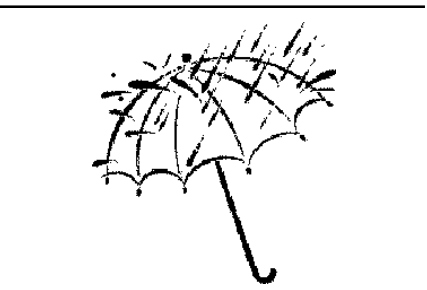
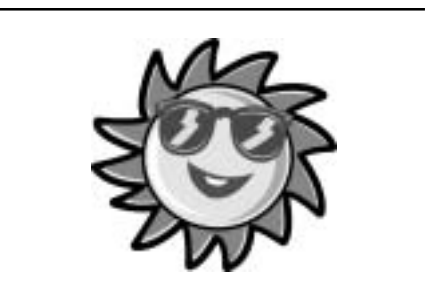


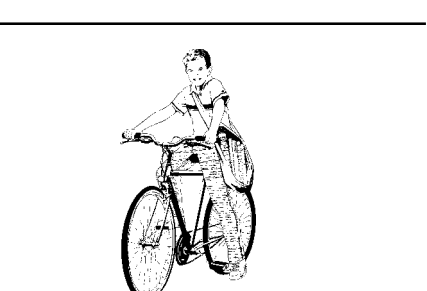
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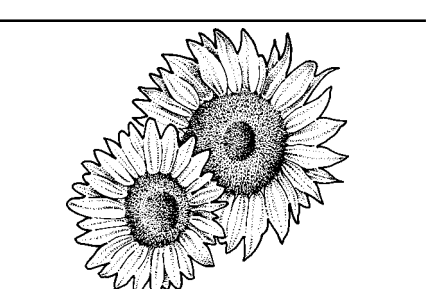


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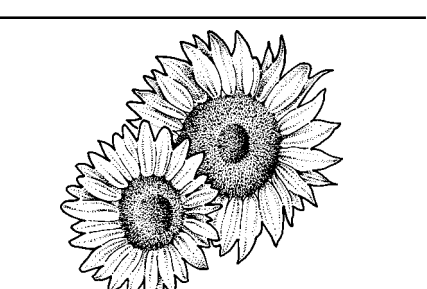


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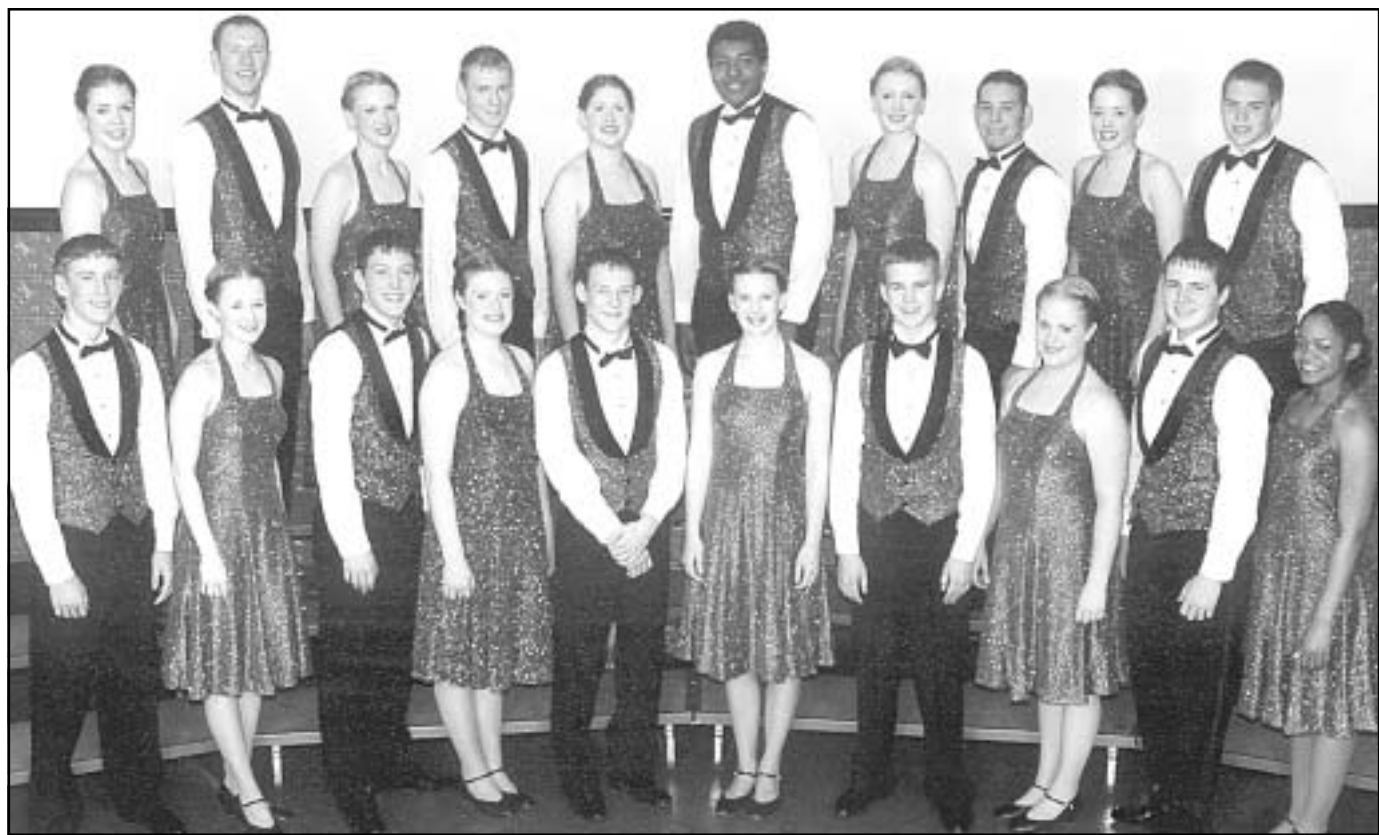


