Jon Anderjaska

Jason Hicks

John Jutten

By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

Next week when area voters go to the polls for the general election they will vote on three candidates to fill three available seats on the Wauneta-Palisade Public Schools board.

The three seats up for election are those currently held by Jon Anderjaska, John Jutten and Stuart Bartels.

Anderjaska is the only candidate that will be listed on the ballot. According to Chase County Election Commissioner Debbie Clark John Jutten missed the deadline to appear on the ballot and Stuart Bartels has not filed for reelection.

Clark said filing an affidavit is required of candidates seeking write-in candidacy on the school board.

As of noon Monday Clark reported that both John Jutten and Jason Hicks have filed affidavits signifying their intentions to run as write-in candidates.

Anderjaska, Hicks and Jutten each responded to a brief questionnaire sent to them by the Breeze in which they gave an overview of their backgrounds as well as their thoughts on the school board seat they are seeking.

JON ANDERJASKA, a republican, was born and raised in Hayes County and has lived in the area as a working adult since 1985.

He attended K-12 at Hayes Center and holds a bachelor's degree in animal science/ag economics from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army.

Anderjaska works as the business manager at the Work Ethic Camp in McCook.

He has served on the W-P school board since 1996. He is currently serving his second three-year term on the Nebraska Association of School Boards. He also served on the original Hayes County Farm Bureau Board.

Other activities he's been involved in include the Nebraska LEAD program, Holy Family Catholic Church as a lector, Trustee and CCD instructor, NSAA sports official for football, basketball and softball, NAIA college baseball umpire, Hayes County 4-H as a leader, horse show superintendent and Japanese exchange program and Wauneta American Legion baseball as a manager and coach.

Anderjaska's family includes his wife, Patty, and their four children. His daughter Betsy and her husband Nik Johanson recently bought and are remodelling a house east of Palisade in the W-P school district. His son, Will, is a senior at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and is majoring in animal science and on the senior collegiate livestock judging team.

His two children at home include Wes, a junior at W-P schools and Ben, a fifth-grader at W-P schools.

JASON HICKS has lived in the area most of his life. He graduated from Wauneta-Palisade high school in 1993.

Hicks is currently employed by Burlington Northern Santa Fe as a locomotive engineer.

Currently, Hicks serves as the vice chairman of the Palisade Village Board of Trustees and has been on that board since 2002.

He has also been an active member of the Palisade Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department for the past 16 years.

His family includes his wife, Crystal and their six children, 18-year-old Cody, 16-year-old Austin, 15-year-old Maycee, eight-year-old Joshua, four-year-old Jaislynn and two-year-old Cacen.

JOHN JUTTEN, a republican, has lived in the Wauneta-Palisade area for 15 and one half years. He owns a cattle ranch.

Jutten's family includes his wife, Amey, and four children: Jenna, a sophomore at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Landon, a junior at W-P, Kyle, a second grader at W-P, and

three-year-old Kameron.

Q&A responses

Each of the candidates gave the following written responses to the questions below:

Q: Why did you choose to seek a position on the school board?

Anderjaska: Because I was interested in my children's education, I became involved with the PTO program that we had at the time. After going to a few school board meetings, I was interested in helping shape policy and be in on the decision making process.

Hicks: With six children in or going to be in the school system I have a vested interest in the future of our schools. The best way to protect that interest is to be active on the school board.

Jutten: I wanted to be active in my children's education.

Q: Is there anything you would like to see done differently by the school board or are there areas of concern you feel are not being addressed?

Anderjaska: Being a part of the current board, my answer is no. We might all have a different opinion, a differing personal idea or have our own solution to an item that comes before the

board, but it is an exception to see a dissenting vote with the current board.

Through meaningful discussion and probing thought we can usually come to a compromise and find a collaborative solution that everyone can agree to and firmly support.

Hicks: No. The present board is doing a fine job with our school system.

Jutten: No comment.

Q: What are the greatest assets of Wauneta-Palisade Public Schools?

Anderjaska: The greatest asset of our district is the actual people of our two communities. Their strong commitment to, their keen interest in, and their support of Wauneta-Palisade Schools is a characteristic that many other schools envy.

It is reflected in the broad range of our students' many achievements and the effort that they continually give. It is shown by our excellent teachers and their commitment to the entire educational process of each of their students.

Our district's adaptation to change and our steady willingness to improve are characteristics that are difficult to match.

Hicks: I believe the greatest assets for the Wauneta-Palisade school is the community and the support the community has for the school.

Jutten: I believe community support of our school is the greatest asset.

Q: What are the challenges facing Wauneta-Palisade Public Schools?

Anderjaska: Challenges facing our district include unfunded mandates from the federal and state governments ranging from student standards to the hot lunch program–the demands on our teachers continue to expand. Declining rural population and how it affects our enrollment will continue to be a chalenge, particularly its impact on our educational offerings and costs versus revenue conflicts.

Hicks: Some of the greatest challenges for the board in the future will be the number of students and the declining state aid.

Jutten: The challenges facing our school are low enrollment and state funding decreasing.

Q: Do you have any concerns or disgruntlements with recent actions taken by the present board? Please elaborate.

Anderjaska: No comment.

Hicks: No.

Jutten: No comment.

Q: Please include other information you believe is relevant to your running for the school board:

Anderjaska: No comment.

Hicks: I believe the Wauneta-Palisade district has two great communities and it would be a honor to serve on the school board.

Jutten: I have enjoyed my term on the school board and would like to continue to serve the community in this way.