

Ex-pilot flies to win mayor seat

Incumbent, newcomer elected to city council

Councilman Ken Shobe will take over as mayor of Oberlin when the new council is sworn in, cruising to victory in city elections Tuesday by a 10-1 margin.

Councilman Ray Ward and newcomer Patrick Pomeroy won two open seats on the city council. They were the only candidates actually in the race at the end after incumbent Jerry Fidele said he was dropping out last month. He got 137 votes anyway.

Mr. Shobe, a retired Air Force pilot who has served on the council for two years, won in a landslide over Steve Smith, a Baptist minister with no experience in public office.

Mr. Shobe received 539 votes to Mr. Smith's 54.

Mr. Smith, who had campaigned extensively, said that he was disappointed in the turnout, but that he had tried his best and did what he could.

Mr. Shobe said that he would be making economic development his No. 1 priority.

"I know we have a lot of problems and challenges with the water and sewer projects in the next few years," he said. "Keeping businesses in town and keeping the streets up are important, also.

"Economic development is my primary concern."

There were two seats open on the council, with three names on the ballot and a write-in campaign.

Mr. Ward has served on the council for less than a year after being appointed to fill a vacancy created when Councilman Marvin Matchett moved out of town. He received the most votes with 493.

When reached at his home, Mr. Ward said he was looking for to the

next four years.

Mr. Ward had said that he would like to help finish the projects he's worked on since he was appointed. He would also like to see the council get some money in reserve in case repairs are needed

Patrick Pomeroy, a

hometown boy who returned to Oberlin a year ago as county ambulance director, received the next highest vote count with 347.

Mr. Pomeroy said that he was happy to be elected and was looking forward to serving the next four years. He said he is hoping to get some new businesses in town.

Third on the ballot was Mr. Fidele, who withdrew from the race too late to have his name removed. Mr. Fidele took a job and moved to Dodge City.

The fourth candidate was Royce Leitner, pastor of the Oberlin Assembly of God Church. He had started a write-in campaign after several people had approached him and asked him to run.

Forty-five people wrote Mr. Leitner's name on the ballot.

After the votes were counted, he said that he was glad the election was over and the mind of the city made up.

This is only partly true, though, since as soon as Mr. Shobe takes over as mayor, his seat on the council will be vacant and he will have to nominate someone to fill it.

The turnout for the election was light to moderate, with less than half of eligible voters casting a ballot. County election officer Marilyn Horn said that in the city, about 600 out of 1,300 voters came to the polls. For the county, the total was 997 out of 2,370 voters, she said.



Ken Shobe



P. Pomeroy



Ray Ward



WITH A FLICK OF THE WRIST, Karon Scott (above) tossed a ballot into the box at the American Legion Hall on Tuesday afternoon. County Clerk Marilyn Horn (below)

walked out of the booth after voting Tuesday, then went back to the courthouse to start counting.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

School board gets one new member as three re-elected

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
Challenger Monte Moore, a critic of the last bond issue who later

joined the effort to improve district schools, swept incumbent Dan Wasson off the Oberlin School Board on Tuesday, 102 votes to 54 in District 2.

With the votes tallied by 9 p.m., incumbent Jean Martin kept her at-large seat with 509 votes to Dave Stapp's 301 and 84 for write-in candidate Mike Helm.

In 10 years on the board, Mr. Wasson said, he had gained a lot of experience but was still interested in learning. Reached Tuesday evening at home, he had already heard the election results.

"I really don't have a reaction

right now," he said. "I guess that is the way people wanted to go, and that's the way it is."

Both men farm in the south part of the county. Although he has never served on the school board, Mr. Moore is on the board's community facilities advisory committee, which is drawing up plans for a possible new bond issue.

Mr. Moore said he sees the next four years as challenging for the district, with the drought and the economy causing problems both here and nationwide. He said his primary goal is to maintain the district's high standards of excellence and education while keeping the activities going.

(See SCHOOL on Page 10A)



M. Moore



Jean Martin



Herndon and Atwood school districts will combine in July

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
The Atwood and Herndon school districts will be consolidated, voters decided Tuesday.