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The Goodland High School X-Pressos show choir posed for a photo in Branson, Mo., where they competed in the Branson National Invitational Show Choir Competition. Choir members are (from left, back row) Jenna McCall, Craig Mason, Jillian Parker, Jeff Moore, Kelsey Leiker, Michael Smith, Grace Langness, Brandon Hatfield, Jordan Frazier, John Mosbarger, Brett Lolicker, and (front row), Shannon Johnson, Daniel Blake, Sami Philbrick, Kerick Mason, Ashley Cebula, Josh Cech, Vanessa Crotinger, Tysen Lofland and Clenisha Yarborough. Photo from Randy Berls

Congratulations X-Presso choir

Music group takes 8th in Branson

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News
Months of practice paid off for the Goodland High School X-Presso as they brought home eighth place and the "Fame" award for good sportsmanship and attitude from competition in Branson, Mo., last month.

The 20-member show choir, eight parent sponsors and teacher Randy Berls spent the first four days of spring break at the Branson National Invitational Show Choir Competition.

"The kids did very well," Berls said. The group put on a 30 minute show, including set up and tear down, which left only 20 minutes for the actual performance. They sang five songs, "Joyful, Joyful," "For Good," the girls on "Big Spender," the boys "A little Less Conversation" and the choir ended the show with "You Can't Stop the Beat."

Berls choreographed four of the songs and Jessica Kennedy put together the moves for "You Can't Stop the Beat."

To get the act together, the X-Pressos started preparing for the Branson trip four months ago, right after they finished the school's annual musical.

Because a 20-minute dancing and singing routine takes some stamina, Berls encouraged the students get active. He said some of the members are in sports, while others got together to play basketball.

They had several wardrobe changes, shedding robes to reveal their performance costumes, gold dresses for the girls and black pants and white shirts with gold vests for the boys. Berls said the boys went offstage during the girls' song and changed into hip-hop gear for the third costume change.

The group performed on a stage at the Tri Lakes center four times the size of the one at the high school auditorium. The auditorium has 2,600 seats and is 85 feet wide by 40 feet deep, Berls said. He said the theater is the old Mel Tillis facility that is still owned by his daughters.

Senior Daniel Blake plans to go on to compete with the Colby Community College show choir and he said the experience should help him in the future.

"It showed us what kind of stuff to expect," said Blake. "It was good overall."

