

# No ‘little kids’ allowed in Goodland dance class

By Doug Stephens  
The Goodland Daily News

Cheryl Schwarz has to establish a few things at the start of her dance class. She is dealing with 3-year-olds, after all.

“Do little kids come to dance class?” Schwarz asked.

“NO!” said the students.

“That’s right,” Schwarz, 54, said. “Little kids can’t come to dance class. We are all big kids.”

Well, sometimes they have to be persuaded to act that way. During the class, one boy ignored instruction and went off into his own world, twirling in circles and running around the room.

“Sometimes he and I have to come to an understanding,” Schwarz said.

She said she asked the boy later why he was misbehaving, and he said it was because he wanted his mommy.

“I call them big kids, but they are really my babies,” she admitted.

“Sometimes they get in a mood, like anybody, but I have been teaching for 26 years, so I’ve seen just about anything they might do.”

They 3-year olds practicing at the Goodland Activities Center may not be on their way to New York yet, but they are learning how to work together and move to music.

The class is taught by Schwarz, who

runs a dance studio in Colby and teaches seven classes for kids in Goodland. Her class may be young, mostly 3 years old, one 4-year-old, and one girl who insists she’s 3 1/2, but they are *not* little kids.

Schwarz starts her lessons by asking the kids who is the boss of their feet and of their arms.

“We are!” said the young dancers. “And who is the boss at home?” Cheryl asked.

“Our parents,” the students said. “I have to put that in,” Schwarz said, “because one girl went home and told her mom she was the boss because I told her she was.”

Schwarz and her assistant, Cortney Palmer, a junior at Goodland High School, led the dancers through their rendition of “Micky Mouse’s Birthday Party.” The kids waved their arms and try to remember when to heel and when to toe, when to spin and when to crouch.

The 3-year olds didn’t get all the moves, but most of them smiled the entire time and didn’t seem to mind their lapses.

“We have to remember how young they are,” Schwarz said.

They got through the routine twice before the students started wandering away.

“As you can see,” Schwarz said, “their attention span is short. But they’ll get better. We still have two months to go.”

Schwarz said she puts together a performance every other year, combining her classes in Colby, Goodland and Oakley. This year it will at 1:30 p.m. Mountain Time on Mother’s Day, Sunday, May 12, in the auditorium at Colby High School.

While she teaches dancers at all ages, including two 70-year-old tap dancers, she says her favorites are the younger kids.

“At that age, they get more out of it,” she said. “You have to spend a lot of time learning how to teach them at such a young age. You almost have to be a psychologist.”

Schwarz says the kids have a good time in her class.

“These kids enjoy themselves so much,” she said, “it’s hard not to share their enthusiasm.”

Dancing helps kids develop, Schwarz said, by helping them gain self-confidence, practice motor-skills, learn spatial perception, and working with other kids. It can be physically demanding, she said.

“I’ve got a T-shirt which says ‘If you don’t think dance is a sport, think again,’” she said.



Kennedy Dinkle (left), Austin Shelley and Kortney Strait practiced their dance number, “Micky Mouse’s Birthday Party,” last week at the Goodland Activities Center.  
Photo by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

# Gooden ready to practice after loss to Oklahoma

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Losing to Oklahoma in the Big 12 championship game robbed Kansas of much of the excitement about being made a No. 1 seed for the upcoming NCAA tournament.

Drew Gooden, in fact, was ready to go right out Sunday night and start practicing.

“Every practice after a loss always takes the bad taste out of my mouth,” said Gooden. “I would start practicing tonight if we could.”

Losing to No. 4 Oklahoma 64-55 did not cost the Jayhawks their expected No. 1 seed in the Midwest Regional. They will face No. 16 seed Holy Cross in St. Louis on Thursday.

But as they turned their attention to Holy Cross, the Jayhawks were con-

centrating on trying to turn their loss to Oklahoma into something positive.

“It’s good if anything for us to see we had to be just that much sharper to be a great team, to do what we want to do,” said forward Nick Collison.

“Pressure-wise, it hasn’t bothered us all year. But it was good to see we have to get better. I think we can.”

The Jayhawks know almost nothing about Holy Cross, a Massachusetts school and the winner of the Patriot League tournament.

“I know a little about Holy Cross, but not nearly enough to get prepared for them, or be prepared for them right now,” said coach Roy Williams. “The first couple of days of practice, we’ve got to work on Kansas and see if we can get something changed there.”



Grant Junior High School Teacher Advisory Groups recently collected 723 items for the Harvest America Corporation as part of their community service project. Joan Walker’s class won the contest by jointing collecting 142 items from Feb. 25-March 1. Most items were brought from home. Ashelei Furtado and Barbara Fernandez-Ayala accepted the food donations on behalf of Harvest America. Winning students were: Vanessa Crotinger, Tyler Anderson, Kali Rietcheck, Brittany Espinoza, Brooke Whitmore, Marla Haley, Olivia Lovington, Janelle Wolak, Jena McCall, Mrs. Walker, Duel Rall and Brandon Zelfer (not pictured)

Photo by Eric Yonkey

**BAND CONCERT TUESDAY**  
7 p.m., March 12  
at the  
Goodland High School Auditorium

*Grant Junior High Band & Goodland High School Band and Jazz Band.*

Concert includes contest works.  
Free will donations will go toward the band’s trip to the **2002 Alamo Bowl!**

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**Date:** Friday, March 15  
**Time:** 7:00 PM MST  
**“BE AN 11” SEMINAR - \$10-00 PER FAMILY**  
**Location:** Goodland High School Auditorium

**All Day Weight Training Seminar**  
WEIGHT TRAINING SEMINAR - FREE  
**Date:** Saturday, March 16, Time: 9:00 a.m. MST  
**Location:** Goodland High School Weight Room

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