

# Ranch keeps legacy of hospitality alive

## Heirlooms decorate Prairie Castle

By Sharon Corcoran  
The Goodland Star-News

Sitting pretty in a valley a mile west and 12 miles north of Edson is a ranch that includes a hunting lodge, a bed and breakfast, a barn and room for sports, wildlife and fishing.

The ranch's bed and breakfast boasts a lending library of books dating back to the early 1900s and a whirlpool tub for those who just want to relax.

Bright flowers accent the garden around the rooms, and a small, decorative pond with lily pads fills the area between the "Prairie Castle" and the lodge. Guests can cross the pond, walking over a curved bridge.

Brent and Diana Flanders are the fourth generation of the Kuhrt family on the ranch, and their children, Paul, 19, and Sarah, 16, are the fifth. They have family heirlooms decorating the bed and breakfast, also known as the "Prairie Castle," and a sign that used to mark the place as "Shermanville" in the hunting lodge.

Kuhrt Ranch (pronounced "Court") attracts two types of clients, they say, hunters to the lodge and tourists and ladies' clubs to the bed and breakfast. It also provides a quiet respite for city dwellers getting them away from the rat race.

"This area doesn't realize what a rare commodity we have in peace and quiet," said Diana Flanders, "in fresh air and wildlife. People can see turkey and deer."

"We don't have the amusement parks, water parks and shopping," Brent Flanders said, "but they have that everywhere."

Cell phones don't work out here, he said, but people can see the stars. A group even came out to watch an eclipse, he said, adding that those who live here don't always notice how open the Kansas sky is.

Besides handling overnight guests and hunting groups, the ranch can take family reunions and



Brent and Diana Flanders

other big events, such as weddings. Guests can rent the whole property for privacy.

The bed and breakfast sleeps up to seven and the lodge about 15. For youth groups, Brent said, they can squeeze in a few more if they bring sleeping bags.

A big room in the lodge holds 80-120 coming and going, and there is room outdoors for activities. Reunions sometimes have part of the group stay in Goodland and meet at the ranch, Brent said.

The bed and breakfast has quite a bit of local business, Diana said, especially from the smaller towns in the area. Guests often come from Bird City, Brewster, McDonald and St. Francis, she said.

Hunting seems to attract a lot of people from out of state, she said, adding that the lodge gets a lot of guests from the Front Range area of Colorado. Often the guests plunge right into small-town life and come back each year for more.

"We've made a lot of friends," she said. "We have people who come every year, and they go to Brewster with us to the kids' games."

A lot of guests like to go to Big Ed's in Bird City for a steak, she said, to the RDC Steakhouse and Saloon in Brewster (used to be Bubba's Corner and Big Als), to Crazy R's in Goodland and to Park Hill in St. Francis.

And the ranch is steps away from the Kidder Massacre site, which also holds historic interest.

A lot of people go to Kidder, Brent said, adding that they go over and look at the guest book from time to time.



A large room (above) in the hunting lodge at Kuhrt Ranch holds up to 120 people, coming and going, and has a sign on the wall with "Shermanville," the original name of the ranch, on it. The bed and breakfast on the ranch (below) has been called the "Prairie Castle"

since 1934, when Pauline Kuhrt had it added onto and faced with limestone in memory of the German castles she knew as a girl.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

All of our visitors have been very friendly and kind, Diana said. And clean and neat, Brent added.

"Some leave the rooms so clean we can hardly tell they were here," he said, "and some even try to start their own laundry."

The family wants to renovate the barn so it will be suitable for tours. Guests would enjoy seeing the milk cows and chickens, Diana said.

"We farm still," Brent said, "but less and less each year."

He said they raise some birds on the ranch to hunt, since there are not enough native birds to support all their hunts.

Everyone wanted to see the inside of the house, Diana said; making it a bed and breakfast was a way to share it with others and bring in some money.

"We have just been blessed with this place," Diana said, "with such a rich history."

Now they share that history with others, supplement their farm income and carry on a legacy.

"The Kuhrt family was always known for their hospitality," Diana said. "This is a nice way to keep that alive."



## Home featured in Kansas magazine

Kuhrt Ranch, which includes a historic Sherman County home opened up as a bed and breakfast, was featured in the Fall issue of "Kansas!" magazine.

The ranch has a history of hospitality. It began as a one-room sod house owned by Joseph Collier, at site north of Edson then known as Shermanville.

Collier was known for extending hospitality to settlers who walked for miles to pick up mail at his post office and shop in his small market. He provided them with water from his well, the only one in the valley at the time.

