

Case worker wants to be motivational speaker for youth

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**



Sara Carroll

Sara Carroll says her goal is to be a motivational speaker for teens, and being the new case manager at Sappa Valley Youth Ranch is only one more step in achieving that dream.

Ms. Carroll started at the ranch on March 12 as the case manager, working with the boys. Her job description covers several areas of the ranch, from talking to the Juvenile Justice Authority to getting boys placed at the ranch, to working with each of the boys for

30 minutes once a week to sending out progress reports.

Ms. Carroll said she doesn't feel intimidated by the boys and stays positive.

No stranger to Oberlin or the surrounding area, Ms. Carroll said it has been nice to be back here catching up with old friends and making new ones. She said as a child she lived in Oberlin for a few years later moving to Hoxie, where she graduated from high school.

Later she went to Cloud County Community College and then received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Kansas State University in December 1999. While in college, she said, she mentored at risk youth and after graduation she worked with in-school suspension students at Manhattan High School.

She said she loved mentoring kids and spent a lot of time talking with them about health issues, suicide prevention and the basics on how to get through school.

She then moved to Topeka in July and worked for the Kansas Children's Service

League, which deals with adoptions and foster care. She didn't work with clients; instead she did paperwork and kept everything in order and the processes within regulations.

After being there for a while, Ms. Carroll said, she was ready to return to small town living and contacted Kelley Youth Services and sent in a resume to the ranch. People with the company in Topeka interviewed her and she was hired. Ms. Carroll said the fact that she knew about Medicaid and the paperwork with it helped her get hired.

She started right away doing intakes on the

boys and familiarizing herself with ranch life and how the program is set up.

Ms. Carroll now lives in Selden. Her father and step-mother are Lodge and Donna Carroll and her mom and step-dad are Donna and Bernard Ritter. She has a sister Amanda and two step-siblings, Amanda and Joe.

"I think we (the ranch) have the potential to have the best Level 5 program in the state and I want to work towards that," she said.

Since she is younger, Ms. Carroll said she hopes to bring new, fresh ideas to the ranch, and she thinks so far things are going great.

35 percent cast votes in election

The city and school election on April 3 only brought 35 percent of the voters out, despite the county election officer's goal of 50 percent.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn, who serves as the election officer, said a low turnout for this type of election isn't unusual, especially since this year in the smaller cities only two people registered to run for office and the only contest was in Oberlin.

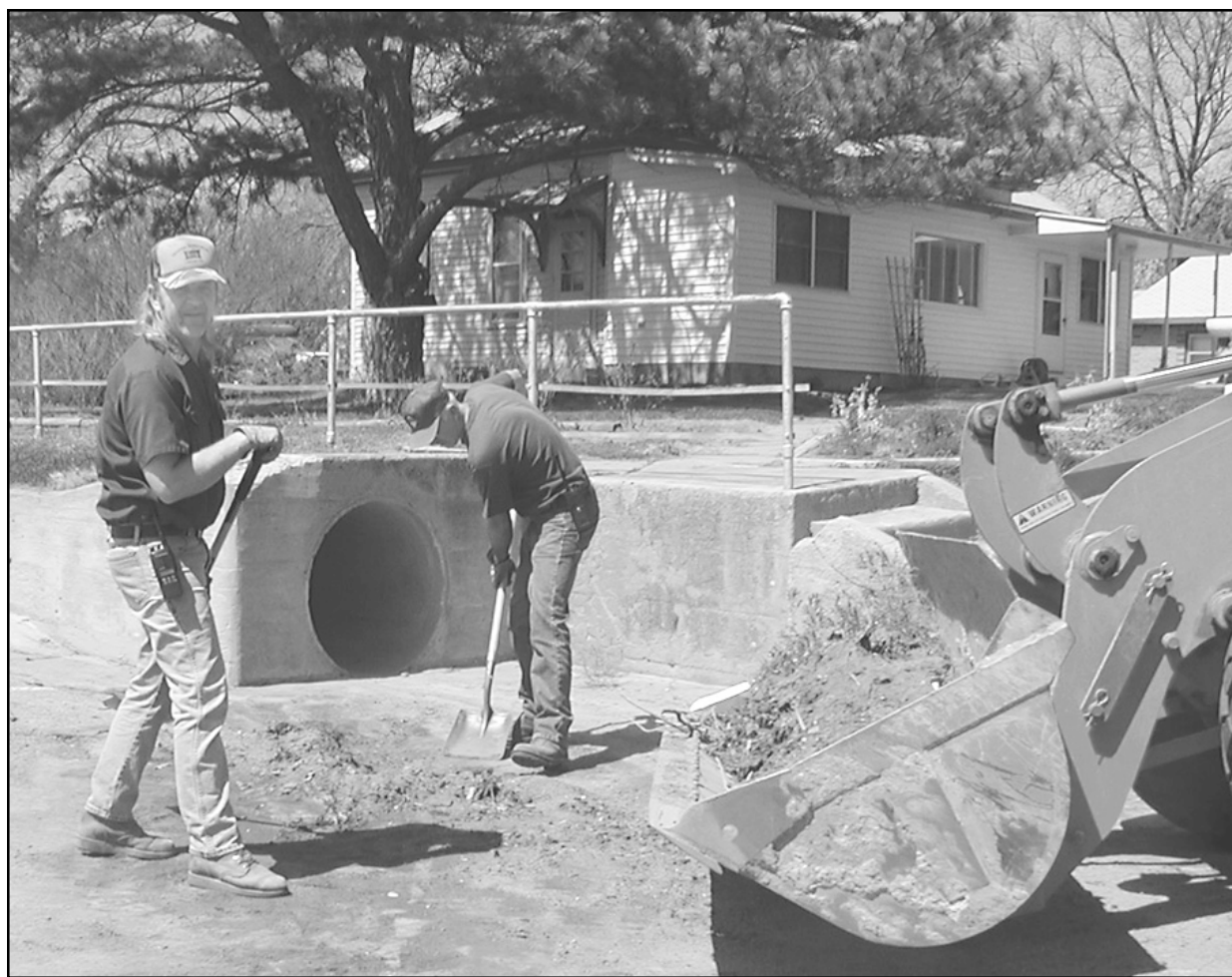
Of 2,322 registered voters, only 822 showed up to vote, including 629 in Oberlin.

