

Federal grant will help shelter house

Oberlin has been approved for an \$8,000 federal grant to help restore the Sappa Park Shelter House, thanks to the work of volunteers and U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran.

Jack Benton, chairman of the Sappa Park Restoration Committee, said this is a matching grant, which means the community has to come up with \$8,000 in cash or services. The good news to that is the work that was done, the supplies and the labor can all be included to match the match.

Mr. Benton said he hasn't applied for the grant yet, but is going back through the records from the past year to figure out how much money

was raised. Last year, the committee worked on getting money, equipment and crew to replace the roof on the building. The job was completed in the fall.

The biggest thing he needs to figure out, Mr. Benton said, is how much each volunteer's labor would cost if paid hourly. By the time everything is figured, said Mr. Benton, the committee will probably need to raise between \$2,000 and \$4,000.

Mr. Benton said the committee would like to put in restrooms and maybe some of the money could be used on that or improvements to the well or septic system.

He said he started talking to Con-

gressman Moran in 2000. He took the congressman to the shelter house for a tour one day when he was in town. Rep. Moran said he would pass on the information to a few places in Washington.

One office called back, said Mr. Benton, and said he should contact the Kansas Historical Society. The other one never called. Then someone with Rep. Moran's office called and said an \$8,000 matching grant had been set up.

A press release from the congressman's office says that \$8,000 has been included in the final spending agreement for the 2003 fiscal year, otherwise known as the federal bud-

get bill, for improvements at the shelter house.

"Within the walls of this shelter house is not just a place for community meetings, but part of Decatur County history and a part of our state's history," said Rep. Moran. "The people of the Oberlin community have volunteered their time and effort into preserving this piece of history and this funding will assist them in that endeavor."

Mr. Benton said he hopes to have the grant application done in the next couple of weeks. Anyone who wants to give money to match the grant should contact him at 475-3174.

Hiking trails planned for Sappa Park

The Sappa Park Restoration Committee is to plan hiking trails along the creek at the park.

Chairman Jack Benton said the idea is to put a shorter trail along the creek bank, then put in a bridge to cross to the other side and come back on the other side of the stream. The group is still working on the particulars of where the trails will be.

The committee met last Tuesday at The Gateway, and members plan

to meet soon at the park to figure what needs to be done.

The committee would like to put in a longer trail that would go around the black powder area and near the road and then back toward the shelter house.

They will meet in a couple of weeks, he said, and go to the park to walk the area.

If anyone wants to help with the trails or be on the committee, they

are welcome, said Mr. Benton.

A lot of people walk at the park already, he said, and some don't want to walk on the road anymore. He said the trails would give people an opportunity to walk in nature areas and safely away from traffic.

The committee would like to start the trails this summer, he said, but first they need to get at least two permits, so there's no telling how long it will take to get started.

Mr. Benton said the group will need to get a permit to put a bridge over the creek, which he has been told will cost around \$500. They will also need a permit to change the creek bank. The committee is working with the city, Jim Abbey, who farms the lake bottom, and the black powder group to form the trails.

Anyone who wants to make a donation for the walking trails should contact him

Undersheriff's return should help staff office

The sheriff's office might get back to two officers this week with the return of Undersheriff Randy McHugh.

Sheriff Ken Badsy told county commissioners on Tuesday, March 11, after a 15 minute closed session for non-elected personnel, that the office was back to one person.

Sheriff Badsy said he suspended Jack Brown, a reserve deputy, for six months after he made inappropriate remarks at a basketball game in Jennings. Mr. Brown has been suspended since mid-March.

That left Sheriff Badsy the only

one available for duty. Undersheriff McHugh is tentatively supposed to start work this week after being on active duty with the National Guard.

Deputy Mark Dahlsten is still out on medical leave following knee surgery and can't return until the doctor approves it.

Sheriff Badsy said since they didn't sell a truck topper during the county auction, he would like to take bids on it. Someone suggested giving a truck that didn't sell to the road crew for repairs, and then the county could try to sell it again.

Street-sealing bids top agenda

The Oberlin City Council will decide whether to ask for bids for street sealing for this summer when it meets at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the council will get another pay request from J Corp, the city water project contractor.

Councilman Jay Anderson will talk about the possibility of a new

cemetery district including Oberlin and six townships which don't have their own cemeteries. He will also present the "lifelong community initiatives" which he said addresses and solves aging issues and educates the public about issues as people age.

