



**CHEYLIN SCHOOL STUDENTS** listen intently to band instructor Rose Hengen as she demonstrates how a certain musical piece should sound. The students are practicing to perform for the Annual Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner

held Wednesday. The musical program will include the fourth graders, junior high and high school students. The students will be serving the meal.

*Times staff photo by Linda Schneider*

## Council gives resignation approval

*By Linda Schneider  
dublins@hotmail.com*

The City Council sat down Monday for the last meeting of the year to approve, among other issues, the resignation of two city employees.

Daryl Miller gave his resignation after nearly 10 years of service. He said he had accepted a position with another company. Mr. Miller expressed gratitude from Bird City, but accepted the position because it offers more money. His last day of employment with the city was Dec. 4.

Sam Beeson had also submitted his resignation. His last day as the city superintendent will be Dec. 14. He said he has been thrilled to be the city superintendent, but with the cold weather coming, he is glad his new position is inside. The council agreed to accept the resignations.

### License

The council approved Heritage Corner Café's application for a license to sell cereal malt beverages. Hometown Market's application to sell cereal malt beverages is pending approval on completion of application.

### Audience

When the floor opened for public agenda, Hal Sager brought several issues of concern to the table. Mr. Sager's first issue concerned a recent executive session of the council members. He asked why a decision about Mr. Beeson's probation had not been made public. Kari Gilliland, city attorney, answered that was because a decision had not been made.

Mr. Sager felt meeting minutes were not properly made available to the public. Mrs. Gilliland said procedures have been followed. Loren White asked how he learned of the information about Mr. Beeson. Mr. Sager said that he had overheard a conversation. Mrs. Gilliland said that meeting minutes are not verbatim, just a synopsis of what was said and that, if he wanted to, he may bring a tape recorder to the meetings.

Mr. Sager's then went on to say the city employees had been winterizing some of the residence on city time and can everyone get this winterizing. Mrs. Gilliland reminded him that if he wanted to make allegations like that, he needed to bring the facts. Mr. Sager said he would bring them to the next meeting.

Mr. Sager said that at the last meeting his impression regarding the \$25,000 grant from Century II was that the council had no idea how the grant was to be used. Mayor Troy Burr said the grant was to be used as an incentive, or a beginning source, from the community to Northwest Kansas Housing Development to start building moderate-income housing.

The last issue Mr. Sager had was, "How is the city going to take care of the resignation?" Mayor Burr replied, "Council will take care of it this evening."

Sheriff Craig Van Allen reported 130 hours of patrol time for

the month of November; 20 extra hours of transporting of prisoners, six traffic warnings within the city limits, and several cases involving juveniles. Sheriff Van Allen asked about the Law Enforcement Agreement for 2008. Jana Diers, city clerk, said that it had been sent in on Saturday and the only changes had been in the dollar amount.

New business included adopting a resolution about the Northwest Kansas Housing Development program. The council had located a couple of possible sites to develop moderate-income housing, but had not secured an option to purchase such property. The proposal is for two single-family residence and two duplexes, making six units available for rent. Council member Deb Smith asked if there needed to be more sites. Mayor Burr said six units is a good beginning. If the city could get them rented, there could be more units built in the future.

Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) council requested an appointment of the at-large seat from Cheyenne County. The areas are governed locally by grassroots councils. They are volunteers who help to make positive things happen in the area. Gary Burbaker has been serving in this position and his two-year term is ending. The council approved to reappoint Gary Burbaker for another two-year term.

For the council committees, Mr. White reported that all the city equipment was in good working order. Mr. Beeson said a local person wanted to sell a 1/2-ton truck with a plow blade. Mr. Beeson said it might be worth looking at. Wade Carmichael said the lights were all in at the park and the bathrooms and sprinklers had been winterized. Daryl Smith said the recent auction had used the recycle bin, located east of the Methodist Church on Demick and East 3rd Street, to dump all their trash. They should be used for recycle only.

The last agendas of the evening had to do with hiring a certified operator for Waste Water Treatment and the hiring of two city employees to fill the vacancies of Daryl Smith and Sam Beeson. Mayor Burr said they had three options. 1) Craig White can work as an operator in training, doing work on a probationary basis for 1 year toward getting certified for waste water treatment. 2) Hire Sam Beeson, a certified operator for waste water treatment, on a weekly basis to sign reports and to help with Craig's training. This can go on indefinitely. 3) Find and hire someone who is certified. Sam expressed desire to help. Mr. White asked if he was interested in the position. Mayor Burr suggested a contract with Mr. Beeson for the present until Jan. 31, 2008. He also said a temporary could be hire for the first four months of 2008 until a more permanent person could be found. A committee of Mayor Burr, Frank Serrano and Mr. White was formed to research pay and make an ad and bring it to the next meeting. Next meeting will be Jan. 7.

## St. Francis barber celebrating 50 years in the hair business

*By Karen Krien  
karenk@nwksas.com*

St. Francis barber, Benny Weber, will be celebrating 50 years in the barbering business. He and three of his brothers have been barbers, but today, only he and his brother Ron are still in the business.

Being one of the younger brothers, Benny was introduced to the business in his brother's barbershop as a shoe shiner. At the time, he thought he could cut hair as good, if not better, than his brother.

Following his graduation from high school in Oakley, Mr. Weber went to Parks School of Denver where he learned how to repair cash registers. But, he decided he would still like to be a barber so he went to barber school in Wichita.