The X-Pressos went up against seven show choirs, ranging from 44 to 70 members from Illinois, Wisconsin and Missouri.

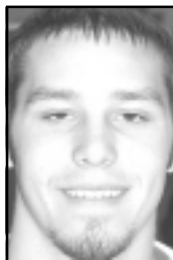
The Goodland group is limited in Kansas by the Activities Association rules to 24 or fewer singers.

"All of the groups besides us had one or



Langness

"It was a lot of fun. It was just a great experience, a great opportunity."
-Grace Langness



Hatfield

"It was a great experience. Being on stage was just a blast."
-Brandon Hatfield

more professional choreographers," he said. "Most of these people choreograph for Broadway shows and Miss America pageants."

After the show, Berls said, the choir got to meet with one of the judges to discuss areas for improvement. He said the clinic should help them in the future.

Senior Craig Mason said he really appreciated the people from town who went to Branson to see the group perform.

"It was very awesome to see so much support," he said adding he knows how far many people had to travel.

The trip wasn't all work; the kids had time to take in some of the sights. Berls said they went to see the Jim Stafford Show, a variety show including Stafford's children, country music and comedy.

"It was a lot of fun," said senior Kelsey Leiker. "Most of us were just really happy to get to go."

"It was a great town," said Mason.

The group spent four hours Friday night

on the showboat Branson Belle with the other 800 competitors, teachers and sponsors, Berls said. The boat featured a five-star restaurant and entertainment.

Mason said the view of the lake was really good and he liked the food and entertainment.

"I think the best thing we did in Branson was we went on the showboat," said Blake. "That was just amazing."

The choir has been raising money for the trip all year, and Berls said it was more difficult this year than it has been in the past.

"The people that helped us were very gracious with their donations," said senior Shannon Johnson.

Berls said the experience for the choir was good, and he will look into going again soon. The students had a good time, he said.

The students said their group is much closer now after the trip.

"It was fun because of all the people we took," said sophomore Clenisha Yarborough.

Students try out for team

Winning a spot with the Goodland High School X-Pressos isn't easy.

Randy Berls, choir teacher at the school, said students try out for the coveted positions.

The 20 students in the choir now, he said, were chosen from 77 who applied.

"It's pretty competitive," Berls said.

The choir comprises 10 girls and 10 boys with five each tenors, sopranos, altos and bases.

Eight of the members are seniors, eight sophomores and four juniors. Freshmen are not eligible until they spend a year in choir with Berls.

Along with musical talent, Berls said, he judges on dancing and acting skills.

The group does regular community

performances, so the members have to be good kids.

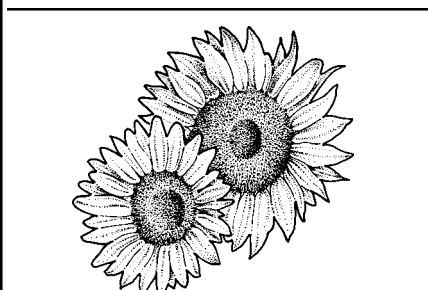
"I pick who I think would be the best to represent Goodland," he said.

Those chosen for spots are entered into a for-credit class. The students are in the course for 84 minutes twice a week and 47 minutes on Mondays.

This year's X-Pressos group includes seniors Clenisha Yarborough, Craig Mason, Jeff Moore, Grace Langness, Daniel Blake, Kelsey Leiker, Shannon Johnson, and Tysen Lofland; juniors Jordan Frazier, Brett Lalicker, Brandon Hatfield and Sami Philbrick; and sophomores Michael Smith, Jillian Parker, John Mosbarger, Vanessa Crotinger, Josh Cech, Ashley Cebula, Kerick Mason and Jenna McCall.

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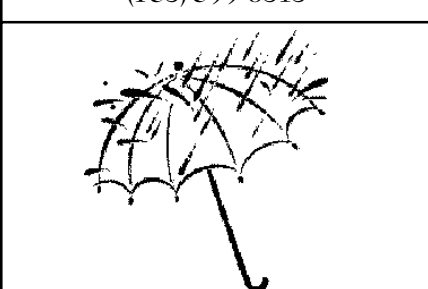
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