

RATON ~ NEW MEXICO NEWS

All-day auction is the big show in Clayton Saturday

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

Busy auctioneer Walter C. Hall brought his act to the Clayton Civic Center for a day of bargain-hunting and even entertainment Saturday. If you move at freeway speed or catch the latest action thriller at the multiplex every Friday night, a country auction may not hold your attention. But for folks who move at a gentler pace, Saturday's all-day auction provided plenty of laughter along with bursts of anticipation, competition, and suspense.

There were no vehicles for sale. No horses or other animals. No homes. Not even a kitchen sink. But that pretty much ends the list of things not offered for bidding. A complete list of items sold would fill this page of The Chronicle-News.

Hall, a rancher who has operated Walter C. Hall Auctions for more than 35 years, alternates workmanlike dispatch with dashes of humor and entertainment. "You will be takin' this to Chicago with you, will you ma'am? Okay, just as long as you get it out of the state." Selling a horseshoe puller, he offers, "I'll bet I could beat you at horseshoes." As assistant Milo Trujillo produces a continuous line of merchandise, Hall pauses to ask, "What is this? A candle warmer? Well, folks, if you've ever needed to warm your candle, here's your opportunity." He informs one winning bidder, "Ma'am, you're the smartest person here."

When Hall opens the auction minutes after 10 o'clock



Auctioneer Walter C. Hall points to a bid as assistant Milo Trujillo looks on at the Clayton Civic Center Saturday morning.

Saturday morning, nearly one hundred people fill the space not occupied by rows of furniture, appliances, equipment, and dozens of eight-foot tables, each filled with an unimaginable assortment of objects ranging from milk bottles and a glass washboard to kerosene lamps and small scales. There's a chandelier, a cream separator, ceramic crocks, old signs, art and framed photographs, two sleighs, a 1944 Clayton phone book, and a 1941 book of New Mexico statutes. "I don't know why anyone would want this," Hall interjects. "Nobody follows the laws anyway."

As Trujillo hands the next item to Hall and it is sold, two other men stay busy carrying merchandise and tables while Santa Rosa horse trainer

Brittany Rouse records each winning bid, her half-heeler/half-coyote "Tator" sleeping at the end of a short piece of heavy rope leashed to a belt-loop on Rouse's hip. Every few minutes, Janet Wolfarth comes from the back of the cavernous hall to carry Rouse's data back to the laptop computer where Kathy Berardi enters it into the day's sales records. When buyers pay their bills and check out, they get printed itemized receipts. Normally they can use a credit card but there is no phone line at the Clayton Civic Center so it's checks and cash only today.

When Hall offers a brand-new brown Resistol cowboy hat for bidding, a man shouts, "That's Max Geary's hat. He lost it." Hall stops the bidding as



The left side of the Clayton Civic Center was filled with tables full of merchandise Saturday morning; by early afternoon, most of that treasure is gone. (Photos by Tim Keller)

Trujillo begins searching for Max Geary. The man continues, "Yeah, he lost that hat out on the highway in a good wind one night." After a good laugh, the hat is sold for \$15 to bidder 126...who is not Max Geary.

Two unique art pieces are offered, fine ink etchings on bone, signed by an artist in Nebraska. Johnny Caldwell shouts from the back, "Those are out of the hips of George Custer!" The art go to bidder 162 for \$17.50. As Hall offers up a set of four metal plates painted with bears and other wildlife scenes, he remarks, "Sarah Palin, Sarah Palin." A ceramic spittoon goes to bidder 143 for \$10, a pool cue rack from the old Jacob's Pool Hall in Clayton to

bidder 150 for \$25. Ray Valdez buys a stack of four hats for \$5, then tries each on for size, bringing laughter from his wife, but one, a black fedora, looks dashing on him and he wears it for much of the afternoon, leaving his brown Union County Feedlot cap atop his new stack of hats on the floor.

It's a long day. A concession offers Frito pies, hot dogs, hand-held burritos, and drinks. After 5:00 the crowd rapidly dwindles to a last few diehards and the auction finally crawls to a close. Trujillo and his crew help buyers carry and load heavy appliances and furniture into the backs of pickup trucks. An eight-foot glass display case is going to Studio C in Des Moines.

As darkness descends, a line of heavily-loaded pickups crawls eastward along Main Street toward the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles.

Though Hall often performs on-site ranch auctions, Saturday's was a consignment auction with most of the goods coming from "one elderly gentleman", one estate, and a Clayton antique store that recently closed its doors for good. Hall throws his whole auction operation into motion, with its six employees, about 15-20 times per year. Saturday he announced to the crowd, "Don't forget, folks, the next auction is on April 4th. And if April 4th happens to be on a Friday, then it'll be on April 5th."

