



WITH A SMILE on his face, Kel Grafel (above) held up a large John Deere dump truck he won at the Farmers and Ranchers Appreciation Banquet on Saturday. Yancy Sowers (below) and his son Kaden walked around during the dinner.

Families win prizes at appreciation dinner

Kids and adults laughed, won prizes and enjoyed a barbecue dinner Saturday night during the annual Farmers and Ranchers Appreciation Banquet at The Gateway.

The evening was organized by the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, but paid for by sponsors, who were listed in the program. This was the fifth year the Chamber has organized the event.

The dinner is free for both farmers and city folks, and everyone had a chance to win a table full of prizes, including two Traeger grills, one donated by R&M Service Center and one from the Chamber.

Prizes ranged from gift certificates to area businesses on up to the two grills. One grill went home with Rosella Meitl and the other with Beverly Witt.

Other prizes included two fire pits, going to Cody Richards and Fern Moore; an oscillating heater to Elden Huff; a vacuum to Connie Olson; a battery charger to Craig Larson; and two bags of seed corn to James Witt.

Chamber manager Carolyn Hackney said around 200 people showed up for the dinner, with probably three-fourths being farm and ranch families.

The meal included barbecued



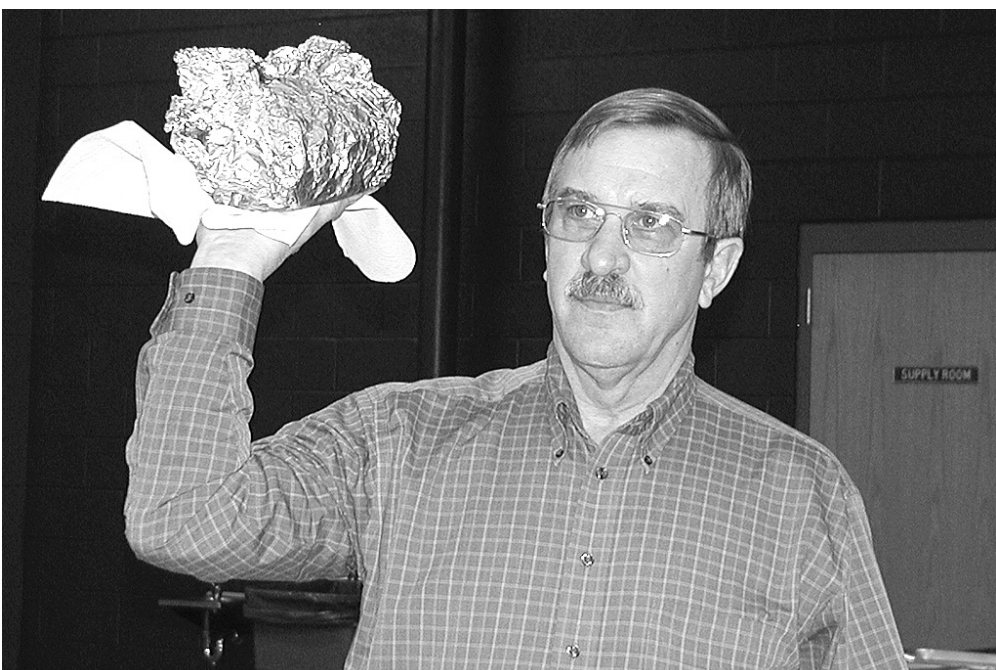
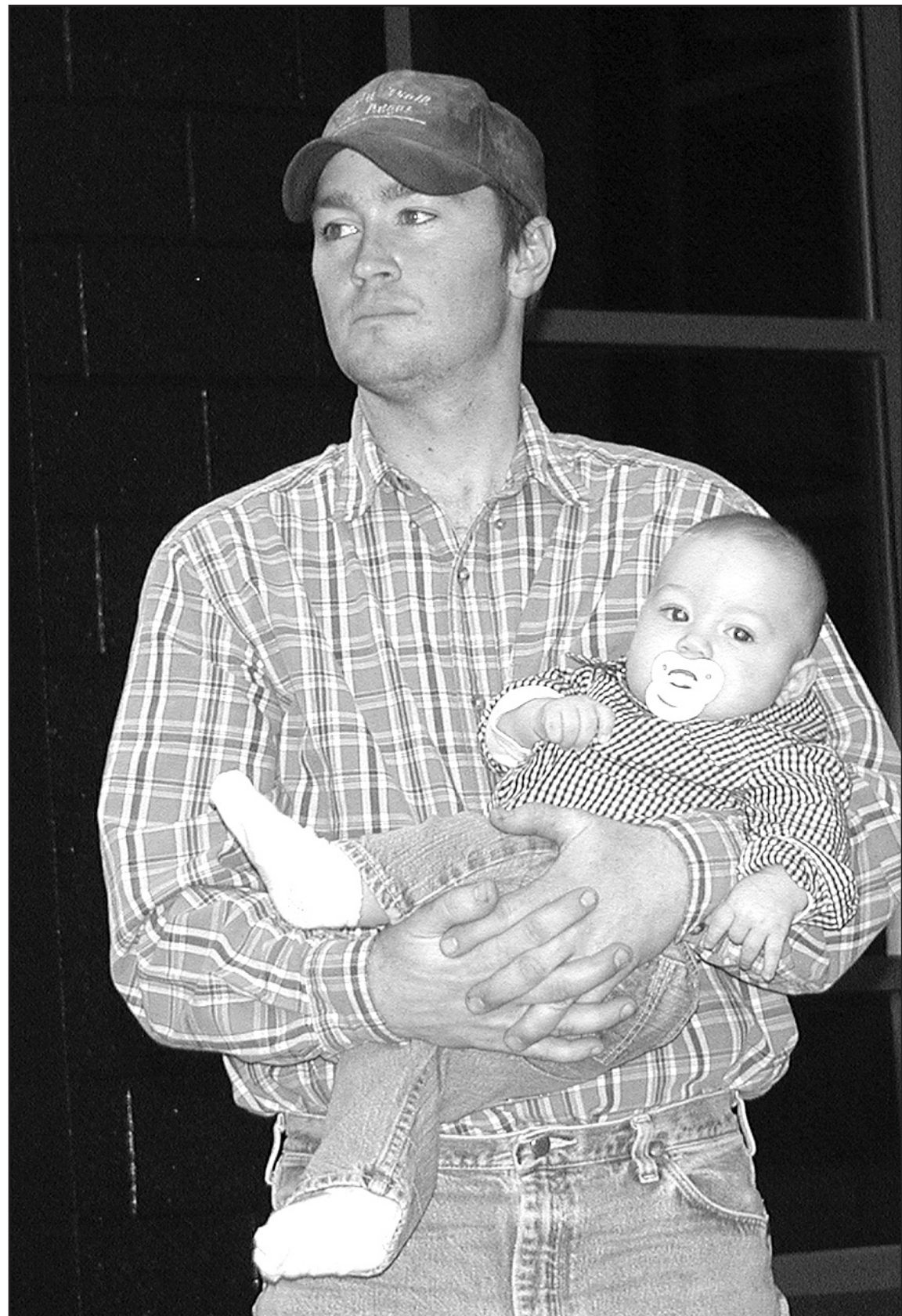
BEHIND THE MICROPHONE, broadcaster Craig Larson kept people laughing with stories about rural life.

beef and pork cooked by Robert Groneweg, a Chamberboard member, with the rest of the menu, baked potatoes, salad, corn, rolls and dessert, prepared and served by The Gateway staff.

Craig Larson, a radio executive from Scottsbluff, Neb., told stories

about rural life and kept people laughing. His stories about small-town life and working at a small-town station as a youngster starting out kept people smiling.

Ms. Hackney said the evening went well and people seemed to have a good time.



ROBERT GRONEWEG held up some barbecued meat that was left over from dinner. The pork butt was auctioned off, with the money going to the Chamber.

— Photos by Cynthia Haynes