



Monsignor Armond Girard was part of the Goodland coffee group (above) in 1994. Tom Bush poured him coffee, along with Stella Cebula and Tom Randolph. He had his portrait taken in his monsignor's hat (right).

Photo above by Esther Studer



Residents remember former priest fondly

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

As a community leader in a small town, Monsignor Armand Girard knew everyone's name as he walked down the street in Goodland and everyone knew him.

"He was well liked by everybody," said Clarence Scheopner, a member of Our Lady of Perpetual Health Catholic Church, where Father Girard was pastor before he retired. "He walked down the street and knew everybody. He always had that smile and was ready to speak to anyone."

Monsignor Girard died earlier this month, bringing the memory of his works back to mind for people in town.

Serving in the Salina Diocese for 50 years, Girard spent his last 10 in Goodland. He came to town in 1985 and served until his retirement in 1995. After retiring, he went to Manhattan to live and work in the Catholic Student Center.

When died on Jan. 5 at St. Joseph Village, he was 83 and had been associated with the church for almost 60 years.

Girard was born April 26, 1921, in Aurora, about 15 miles southeast of Concordia, the son of Blanche Mary Louise Desilet and Leon Girard.

He grew up in Aurora, and after

graduation from the high school there, moved on to St. Benedict's College in Atchison.

Choosing the cloth was not easy for Girard, friends said. He had to give up not only serving his country in the Army, but he gave up having a family, too.

After spending two years in seminary, he came home and registered to serve in the military in World War II. Cynthia Haynes, publisher of the *Norton Telegram* and a cousin, said Girard wanted to serve along with his twin brothers. Because he was in preparatory seminary, though, he was deferred from the draft, but he learned he could help out by becoming a chaplain.

"After a lot of prayer and discussion with his parents, advisers and family," Haynes said, "he stayed in the seminary and completed his education to become a Catholic priest, eventually becoming a monsignor."

Haynes said Girard told parishioners at his 50th anniversary as a priest how he struggled over giving up a family for the church, especially since the girls he knew were so pretty.

"God did the choosing," she said, "and he just followed along."

Girard went to the St. Louis Preparatory Seminary in Missouri for two more years and then to the

Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis for three.

He is quoted in *The Sherman County Star* on June 7, 1995, saying he was strongly influenced by those around him to finish his religious education.

"My decision to become a priest came through my association with classmates in seminary," he said. "I also received the call to the service of the church and for God's people."

The next step was two years at the Catholic University of America in Washington. Girard was ordained on June 10, 1945 at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salina.

From there, he received his first assignment as assistant pastor at Sacred Heart, where he served for seven years.

Next he became pastor at Sts. Peter and Paul at Clay Center, first pastor at St. Mary Queen of the Universe in Salina, first pastor at Immaculate Heart of Mary in Hays and pastor of St. Francis of Assisi in Norton.

His final assignment brought Girard to work as pastor of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Goodland.

Although most remembered as priest at the church, Girard worked to make lives better for people inside and outside of the faith.

He was involved with the Minis-

terial Alliance, the Chamber of Commerce, Genesis, the thrift shop, the transient program and the Knights of Columbus.

While in Norton, he became active in Valley Hope Association, a group dedicated to helping people with treatment for drug or alcohol addiction.

Scheopner said all the time Girard served on the Valley Hope board, from 1980 to 1989, he never missed a meeting.

He worked not only to help struggling addicts, and volunteered with the mentally disabled as well. He was honored as Adult Volunteer of the Year in 1994 for his work with the Golden West Skills Center.

"He was very special with the handicapped and retarded," said Scheopner who takes care of his mentally disabled daughter, Judy. "He made her feel really good, like she was important."

Scheopner said Girard was a good family friend, too. He said along with baptizing Judy, the priest married several of his children and even nominated the family for Knights of Columbus Family of the Year in 1991. He and his family went on to the district, state and national competition.

The family was runner up out of five families for the national award, and Scheopner said he thanked

Girard for getting them that far.

"It's quite an achievement," he said adding Father Girard put in a lot of work to get them that far.

"The big highlight was when we went to the national convention," he said.

Always interested in education, Girard set up the first scholarship in the church here. Stan Cebula, a Goodland native and a member of the church, said the scholarship, which bear Girard's name, goes to high school seniors.

"I think he was a major influence on the youth," Cebula said.

After taking over the church, he said, Girard didn't make a lot of changes but he did bring his own style to the position.

"He was very organized," Scheopner said. "He was really involved. He got people to singing in church."

Girard's followers here had only good things to say about the priest.

"He was a very humble man," said Janet Rumpel, Sherman County clerk. "I think that's what a minister should be."

"Monsignor was just a wonderful man," Cebula said. "He always had an upbeat attitude."

In his free time, Scheopner said, Girard liked to play golf and spent hours on the course at the Sugar Hills Golf Club.

"He enjoyed playing golf a lot," Cebula said, "It was probably his favorite pastime."

Scheopner said the church and the town was sad to see Father Girard leave after his retirement in 1995, but the college was a perfect place for a priest to retire.

"He was an effervescent guy," he said, "and young at heart."

Even after he left, Scheopner said, Girard kept in touch with people here and returned for several funerals. He said Girard stayed active up to the end of his life, filling in for priests who got sick or needed a vacation.