BYU brings high energy performance to Shuler stage

By **LAURA L. BREWER**
The Chronicle-News

Brigham Young University's Young Ambassadors brought a high energy, lively musical performance of The New Music Makers, to a nearly sold out crowd at the historic Shuler Theater this past Saturday. The young performers enthralled the audience in this 90-minute review of popular tunes from the last half of the twentieth century brought to life with fast-paced choreography, dazzling costumes, and a beautiful blend of voices. Adding to the audience enjoyment was the live accompaniment by a ten piece show band of guitar, bass guitar, drums, percussion, trombone, trumpets, clarinet, flute, and saxophone.

These talented BYU Young Ambassadors belted out music made popular by Frankie Valli, Neil Diamond, Carole King, Billy Joel, Stevie Wonder, Kenny Loggins, the Four Seasons, and other great song-writers and performers while high-stepping some very difficult dance moves. The size of the Shuler stage, which is probably smaller

than many on which they perform, presented difficulties for some of the numbers when all twenty-six performers were on stage. Each dancer needed to be right on mark with every kick and every turn exact to prevent disaster. They were all equal to the task.

BYU Young Ambassadors provided a workshop for middle school and high school students earlier in the day as part of the tour arrangement. About thirty youngsters participated in the two-hour workshop where they were instructed in dance, music, and theater. Divided into three groups of about ten each, they rotated between the three stations which were set up in the El Raton Theater and the Raton School of Dance studio.

The New Music Makers was brought to Raton as part of the performing arts season of the Raton Arts & Humanities Council, Inc. with Woody's Furniture providing addition funding as the local sponsor for the performance. RAHC provide the entire entourage, including musicians, dancers, and crew with a sack lunch on Saturday, and

the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints provided the entire ensemble, with a wonderful dinner prior to the show. Everyone involved were very appreciative because the BYU students had to return to the university immediately following the performance. They had been on tour for eight days, and Raton was the final stop. In order to be back at school by Monday, the students loaded up on the bus at eleven o'clock Saturday night to return to Utah, leaving the set crew behind to break down the set.

The Young Ambassadors are produced by the School of Music of the College of Fine Arts and Communications in cooperation with the Department of Dance at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

The next performance in the RAHC performing arts series is Grand Derangement, a lively band of contemporary music from southwestern Nova Scotia on March 24 at 7:30 p.m. on stage at the historic Shuler Theater sponsored by the State Oil Company Inc. For tickets, or more information call RAHC at (575)445-2052.



Local students practice dance steps demonstrated by the BYU Young Ambassadors during Saturday afternoon's workshop at El Raton Theater.



Several local students listen intently to the BYU Young Ambassadors during Saturday's workshop. (Photos courtesy of Frank Mahannah)

Vital Roads could add vitality to Raton's economic health

By **LAURA L. BREWER**
The Chronicle-News

Vital Roads, an organization that took hold in the Des Moines, Folsom, and Capulin area last year, will have a chapter in Raton following an introductory meeting by Sunny Hill, co-founder of the Des Moines' chapter last Thursday.

The Des Moines chapter has about ten members, mostly women, who have a common goal, to "revitalize the community." As friends, they have formed a bond that they hope will "build a prosperous rural community through sustainable enterprise," because as members of a rural community they have faced challenges to creating and sustaining businesses that would provide a steady income with financial independence.

Last year, during organizational meetings, the members took stock of what assets they have in the community and

what opportunities those assets could afford them. Members listed gardens, crafts, art, business skills, and other strengths that, through networking, could benefit not only the individual, but the community as a whole. One idea that grew from the initial meetings was to provide barbeque during the high school functions that could lead to a full-time barbeque business. Another idea that has already taken hold is to provide a farmer's market, which would allow gardeners and crafters a venue to sell their wares.

Christina Boyce, owner of Studio C, an art gallery in Des Moines, and a member of the Des Moines chapter of Vital Roads, has been a catalyst to this creative venture by providing space for local art and crafts as well as gatherings for poetry, photography, and music.

One of the main goals of the organization is to encourage and support members and to

provide them with the necessary tools for success. To that end, the Des Moines chapter has set up micro loans for which residents may apply to start a business, or to allow an established business to go to the next level, whether that means adding to inventory, marketing and advertising, or buying equipment. And, with the varied backgrounds and skills of the group, every member can contribute to the success of the rest. If one member is weak in accounting, but strong in creativity, that person may be able to help the next who may be an accountant, but need help in creating a logo for her business.

A Vital Roads chapter meeting will be held in Raton on March 14 at 1:00 p.m. in the Harmony Path Massage Therapy building at 210 S. Third St. For more information, call Pam Harkness at (575)445-8890.



Sunny Hill, co-founder of Vital Roads in Des Moines, speaks to women in Raton about setting up a Raton chapter.

(Photo by Laura L. Brewer)