The polls closed at 7 p.m. and by 8:45 p.m., all the combined votes had been tallied, with 786 voting for consolidation and 119 voting against. Of 272 registered voters in the Herndon District and 1,571 in Atwood, only 905 turned out. Under state law, the votes were tallied together, not by districts.

With fewer than 100 students at Herndon this year, the board started to look at its options in December. Herndon first met with

the Atwood School Board, then with Oberlin and Golden Plains.

The Herndon board decided to consolidate with Atwood and although the board wavered back and forth several times, the final decision was to go through with consolidation and let the voters decide what was best for the district.

Tuesday night, the voters agreed, which means Atwood and Herndon will be one district by the next school year.

Superintendent Kim Juenemann said she was pleased to see the high turnout of voters in Herndon. She said the school is ready to move on to the next step and plan for the

future. Mrs. Juenemann said she looks forward to helping the interim board.

Atwood Superintendent Lee Tarrant said running a school district is like running a business. With consolidation, it's like all of the sudden, this business ends on a certain date and a new one starts.

An interim board made of four members from the Atwood School Board and three from the Herndon board will try to take the best out of each district and mold that into a new one.

The interim board, said Mr. Tarrant, doesn't have any power until July 1, but even before that, the group will have to be

working to organize the new district.

The board members will not only have to be dedicated, he said, but will have to cooperate with each other.

Board members in Herndon and Atwood were up for election this year and although they were voted on at the general election they will only serve until the interim board takes over in July.

Part of the organization process, he said, is that everyone, including him, will receive a pink slip in May which will be signed by all seven members of the new board. Anyone who will not be re-hired will be talked to, but he said at this time, it looks like all of

the district's staff will be re-hired.

As superintendent, he said, he doesn't have a vote on the board, but he does have expectations.

With the consolidation, the new district will have the same budget as the two districts had this year, he said, but prices will also be going up, so the district may still need to look at the future and plan well.

Tuesday afternoon before the vote was tallied, Mr. Tarrant said if consolidation didn't pass, the Atwood Board would be looking at the next year to see what may need to be done.

(See DISTRICTS on Page 10A)

Crops look good after steady drink

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
Slow, steady moisture mixed in with spring sunshine has brought wheat fields across the county out of dormancy and into the next stage of life before harvest, changing a poor

crop to at least the prospect of a decent one.

Brian Olson, multi-county extension agronomist for this area, said all of the wheat he has seen has come out of dormancy and is from any-

where between two and four to five inches tall.

The plants are getting ready to start jointing, he said, which should take place in the next two weeks. When the plants joint, he said, the seed head is coming up from the crown and the plant is turning from a vegetative to reproductive state.

Before jointing, conditions will determine how many wheat heads will grow on each plant, how many kernels each will have and how those kernels will be filled out.

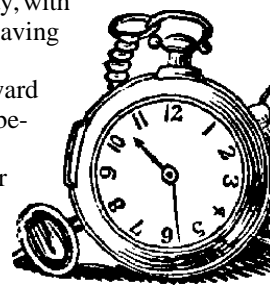
The 1.07 inches of rain Decatur County received last month helped the wheat a lot, he said. Fields that were fertilized before the rain have really taken off, while others are also (See CROPS on Page 10A)

Time to jump forward

The days will seem a longer after Sunday, with clocks jumping forward an hour for Daylight Saving Time.

Sunday at 2 a.m., clocks need to be set forward an hour. You may want to set them forward before going to bed on Saturday night.

That means that it will stay light for an hour longer each evening and will be a little darker than normal when you go to work in the morning. So be careful, and watch for deer.



Committee applies for grant to get sign at The Gateway

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
With the help of three area farmers and four women on the committee, a grant application has been filed to help pay part of the cost of an electronic message board in front of The Gateway.

There has been talk about putting a sign at The Gateway since it was built more than 10 years ago, said Connie Grafel, Gateway marketing director, who serves on the committee, and there still is no sign.

No matter what kind of advertising is done, she said, there are still people who see cars at The Gateway and ask what happened. On average, there are 27 events at the civic center monthly, said Ms. Grafel. If there was a sign, then people would know each

event and then be able to decide if they want to go.

