

Daughters of the American Revolution

The John Athey chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution met March 27 in Hoxie. Seven members and one guest attended. Regent Sharon Maurath called the meeting to order according to the group's rituals. The death of long-time Hoxie member, Irene Cressler, was reported. The chapter welcomed four new members into the group and verified a fifth. They elected new officers for the 2013 to 2016 term. The new officers are: Maurath of Oakley, regent; Gayle Bremenkamp of

Colby, vice regent; Kay Weber of Hoxie, recording secretary; Gladys Rowley of Oakley, treasurer; Judy Watkins of Hoxie, registrar; Fran Mann of Quinter, chaplain; Cheryl Goetz of Park, historian; and Delphyn Biggs of Oberlin, librarian. Weber reported the Indian minute. Bremenkamp reported the Constitution minute. Mann reported the conservation minute. Watkins presented the American history, president general's and Daughters of the American Revolution schools messages. Goetz gave the women's issues and na-

tional defense reports. Maurath reported on the chapter achievement. Bremenkamp presented a program on the proper way of folding the American flag and what each fold means. Members volunteered to help with the group's 18 committees with reports being given at various times throughout the year. The club ate lunch at JD's Restaurant. The next meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 24, at the Oakley Public Library.

Brewster School busy with dance, music, art

The Brewster High School students finally had their Snowball Dance after its postponement - due to snow. Shane Rice was crowned king and Courtney Doxon queen on March 22, just a month after the original Feb. 22 date. Beta Women's Club held its annual Fine Arts Night at the Methodist Church Tuesday. Alice Collett's music students and Michele Werth's art students showed off their talents. The music students performed again Saturday at the regional solo and small ensemble contest in Oberlin; five will go on to the state contest. Art students have been busy with several shows and will be attending another show in Hays this week. Look for more pictures and details on awards these talented students have earned in next week's article. As part of the Brewster Beautification Projects, the Master Gardeners of Brewster - Colleen Rall, Leisha Carpenter, LeAnne Carney and Lesa Jueman - are asking for donations for flower pots on the four corners of Main Street and Kansas Avenue. last year was quite a challenge with the heat and wind so plans are to plant hardier varieties. Donation containers will be placed at Brewster Grocery, the Co-Op, Senior Center and the Craft Peddler. For information, please contact one of the gardeners. If you have Brewster news or upcoming events you would like to share please let me know. E-mail



Angie Moore
Brewster Correspondent



RAE STEWART/Brewster High School Senior Will Allen played a clarinet solo at the Beta Fine Arts Night Tuesday in Brewster. He received a "1" Saturday in Oberlin and will be competing at state along with several others from Brewster. angiem@st-tel.net, call 694-3008 or drop information off at the Prairie Land Insurance office.

Conservation acres increasing

By Michael Pearce

The Wichita Eagle

KINGMAN (AP) - On boyhood campouts, the property nourished Bill Johnson's body. Fish for breakfast were caught in a crystal-clear stream. Sweet-tasting spring water gushed from the ground. For decades since, the 240 acres in Kingman County has nourished Johnson's soul. "I can have a bad week at work, then go out there and all of a sudden I've been rejuvenated," Johnson said of the land his father bought before he was born. "I can't remember when that place hasn't been deep in my heart." Now Johnson, 62, worries what will happen after he dies to the towering cottonwoods where wintering eagles roost, the spring-fed beaver ponds where waterfowl flock and the grasslands where the deer he loves to hunt thrive, the *Wichita Eagle* reported (bit.ly/Ya3Ho2). "I've always felt like it's been my job to take care of it," Johnson said. "I don't want somebody to go in there and develop things, or plowing everything up." Jim Hoy and Jane Koger once had similar fears for the Flint Hills ranches that have been in their families for at least five generations. That changed after they placed those prairies under protective conservation easements, which are restrictions placed on deeds to prohibit most development for perpetuity. "Now it's protected ... no construction, no oil development, no farming," said Hoy of his land near Cassoday. "We think the Flint Hills are as sacred of a landscape as we'll ever have in Kansas." Koger remembers the relief she felt the day she signed her easement several years ago. "Talk about resting in peace," Koger said. "Now I know I'll really be resting in peace." For about the past 20 years several conservation organizations have been helping Kansas landowners enroll lands in protective conservation easements. Most ensure the land will stay in its current natural state, protected from urban sprawl, utility lines, new roads, mining, farming and wind farms. Once enrolled, the restrictions stay with the deed forever, and are administered by the conservation

group helping to enroll the easement. As well as peace of mind, landowners sometimes receive financial compensation for their efforts. Rob Manes, Nature Conservancy of Kansas director, said conservation easements began in the eastern U.S. several decades ago, as farmers in places like Pennsylvania and Maryland wanted to ensure their family farms never grew shopping malls or houses. Manes said helping set up easements in Kansas ranch country works well with the group's goal of protecting critical habitats, like remnants of the tall-grass prairie. He said fear of the grasslands being plowed, dissected by roads, or becoming a patchwork of wind farms has helped propel a growing number of landowners to check into easements. Manes said currently there are about 120,000 acres under easement in Kansas, and that amount is steadily growing. Koger thinks even more landowners might participate if they realized that they still retain full ownership and how little conservation easements affect the current use of their land. Also, public access to such lands is not required. "Basically I sold only the development rights, so I can't build a golf course," Koger said. "I can't plow it. I can't do oil or gas wells. But it can still be grazed, and nobody is telling me how to graze it. I can do recreational hunting or fee hunting. I can do tourism, all just like before." Hoy noted that most easements are largely tailored to the owner's desires. Not all of their property needs to be enrolled. Hoy and Koger didn't include small parcels in case some buildings or houses need to be constructed. Financial compensation packages are available to qualified landowners. Most attempt to pay all or part of the devaluation of the land's value. For instance, if land is valued at \$1,800 an acre and the appraised price drops to \$1,500 per acre after development rights are removed, the landowner could receive up to about \$300 per acre. Often the money comes from federal programs designed to protect grasslands, wetlands and ranchlands, said Mike Beam of Ranchland Trust of Kansas, a nonprofit group.

Treasurer's office gets title to bonds

State Treasurer Ron Estes announced the Shawnee County District Court awarded Kansas Treasurer's Office title of approximately \$880,000 in unclaimed matured U.S. savings bonds. These savings bonds are currently held by the treasurer's office as unclaimed property. The court also awarded the treasurer title to unclaimed matured U.S. Savings Bonds issued to owners with a last known address in Kansas. The information on these bonds is held by the U.S. Treasury and the bonds are estimated to be worth \$151 million. The Kansas Legislature passed K.S.A. 58-3979 authorizing the office to take title to unclaimed matured bonds and return them like all other unclaimed property

coming through the office. Estes said requests by his office and previous state treasurers to gain access to U.S. Treasury records about Kansans' unclaimed savings bonds have been refused without having legal title to the bonds. Some of these bonds date back to World War I, and many of the original owners or their heirs do not know that the U.S. Treasury is still holding their money. "It is my belief that the U.S. Treasury has a duty to patriotic Americans to make an effort to reach bond owners or their heirs and they are not taking the appropriate steps to do so," Estes said. "I believe we can do a better job of finding these Kansans and returning their money to them."

The Kansas office returns between \$14 million and \$16 million in unclaimed property each year.

Corrections

The Colby Free Press wants to maintain an accurate record of our town. Please report any error or lack of clarity in a news story to us at 462-3963.

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