"He said, 'I don't think I'm retired. They keep me going,'" Scheopner recalled.

His life ended with hope and promise for the afterlife. He wrote a letter to his friends and family shortly before Christmas, telling them he had ideopathic pulmonary fibrosis and didn't have much time in this world.

"I want to thank all of you for the way God has brought you into my life to grow in love and in His service," he wrote. "I hope you will continue to pray for me and I will continue to pray for you now and when in heaven."

"I'm not praying for more life here on this earth, but for eternal life with my Lord and Savior."

Commissioners want fewer county cell phones

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Sherman County has about 10 cell phones, but the commissioners would like to see that number drop if possible to reduce any tax problem with personal use.

New Internal Revenue Service rules say that any personal use of a county cell phone must be reported as taxable income, and Commissioner Mitch Tiede said last Tuesday that he has talked to all the people who have cell phones about their use.

"I would like to eliminate as many as possible," Tiede said at last Tuesday's commission meeting. "Many of the employees have their own phones and use very few minutes on the county phones."

He suggested the cell phones

used by the assessor's office, the computer person and the fire department could be cut.

The sheriff's office is already on a program where the deputies use their own cell phones. They are paid \$15 a month on their payroll for using the phones for work.

Sheriff Kevin Butts said he and Undersheriff Roger Studer are on that plan.

Tiede said the county would consider offering the other deputies — Burton Pianalto, Brad Parker and Jason Showalter — the same support.

"What the IRS is looking for is abuse of the cell phones for personal use," Tiede said after talking to the county's auditor, Mark Bauer of Bauer, VonFelt and Bauer.

The county's cell phone plan is

for \$300 a month, Tiede said, and if the county could cut down to 10 phones, there might be a lower charge and fewer roaming fees.

Deputy clerk Mary Ann Snethen was asked to check on the county contracts, and she found that the county has seven separate contracts for cell phones.

She said that every time an employee has gone in to upgrade or replace a phone, they have signed a new contract.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said the need to write Alltel a letter saying that no new contracts can be signed unless approved by the commissioners.

Butts, Treasurer Shelby Miller, Public Works Manager Curt Way, County Clerk Janet Rumpel and County Attorney Bonnie Selby

were present for the cell phone discussion.

Butts said he would offer the cell phone support to his deputies, and suggested that everybody in the county should be on the same plan to eliminate the county cell phones.

Tiede said he was not sure total that was possible, but felt the number of county phones could be kept to a minimum. He said he had checked on all the cell phones and believes that there is a need for possibly 10. Road and bridge has four, the health department two, and the county attorney, emergency management, noxious weed and building supervisor one each.

Rasure asked the department head how they would prefer to handle the cell phone issue. Way said he would have to talk to his people and see what they wanted to do.

Butts said he preferred the way it was being done in his department.

Selby said that sounded reasonable to her.

"I would like to see all the county cell phones go away," Tiede said.

Rasure suggested that if the business use exceeds the \$15 per month, the employee could submit their phone bill to the commissioners.

Selby wanted to know if the county would be looking at changing the roaming plan.

"We feel it would be better to go to the personal phones," Rasure said

"If we get the number down, we can possibly get a new plan," Commissioner Chuck Thomas said. "Those plans are changing all the time."

"How do we go through the bills to match calls to the cases I am calling about?" Selby asked.

"That is why I prefer the \$15 that

I get," Butts said. "I can call anyone."

"We have to limit use of county cell phones to county business only," Rasure said.

"Maybe we can cut the number down and look at it then," Thomas said.

"I think there ought to be only one option," Butts said.

"We have some departments that need a cell phone," Tiede said.

"I can see that, but think it should be one way or the other," Butts said. "Either all take the personal cell phone option or have a county phone provided for official use."

"The only problem is when the cell phones are being used for personal use," Rumpel said.

The commissioners asked the department heads to go back to their people, and they will review the issue again on Monday, Jan. 31.

Weather adds to heating problems

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

Sheriff Kevin Butts invited the Sherman County commissioners to walk over to the Bastille last Tuesday to talk about the heating problems in the recent cold weather.

The coldest part of the building was the evidence vault on the south side, where the room temperature was down to about 50 degrees, and the air at the ceiling was reading 46 degrees. Keith Bowman of Bowman Heating and Air Conditioning told the commissioners the room was extra cold because there was no insulation on the block walls and the heat duct was not bringing in enough air.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked Bowman about insulating the walls, but said it would be expensive because the ceiling would have to be removed and cut to fit after the

insulation was put up.

Butts said workers from Dependable Glass had been over to seal the windows, and would be back when it was warmer to seal the doors. The commissioners are expected to look at alternatives at their next meeting on Monday.

At the meeting last Tuesday, the commissioners approved a contract

with the state Department of Transportation to spray weeds along Business U.S. 24. Weed Control Supervisor Daryl West charges the state \$20 per hour for spraying plus \$35 an hour for the truck and sprayer. Commissioner Mitch Tiede said the state usually pays about \$1,200 for the spraying, and West charges separately for chemicals.

correction

In the Friday, Jan. 21, edition of *The Goodland Star-News*, an article on page 7a on the National Weather Service volunteers included an error in the phone number. Instead of 899-6412, volunteers are asked to call 899-7119. This was due to incorrect information given to the newspaper.

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