



ENJOYING THE VENTRILOQUIST – The crowd of over 200 people enjoyed the program sponsored by the Community Club Saturday evening.

Times staff photo by Norma Martinez

Ventriloquist entertains following a great dinner

The Community Club outdid themselves with their dinner and entertainment on Saturday evening at the Legion hall. It was a sell out for a crowd of over 215.

The club members who cooked and served the meal produced one of the best meals of their time. The menu consisted of Mandarin orange - caramel walnut salad, roast beef with brown gravy, baby potatoes, almond green beans, wheat rolls and choice of vanilla, chocolate or twist ice cream.

From all the comments from all those who attended, Greg Claassen the ventriloquist topped their list for entertainment. He lived up to everything he claims to provide for the audience.

From his first introduction to the final act he provided instantaneous healing and relaxation for the moment. Even on Sunday folks were still laughing over his puppets spontaneous antics showing laughter is contagious.

Ken and Sherry Krien brought him to Bird City in 1995 for their 50th anniversary. They enjoyed him and his characters so much then,

they brought their grandchildren to this event to see him. They sat spell bound at his ability to throw his voice and make his puppets perform.

Years ago Mr. Claassen performed in McDonald for a Co-op meeting and in St. Francis. The community also had him come years ago to perform at the Legion hall for an alumni banquet and Farmers Night. They sponsored these evenings of dinner and entertainment as the community's way of starting off the spring with a fun time and meal. This year's plans were made with the Farmers Night times in mind.

Mr. Claassen enjoys performing for the small town farmers the most as he grew up on the farm and loved farming, but at a young age he started playing around with ventriloquism. When he was a freshman in high school he saw an ad in a Popular Mechanic magazine and when he could save a few dollars he went to Littleton, Colo. for a lesson. At that time he put on his first show for a Farm Conservation Group and after the show a gentleman came up to him and gave him \$20. That was

exciting to him to get paid for his having fun.

After he graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in Agricultural Economics he returned to do farming. He continued the ventriloquist work as a hobby until 1996 then gave up farming to become a full time entertainer.

It is a known fact, he said, that 15-20 percent of the people don't like ventriloquists. But that's okay! Like my grandfather said, we don't all have the same taste, otherwise everyone would be chasing after Grandma.

Once he had everyone's attention he made the announcement that, his career had really taken off and last Wednesday he signed a contract with HBO. Afterwards the guy on the other end of the phone told him it would cost him \$19.95 a month.

Introducing his first guest Pearl Hickenbottom he also pointed out a newspaper reporter in the crowd named Tim Burr. Pearl claimed to have dated him several years ago until she had to break off the relationship. Pearl turned Tim into the star of the show. Tim



VENTRILOQUIST, Greg Claassen, talks with Hal Antholz at the Saturday program.

said, "I don't understand why they picked on me." The assumption was newspaper people have tough skin and can withstand any kind of remarks, good or bad.

His next entertainer was an old farmer, Harley from Missouri. He had fun with several other people in the audience – too many to keep

track of. As a final act he called Hal Antholz to the stage and had him put on a vest, then a half mask which the ventriloquist had control of the mouth and made him talk.

Hal was a good sport. When Greg poured a glass of water in his mouth and it spewed out of Hal's mask into

the audience. After Greg's performance ended he hurried off to drive to White Water, near Wichita and catch a plane on Sunday for his next event in Arkansas, but his antics from his puppets will linger on in local area residents for a long time.

Author and dad sign books at McDonald center

Todd Osborne and his father Elroy Osborne brought most of the McDonald and a few Bird City residents out for the book signing of their first children's story book, "Dr. Sleepy Makes A House Call." Those that stopped by on Sunday from 1:30 to 3:30 not only had their book signed, but had a friendly time chatting with these two former McDonald residents, and enjoyed the dessert buffet, hosted by McDonald Area Development.

"Dr. Sleepy Makes A House Call" is written by Todd and illustrated by his dad, Elroy. The book is based on a story that Todd told to his children at bedtime when they were growing up.

A young girl, named Kayla, could not sleep and her mother calls on Dr. Sleepy who tells her how to go off to Dreamland in Sleepyville. Elroy illustrated the book in bright basic colors that draws a young child with an

imagination into the book.

Elroy lived in McDonald for 26 years and raised four sons, Todd, Troy, Mark and Scott. All four of them graduated from Cheylin High School. He worked as a banker until his retirement in 2000 and then moved to Salina. In 2010 he moved to Colorado Springs, Colo., where he is presently living.

Todd lived in McDonald until he graduated and left to go to Fort Hays State College where he met the love of his life. After he graduated from college in 1981, he and his wife, Kaylnn, had two children, Ryan, who is 23 years old and Kayla who is 20.

After several moves they settled in Tulsa Okla., with their dog Scooter.

Todd is presently creating "Attitudes," an animation group of memorable characters, which he hopes to bring someday to a television screen.;



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SIGNED the 5-year lease agreement with the Good Samaritan Society on Tuesday at their regular meeting. Pictured are (l to r) Brett Poling, Ernie Ketzner and Dale Patton. Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

County commissioners sign 5-year lease

By Karen Krien
karen.k@nwkansan.com

The Cheyenne County Commissioners signed a 5-year lease agreement with the Good Samaritan Society at the Monday commissioners' meeting. With the signing of the lease comes the ownership of the nursing home and apartments for the cost of \$1.

All three commissioners, Dale Patton, Ernie Ketzner and Brett Poling, were present at the meeting. After a brief discussion and Mr. Patton, chairman, advising each commissioner to vote as they thought best, Dr. Poling made the motion to sign the lease and Mr. Ketzner seconded it. The vote was

unanimous.

I am in favor of the agreement going through, mainly, Mr. Ketzner said, because I want Good Sam to stay open. This could have been a negative thing for the community and, down the road, we will have some options. But, he said, at this point of time, we need to keep the facility open.

Had the facility closed, Dr. Poling said, it could have been a big impact on the community and county.

He also thanked Jeff Paulsen, Village administrator, for the time he had taken in seeing that information was available. Mr. Paulsen had several questions concerning the title insurance and warranty deed.

The commissioners assured him that this was taken care of by Sondra Bracelin.

He also presented an accounting report for the last three months. It showed that the nursing home and apartments combined, had a profit of \$1,732. Mr. Paulsen also confirmed that this profit was after the \$10,000 per month taken out for funded depreciation.

The acceptance of the facilities with many months of studying what would be involved when and if the county would become the owners. It was a matter of "due diligence," Mr. Patton repeated numerous times.

Due diligence was not only

referred to in making the right decisions but also in how the tax money was spent. The voters had agreed to have 6 mills or approximately \$200,000 levied yearly to be spent to keep the doors of the nursing home open.

There had been questions as to who would have control of the money and how it was spent. In the end, the commissioners and the Society agreed that the county would have control of the money, allotting money to the Society as the monthly budget was presented. There will also need to be money available for repairs and equipment.

**Spring School
Section
in this Times issue**