

New staff bring fresh ideas to Howard Johnson

By Ramona C. Sanders

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With two new managers and a longtime travel and tourism expert on board, Howard Johnson Hotel has new things in store for the Goodland community.

Holly Coryell was named events and catering manager in September and Aimee Bradley became restaurant manager in June.

Coryell, 29, is a Burlington native who studied at Johnson and Wales University in Denver, a private culinary, hotel and restaurant college. With a background in event and entertainment management, she said, she started at Howard Johnson's as a bartender in June and received her new appointment a week before the Flatlander Festival.

Bradley, 55, has been in restaurant management for over 25 years and was owner



From left to right: Bradley, Coryell and Weaver

of the Pioneer Inn steak house in Great Bend. After selling the business in 2005, she said, she was the dining-room manager at Highlands Hotel in Great Bend.

Former assistant tourism director for Sherman County, Marciea Weaver, 69 has been the hotel's general manager since January, supervising a staff of 39. Weaver trained at the U.S. Organization of Management Institute and is a former tourism di-

rector for Abilene with more than 22 years of travel and tourism experience.

"Expect great things from our managers," said owner Lincoln Wilson. "Based on their credentials, they have the ability to perform and they've demonstrated that. I challenge my managers to exceed anything they've done in the past."

One of the first collaborations by Coryell and Bradley was to start offering catering services. Coryell said the hotel can cater any type of event, from weddings to corporate parties, with its Americana-type cuisine.

Bradley said she is working on new

menus and new ideas for the restaurant, which has daily lunch and dinner specials and a Sunday brunch buffet.

Also planned are an adult Halloween costume party, a Rocky Mountain oyster fry for hunting season, a small-business Christmas party.

The managers of the hotel are hoping to duplicate the success of its recent Flatlander Festival party, which drew more than 350 people.

"Our Flatlander event was the most successful event that the hotel has had since Lincoln owned it," said events and catering manager Holly Coryell.

Wilson has owned and operated the hotel, at 2218 Commerce Road north of I-70, since 2004, along with the Harvesters Restaurant and Wildcat Bar and Lounge.

Wilson said the latest offerings are a continuation of the commitment he has made

to Goodland. Wilson serves as president of the Flatlander Fall Festival committee and a member of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Economic Development Council's Shine on Sherman County committee and Goodland Regional Medical Center's Slice of Life.

"My philosophy in this community is to do the community proud, that's our mission," Wilson said. "We participate in activities in our community that will hopefully enhance those activities."

Wilson said the upcoming activities have a dual purpose: To serve the community and to boost the hotel's bottom line. He said the 79-room hotel had revenues of \$1.6 million last year.

"Any activity that brings people in certainly works toward that profitability," he said.

School board hears principals' reports at meeting

By Ramona C. Sanders

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The following are individual school reports given to the Goodland School Board during the Monday, Oct. 8 regular meeting:

• At Central Elementary School, principal Harvey Swager said the students raised \$500 at the Flatlander Festival with a pancake feed organized by the school's site council. The Brick Top Cruisers donated \$250. The funds will be used towards new school playground equipment.

Swager also reported that the school will be having a potluck dinner for the school's Hispanic Parent Community Group at 5:30 tomorrow.

"As you know, our (yearly progress standards) were affected by our special population," Swager told the board. "We're doing this in order to make a connection and get more support."

• West Elementary School principal Verna Milnes told the board that teacher Pat Pickett was named the 2007 Wal-Mart teacher of the year. She received a \$100 Wal-Mart gift certificate and the school received a \$1,000 grant from Wal-Mart.

Milnes also updated the board on the school's grandparents luncheon held on homecoming day. She said the event had an "excellent turnout" with 250 grandparents attending.

Milnes also reported that all 1st and 2nd grade students have taken a reading assessment test.

"We have a graph that shows

reading needs and strengths, said principal Verna Milnes. "The data will guide our instruction."

Milnes said students will be tested again in January and at the end of the school year. She also stated that 2nd grade students will be taking a basic skills test for two hours each day for the remainder of the week.

• North Elementary School principal Jim Mull talked about a fire-house visit and a visit by the kindergarten class to the Goodland Public Library to get library cards.

"I think this is a great use of this community service," Mull said of the library visit.

He also reported that the school's site council provided healthy treats for students during the basic skills testing and a representative from the Goodland Regional Medical Center will be providing a hand washing clinic to the youngsters next week.

• Goodland High School principal Sharon Gregory reported the kickoff to the career opportunity seminar last week with a criminal justice presentation given by a law enforcement officer from Colby.

Gregory said that homecoming activities "went very well," with the teachers winning the 80s Day Dress Up.

In other high school events, students will be taking a basic skills test this week with the high expectations committee providing treats, the FC-CLA fall leadership academy begins this month and the fall cleanup is scheduled for Oct. 24. Gregory said the high school's site council has

agreed to meet at 6:30 a.m. on the second Tuesday of every month.

Gregory also talked about her attendance at a curriculum meeting in Topeka last week. She shared that she gained a different perspective on education that includes tailoring instruction to individual students as much as possible.

