

A year of economic development for women

By DeNae Brassard Park
Executive Director, CCEDO

Many area businesswomen can say that they helped to stimulate the economy in Colorado County in 1997. Here are more of these outstanding women to watch in 1998:

• **Tamsyn Sprang** recently opened Weimar Skate and Fun in the greater Weimar trade area. She said her youth-oriented business has been busy since the doors opened.

"I decided to open the skating rink because we needed an affordable and

safe place for our youth to be with friends and listen to music," Sprang said. In addition to providing youth recreation, she employs seven high school students at the skating rink.

Weimar Skate and Fun, which also has video games and a snack bar, can accommodate 100 skaters a session. Sprang said birthday and private parties are welcome. Call 409-263-4FUN for more information.

• **Jodi Sebesta**, owner of Jodi & Co. since 1990, has earned quite a reputation around the world for her award winning, creative photography.

Sebesta holds the coveted Master of Photography and Photographic Craftsman degrees and her unique style has been published in international photographic books.

In addition, many of her works have been on display at the EPCOT Center in Orlando.

Sebesta said what she enjoys most about her job is the great people she comes in contact with. Jodi & Company is located at 1120 Milam in Columbus. Her studio is a "must-see" for people who enjoy quality photographic art.

• **Beth Beken**, owner of The Collection in Weimar has developed quite a customer base from Colorado County and southeast Texas.

She says the name The Collection is most fitting because she has a collection of everything from gifts, Yankee candles and bridal registry to custom framing and Arthur Court Designs.

Beken said she keeps customers coming back time and time again because the items in her store are current reflecting new trends and public

demand. "At market, we look for new and popular items that will keep our customers happy," she said.

The Collection is located at 100 E. Post Office in Weimar. Call manager and custom framing specialist Sheryl Berger at 409-725-8589 for more information.

• **Charlene Weatherly**, the innovative and creative owner of Double Tree & English Ivy and Hometown Hall Antiques, has successfully cornered the market on cooperative-style selling of antiques and gift items.

Open since 1992, Double Tree & English Ivy is located at 1237 Bowie in Columbus.

When the store first opened, Weatherly said she wasn't sure the dealers could fill the 3,000 sq. ft. building. "It's kind of evolved ever since," she said. Now bursting at the seams with 26 dealers, Double Tree & English Ivy has a mecca of gift items, candles, jewelry, music, antiques and more.

Before Weatherly knew it, the store's customer base had increased to a 70-mile radius around Columbus.

Facing increased customer traffic and having to turn prospective dealers away, Weatherly found it was time to open a second location, Hometown Hall Antiques.

Instead of duplicating her first store, Weatherly's marketing strategy was to create a store with a different clientele. "Hometown Hall Antiques has more antiques and folk art. Because of this, we get more collectors and out of town customers at that shop," she said.

As Hometown Hall Antiques is

still growing, there is currently space available for dealers. Please call Weatherly at 409-732-8802 or 732-5425 for more information.

• **Doreen Alexander** has owned The Bride's House, 1128 Milam, Columbus, for the past three years.

Her shop specializes in wedding, pageant, prom and special occasion dresses in sizes 4 to 40.

In addition to tuxedo rentals for both men and women, the shop also carries everything from wedding accessories to dress shoes.

And if you can't find the exact dress you want in her store, Alexander says she has an excellent dressmaker on hand who can custom design anything your heart desires.

Alexander says her store has garments that can be worn in the most special and unforgettable occasions throughout your life.

"We have christening dresses for babies, dresses for first communion and quinceanera (the coming out of Mexican-American girls), debutante and wedding dresses and semi-formal and formal wear for grandmothers," Alexander said. "In fact, last month we had four brides over 60 years old," she added with a grin.

Building a clientele from as far away as Houston, Austin and Dallas, Alexander has found the need to expand her store. In 1998, The Bride's House will move to a new location at 1010 Milam.

"We'll have more room to better serve our customers and meet each of their special needs," she said. The expansion will include more dresses, plus sizes and a complete gift line.

ELPS observes passing of 100 days of school

Students at Eagle Lake Primary School (ELPS) celebrated 100 days of school Thursday, Jan. 22.

Classes wore 100 day hats and necklaces and the physical education classes did exercises and activities in 100 increments.

The 100-day pecans spelling out "Texas", prepared by Marco Rivera,

was a favorite collection. Collections of beans, pennies, straws, rocks, popsicle sticks, cereal, buttons, handprints, candy and footprints were some of the 100 items collected by the students.