William and Pauline Kuhrt bought the ranch in 1891, and in 1907, they built a two-story frame home to replace the sod house. He died in 1917. In 1934, she made additions to the home and had it faced with native limestone rock to imitate the German castles she knew as a girl. People in the area began calling the house the "Prairie Castle."

Pauline Kuhrt died in 1934, and two sons, Paul and Eugene, and a daughter, Emilie, continued to build the Kuhrt legacy until their death.

The ranch was passed on to Jim Flanders, the only son of William and Pauline's youngest child, Gertrude, who had married Raleigh Flanders in 1931.

Jim's son and daughter-in-law, Brent and Diana Flanders, began operating the ranch in 1990. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001, and the main house has been a bed and breakfast since June 2004. Jim Flanders and his wife Jan live nearby and help.

Mom cooks, and Dad helps out too, Brent said, adding that he can't imagine running the ranch without them. Brent and Diana said they

started small, but the operation has grown each year. They hope it will one day employ their whole family.

"That's our desire," Diana said. "We'll see if they follow our plans."

Sarah said she wants to go to culinary school, Diana said. That would work well, Brent said, since the ranch could serve more meals with another cook in the kitchen. They serve dinners by reservation and Victorian teas.

The article in "Kansas!" spurred on a busy fall at the ranch.

"We have had the busiest month bed-and-breakfast-wise," Diana said. "It's because of the article."

Call the ranch at 899-5306.

## Spooks, goblins costume contest Tuesday

There has been a change in time for costume judging for Goodland's fourth annual Moonlight Madness celebration, expected to bring out spooks and goblins from 5:30-7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Some downtown stores will be open late with specials for shopping, and there will be treats for the kids who visit the stores. At Eldorado Western Wear, 1101 Main, the Goodland Police will hand out candy and there will be a clown from McDonalds handing out special Halloween coupons.

The Madd Hatter will provide music beginning about 5 p.m. at Eldorado, and costume contest judging will begin at 5:30 p.m.

There will be four age groups, with prizes for first and second in each. The 2- and-under group will be judged at 5:30 p.m., kids 3-6 at 6 p.m., and 7-10 and 11-15 judging has been moved up to 6:30 p.m. The Goodland Kiwanis Club has donated prize money for the

costume contest.

Businesses participating in the event or handing out candy to the kids include Jacque's Hallmark, Eldorado Western Wear, J.C. Penney, High Plains Office Supply, KC Video, McDonalds, Cowboy Loop, American Communications, Mr. Jim's His and Hers, Wal-Mart, Madd Hatter, Custom Tailoring by Marie and The Goodland Star-News.

## 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.

**Bridal Registry**

Tammy Weeter  
&  
Beau Larson  
Nov. 5, 2005

Mann's Jewelry & Gifts  
1005 Main Street  
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(785) 899-6100

**Bubba's Meat Block**

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Come in & meet Bubba & Lori Helton  
Now taking Special orders  
Open  
Tuesday - Friday 10 - 6  
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1614 Main 785-890 - 6654

## student of the week



Name: Jena McCall  
Parents: Steve & Susan McCall

Grade: 11  
Age: 16

We've nominated this student because: She does an exemplary job in the classroom. Her work is always done and done well. She shows a quiet leadership both in academics and citizenship.

Student Comment: My favorite aspect of school would be the possibilities available for leadership

and involvement.

Activities involved in at school: Tennis, X-Pressos, FCS, AFS, FCCLA, GAA, Musical, Band, Jazz Band, and church choir

My choice of movies, books, and games: The Princess Bride, I like most types of music, The Stand by Stephen King, and Gestures and Taboo

After I leave Goodland High School I intend to: attend college

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be: still learning and enjoying life.

Favorite Quote: "Fear less, hope more; whine less, breathe more; talk less, say more; hate less, love more, And all good things are yours."  
- Swedish Proverb

In Memory of  
Michael John Klinge  
April 27, 1990  
October 21, 2004

A Million Times We've Needed You

A million times we've cried:  
How alone could I have survived,  
You never would have died,  
It broke our hearts to lose you,  
But part of you didn't go alone.  
A part of us went with you  
The day God took you home.  
They say time heals all sorrows  
And helps us to forget.  
The times so far has only proven  
How much we miss you yet,  
God gave us the strength to face it  
And the courage to stand the blow.  
Why we had to lose you  
None of us will ever know.  
Friends may think we have forgotten  
When at times they see us smile,  
Little do they know the heartache  
We're hiding all the while.

We miss and love you, Michael!!!

Randy Bahe Family,  
Sean Miller Family,  
Neil Normandin Family

Classifieds can help clean out those closets! Call 899-2338.

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