That intersection of U.S. 36 and U.S. 83 sees a lot of traffic. Ms. Grafel said she called the Kansas Department of Transportation and learned that 5,800 vehicles pass through there every day.

Some might stop if there was a sign saying what's going on, she said.

At a recent City Council meeting, a representative from the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission said they wanted to see a sign in front of the building and the group was willing to give some money for one. Ms. Grafel said at that point, she, Kem Bryan, who works part-time at the Oberlin Library and (See GATEWAY on Page 10A)

Listed candidates chosen over write-ins in general

With lots of write-ins but not too many choices on the ballot, Decatur County voters mostly marked the names on the sheets — when they had the chance.

In the Norcat city election, only one name was on the ballot, and voters gave letter carrier, and incumbent councilman, Michael D. Helm 61 votes.

Norcat voters also had five write-in names to chose from. Rod Lechlitter with 50 votes and Jim Plotts with 35 won seats

on the council. Other write-in candidates were Tammy Cook, 28 votes; Carolyn Plotts, 26; and Theresa Reves, 16.

In Jennings, there were three seats open on the council and two names on the ballot. Eric Green and Sarah Carter were elected with 55 and 39 votes respectively. Stann Hartzog received 18 write-in votes for the third seat and Bill Gawith came in fourth with 11 write-in votes.

In Dresden, Russell Rhodes needed only

10 votes to win the mayor's race unopposed. No one had filed for the two open council seats, which went to Jeannie Spreser with eight votes and Ron Jacobs with seven.

On the Jennings School Board Lawrence Carter received the top number of votes with 103, Sheila Rhodes was next with 84 and Sarah Carter got 65 to put her on the city and school boards.

Aden Schillig was the only candidate for an unexpired term on the Jennings School

Board, and he was elected with 89 votes.

In Oberlin, Ken Shobe beat Steve Smith for mayor 539-54. Ray Ward received 493 votes and Patrick Pomeroy 349 to take seats on the City Council.

Kurt Vollertsen, District 1, and Barbara Olson, District 3, Oberlin school board incumbents running unopposed, both won their seats. Incumbent Jean Martin, Oberlin, beat challenger David Stapp, Norcat, 509-301 for the at-large position. However, in-

cumbent Dan Wasson, Selden, lost to newcomer Monte Moore, Oberlin, 102-54 in District 2.

Out of 2,370 registered voters in the county, just 997 cast ballots, a shade more than 42 percent, said County Election Officer Marilyn Horn.

Despite the large number of write-in candidates, the votes were all counted before 9 p.m. and election officials were ready to go home early for a change.

* School voters choose from six

(Continued from Page 1A)
Mr. Moore, also reached at home Tuesday night, said he had not heard the results yet.

"I am appreciative of everyone who turned out to vote for me today," said Mr. Moore. "Hopefully, we can do some things and work with the community and come up with the solutions to the problems and the challenges the district is facing."

He said he is anxious to get to work.

Mrs. Martin, the lab supervisor at the Oberlin Medical Arts Clinic, will sit on the board for another four years.

Mrs. Martin faced Mr. Stapp and Jan Badsky for the seat in the primary election and she and Mr. Stapp then moved into the general election after getting the two highest vote totals.

She was called at her home Tuesday night, but there was no answer. Her opponent, Mr. Stapp, a farmer in the Norcat area, said he wanted to run for the seat to work to keep the schools in the county going for years to come.

At home Tuesday night, Mr. Stapp had not yet heard the results. He wished Mrs. Martin good luck and said he appreciated all those who voted for him. He said he might try to run again, but he didn't know for sure.

Mr. Helm, a rural mail carrier, said he didn't really run a full write-in campaign, but talked to people he saw. For him, he said Tuesday was just another night.

Incumbents Barb Olson and Kurt Vollertsen ran unopposed in their districts and were re-elected.

Mrs. Olson received 71 votes and Mr. Vollertsen 124.

* Districts will join this summer

(Continued from Page 1A)
Mr. Tarrant said he had heard that if the consolidation vote had failed, anywhere from 10 to 30 students of the students in Herndon would be going to Atwood or Oberlin schools anyway.

