

# Antique piano gets strings for new sound

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

A 105-year-old piano is getting a new set of lungs, but it will take nearly a year for the "transplant" to take.

Bruce Lantry, owner of Lantry Piano Service near Imperial, Neb., spent part of last week and this week putting new strings in a 1901 piano in the 1907 Victorian Ennis-Handy House. It will need continuous tuning throughout the year to regain its "singing voice" before the Sherman County Historical Society uses it for holiday events next winter.

Logos inside the piano say it was made by Western Cottage Piano and Organ Co. for the L.B. Merrifield Co. Lantry looked in list of piano companies in a book and discovered the piano's serial number indicates it was made before 1902.

It was from the Dr. A.C. Gulick home, said David Branda, president of the historical society, and was donated by Gulick's granddaughter Karen Neitzel. It's in really good shape, Branda said.

Stringing is done the same as when these were new, Lantry said; it's a tedious job. When you take the piano apart, he said, you have to measure each string and write down how many notes of each size.

The length of the strings for each note for some popular piano brands are listed in books, Lantry said, but this piano was made by companies that no longer exist. He also had to take the old bass strings out and send them to a company that makes new ones, so they would have the right measurements.

But that seems to work better anyway. You get a more accurate reproduction, he said, than when they go by the numbers in a book.

The piano still sounded nice, Lantry said, and the tuning pins were still tight, but the wire was breaking.



Bruce Lantry, owner of Lantry Piano Service of Imperial, Neb., restringing a 1901 piano at the Ennis-Handy House last week and part of this week. He has been tuning pianos in Goodland since 1991.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

Some pianos this age are not worth fixing, Lantry said, but since it still sounded good, this one is.

When installing the wires, he said, the tension has to be laid down evenly to avoid breaking the cast iron plate, which is under 30,000 pounds of pressure.

The wires keep stretching, Lantry said, so you can tune a piano every hour for a day before it even begins to settle down.

It takes months to hold a really good tune, he said, so the piano will likely just be starting to sound like it should in time for the historical society's Christmas and New Year's parties in the winter.

Lantry had been to Goodland many times to tune pianos before restringing the 1901 Merrifield. He tunes pianos for GERALYN PARKER, a Goodland piano teacher, and several of her students; for Linda Koons, a fellow member with Parker of the Goodland Federated Music Club; and for Lloyd Holbrook, who served the last two terms as president of the historical society.

His first trip to Goodland in 1991 was memorable.

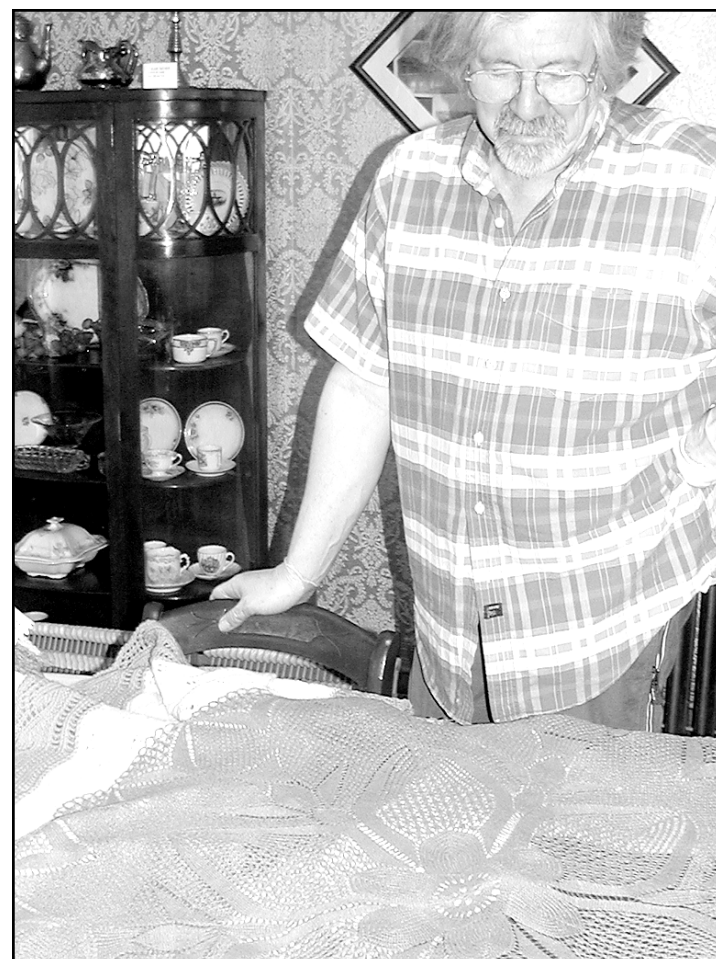
"I tuned for someone who was going to host the music club," Lantry said. "We had an inch of snow; Goodland had a foot, and I

didn't know until we got here. We were snowed in a week; my wife worked puzzles."

