

ON STAGE SUNDAY, graduates Tabettha Hoehner, Ted Jueneman and Caleb Kastens (above) wait for their friends to receive their diplomas. Ted (below) hugged his mother, former Superintendent Kim Juenemann, and handed her a rose.

Students, town say good-bye

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**
Yellow and blue banners hung from the gym walls, proclaiming the glory of Herndon High.

The years Odyssey of the Mind students won the championship, the time Destination Imagination students took second in the global finals, the year the Odyssey team took second, and last fall, when the six-man football team went all the way to the finals in the Nebraska league.

It was nine times the Beavers took the championship position in Odyssey of the Mind, 1986, 1989, 1992, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1988, 1991 and 1994. In 1997 and 1998, the team took second. In 2000, Destination Imagination students took second in the global finals. It was this year that the six-man football team almost won the Nebraska championship.

Nebraska, because Kansas doesn't have six-man competition anymore.

The Beavers won't have another chance to hang any more banners. The high school will close its doors on Thursday after 80 or more years of service.

It has been the last year for a lot of things in Herndon, and Sunday was the last graduation.

Eleven students walked across the stage, Kara Allen, Lance Basgall, Alicia Bergling, Curtis Brown, Tabettha Hoehner, Theodore Juenemann, Caleb Kastens, Abraham Marintzer, Tyler Mercer, Kati Niemeth and Daniel Riener.

Before the school year started, the Herndon School District consolidated with the Atwood district. That

meant many changes, including a new superintendent.

Lee Tarrant said he asked the seniors what they wanted him to talk about at the graduation ceremony. He said the kids told anything he wanted, as long as it was short.

It has been a good year, said Dr. Tarrant, who also served as principal for the final year, although it has been tough knowing this would be the last year.

In a class recently, he said, the students were talking about what different animal groups were called. They found that a group of beavers is a colony.

"Thanks for letting me be part of the colony," said Dr. Tarrant.

For its last graduation, Herndon High singled out four "honor students instead of the usual valedictorian and salutatorian. The four all had straight A's in high school.

First to speak was Mr. Basgall. In the beginning, he said, there were six kids in the class. In elementary school, he said the teachers could tell it was a wild class. In fourth grade, they all spent time in detention together.

Mr. Basgall talked about the years in between and when other students joined them. By the end, they were 11 strong. The students made it a year to remember, he said. The football team went to state for the first time in school history.

Miss Niemeth said the class chose their motto, "We dare to do what we dare to dream," because it is about aspirations.

"We all have goals and dreams to

accomplish," she said. Stepping out could bring failure, but that is OK because failure is just another step.

She said they have all gained opportunities by going to a small school, and they got a good education. She said the class wanted to do their best, knowing this was it for their school.

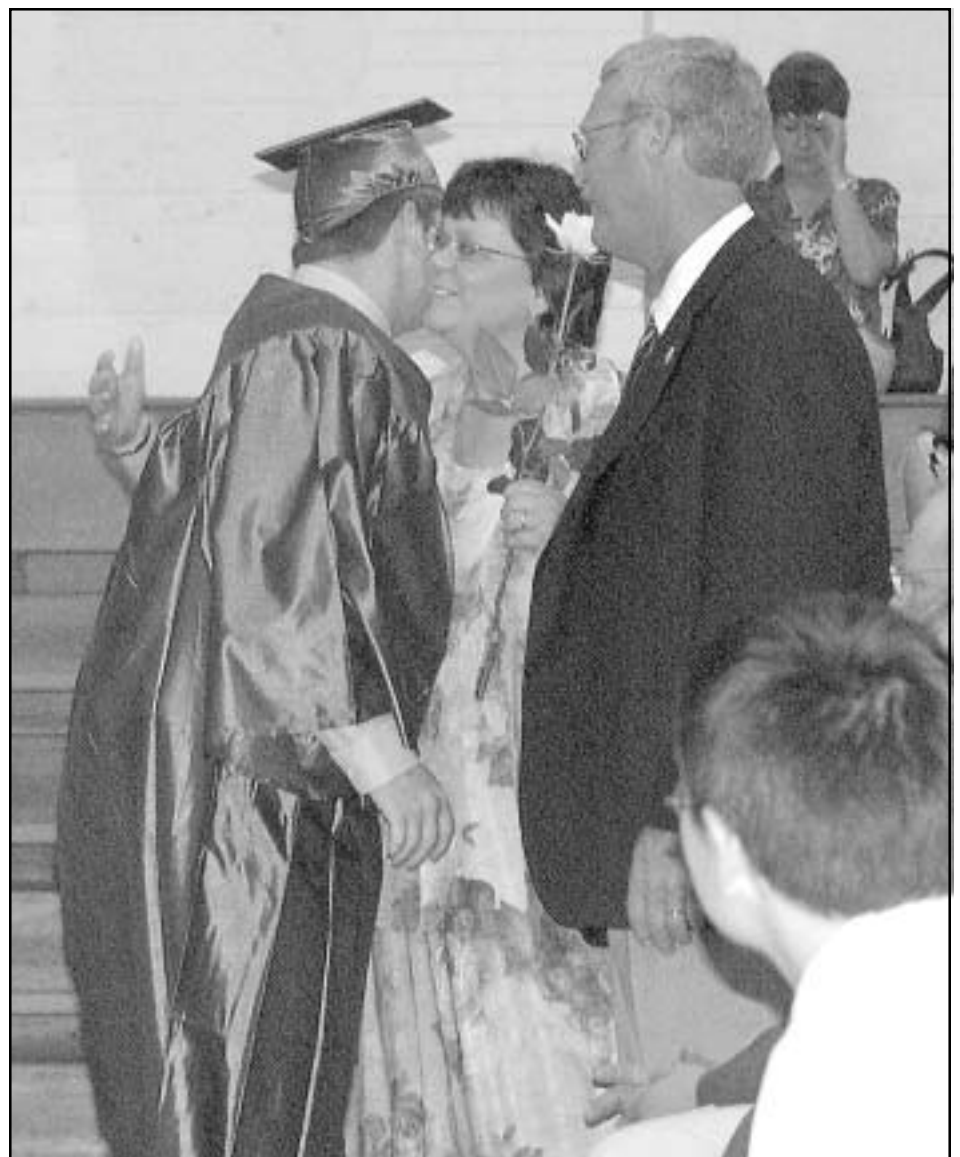
Mr. Riener shared some memories about the senior sneak to Colorado. He said they went to Glenwood Springs, where they went whitewater rafting, the girls went to a day spa and the class swam in the hot springs pool. The stopped off in Denver, where they rode go-carts, went to the mall, ate at Joe's Crab Shack, went to Elicht Gardens and ate at Casa Bonita.

Before receiving their diplomas, Mr. Brown read each graduate's name and their plans for next year. As each student walked off the stage, they were handed a rose to give to their parents. They received another flower when they got their diplomas.

The students held a receiving line outside the school where family and friends stopped to tell them how proud they were of them.

Two eighth graders graduated Sunday. They were Dusti Kowalski and Zyle Nelson.

While the grade school was supposed to remain open another four years, most of the students have moved on and it appears there won't be enough to have classes. The school board has yet to make that decision, however.



FAMILY AND FRIENDS congratulated the 11 graduates (left) outside the Herndon School. Lance Basgall and Alicia Bergling (above) got ready to leave the stage.