"We need to change the way we think about educating kids," Gregory said. "We used to think about educating all students, now we're looking at educating each student."

• Board president Dick Short, who also sits on the advisory board of the Northwest Technical College, reported the college has an enrollment of 242 students, with 171 of them being entering freshmen. He said 59 of the students are from Colorado, 12 are from Nebraska, 1 is from Oklahoma and 1 is from New Mexico. The remainder are from Kansas.

Short also told the board that the college has made an offer to purchase property for a new child care facility. He said the new facility will serve teachers in need of an onsite daycare center and it will attract married students with families.

"This is something the college is going to start," Short said. "We're excited, I'm excited about the child care situation."

Short said the college is also planning to buy private property south of the campus because of drainage problems on that site that affect the college campus.



Central Elementary students enjoyed outdoor play on the school yard last week. The school site council pancake feed fund-raiser at the Flatlander Festival garnered \$500 toward new playground equipment. The Brick Top Cruisers matched that with a \$250 donation. Photo by Ramona C. Sanders

Former Goodland man shot by police in Texas

A former Goodland man who had allegedly threatened to harm himself over the last several months was shot and killed by Whitehouse, Texas, police last Tuesday when he opened fire in front of his house.

Thomas Edward Toppliff, 42, was pronounced dead at 6:58 p.m. by Smith County Justice of the Peace James Meredith. Meredith said Toppliff appeared to have a bullet wound to his upper chest and one to his wrist.

Toppliff was the son of Dean and Myrna Toppliff of Goodland

Police Chief Rick Waller said two officers went to the 200 block of Parkdale Street shortly before 7 p.m. last Tuesday after Patty Toppliff said she was worried because her husband was talking about killing himself.

Witnesses say Toppliff came out of the home firing a shotgun, forcing police to shoot back.

"The officers pulled up to the home and the subject came out of the house with a shotgun and began firing at them," Chief Waller said, "and they returned fire."

"They didn't have a choice."

The town police car had small holes in the side where the shotgun blast hit it, the chief said, adding that the Texas Rangers are investigating the death.

Wednesday, Patty Toppliff said people should know her husband was "a good person" who just wasn't thinking straight Tuesday night.

She said he had been under a lot of stress at work lately — he was an account representative for Baker Supply in Tyler, Texas — and wasn't in the best financial situation. Tuesday night, she said, he just didn't know how to handle his problems any more, and started talking about committing suicide.

"He was not thinking right," Patty Toppliff said as she walked a reporter through the last moments of her husband's life.

"I called the police to see if they could get him to stop ... stop from doing anything," she said.

She said it wasn't the first time her husband had talked about killing himself and she knew she couldn't let him leave that house.

"He just wanted to leave and I

wouldn't let him leave in the truck," she said. "I told him he wouldn't be fair if he got out there and caused an accident and hurt somebody that was innocent."

But when he pulled out the shotgun, she said, she decided to call the police.

"I didn't know what he was going to do," she said.

Toppliff said she fled to the home of a neighbor, Elsie Graham, across the street, where she watched what happened.

She said her husband walked out the front door and started firing at the police as they pulled up.

"He had the gun up ...," she said. "I knew what would happen."

"It was almost like it wasn't real," Graham said, "like it wasn't happening. It was hard; she was very upset."

"She kept saying I don't want to

watch, I don't want to watch, but I have to see what happens."

"I don't know whose gun I heard, I just heard several shots," and Patty Toppliff said before starting to cry. "He was a great man; we were best friends."

She said they had been married for five years and he had a son, Dylan, of Austin, Texas.

Toppliff attended Goodland High

School and joined the U.S. Army. When he returned from service he attended Northwest Kansas Technical College and Colby Community College and received a degree in telecommunications technology. A full obituary appears on Page 2.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

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Furniture: Matching sofa and chair; sofa; love seat; matching swivel rockers; swivel rocker; bar stools; bedroom set with queen bed, dresser, chest; 4 bedroom sets with double beds, dressers, mirrors; Chromecraft table; kitchen table with 6 chairs; 50's china hutch; 2-Zenith console TV's; kitchen table with 6 chairs; Maytag washer and dryer; Maytag portable dishwasher; Kitchenaid portable dishwasher; file cabinet; microwave and cart; portable TV; small writing desk; stereo with 8-track player.

Miscellaneous: Strohs Beer light; 78 rpm records; 8 track tapes; exercise equipment; towels, blankets, sheets, lots of bedding; complete dish sets; silverware, cookware; glassware; 24' extension ladder; TV trays; lots of misc dishes, kitchen ware; canning supplies; boxes of miscellaneous items.

Special Consignment from the former Blossom Shop. Several tables FULL of the figurines, flower holders and merchandise used in the operation of the Blossom Flower Shop. If you are a crafter and work with flowers, you will want to come down and see the unique items.

This is a partial list. For more information contact Homestead Realty & Auction, 1023 Main, Goodland, KS. Terry Richardson Broker/Auctioneer, 785-899-2328, 899-8094, 800-974-2426

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