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**In Brief**

**HEMINGFORD BOOSTERS SOUP SUPPER**

The Hemingford Boosters Club will hold a soup supper on Tuesday, January 26 at 4:00 p.m. until after the boys' varsity game. Serving chili, chicken noodle soup and cinnamon roll for \$5.00 at the school cafeteria. PLEASE, volunteers needed to serve. Call Deb at 487-5262 or Kay at 487-3537.

**GET YOUR GIRL SCOUT COOKIES**

Girl Scout Cookie sales are currently under way. Cookies are \$3.50 per box. You may order from any Hemingford Girl Scout until January 25 or call 487-3431 to place an order. Cookies will be delivered the last 2 weeks of February. The Girl Scouts thank all for your support.

**SANDWICH FEED AT HAY SPRINGS**

The Hay Springs High School Yearbook Staff will host a sandwich feed on Friday, Jan. 22 during the Panhandle Conference Basketball Tournament. They will be serving beef and cheddars, Philly steaks and roast beef sandwiches beginning at 4 p.m. in the top level of the Lister Sage Building. The cost is \$5, which includes the sandwich, chips, drink and dessert.

**FUN DAYS**

The Hemingford Chamber of Commerce made the decision last week to hold its annual Fun Days during Memorial Day Weekend, on Saturday, May 29 in conjunction with Hemingford High School Alumni Days. There will be something to offer the entire weekend, so please make plans to come. Be on the lookout for more information as it becomes available.

**TAI CHI EASY**

Tai Chi is a gentle activity that helps posture, flexibility, circulation, improves balance, provides stress relief, boosts the immune system and helps with mental focus.

Classes will be on Tuesdays starting January 26 from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. at the UNL Box Butte Co. Extension Office, 415 Black Hills Ave, Alliance. For more information and to register, please call 308-762-5616.

**HABITAT WORK DAYS**

Box Butte County Habitat for Humanity will be working in Alliance at 14th and Big —turn to page 2A

**Hemingford to apply for Nebraska Energy grant**

With the deadline for application approaching on Feb. 3, the Hemingford Village Board of Trustees' Tuesday night meeting once again centered around the Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG). Village Administrator Peggy Sheldon said she has been researching the grant and various projects that may qualify, since the last meeting on Jan. 5.

"It doesn't look like everyone is going to apply, so I think it is important that we do," she said. Sheldon was referring to the fact that an estimated 500 towns and villages and 83 counties are eligible to apply for these grants from the Nebraska Energy Office with \$8,634,150 available statewide. The maximum grant amount is \$250,000 which must be matched with 20 percent in non-federal funds.

Because of the matching funds requirement, it was originally thought that the Village would have to come up with \$50,000; however Sheldon informed the board that the amount won't be as much as originally thought because of special monies from the Nebraska Public Power District. At the Jan. 5 meeting, it was proposed that the monies awarded from the EECBG be used to replace street lights with LED

bulbs, which are longer lasting and more energy efficient. But after researching the project further, it was estimated that replacing each bulb in Hemingford would cost \$210,000, using up the majority of the grant. Sheldon said she and Assistant Utilities Superintendent John Kriz, focused their attention to researching other projects using any leftover money on replacing the street lights. Such projects include: replacing exit signs in municipal buildings with LED signs, a new overhead door at the Utilities Shop estimated at \$4,700, replacing windows at the Utilities Office, and replacing the lights and re-insulating Hemingford Community Care Center.

The board approved the application, following suit of Panhandle communities such as Chadron, who approved the application Monday night. The Energy Office expects to announce grant recipients around May 1, 2010.

**Letters from Weih sien**  
*The story of an American hero and those he helped to free*

"Some folks tell me America has no heroes. They're wrong. I see the face of heroes in the weathered faces of these six men and the thousands of American men and women who look like them. These are the heroes who saved the world. Yes, America has heroes. I know their names." — Mary Previte, retired Assemblywoman in the New Jersey Legislature and former Weih sien Camp internee



**Tad Nagaki . . .**  
... of Alliance, hangs out at one of his favorite spots, Alliance Tractor and Implement Co. Nagaki, who turns 90 on Monday, is the lone survivor of the Duck Mission team that liberated Weih sien Camp in 1945. Ledger/courtesy photo

And the names of those men — James Hannon, Jim Moore, Stanley Staiger, Ray Hancuklak, Peter Orlich, and a farm boy from Nebraska named Tad Nagaki.

On August 17, 1945, the Duck Mission Team, comprised of these six men and a young Chinese interpreter jumped out of a B-24 aptly named "The Armored Angel," and liberated 1,500 Allied civilian prisoners from the Weih sien Internment Camp in China.

These men were heroes by the very definition: he-ro [heer-oh] n. — 1. a person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal. 2. (Classical Mythology) being of godlike prowess and beneficence who often came to be honored as a divinity.

As for "godlike prowess" that is exactly how Mary Previte, now of Haddonfield, NJ, described these men in a 1997 article she wrote, "Tad Nagaki, A Japanese-American Hero Behind Enemy Lines in World War II."

Previte writes, "Oh yes, we trailed these gorgeous liberators around, begged for their insignia, begged for buttons and begged them to sing the songs of

America. They were sun-bronzed American gods with meat on their bones. My 12-year-old heart turned somersaults over every one of them."