With consolidation, he said, the Herndon school may have a few more years left.

The memorandum of understanding agreement made among the 14 members of the two boards before the election says that the high school in Herndon would stay open for one

year and then the kindergarten through sixth grade classes for four years.

Mr. Tarrant said those are minimum times, not maximum. It's important to remember that the boards can't obligate a future board, but those members who will sit on the interim board signed the agreement.

One thing's for sure, he said; things will be crazy from here on out getting organized.

Herndon Board Member Tom Kogl was reached at home but said he had no comment.

County demands Medicare hearing

The county ambulance department has asked for a Medicare hearing on 24 or 25 calls that haven't been paid.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy, County Attorney Steve Hirsch and the commissioners have been working on getting the information ready for months.

Mr. Hirsch said they shouldn't be shocked if the department doesn't hear back from Medicare for six weeks

Now that he has been through the process, said Mr. Pomeroy, when the department gets a letter saying Medicare isn't going to pay, it will be sent back right away for a hearing.

The director said he hasn't had the chance to work on bids for a new ambulance, but did call the companies and at least two of them are good for 60 days.

Rocky Mountain Company wants him to come to the plant and see how the ambulance is built.

Karen Waterman, who worked on the ambulance committee a lot, would like to go to the factory, he said, and the company will pay for the trip.

Mr. Pomeroy said if they decided to purchase the ambulance from Rocky Mountain he would like to go see it being built.

Mr. Hirsch said he didn't think there was anything wrong with having someone from the ambulance department go to North Carolina to

County round-up

At their meeting last Tuesday morning, Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked with Jack Metcalf about the Oberlin Speedway and asked a few questions about the track. Story below to right.
- Heard the information is in the mail for Medicare hearings so the county may get paid for ambulance services. Story at left.

see the factory.

The commissioners said it was OK as long as there was no expense to the county.

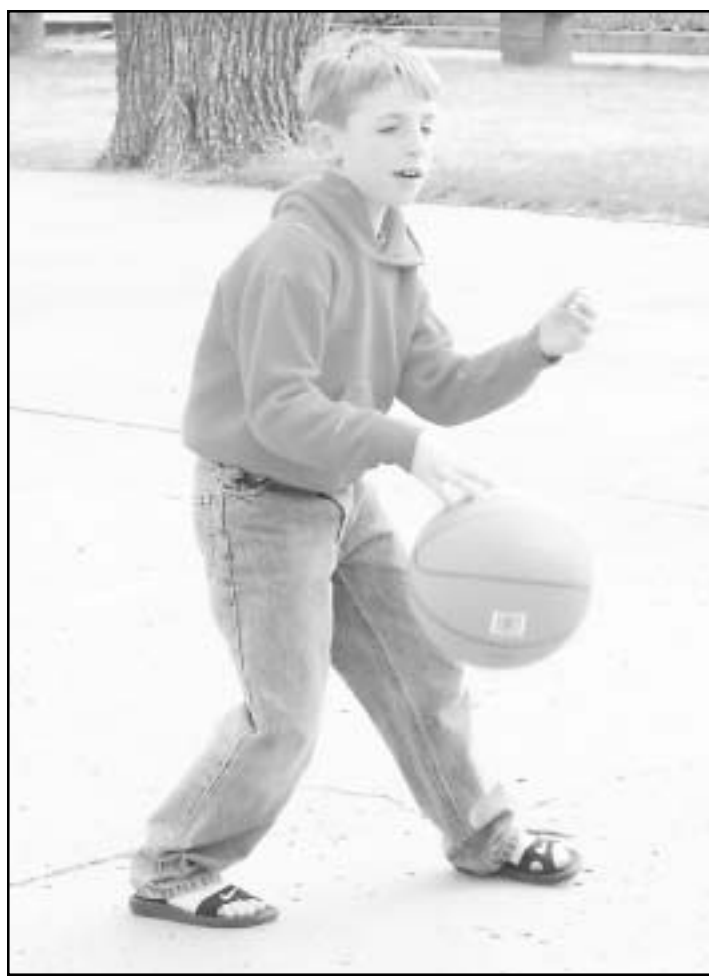
Mr. Pomeroy said he had received the service's program provider number, which means the department can offer continuing education classes. The number is good until 2005 and if there are no problems, then it will be renewed for another two years.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Heard that crew members Linda Manning, David Depperschmidt and Jack Brown had done an outstanding job, saving a life on a call last week.

