

Business moves across street, expands

By Sharon Corcoran

slcorcoran@nwkans.com

A Goodland store has moved across the street, but owners hope customers will travel 100 miles or more to shop for gifts and make their homes more comfortable.

The Almond Tree moved from the former Knott Just Books location on the southwest corner of 11th and Main (the old First National Bank) to the former Collage building on the northwest corner Feb. 16. Owner Rochelle Kling says she hopes it will become a "destination store," where people will travel 100 miles just to shop.

Those who can't travel to the store or want a preview before they arrive can look at www.almondtreeinteriorsandgifts.com.

The opportunity to move came to Kling and partner Jo Rogers, rather than the women seeking it out.

"I think God set it all up," Kling said. "We all feel it was a blessing from the Lord."

Kling said the store was bursting at the seams and needed both more space and more variety of products.

"We needed to open up our horizons a little more," she said.

The move did both, giving them more than twice the space, with room to expand their product line to include rugs, artwork and accent furniture. The store is all about hospitality, home and lifestyle, Kling said, adding that to her, home is where you go to be completely relaxed and are free to be who you are.

What the store sells is all just stuff, she said — it's the people who make it special, the gift giver and receiver, making the stuff do what you want it to do for you.

"Our slogan is 'Be inspired every day,'" Kling said. "Our products inspire us, our customers inspire us, and we, in turn, can inspire others."

The Almond Tree offers custom window treatments, bedding and tablecloths, and can send furniture to be reupholstered to go with the new decor. They sell gift baskets of gourmet foods, bath and body products and silk floral and greenery.

Janet Redlin puts the floral arrangements together, and Kling said it was Redlin's idea to rent arrangements for weddings and other events.

"Why buy arrangements you don't need to keep when you can spend a fourth of the money to rent them?" Kling asked.

She said it's a dream come true to be in the old Collage building.

"When I worked for Bonnie Bollig (owner of Uniques by Bonnie)," Kling said, "I talked with her about wanting a store (in the building), but I couldn't afford it. It was the most desired place on Main."

She said the building's owner, former Economic Development Director Jeremy Jennings, came to her and has helped make the arrangement work. He has been accommodating, she said, letting them rent only the part of the building they can afford.

She said they hired the Goodland High School G-Club to help them move, and about a dozen boys showed up.

"They had us moved in under three hours," she said. "It wasn't that we didn't have a lot of stuff, just that they were that good. And nothing was broken."

Kling said the store's staff, which also includes Jessica Kannady and Kaitlin Fugleberg, has also helped with making her dream come true.

"It's a great ride," she said, "a ride with people who



Janet Redlin arranged flowers in a vase at the Almond Tree's new location on Thursday. Owner Rochelle Kling compared paint swatches with fabric samples to pull together a decorating plan for a customer.

Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

care about you and your ideas, and their ideas are valuable too."

Their goal is to offer something different for the community, she said, and still keep it reasonable priced.

"We can't compete with Wal-Mart (on price)," she said, "and we're not even going to try. We offer something different."

She would like to see others do the same.

"I'm deeply concerned about our Main Street," Kling said. "We're losing businesses, with some retiring or closing for some reason. Anyone with an idea should put the numbers together and try it."

"Who wants to be sitting there at 60 and wishing they had done it?"

Goodland has a lot of great features, she said, including the brick streets, the good people.

"We have so much to offer," she said. "We need to get it out on a platter and start serving it."



Former commissioner questions fire chief opening account

By Tom Betz

ntbetz@nwkans.com

A former Sherman County commissioner asked Tuesday about how a bank account had been opened without approval of commissioners, who later called the county treasurer in and told her they have to be informed before any account is opened.

Treasurer Iris Scheopner said she thought the fire chief has their permission to open an account, but the commissioners said she still needs to have their approval.

Former commissioner Cynthia Strnad said she wanted to know about how an account for the Sherman County Rural Fire department could be opened without the commissioners' knowledge or approval. She said she was worried about how county money is handled.

Strnad served on the commission for about four years, from 1994 to 1998. She was the first woman elected to the commission, but resigned in the spring of 1998. Now retired, she lives in Goodland.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said the treasurer had set up a savings account to handle money coming from a collection agency working billings for rescue runs and hazardous material spills.

