

OUR TOWNS

**Gayville
Mission Hill
Volin**

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Longtime G-V Music, Art Teacher Takes Her Final Bow

BY TRAVIS GULBRANDSON
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GAYVILLE — Last week, the elementary students of Gayville-Volin School performed their annual spring concert, a musical program that told of the history of South Dakota.

For music and art teacher Laurie Hanson, who wrote the show, the performance was special for several reasons, perhaps the biggest of which is that it was her last at the school.

"A lot of music teachers were here before me — quite a string," she said. "And so they were really happy when I came, and I think they're sad to see me leave. And I'm sad, too. It's kind of bitter-sweet."

At the end of this term, Hanson will begin work at the Calvary Baptist Church in Yankton.

"They're starting a new preschool, and I am going to be the teacher/director there," she said. "It was really hard, because I've been here for a long time. But it's a new adventure for me, so I'm going to try it. ..."

"It was a pretty hard decision, but like I told the kids, I have a pretty strong faith, and I believe this is something I've been called to do right now," she said.

"We're sorry to see her go, but it's an opportunity that's going to be good for her, and we wish her all the best of luck," said Gayville-Volin Superintendent Jason Selchert, Ed.S.

Hanson has spent the past nine years at Gayville-Volin, before which she taught in Scotland and Wakonda.

She said doing programs has been one of her favorite things about her time at the school, which can be a rarity in her profession.

"A lot of music teachers hate (programs). I love them, but it's always because the kids have been so responsive to me," she said. "They will sing and they will work so hard for me. They not only love to perform, but they have fun. That's what I see coming out, and that's what a lot of people say they see, too. It's a blessing."

Selchert said Hanson's work with these programs has been one of music department's strongest assets.

"I've been here all nine years that she's been here, and she's done a wonderful job with our music program," he

said. "She brings a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of creativity, and hopefully the person who takes over for her will be able to have some of that same enthusiasm and creativity on the job."

During her time at the school, Hanson has put together two vocal performances per year — a mini-musical play in the winter, and a themed performance in the spring. Rehearsing for these productions takes up the majority of the year's classtime.

"For the Christmas program, we start rehearsing in October, and for the spring program, we start right after Valentine's Day," she said. "We rehearse in the music room until we get close to the program — then we do practice in the gym and put all the kids together."

The students often have input into what the themes of the shows will be, which Hanson then writes based on their decision.

For this year's spring concert — which saw the students decked out in Old West-style costumes — Hanson took the idea from a friend whose grandson attends school in Harrisburg.

"They had done something about South Dakota songs, and so I thought, 'That would be a good idea,'" Hanson said. "I took the history that I knew and put it together to make the narration, and then I just found songs that fit."

At the close of last week's show, an emotional Hanson thanked the students and parents for helping her during her tenure at Gayville-Volin.

When she was first hired for the position, she said her worst fault was that she got too attached to her students.

"That's still my fault," she said. "When I left Wakonda, the kids sang to me, and I cried and I cried. That's kind of the way I felt the other night. I just get so attached to my kids. I feel like they're all my kids."

Hanson said her time at the school can be pared down to one idea.

"I believe that music should be fun," she said. "So every time I teach somewhere, that's been my philosophy: Music should be fun. And that's what I try to teach the kids. And they do think it's fun. I have a lot of kids say music is their favorite class. I don't know how much that happens. ..."

"Whoever comes in, I hope they keep that love of music going, because the kids here love it," she said.

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LAURIE HANSON



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
Laurie Hanson, music and art teacher at Gayville-Volin School, will be leaving the school after nine years on the staff. She said she is sad to leave, but is looking forward to her new position at the Calvary Baptist preschool in Yankton.

First-Half Real Estate Taxes Are Due April 30

The Yankton County Treasurer's Office reminds the public that the first half of the 2009 (payable in 2010) real estate taxes and the first half of the 2010 mobile home taxes are due and payable on April 30. You can use the silver drop box

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