The call was handled in a professional manner, he said, and everyone did a great job.

Just a little ball



ON THE LAST DAY of spring break, Ryan May shot hoops on the basketball court in City Park. This week, he's back in class. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

* Gateway may get electronic sign

(Continued from Page 1A)
Lohofener Grain; Peg Smith, who works for Hirsch and Pratt; and Karen Larson, who works at Dr. Gary Fredrickson's office, were named to the sign committee.

Mrs. Bryan found a "sustainable agriculture research and education" grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service.

In order to apply for the grant, three farmers had to be on the committee and then the money, if received, will go through them, said Ms. Grafel. Rod Bryan, Robbie Henningson and Dan Grafel agreed to help.

The committee asked for \$16,857 for the sign. Ms. Grafel said if the group gets all of that, it will pay for 40 percent of the equipment, 25 percent of the landscaping and a minimal part of the labor. The group will

still have to raise a good portion of money, depending on how much grant money they get and what bid is accepted.

The grant application has been sent. She said it should be reviewed in June but the group doesn't expect to hear anything back until August.

Ms. Grafel said the group has two bids now and some information on a third. Both bids are for an electronic message board, she said. One is for \$26,774 and another is for \$37,759. Ms. Grafel said she is still comparing the two for differences.

She said the group plans to talk with Midwest Energy and Southwestern Bell for donations. She has contacted Wal-Mart but the company doesn't have any to give this year.

Oberlin Arts and Humanities, Lutheran Thrive It, the Lions Club and other organizations have already pledged money.

Kinks worked out of Oberlin Speedway

The Oberlin City commissioners talked with Jack Metcalf about the Oberlin Speedway, at their meeting Tuesday, pointing out that the security fence closed off a dirt mound that was used as a loading dock.

Mr. Metcalf said the mound will be reconfigured around so it can still be used.

Commissioner Pat Glenn asked about seating in the pits. Mr. Metcalf said the plan is to put moveable bleachers on the loading dock so those in the pits can see.

The commissioners received a letter from Chief Dispatcher Jeanne Pachner, who wanted to know if she can hire two part time people for dispatch instead of one full time.

Part-time employees do not get health benefits, although they can get vacation time.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said she had been in to talk with him about benefits.

The commissioners decided that it would be OK to hire to part-time employees for the position.

* Crops show good potential

(Continued from Page 1A)
growing but not at the same rate.

The wheat was in fair to poor condition before the steady rain fell, Mr. Olson said. Now the potential is there to have a decent wheat crop. It has enough moisture for the next couple weeks, he said, and then hopefully the area will get some more rain.

With the March rain, he said farmers are noticing some weeds that have popped up.

Some farmers thought because it was so dry, there wouldn't be any weeds in the fields, but they are starting to show up now.

There are some thin spots in some fields, he said. Some may be be-

cause of poor stand establishment last fall or the poor conditions this year, but it is difficult to determine. Mr. Olson said farmers will have to decide whether to keep some marginal stands of wheat.

Greg Lohofener, with Lohofener Grain, said the wheat in the area is looking pretty good. The moisture the county got was very timely and fell just right, he said.

Statewide, the crop looks better than it did a month ago. Fields in eastern Colorado and southwest Nebraska are also looking very good.

The subsoil moisture is still limited, he said, and the crops need more rain, but it is a good start.

Seniors to have dance

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Colby will sponsor the annual recognition night with a dance from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16, at the Ameri-

can Legion in Colby. The Ramblin' Andy Family Band will play. All area seniors are invited. Tickets will be available at the door.

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1999 Ford Mustang	10,000 Miles
2000 Olds Alero 4D	24,000 Miles
1999 Ford Taurus	76,000 Miles
1997 Ford Escort 4D	73,000 Miles
1996 Ford Aerostar	72,000 Miles
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1994 Buick Lesabre Cust.	70,000 Miles
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