Lantry travels up to 150 miles in every direction to tune pianos.

"My favorite customer has seven pianos in one room," he said. "He's a farmer who collects them, though he can't even play well. He has one from Austria that cost \$60,000-\$80,000 and has one in the bedroom he has never let me see."

Lantry also tunes pianos for Colby Community College and on the weekend tuned the piano for the Vienna Boys Choir, who performed in the Colby High School auditorium Sunday.



When Bruce Lantry came to Goodland to restring the piano at the Ennis-Handy House, he brought some of his lace knitting projects to show to Marilyn Imel's knitting class that meets at the Carnegie Arts Center. The tablecloth he is showing won a ribbon at the Nebraska State Fair.

## Man's life 'lace filled'

Some people have a checkered past. Bruce Lantry has one filled with lace, knitted lace.

The knitted lace has made Lantry, owner of Lantry Piano Service, something of a minority. When he lived in Boulder, Colo., he was a regular customer at a store that sells knitting supplies, the only man who came in often. He was told they only had one other man come in the whole year.

Where did he pick up such a hobby?

"I started doing lace knitting when I was in the Army," Lantry said. "They had books with patterns."

Over the years, he has made several table cloths, and he made a dress for his wife. Since it was made of wool yarn, Lantry said, it had to be awfully cold for her to wear it.

His seven-foot round white table cloth with a rose pattern in the center won best in county at the fair last year, he said. He decided not to take it to the state fair, though.

With the price of gas, he said, it would have cost a lot to drive there, two round trips, to drop it off and then pick it up. He could have had it shipped but was concerned about it being lost. It took 10 years to make, he said, and is irreplaceable.

Lantry was in the U.S. Army Band from 1968-71, during the Vietnam War. He played on the Capitol steps many times and at the White House numerous times, including an especially memorable occasion, Tricia Nixon's wedding to Edward Finch Cox, then a White House aide, in the Rose Garden.

It rained, Lantry said, a fine drizzle, but the President's daughter was determined to have her wedding in the garden, so it was outdoors.

"I think it's still the only wedding held in the Rose Garden," he said.

Lantry played string bass professionally and had a string group, a small orchestra.

# Mental health reorganizes staff

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

High Plains Mental Health has been reorganizing its staff to improve client service the Sherman County commissioners were told.

Tracy Hillmer, office manager for High Plains, and Maripat Bowman of Golden West Skills Center, county representative on the 18-county regional health center's board, came to commission meeting on Feb. 21, to explain the reorganization.

Hillmer said she remains the manager in Goodland and is a therapist who sees clients, but doesn't supervise the clerical staff. Hillmer said she now oversees both the Colby and Goodland offices, and

spends three days a week in Colby.

"We have been doing some internal restructuring," Hillmer said. "We have gone from a branch office manager responsible for everything, to a more regional support staff supervisor. If there are technical problem with the computer, they have a staff supervisor in Hays to give them technical support."

Hillmer said her duties include managing the physical issues of the buildings and the overall work flow of the offices.

She said the agency now has regional case managers who work with the offices in Colby and Goodland and the eight counties the two cover. She said Tammy Pettijohn is the supervising case

manager. Hillmer said there is one full-time case manager in each office and then others work as needed.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked how many people are on the staff.

Hillmer said two women therapists work in Goodland and, a man comes over to Goodland on Monday and Friday for those who want to talk to a man.

She said there is one support person who handles the clerical duties, and they are filling a second job since Diana Dycus became the regional support staff supervisor.

Rasure asked what the case load has been over the past year.

Hillmer said she did not have the statistics, but from her observation the usage is about the same as last year and there might be a slight increase.

Bowman said she has enjoyed being able to attend the quarterly board meetings via a television

conferencing system. She said it saves on gas and time.

"The representative from St. Francis and I will attend the meeting Thursday from here," she said.

Bowman thanked the commissioners for appointing Dennis Daise to be the alternate.

Hillmer said the mental health group is trying to use the staff in a better and more efficient manner.

"It flows better," she said, "and people get answers quicker."

County Clerk Janet Rumpel pointed out that the county has a prescription drug card that may be able to help people get up to 20 percent off their drug costs.

Rumpel gave Hillmer a stack of the folders that explain the program.

Hillmer said there is a nurse in Hays, and part of her job is to keep up with the changes in the drug programs.

## correction

In the accident report on Page 8a of the Feb. 21 edition the information about the accident on Feb. 4, involving Roger Enfield was wrong. The correct report was that a 2000 Chevy pickup driven by Enfield was driving west in the parking lot at Wal-Mart when his truck was hit by a 1997 GMC backing up and driven by Randall Tupper. Joseph Randall Bondell was a passenger in the Enfield pickup. This error was from the information provided by the police department. The police have changed computer programs,

and the error was made because the new program did not print out the expected information for the accident.

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