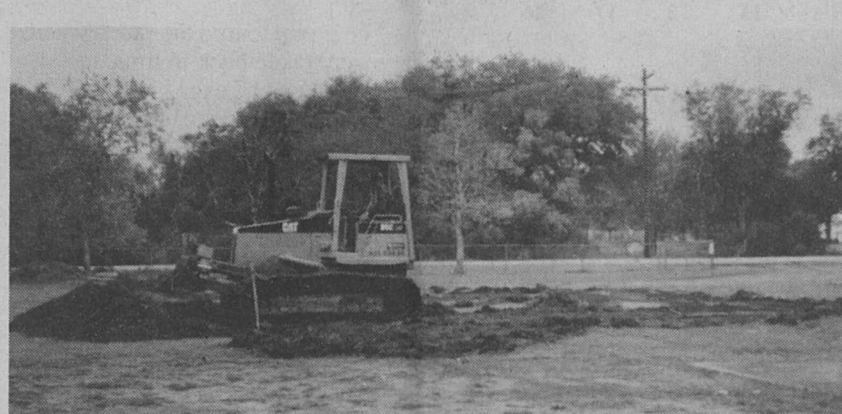
The importance of good school attendance is emphasized at ELPS and is included in its campus goals.



First grade students of Kathy Kibort pose with some 100 day collections. Pictured are Matthew Sosa, Stacy Knesak, Bianca Mendoza, Joselyn Stovall, Sabrina Spates, Wayne Cisneros, Bruno Flores, Donte Spears, Ana Castillo, Katie Hassin, Elizabeth Marquez, Isaac Rangel, Kimberly Torres and Kibort. The first grade classes of Kibort, Betty Janish, Stephanie Byrd, Jeannie Leopold and Sabina Rotter exhibited collections.



Tamsyn Sprang, center, is shown with her staff at Weimar Skate and Fun. The skating rink provides fun and entertainment for families and people of all ages.



New band hall for Sheridan
Nov. 25 was a memorable day at the Sheridan School. Drymalla Construction was on the grounds bright and early to begin work on a new band hall scheduled for completion soon. The 1998-99 classes will be the first to use the facility. Both the teachers and students are excited about the project.

Joint recruiting effort adds orthopedic surgeon

The governing Boards of Rice Medical Center, Columbus Community Hospital and Fayette Memorial Hospital are pleased to announce the addition of Scott Williams, MD, a Board-Certified orthopedic surgeon.

His practice will include an emphasis on total joint replacements and sports medicine while including all aspects of musculoskeletal medicine.

He has relocated his practice from Brenham to provide services at the three facilities on a set weekly rotating schedule.

Through this joint effort, Dr. Williams will also be on Orthopedic ER coverage for each facility.

Dr. Williams will be at the Eagle Lake Specialty Clinic on Monday and every other Thursday, La Grange Specialty Clinic Tuesday and Wednesday, and Professional Services Clinic in Columbus every other Thursday and Friday.

Williams received his bachelor of science degree in Chemistry from the University of Florida and graduated

from the University of South Florida Medical School with a Doctorate of Medicine.

He completed his internship at William Beaumont AMC, El Paso, and residency program in orthopedic surgery at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio.

Dr. Williams' sports medicine fellowship was completed with Hughston Orthopedic Clinic in Columbus, Georgia.

He is a member of the Texas Medical Association and currently serves as president of the Washington-Burleson County Medical Society.

"I look forward to serving these communities and the three hospitals. I am familiar with many patients in these areas and have always enjoyed my time in these communities," explained Dr. Williams.

His hobbies include golf and goose hunting.

Dr. Williams is currently taking appointments at each clinic.

For more information, call: Eagle Lake, 700 S. McCarty, 234-2066; Columbus, 109 Shult Drive, 409-732-2376; or La Grange, 430 E. Guadalupe, 409-968-2349.

Refuge plans APC increase

The Attwater's Prairie Chicken (APC) was once a common wildlife species found in prairie habitats from Corpus Christi to southwest Louisiana.

However, since the early part of this century, APC numbers plummeted as much of the prairie habitat on which they depend was converted to croplands, brushlands, urban sprawl and other land uses.

Estimates are that less than 1% of the once expansive coastal prairie remains.

Eventually, APC populations were fragmented into small, isolated populations which are more susceptible to extinction due to threats from inbreeding, increased predation, and the vagaries of weather.

APC numbers in the wild reached an all-time low of 42 individuals in the spring of 1996. The population received a boost in recent years at the APC National Wildlife Refuge near Eagle Lake through the release of pen-reared birds.

In 1996 and 1997, a total of 83 APCs were released on the Refuge. However, over half the birds released each year are lost to predators.

In addition, hens that survived from the 1996 release suffered poor reproductive success, due in part to a high rate of nest predation.

Although essential to preventing extinction of the APC in the wild, it is obvious that the captive release program cannot provide a quick fix to all the problems facing the APC.

Despite two years of supplementation and intensified management, the population on the Refuge is still very close to disappearing.

Currently, it stands at less than 50 birds... not enough to safeguard the population against hazards of bad weather or inbreeding.

Biologists are anxious to increase the population as quickly as possible.

The two best ways to help the population grow are to increase the number of nests that hatch and to improve the survival of birds after they hatch.

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GINOLERS

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