Friday morning, county commissioners canvassed the votes and didn't find anything unusual about the election, said Mrs. Horn.

For the Dresden City Council, Ron Jacobs received seven votes for a regular seat on the council and five for an unexpired term which has two years left. Mrs. Horn said Mr. Jacobs decided to take the unexpired term, which means the three other positions on the council will be taken by Don Ritter, Don Sulzman and Clifford Mowry. Mayor Russell Rhodes, who was appointed to the position after the former mayor stepped down, also was elected for two years.

For the Jennings School Board, Sarah Coiner is serving an unexpired term, too, meaning she will only serve for two more years and the seat will be up for election. The other three seats will be filled by Vickie Bailey, Larry Miller and Jeff Wahlmeier. There won't need to be anyone appointed to the board.

Mrs. Horn said in order to get more people out to vote, the cities and school districts need to get more people to register.



CLEANING UP AFTER THE STORM, city crewmen Dan Castle (left) and Bob Shuler worked Monday to remove sand and debris washed down Friday in front of the drain on Cass Avenue near the grade school.

—Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Commission wants to mark buried lines

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

Decatur County commissioners agreed to see how many people would post signs marking buried lines under county roads voluntarily before passing a resolution requiring them to do it.

At the beginning of March, commissioners asked the road and bridge department to look into roadway signs which would indicate if a power line, gas line, water line or something else was buried under the roadway. Tuesday, Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said he checked into two options for signs.

The first would be to bury a piece of pvc pipe and then place a sticker on the top side. The second is to order aluminum signs which would cost about \$60 each. That turned out to be the cheapest and easiest.

Mr. Stallman suggested last Tuesday that landowners fill out a permit and then they would get a sign which they would put next to the buried line.

Commissioner Ralph Unger asked if they should provide a generic sign and then an extra one if it is gas, stating that it is flammable. He said that Mr. Stallman should draft up a permit application.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he didn't think that \$60 was too much to pay for a sign, since if the line gets cut it will cost more than that to repair it.

Mr. Stallman said he would get sample signs and asked if this is just for people who have newly buried lines or for everyone who has one. Commissioner Brown said he thought they

would like to go back and have everyone get a permit and sign.

Commissioners talked with Noxious Weed Director Gaylen Huntley, who said the other person who works in the department has put in his two week's notice, meaning that the county needs to look for another employee. Mr. Huntley said the man received a better offer.

The problem, said Mr. Huntley, is that the county needs to offer more to bring someone in, but in the winter there is nothing for them to do.

Commissioner Unger said one idea would be to work with commercial applicators to spray weeds. Mr. Huntley said most commercial people won't take their equipment where he will.

Right now the pay for the position is at about \$28,000, which includes benefits. The job requires a person to lift 100 to 150 pounds and a uniform is provided.

Commissioner Brown said if they only use Mr. Huntley this summer and he works as hard as he can, and then next year the weeds are out of control, it will cost more. Mr. Huntley said right now he feels like the county is just holding back the weeds. The only one they are winning with is musk thistle.

In the past, the commission has talked about Mr. Huntley becoming more of a policeman type, telling people where they have to spray and selling chemicals. Then, if people don't spray, he would be able to take them to court or send a contractor out to do the job and put on the owner's tax bill.