He graduated in 1957 but, in those days, it was necessary to work under a licensed barber. He worked in Atwood, Winona and Ulysses, then opened his own barbershop in Dighton.

He moved to St. Francis in 1963 and opened a shop. He well remembers the day he was getting ready to open as it was the day that President John Kennedy was killed.

At that time, there were five other barbers: Shorty Carrol, Sonny Angel, Rex Confer, Elmer Confer and Art Lueschen. For the last 20 years, Mr. Weber has been the only barber in St. Francis.

Besides cutting hair and shaving, Mr. Weber also sharpens clipper blades, knives, scissors and lawn-mower blades, as well as repairing cordless razors.

### No appointments needed

Mr. Weber has never made appointments. Customers would often wait and visit or tell jokes. Farmers coming to town, especially on Saturday nights in the 50s and 60s, would stop in when they came to town. If there were already customers waiting, they would take care of some of their business and then come back.

Even now, Mr. Weber doesn't take appointments.

"It's walk in only," he said.

He has gone to the rest home or made house calls to cut customer's hair. The longest trip he took was to Denver to cut Haddon Holzwarth's hair. Mr. Holzwarth was in the hospital and, while Mr. Weber went to visit his very good friend, he also took his barbering tools with him.

"I always cut Haddon's hair — he wouldn't let anyone else cut it," Mr. Weber said.

And, when Mr. Holzwarth died, Mr. Weber trimmed it one last time.

### Famous customer

Mr. Weber said he cut Shea Hillenbrand's hair and figures Mr. Hillenbrand is the most famous person to have his hair cut at the shop. Mr. Hillenbrand, grandson of Albert and Bessie Burr, has played baseball for the Boston Red Sox, Arizona Diamond Backs, Toronto Blue Jays and is now with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

### Changes

Mr. Weber has seen a lot of changes in the last 50 years. One change which has been gone for many years is the fact that Bud Boardman came into the shop every other day where he had a shave with the straight-edge razor. Though the years, there have been many people who preferred this type of shave but when AIDS came onto the scene, the inspectors advised barbers to put away the straight edge as it was too dangerous to the barber as well as his/her customers.

Many men have used his hair tonic (Jeris) and some still use it today. Mr. Weber bought it by the gallon, which he used in the shop but also refilled the customer's bottle if he brought it back. When he first started a bottle of Jeris tonic cost about 50 cents but, today, it is \$5.

One little customer, Martin Beikman, wants only Mr. Weber to cut his hair so he can have the tonic — he says "he wants to smell good." One year, before the school Christmas program, Martin came specially to have Mr. Weber cut his hair so he would "look nice for the program," he said. His mom said he wouldn't let her touch it because she might mess it up.

Besides cutting hair, Mr. Weber used to give mudpacks. These were used to help get rid of acne. After the mudpack was applied, an ultra violet ray was used to dry it. When the mudpack was pulled off, the black heads came with it. When medicines came into use for acne, the mudpacks were seldom used.

One of the biggest changes in barbering came with styles. One of the more difficult styles to cut but one that Mr. Weber enjoyed working with was the flattop boogie. The hair was flat on top and the sides were combed back.

Mr. Weber said he had an excellent instructor, which helped him, but it was something he enjoyed



**BENNY WEBER GIVES a haircut and chats to one of his regulars, Gary Leach**

*Times staff photo by Karen Krien*

doing.

When long hair became the style, Mr. Weber said it was bad for the barber. Often times, when the hair needed trimmed, the customer went to a beauty shop instead of to the barbershop.

Through the years, he cut hair for both boys and girls but, eventually, he cut girls' hair less and less.

### First cuts

He gave many "first" haircuts but the cut for the youngest was for his very first granddaughter, who was born with long hair. Often kids would come in for a cut with their parents paying for it. They just wanted a "little" cut off. However, one time, a father came in and said, I'm paying for this and I want the hair cut off! The kid came in and Mr. Weber told him what he said. Reluctantly, he had his haircut to suit his dad but Mr. Weber didn't like the job of telling him.

Mr. Weber enjoys his customers and always tries to make them smile at least once during the hair cut. If nothing worked, he would end the cut with "got ya looking pretty now!"

There was one kid who, after he heard those words, got up, looked in the mirror and said, "Yea, I know!"

### Building history

Weber Barbershop's building has a long history of barbering. It was moved from Wano. In 1927, the business was known as the "Roberts Barbershop." Another

building was attached to the rear and there were four chairs. Customers could also get a bath along with his haircut and shave.

Mr. Weber once had a tall barber pole on the front of the building. Every year at Halloween, he took it down and took it to the lot in the back of the building. Then, one year, someone stole it. Replacing would have been very costly so he eventually replaced it with a much smaller pole.

### No retirement

Mr. Weber doesn't plan to retire. He likes what he is doing and can't imagine just sitting around.

He and his wife Kathy do anything but sit around when they are dancing. They love to polka and have even been seen on Big Joes Polka television show and also in the RFD magazine. They traveled to Minnesota as will as Branson, Mo., to dance on Big Joes' show.

Mrs. Weber is a first and second grade teacher at Cheylin, Bird City. Since Cheylin has a four-day school week, they are able to take three-day weekends where they travel, not only to dance, but also to see their children (Lenny, Joyce and Mike) and their nine grandchildren.

Besides running a barbershop, Mr. Weber has also owned a putt-putt golf course, a pool hall and was in the dog racing business. He said that for 12 years, he raised, sold and raced about 600 dogs, which were sent back to the track. One dog still holds a record at the Colorado Springs track.