



FOUR GENERATIONS, Charlotte Wahrman, Deb Smith, Jessie Smith and Theresa Knapp are inspecting Jessie Smith's first quilt.

Quilting passed through generations

By: Norma Martinez
normamartinez@wildblue.net

Quilting is an art that has been passed down through the generations for many centuries. In the past centuries these quilts were all pieced together, bound, and quilted by hand. Now with the sewing machine and lack of time to spend quilting, the hand sewing is an art that is dying out. The pieces are still hand cut to the specifications of the quilt design, but pieced together on the sewing machine, and then either machine quilted, or hand quilted by groups of ladies.

In Bird City and St. Francis the Methodist and Lutheran Churches and in McDonald the Federated Church has ladies who meet on a regular basis and do hand quilting as a means of raising funds for special programs in the church. The ladies in these groups are becoming unable to quilt, entering nursing homes, or dying so these groups are barely managing to stay together. Eventually hand quilting will become a lost art. Most of the quilt shops and others in the younger generation have purchased large professional type quilting machines,

and most of the current quilters pay them to quilt and bind their final works of art.

Many of these ladies quilts have been on display in the Quilting Shop during the Antique Engine Thresher Show. Last year's display contained a black and white fat quarter's quilt made in the pattern called "Turning Twenty", and made by Jessie Smith when she was a freshman at Cheylin high school. It took her a semester to finish the quilt. Her grandmother Theresa Knapp did the binding for her, and the McDonald's Federation quilting ladies did the quilting.

Jessie's quilt represents the fourth living generation of quilters in her mother's lineage. During the duration of her life, she went with her mother Deb Smith, and grandmother Theresa Knapp to quilt in her great grandmother, Charlotte Wahrman's basement. In the recent years her, her mother and grandmother attended the quilting classes offered at the Quilt Cabin in Colby. Since then she has finished one other quilt.

When Deb Smith was in high school, her grandmother, Char-

lotte taught her how to make a crazy quilt. She put the top together and put it up until several years later when her parents Dean and Theresa Knapp moved from the farm to town. Then it took her several years to hand stitch around each crazy piece and then she took it back to her grandma Wahrman to finish it. Since then Deb has completed four quilts, part of these were hand quilted by the ladies from the Bird City Methodist church, and Federated church group. The others were machine quilted by local professional machine quilters. At the present time she has four quilt tops in progress. One of her dream goals is to have a glass covered cabinet with her quilts all neatly folded and displayed in it for viewing.

Theresa's first quilting experience was when her daughter Deb was four years old and she constructed one from squares she had embroidered, then she constructed one using the appliqué method. After her family of three was raised and the double knit material came out, she then made several 9 patch quilts. These were the most popular quilts to make

by the inexperienced sewers and they were good for warmth and durability. Her mother Charlotte did her hand quilting until she was no longer able to quilt. She constructed several quilts using different quilt patterns she learned during her classes. These were hand quilted by the Methodist and the Federated church ladies. During this year's quilt classes she started a black and white with touches of red quilt top.

After Charlotte Wahrman was married and started cooking and baking she utilized her flour sacks by making quilts. She made many quilts and gave them away. When each of her 12 grandchildren got married they received a beautiful hand sewn and hand quilted quilt from her as a wedding gift. She then managed to make a quilt for everyone of the 19 great-grandchildren. When not making quilts she crocheted Afghans for every one of the children and grandchildren.

Charlotte is presently in the Benkelman Nursing home and will turn 99 years old in August. That in itself is a legacy to leave behind as well as part of the dying past - Hand sewn quilting.

Board meets with society director

By Karen Krien
karen.k@nwkans.com

The Cheyenne County Commissioners met with Randy Fitzgerald, the Good Samaritan Society director of operations, and Jeff Paulsen, Good Samaritan Village administrator, on Tuesday, May 15, concerning a lease between the county and the Society. The result of the meeting was to have Mr. Fitzgerald work with the county attorney to come up with a lease that will meet the approval of the Society and the county.

The tone of the meeting appeared to be of negotiations between two parties on different sides. At an earlier meeting, there was concern that people might not come to the Village if they thought it was going to close.... Dale Patton, commissioner, had said that closing the Village is not the intent of the commissioners - We just need to work out the details.

Also present representing the Village Advisory Board were Ken Quigley, Elmer Kellner, Pastor Tom Bailey and Dr. Mary Beth Miller.

Much of the discussion centered around Point 9 of the proposed lease. The wording states Cheyenne County "will provide the amount of not less than \$200,000 per year during the 5-year period of the lease.

Kari Gilliland, county attorney, asked, "How do we go about the transition process?"

The first lease draft, she said was for the county to pay \$100,000 on an annual basis for 5 years with profit sharing. At the next meeting, the Society said they would transfer the nursing home facility and the apartments for \$1 only if Phase Four, which was the independent living complex, was completed.

The next meeting, which was really not a meeting but a message from Mr. Fitzgerald, who said that the Society would not agree to any profit sharing.

Now, Mrs. Gilliland said, we have a draft or working copy of a lease which states that the Society wants \$200,000 a year, no profit sharing and the county will pay the insurance.

Terry Miller, county clerk, had called several other clerks in neighboring counties for information on what that county paid for county-owned nursing homes that Good Samaritan Society leased.

