



# Retail committee talks parades, shopping

by Holly Thomas

A lot is happening in downtown Thermopolis in the upcoming months and the Retail Committee is preparing for it all.

This weekend, for the Hot Springs County High School Reunion, the committee plans to brighten main street with balloons and is asking downtown businesses to participate in Christmas in July with sales, promotions, etc.

With the recent Fourth of July parade, the retail committee discussed their thoughts on the number of parades the community holds.

The general feeling was that with a large number of parades retailers, spectators, and participants are all feeling worn out and it might be a better approach to have focus on fewer, more spectacular parades.

Chamber Director Meri Ann

Rush said she would bring the committee's comments to the next chamber meeting.

Small Town Saturday is an event that has been growing in small communities around the country and the retail committee plans to increase Thermopolis participation this year.

The committee is working with a program sponsored by American Express to provide promotional materials, but the program requires participation with at least ten businesses. Participation in the program does not cost the business anything except their time.

The committee tabled the topic to discuss more at the next meeting and moved on to a tour of Needful Things. The tour is part of a goal for the retail committee which is to tour as many businesses as possible to become more familiar with Thermopolis stores.

## All Class Reunion hits Thermopolis

by Cindy Glasson

Whether you were a cheerleader, a bookworm, an athlete or anything in between, chances are you're coming home this weekend for the annual All Class Reunion for Hot Springs County High School.

Classes being honored this year end in "0" and "5", however, any graduate is welcome to attend the dance at the V.F.W. and the all school picnic on Sunday.

Friday night will feature mixers by each class. Registration will be at the V.F.W. on Saturday afternoon from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Each class will have their own class dinner that evening, followed by a free dance at the V.F.W. beginning at 9 p.m. The band will be "The Rewinders."

The picnic on Sunday will begin at noon at the Kiwanis Shelter in Hot Springs State Park. You must register ahead of time for the picnic at the V.F.W. on Saturday. Tickets for the picnic are \$10 for adults and \$8.25 for children under 12 years old.

**Class of 1955:** Saturday brunch, 804 Mondell at 10 a.m.; Saturday night dinner at the Front Porch, 5 p.m.; for more information contact Leona Elliot at 864-3774.

**Class of 1960:** Saturday night dinner at the V.F.W., 6 p.m.; for more information, contact Doris Ready at 921-1605.

**Class of 1965:** Friday night BBQ at 1100 Black Mountain Road (Chuck Bunch residence), 5 p.m.; Saturday night dinner at Smoking Waters Shelter across from the Big Spring in Hot Springs State Park, cocktails at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m.; for more information, contact Carol Smith at 921-1223 or Cheryl Shero at (307) 272-4135.

**Class of 1970:** Friday night mixer, 707 Clark; Saturday night dinner at Stones Throw; for more information, contact Roxie Braley at 864-3444 or Kathy Wallingford at 864-3860.

**Class of 1975:** Saturday night dinner at 151 Highway 20 South (Doug Nichols residence); for more information, contact John Maser at (307) 431-8085.

**Class of 1990:** Saturday night dinner at One Eyed Buffalo, cocktails at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m.; for more information, contact Rachael Hughes at (307) 250-3830.

**Class of 1995:** Friday night mixer, Safari Club at the Days Inn, 7 p.m.; Saturday night dinner at Shorty's Saloon, 7 p.m.; for more information contact Amanda Moeller at 921-8605.

**Class of 2005:** Friday night mixer, 103 Cedar Ridge at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday night dinner at Little Wrangler; for more information, contact Alicia Leake at 921-1135.



**Hula your heart out**  
Bralee DeVries and Kaycee Stothart show their stuff with hula hoops at the Hot Springs County Library Kid's Talent Show Friday. Kids were able to showcase their talent in an array of subjects including dance, archery, reading, music, and more.

photo by Holly Thomas

## Town of Kirby celebrates 100th anniversary



Dan Skoric stands in front of his Kirby store. courtesy photo

by Cindy Glasson

*I recently had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with three local ladies talking about the roaring days of Kirby, a small community about 13 miles north of Thermopolis. The Skoric sisters, Dorothy and Ellen, and local historian Dorothy Milek, had plenty of stories about the early days when Kirby was growing at a rapid pace, the characters who lived there and the simple, yet wonderful, life growing up in the midst of it all.*

John Nelson bought the land where Kirby stands in 1904. His brother, Ed, bought an additional 160 acres, and the town of Kirby was born.

It took a few years, but on July 15, 1915, 61 people voted for the incorporation of the town, seating A. Johnson as mayor, accompanied by John Nelson, J.B. Wight, Carl Bramer and John A. Stewart as his councilmen.

While the Nelson brothers built the first homes, Wight was not far behind, building his own home along with a grocery store and a post office.

A mercantile was soon to follow along with a Greek bakery, Bob Smiley's pool hall and Billy Hergert's café.

There was John McCullum's

service station and Ralph McMain's garage as well as a carpentry business owned by F.W. Bull.

A. Johnson, Bergloff and Talovich, Gus Sylvester, Taylor and Dan Skoric all had bars.

There was a "sporting" and gambling house, too, right next door to the jail.

Sam Kelly had a ranch, the "goat ranch", where prostitution and bootlegging were more prosperous than actual ranching.

The goat ranch was located near the railroad tracks heading north out of Kirby. If you look to your right after you've passed the road into Kirby you'll notice what looks like a dump between the highway and the tracks.

Just on the other side of the railroad tracks is where the goat ranch and all its "goings on" were going on.

You see, Kirby was growing by leaps and bounds and the miners from Crosby and Gebo were spending plenty of time, and apparently money, in the town.

My grandmother, Margaret

Stewart, and her little brother John, used to pick flowers from their mother's yard and take them to the "ladies" at the sporting house each day. In exchange, the ladies would give them each a fresh baked cookie.

It was a win-win situation. The ladies had fresh flowers for their rooms and grandma and Uncle John had cookies. Apparently, it didn't matter that their father, John Stewart, was the town marshal.

Tragedy struck the entire town however, when Swenson's store caught fire.

It was early morning, 5:30 a.m., the day before it was to officially open. Swenson hadn't even moved his merchandise in yet.

By 7 a.m. nearly every business in Kirby had burned to the ground.

The only fire protection available at the time was an old pump-truck with a small hose, not nearly enough to prevent the devastation.

Liquor ran pretty freely in Kirby.

by in spite of prohibition.

In one of the bars, a pitcher with bootlegged liquor sat on the counter.

If you were a regular or someone the bartender knew, you were able to buy a glass of "water", but if you looked suspicious or were new in town, the "water" got poured down the sink before you could even ask for a sip, keeping the bootlegging secret.

There was a real sense of community in Kirby throughout the years.

In the evenings, one person could come out of their home and walk down the street, chatting with neighbors until everyone on the block was gathered together, talking, playing games, sharing their meals, cakes or whatever they had.

Kirby was an eclectic mix of ethnicities, too, so there were foods from Yugoslavia, Germany, Ireland, you name it, it was probably cooked in one house or another.

There was "sarma", known today as cabbage rolls; "potica", a walnut sweet bread; apple strudels; "angel wings", a fried, twisted cookie; "pogacha", which is bread; along with cheeses, smoked meats and all the fresh