

Book store closing doors; ‘last page’ next weekend

KNOTT, from Page 1a

happened. “It just makes me sick,” said one customer while checking out the books, collectibles and gifts that are now marked from 20 to 50 percent off.

“I sure hate to (close),” she told another customer. “I just reached a point where if I want to eat, I have to.”

Knott said she has put blood, sweat and tears into the small store, everything from the occasional paper cut to the few days a few summers ago when the store went without air conditioning. These days she has been fighting back the tears associated with closing.

“I would have done this forever,” she said.

Knott, a former elementary teacher, took over the store in August 1994 from Jan Carman and Kathryn Wedermyer, who had the business for 8 years. Knott said the store has been around for about 40 years.

“I took the plunge and haven’t regretted it,” she said, adding that she spent three years considering the “plunge,” taking bookkeeping classes and working one summer in a book store.

She decided to go into business for herself after 19 years of teaching second grade at North Elementary. She said she was tired of teaching and wanted something new.

Born and raised in Walsh, a small town in southeast Colorado, Knott went to college at Panhandle State in Oklahoma. She earned a degree in elementary education and took her first job here. She stayed, she said, because she likes Goodland. “I just liked the people,” she said. “They’re wonderful people.”

She said the past 11 years at the store, she has met more people than she ever imagined possible.

“I’m gonna miss my customers so much,” she said. “I have good customers. I have the cream of the crop.”

Saturday or Sunday for graduation?

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News
A request to change Goodland High School graduation from Saturday to Sunday had the school board locked in a debate until members finally decided to put the issue off until the next meeting.

At a meeting Monday, May 23, some members argued that Saturday is the best time for Project Graduation, a night of games and entertainment planned to keep seniors busy — and safe — after the ceremony.

A Sunday graduation, others said, would give family and friends a chance to stay all weekend and visit. But some relatives may need to drive home before Monday, the first group said.

“It certainly doesn’t make any difference to me,” said Superintendent Marvin Selby.

Mary Porterfield, high school Spanish teacher and senior class sponsor, had asked the board about the day for graduation this year, Saturday, May 21. She said it conflicts with the state track meet, baseball and softball.

“I haven’t gotten a lot of real good comments (about changing the date),” said board President Jane Philbrick.

Board member Marty Melia has had positive responses. One told him their relatives could stay over and spend some time with the family.

Board member Mike Campbell said now relatives drive in on Saturday morning and only get to see the graduates for a short time. After they get their diplomas, he said, the kids leave the family and run off to Project Graduation.

“If graduation was on Sunday,” he said, “it would be a weekend with family.”

Board members argued that if the graduation day was changed, Project Graduation would have to be moved to Sunday, too.

Melia said it’s better to have the party on a Saturday.

Board member Fritz Duke said he thought the all-night party is getting out of hand anyway.

“It has nothing to do with school,” Campbell agreed, saying the decision should be based on the school’s needs.

“Remember the last time we did this?” asked Philbrick, pointing to the conflicts over the day.

She asked board members if they wanted to table the issue until the



Linda Knott rang up one of her last sales Tuesday at her store, Knott Just Books, which is going out of business next week. Knott said she will miss her customers the most.

Photo by Kathryn Burke/The Goodland Star-News

When she took over, Knott said, she changed the layout of the shop, opening it up with freestanding displays. She didn’t change much, she said, but did add a larger music section.

“They had it done up pretty nice,” she said of Wedermyer and Carman. The store sells Christian items including books, greeting cards, music, wall hanging and more. She carries seasonal items, figurines and gifts.

Knott says the closing is due to the town’s economy, plus competition from outlets for books like the Internet. When she first opened the store, she said, it was hard to find a parking spot on Main.

One day recently when she looked out the window, she said she noticed only one car parked out front and the customer was in her shop.

“I was real excited,” she said.

Knott said business really turned bad last Christmas. She said sales

were down and she kept holding on. When spring came and her normal rush for Easter, Mother’s Day, first communion and confirmation didn’t, she knew there was trouble.

“I think everybody’s having a tough time,” she said, adding the new businesses in town, Adronics/Elrob Manuf. Corp. and ReNewable Energy Resources, could make the difference. “I think we’re on the right track.”

The closing will not just affect Knott, but also her one part-time

employee, Twila Murray, and her customers.

Knott worries many of her elderly customers who aren’t particular computer literate won’t be able to get books.

“I do feel bad about that,” she said.

“The final chapter” reads bold print in her store front window.

“Last page June 18.”

Knott said she plans to take a few weeks off after she closes the doors for the last time. After the vacation, she will hit the streets searching for a new job.

“I’m not saying no to anything right now,” she said, adding that she doesn’t plan to go back to teaching, but might consider substituting.

“I do think it’s really hopeful,” she said of the job market.

Even so, Knott, who is single, is leaving a big part of her life behind. She was the owner, sales lady and janitor, she said. She was married to her job and the divorce is taking its toll.

“It’s kind of like losing a part of you,” she said.

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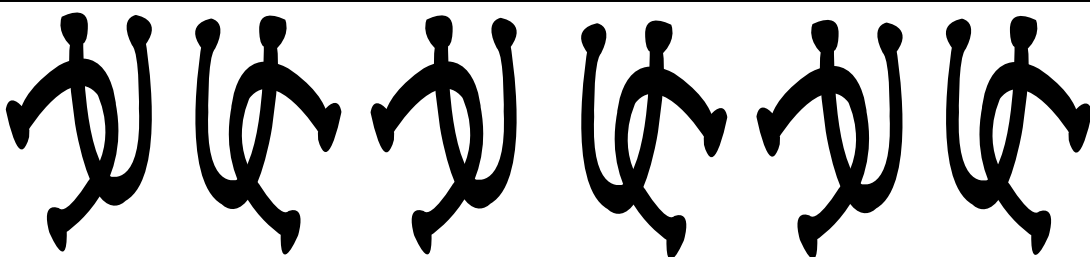
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