The clerk in Decatur County reported that the Society pays the insurance and the county holds all memorial donations. Currently, Decatur County is giving the Society 1/2 mill or not quite \$20,000. The Society does ask for more money if the air conditioning or boiler needs repaired or replaced or if there are other such breakdowns.

In Rawlins County, the county's insurance insures the building, but the county holds that money out of the budgeted money that is to go to the Society. The budget for the Society is \$120,037 but the mill levy supplied to the Society is 3/4 mill to one mill. Currently, that amount is \$23,200.

Sherman County does not pay for the facility's insurance. They give \$20,000 per year to the Society. The county keeps a "Health Care Fund" and put \$20,000 in to that fund for possible future needs to operate.

So, said Mrs. Gilliland, we own the building (after the Society sells it for \$1) but we are paying you to lease it - this will be hard to sell to the taxpayers.

But, Mr. Fitzgerald said, the society has never owned these properties in the other counties - we have always just leased them.

Then, Mrs. Gilliland said, we will give you \$1, then tack on \$200,000. We are actually paying plus giving up any profits.

Mr. Fitzgerald pointed out that the \$200,000 was the county's money - it is not the Good Samaritan Society's money. He suggested that the county put the \$200,000 in a capital improvement fund. The building and the apartments would be the county's, he reiterated. The money left each year could be put toward

building a new assisted living facility.

"I have never said, 'you shall give,' only if it is needed," Mr. Fitzgerald said, noting that the \$200,000 is to be used for capital improvements and operational support.

So, Mrs. Gilliland said, the "lessee" (the Society), comes to the lessor (the county) if there is an operational loss but the lessee keeps the profits?

Mr. Fitzgerald said that the Society cannot make a 35-bed facility profitable when only 25 beds are in use. We are not demanding money, only if it is needed. We lost our shirt the past three months with only 24 beds in use.

The lease needs to be ready to sign by Jan. 1. The Society will give a list of assets, everything from beds, stoves and food, Mr. Fitzgerald said.

The Society wants a 5-year lease.

Why not a 1-year lease or a 3-year lease? Mrs. Gilliland asked. She asked if the time for the lease was negotiable? Mr. Fitzgerald said, "No." It shows good faith on both parties, Mr. Fitzgerald said.

Earlier, it had been mentioned that the billing for the nursing home would be moved to the Society's head office. When asked why, he said that most larger businesses have centralized billing especially with Medicare and Medicaid complicated regulations.

When asked if the billing was open to review, Fitzgerald said, "No."

Dr. Miller asked Mr. Fitzgerald to clarify why the other area facilities pay less money than the Society is asking from St. Francis?

Mr. Fitzgerald said the Society never owned those buildings but the Society still owns the St. Francis property.

But, she said, why, after we (county) pay the dollar, are we being treated differently? It really isn't a gift because our lease is different?

Those facilities, Mr. Fitzgerald said, have historically done well.

I thought we had done well, too, Dr. Miller said.

Mr. Fitzgerald said that he will be looking at the budgets of the three nursing homes mentioned earlier. We are not going to be wasting money. Our administrators are held accountable, too.

Andy Beikman, commissioner, questioned, why, all of a sudden, did the Society want to give the Village away? He asked Fitzgerald if the fire hadn't happened, would they (the Society) have wanted us to own it?

"No," Mr. Fitzgerald said. "After the fire, we felt that we could no longer own the facility."

"I was trying to find a way to keep the St. Francis facility going," Mr. Fitzgerald said.

Les Lacy, Cheyenne County Hospital administrator, was at the meeting. He said the Society's proposed lease looked a lot like the lease with Great Plains Health Alliance, the company which leases the hospital. Later, when asked, Mr. Lacy said the hospital pays about \$66,000 to Great Plains which is equivalent to what it costs for a registered nurse. With the \$66,000, he said, comes many benefits for the hospital and clinic. However, an excess of 60 to 70 percent of the \$66,000 is recovered on our cost report, he said.

The commissioners will be working on the 2013 budget in June so it will be ready in July. They asked Mr. Fitzgerald if he could have the Society's budget for the Good Samaritan Village by then. At first, he said no, that the Society makes their budget in August and September.

The commissioners said if they were to budget money for the Village, they needed to have figures to work with. Mr. Lacy said the hospital budget isn't made out until August and September but he gives the commissioners an estimate of what it needs for the coming year.

Mr. Fitzgerald said he will have a budget on or before June 15.

He said he will work with the county attorney to "tighten up" some of the wording on the lease.

Bible school is planned

Vacation Bible School is coming to Bird City June 4 through 8! Immanuel United Methodist Church, Community Wesleyan Church and St. John Lutheran Church invite all children to get ready to dive into fun at "Operation Overboard: Dare to Go Deep with God" Vacation Bible School. Explore and experience God's underwater universe. Bible school is for children ages kindergarten through sixth grade.

The fun begins Monday, June 4, at the Cheylin School cafeteria in Bird City from noon to 2:30 p.m. and ends Friday, June 8. Lunch is provided each day!

The adventures include deep sea voyages into Bible fun and creative crafts, hands-on mission work, water science experiments and great music.

To be a part of all the excitement, pick up a registration form at Bird City's Hometown Market today!



MEMORIAL DAY plans for the Bird City Cemetery are being discussed by Charles Coleman (left) and Hulda Dorsch. Services are set for 10 a.m. with Pastor Tam Bailey as the speaker.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

