

Teachers, alumni remember those school days

By Tom Betz
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Friday afternoon things got going for the All-School Reunion with the teachers open house at the Goodland Elks, and a large number of alumni gathered to meet and talk with old teachers.

One of those was Galen Schwertfeger from the class of 1970 who was talking to retired teacher Sharon Palmquist.

Schwertfeger said he was a bad boy in school, and later many of his classmates agreed with that description.

He was saying to Palmquist he had not been totally asleep in her classes, and he had straightened up after leaving Goodland. He lives in Oklahoma now and said he has done a lot of different things and lived in a number of different places. He has three engineering certificates and is working on a masters.

He said he taught school for a eight years and was an adjunct professor at Oklahoma City Community College and Pratt Junior College.

Palmquist said it sounded like Schwertfeger has lived quite an



Sharon Palmquist and Galen Schwertfeger

interesting life.

"I am a gypsy," he said. "I don't last anywhere very long. I get bored like I did in my high school days."

Palmquist said it was good to see those who grew up as wild children do well in their lives.

Schwertfeger said he now works for the U.S. Department of Interior.

Palmquist said she probably had a reputation as a stickler when she was teaching.

Schwertfeger said he had the

reputation of being a loser.

"You challenged teachers," Palmquist said with a smile and a laugh. "One thing I remember about you was you were good looking."

Classmate from 1970 Cathy Waugh of Manhattan joined the conversation and said she was glad to see that many people.

She said she had gone to the prom with Schwertfeger.

"I was the bad boy of the class of 1970," Schwertfeger said. "I made it, but not here. But everyone here

helped."

She said she is Bob's daughter, and said she was not nearly as famous as Galen.

She said she agreed with Galen that Goodland gave them a good basis.

She said she had helped at registration that morning and more than 1,100 had come from all over the country. They were from California, Washington, D.C. Florida and many Midwest states all coming back to little Goodland High School.

She said she felt bad for other schools that did not do the all-school reunion because it was so much fun.

Schwertfeger said it was a testament to what the institution did because everyone who came from Goodland High school did not leave being timid. I was not their favorite student, but I walked away with some courage and fortitude to go out and try something. I give that credit to everyone here. It is a good school.

Flatlander plans updated, county asked to contribute

By Tom Betz
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The 25th Flatlander Fall Festival is coming up in about six weeks and the Sherman County commissioners heard about plans to bring in a Nascar racing car as part of the big show.

Flatlander Festival Chairman Brent Wood was at the meeting on Tuesday to update the commissioners, and ask them to consider making a donation of \$2,500 or putting that in the budget for next year.

Wood said a lot of the same events are planned for Flatlander to be held Sept. 23 to 25, and they continue to look for ways to improve the whole weekend. He said when the Flatlander Committee took over the project five or six years ago they have expanded it to three days with the racing beginning on Friday and going through the big street car and bike show on Saturday and the talent show and Picnic in the Park on

Sunday afternoon at Chambers Park.

He said this year the committee has agreed to change the hours on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. to more accommodate the way things have been operating. He said there are a lot of events that begin at 3 p.m. on Saturday, and many of the vendors on Main had closed by that time so they felt it made sense to move the time up by an hour.

"It is the same amount of hours," Wood said, "but it will better match with the other events. The tractor pull starts at 2:30 p.m., the bike games start at 3 p.m. and the car races start at 4 p.m."

He said the National Guard is bringing in a Nascar No. 88 National Guard Chevrolet driven by Dale Earnhardt Jr., and feels it will be a big draw.

Wood said the committee decided to lower the booth price to \$25 this year to see if they can fill some of the blank spots

they had last year. He said the price had been \$45, and felt the food vendors had no trouble making that and more, but some of the craft vendors had a tougher time. He said the Flatlander food booth for the Knights of Columbus has been one of the best for the group and helps fund other programs.

"We are not trying to make money," he said, "but just hold even and cover our costs. We don't really have other ways to raise money except through the booth fees. We are always looking for volunteers to help on the committee."

Wood said he is trying to organize a horse-shoe tournament to be held at Chambers Park on Sunday afternoon.

He asked the commissioners to consider giving \$2,500 in honor of the 25th year. He said they have not gotten county support in the past couple of years.

"Do you need an answer today?" Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said.

"No," Wood said. "We will hold the event either way. We get a lot of support from the city with closing the street and manpower to help move bleachers and the electrical hookups on Main."

Commissioner Larry Enfield asked what the city contributes.

Wood said the city agreed to get the electricity to Main, and the Flatlander Committee agreed to pay \$250 a year for 10 years to help, and the city has waived the cost for the past couple of years.

Enfield asked how many booths are expected.

Wood said around 50. He said the major expenses are insurance that is \$1,800 to \$1,900 plus the cost of the porta potties. He said the Baptist Church helped last year by opening the restrooms at their church on Main.

"We are always trying to make it the even better," he said, "and try to make it more

accessible to all the people. I was worried about the cost of gas, but think we will have a great crowd."

Wood said the Flatlander Committee tries to help coordinate the various events, and said the car club and bike group handle their own programs. He said Northwest Tech has helped promote the event with their alumni.

He said he was glad there are two more hotels open this year to help people who want to stay overnight.

"This is one of the biggest events of the year," Wood said.

Commissioner Max Linin asked if the vendors pay sales tax.

Wood said they ask the vendors to abide by the law, and have the Police Chief make a round to check things out.

Enfield thanked Wood for coming and said the commissioners would look at their budget

City plans to celebrate completion of water improvement project

By Tom Betz
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The City of Goodland will hold a ribbon cutting and open house from 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday at the new water treatment plant on Kansas Ave. to celebrate the completion of the \$6 million water improvement project.

In recent years the city was coming under scrutiny from the state Department of Health and Environment for increasing level of nitrate in some of the city wells. The wells had to be tested individually. The overall water was below the nitrate level of 10 parts per million, but several wells had been showing levels near or above the requirement.

City officials had begun the process of seeking a consultant to help the city work on a solution to the nitrate problem.

As the city was selecting the consultant the federal government was approving the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (President Obama stimulus package).

The city selected Evans, Bierly Hutchison and Associates for the water project, and with the timing the city was able to receive about \$2

million in loan forgiveness money from the federal program to reduce the cost.

The remaining \$4 million was to be loaned to the city through the state, but city officials determined they could save the citizens more than \$1 million in interest by using existing reserves to pay off the

loan. Construction of the water treatment plant has been by Miller Construction of Goodland, and a number of other contractors were involved in laying water lines and a new main on 10th Street across town and building two lined evaporation

ponds and two water storage tanks at the treatment plant.

A lot of the water project involved bringing the water from all the city wells to the central point at the treatment plant and then pumping it out into the city system. The blending and ability to treat a portion of the

water for nitrates allows the city to maintain better quality water with a lower concentration of nitrates.

Goodland Ambassadors will be on hand at 6 p.m. to hold a ribbon cutting for the city.

No bomb found at Walmart

Monday morning a little before 8 a.m. dispatchers received a call that a bomb threat had been called into the Goodland Walmart store, 2160 Commerce Rd., from an unknown caller.

Goodland Police responded to the call and the store was ordered evacuated. Other responding included Sherman County Sheriff's Office, Kansas Highway Patrol, Goodland City Fire Department, Goodland EMS and Sherman County Emergency Management.

The fire department blocked the entrance as other law enforcement

searched the store. Law enforcement officers determined the call was not a viable threat, and no bomb was found.

Walmart was declared safe to reopen for regular business about 8:45 a.m.

The store as well as emergency services have been placed on heightened alert.



corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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