"I don't know if I can handle just being the bad guy," said Mr. Huntley.

The commissioners agreed it would be nice to have two part-time seasonal workers to help in the summer, but they must be 18 or over.

In other business, commissioners:

- Talked with Mr. Stallman, who said the crews have graveled some roads in Sherman, Summit, Oberlin and Jennings townships.

Mr. Stallman said he would like to move the small blue landfill building out to Kanona for their repeater and radio stuff. The commissioners agreed.

- Heard the sign on the noxious weed shop is up.

- Heard that dispatch is getting a good response on 911 forms to tell emergency crews how to get to a house in case of an emergency.

- Received a \$1,917 refund from Kansas Workers Risk Cooperative for Counties.

- Held a 20-minute closed session for attorney-client privileges. No action was taken.

- Talked with Ambulance Director John Barrett, who said things are good and the ambulances are running well. He said part of the ambulance barn isn't sealed very well and he would like to have it fixed.

- Heard that County Clerk Marilyn Horn found a new transportation bus for \$46,000 which would hold two wheel chairs and about nine people. No decision was made on the bus.

Gym to open, offer workout classes

The Works Gym on Main Street, in the space last occupied by CR Treasures, should open at 5:30 p.m. today offering a free trial toning aerobic class and a sneak peak at two other classes.

Janice Smith, owner of Cheap but Chic, will run the gym with Christina Weller teaching classes.

Although the two women still have to work out the kinks, Ms. Smith said she wanted to start a gym because it is something the area doesn't have.

She said she has found women here are sometimes the last to get any attention, and she'd like to put them on the same level as men.

It's important for the women to take an hour a day to themselves, she said, to keep them in shape and make them happy and proud.

The Works will provide a place for women to take that hour, working on their physical and mental well being, she said. Men have plenty of outside

activities, she said, but they'll be welcome at the gym, too.

"In little towns you don't have the access to do this," she said. "Often it is just forgotten. I want every woman, tiny or big, to be happy with themselves and feel comfortable with who they exercise with."

The gym is for everyone, she said. People need to get out and move. She said this includes older people, who need to move just as much as the rest of us, maybe even more.

In the beginning, the women will offer three levels of step classes, a stretch class, second, a toning and also a high impact class.

The Works will be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but they haven't set the times.

Classes will probably be around \$35 a month or \$15 a week, and equipment will be available later.

Ms. Smith said she already has elliptical

gliders, bike, free weights and a couple other pieces of equipment. She is looking for more workout machines to be donated or bought. She said often people buy equipment and then don't use it as much as they think they will, and those pieces may work well in the gym.

Looking at the long run, she said she would like to bring in a martial arts instructor for the kids, which will help teach discipline while moving their bodies, high impact aerobic movement like line or square dancing, and other programs.

"We want to help boost self-esteem," she said.

Day care will be offered for \$1 an hour.

Ms. Weller went to Joliet Junior College, in Illinois, and trained to teach fitness classes.

"The gym is for the community," said Ms. Smith, "not for us."

Police search apartment for drugs

A search warrant issued Saturday night for a vacated unit at Parkview Apartments brought the Oberlin Police Department and the Decatur County Sheriff's Office in for a search.

What the search turned up in suspicious tiny vials was not drugs, though, but dirt collected from 49 or 50 states.

The apartment had been vacated after police served a Colorado warrant for the arrest of Michelle D. Higgins last Tuesday. She was taken in on the charge of possession of a controlled substance and left Oberlin the following day.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said the

department received a call from a relative who had been in the apartment who told the officers that there were items which looked narcotic related. With probable cause to search, officers gathered the information and obtained a search warrant on Saturday night.

They searched the apartment for about 40 minutes, although officers were at the apartment longer securing the place and waiting for the warrant. The county drug dog, Luna, wasn't used.

All they found was Ms. Higgins' collection of vials filled with dirt, the chief said.

Easter egg hunt set for Saturday

The Easter Bunny will be in town Saturday and kids from 3 to 9 years old can hunt for candy at 1 p.m. in City Park.

The Oberlin Lions Club, which has been hosting the event for longer than Jack Benton can remember, will be providing the candy and setting up the hunt.

Mr. Benton said kids should come with a basket or something to hold their findings. Sections will be roped off at City Park and kids will be split into age groups, 3 years and under, 4 and 5 years,

6 and 7 years and 8 and 9 years.

The event is free.

"Come and have a good time and enjoy," said Mr. Benton.

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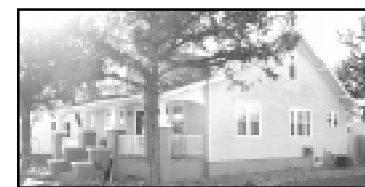
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