The story of the Duck Mission and the people of Weih sien Camp is one that books are written about or movies made. In fact, Eric Lidell, the man whose life was documented in several books and the movie "Chariots of Fire" died in Weih sien, succumbing to a brain tumor six months prior to the camp's liberation. After competing in the Olympics, Lidell returned to his missionary work in China. On December 7, 1941 America and much of Europe found itself at war with Japan who had infiltrated much of Asia in an effort to expand its dynasty. Lidell found himself separated from his homeland, Scotland, and imprisoned with thousands of other Allied civilians.

Previte, remembers Lidell fondly as an organizer of sporting events for the school children of Weih sien.

"We called him Uncle Eric," she said. Many of the prisoners inside the walls and



**At Tsingtao, 1945 . . .**  
... are four of the seven Duck Mission team members (l-r) Ray Hancuklak, Stanley Staiger, Tad Nagaki and Jim Moore. Photo courtesy of Mary Previte and www.weih sien-paintings.org

barbed wire fences of the camp had a story similar to Lidell; men, women and children from America, England, Scotland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They were business people, vacationers, missionaries, entertainers all cut off from their homelands by the Great War, and all held captive by the Japanese.

Previte and her three siblings were Chefoo school children. Without the modern conveniences of travel in China, it was commonplace for the children of missionaries to be placed in a boarding

school while their parents were serving far away. "Our parents said goodbye in 1939. September 11, 1945 was the next time we saw them," Previte said.

The teachers of Chefoo and the other boarding schools made sure that the children were cared for, educated, and entertained despite not having the resources to do so.

"The teachers and grownups saw to it that our spirit was kept alive," Previte said.

Aside from a regular school schedule, clubs —turn to page 5A



**Sgt. Nagaki and fellow OSS team member Hancuklak receiving the Soldier's Medal after the liberation of Weih sien in 1945.** Photo courtesy of Mary Previte and www.weih sien-paintings.org



**Eryn Jade Ring . . .**  
... born January 16 to Steve and Cassandra Ring, of Alliance, is Box Butte General Hospital's first baby of 2010. She arrived Saturday morning at 11:00 a.m. weighing 7 lbs., 4 oz. and was 20-inches long. Steve is employed at Bloedorn Lumber of Alliance. The couple was presented gifts from Box Butte General Hospital in honor of their daughter being the first baby of the year. In back of the family is Dr. Timothy Narjes, the physician who delivered the baby, along with BBGH Labor and Delivery Co-Coordinator Erica Muhr, RN. Maternal grandparents are Gail Gates and David Friestad of northern California. Paternal grandparents are Maria and Carl Swenson of Alliance. Ledger/courtesy photo

**Drawing attention to modern slavery**

By Tonya Wieser  
World-Herald News Service

**A**LLIANCE — Forced labor, prostitution, child labor, and indentured servitude. Every day, men, women and children around the world are trapped in desperate and dangerous circumstances as a result of human trafficking.

"Most people only think about human trafficking when they see it on the news but it is a growing criminal enterprise second only to drug smuggling in the nation," said Maria Swenson.

The Alliance Soroptimist International member spoke at an informational meeting Wednesday evening at the Alliance Learning Center concerning the facts about modern day slavery and ways in which to help victims of human trafficking.

Trafficking is widespread, Swenson said as she shared reported cases. Sam

was nine-years-old when he was smuggled into the U.S. from Guatemala forced to clean homes and offices scrubbing toilets with his bare hands. He was kept leashed to the backyard porch often starved for acting up until a neighbor heard crying and called the authorities.

Mila is from a village in West Africa that does not register children at birth and was brought to the U.S. at the age of ten to work around the clock as a domestic servant suffering verbal and physical abuse until running away at the age of 15 only to find herself taken in by a man on the streets who prostituted her out.

"Trafficking victims can also be found in rural areas from the tomato fields of Florida to the sugar beet fields in Nebraska to construction in Iowa to the meat packing plants in Nebraska, Iowa and Colorado," Swenson said.

It is a \$5 - 9 billion industry and each year thousands of men, women and children are bought and sold like commodities kept in places no one would suspect.

"U.S. citizens accounted for 66 percent of the suspects in alleged human trafficking incidents," Swenson said. "It is an underground crime invisible to the public eye and many victims have died and others have suffered."

In 2008, nearly 83 percent of the human trafficking incidents involved allegations of sex trafficking, labor trafficking accounted for 12 percent and 32 percent of the 1,229 alleged human trafficking incidents involved sex trafficking children.

Although Hispanic victims comprise 37 percent of alleged sex trafficking victims and 56 percent of alleged labor trafficking victims, people with severe

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**e-Edition up and running**

The Ledger unveiled its e-edition on Monday, after two months of preparation.

The e-edition offers the same product as the print version of The Ledger, but provides the capability of staying up-to-date on local news without waiting on the mail.

"It looks just like the newspaper, because it is" said Editor Aaron Wade. "The files used to print our paper each week are the same files that are uploaded to the e-edition. The advantage is someone in eastern Nebraska or even out of state can now read The Ledger on Thursday, when its contents are viable, rather than having to wait for it to travel by mail."

Those interested can —turn to page 2A

**County clerk not seeking re-election**

By Tonya Wieser  
World-Herald News Service

**A**fter three terms of serving as the Box Butte County Clerk, Cheryl McDuffie, of Alliance has announced she will not be seeking re-election.

"I have loved what I do; working with the public and the employees, but feel it is just time to start slowing down and pass the torch," McDuffie said.

At this point she is uncertain as to what her future plans will be after a new clerk is installed on Jan. 4, 2011, but hopes to seek employment elsewhere.

"I am ready for someone else to give me orders," she said jokingly, "and something with a little less stress

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