"Did they open an account?" Strnad asked.

Thomas said it had been opened, but not used, before commissioners found out about it. Strnad said she was concerned about how the account had been handled.

"Was (Treasurer) Iris Scheopner called in and asked about this," she said. "Why was Alan David (Goodland rural fire chief) in a position to ask the treasurer to open an account?"

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said David told him he had mentioned that the department might need to open an account so the collection agency could direct deposit the money.

Using the agency was suggested at the end of November by County Attorney Bonnie Selby, who said she was not having a lot of luck in collecting the bills. In December, commissioners to turn the bills over

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.

to a collection agency after two notices from the county attorney.

There was no mention in the meeting minutes of a separate account, said County Clerk Janet Rumpel.

"The fire board didn't appear to know about it," Strnad said. "Seems funny the treasurer and fire chief can open an account that nobody seems to know about. I am dumbfounded."

"Have we discussed the situation with Scheopner?" Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked.

"Chuck talked to David about the account," Strnad replied, "but nobody appears to have talked to Iris and said that you do not open accounts without (commission) authority."

"We ought to at least be informed about what is going on," Tiede said. "We probably ought to talk to her about that."

Thomas said David had talked about the collection process and maybe had mentioned the need for a separate account.

"As a taxpayer, I am concerned about how the county's money is handled," Strnad said.

"I think we should thank the fire chief for taking the action to get the collection agency," Thomas said.

After Strnad left, the commissioners called Scheopner into the meeting.

"I guess we had some questions about this savings account David had you open," Tiede said.

Scheopner said it was a savings account to handle the direct deposits. She said she set a similar one up last year for a grant, and it was zeroed out when the grant was closed.

"An actual account was set up with signature cards?" Rasure

asked. "Who was on the cards?"

Scheopner said she, Crystal Wright of the county clerk's office and Rumpel were on the cards.

"I don't remember signing one," said Rumpel.

Scheopner said the account was in a group of signature cards she had Rumpel sign in early March when a number of county accounts were moved from First National Bank to People's State Bank.

Rasure told the treasurer that David does not have the authority to open accounts.

"He is the one who told me he had the authority," Scheopner replied.

"We need to be notified," Tiede said.

"I thought he had the authority

and had come to you," Scheopner said.

"I don't think he specifically asked to open an account," Thomas told her.

Rasure said the fire board needed to be notified as well.

"I thought he had done all that," Scheopner said.

"He did not get anything from the fire board," Rasure told her.

"I thought he had done that as he had the letter to open the account for the grant," Scheopner said.

Rumpel said it can be a requirement of a grant to open a separate account.

"We need to be notified when something like that comes up," Tiede told the treasurer.

Need a Ride?

Call General Public Transportation Bus Services are available within the City limits of Goodland, Kansas

To schedule a ride call:

Monday thru Friday
9:00 am to 3:00 pm MST
785-899-5082

Donations are accepted
Handicap Accessible

"Project Funded in part by the KDOT Public Transit Program"

Come to our "Italian Night"

Friday, March 28th
5:30 PM to 7:30 PM
Good Samaritan Society-Sherman Co.
\$5 per person
**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT
RELAY FOR LIFE!**

MENU
Spaghetti with meat sauce
or chicken alfredo sauce
Minestone soup with crackers
Garlic Bread
Green Beans or Yellow Squash
Tossed Salad
Cottage Cheese
Custard Tarts

Sat., March 29, 2008
1:00 CST
Oakley Livestock
Oakley, Kansas

This is Bull!

Moser Limousin
Annual Bull Sale

Using the "proof of the past" for the "progress of the future".

42 BULLS

(24) LIM1 & (18) LIM1-FLEX BULLS
(37) 2 YR. OLDS, (5) YEARLINGS
95% Black - 90% Polled
Many Homozygous Black

38 YEARS OF "MEATING" THE
NEEDS OF THE COMMERCIAL AND
PUREBRED PRODUCER.

Dan & Kristy Moser & family
Winona, Kansas

For questions or to request a catalog
PHONE: 785-846-7888
FAX: 785-846-7874
e-mail: eatmobeeff@st-tel.net

Sale Day Phone
785-672-4100