The meeting is open to the public and will be aired on the public cable access Channel 7.

WANTED:
County Recreation Director
 for the Decatur County Recreation Commission - to run the 2003 Ball Programs. Minimum Age 18. Turn in resume to the County Clerk by April 14th. EOE

Authors Club sets contest

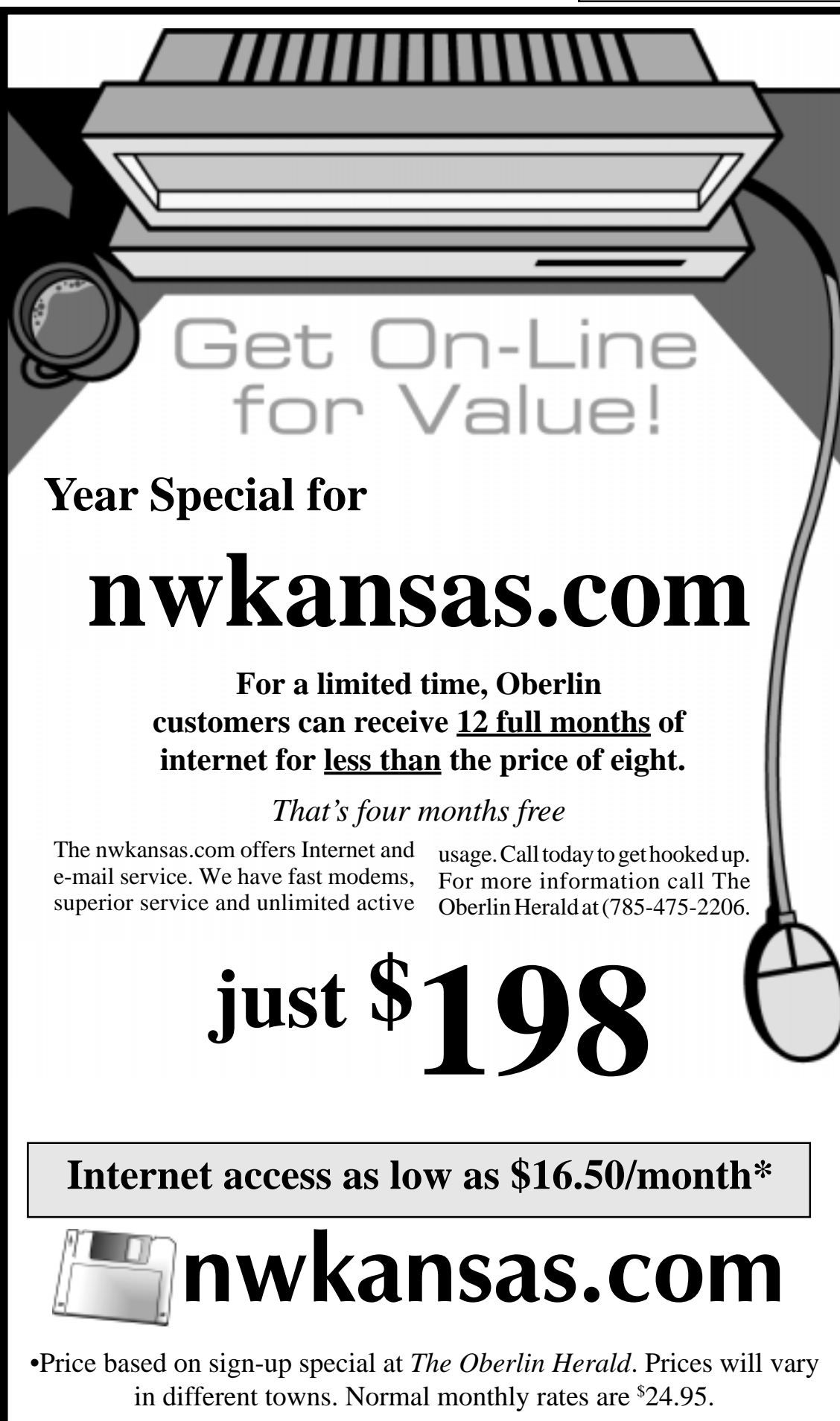
The Kansas Authors Club, which will soon be 100 years old, will hold its annual prose and poetry contests to begin on April 1.

It is open to Kansas residents, members and non-members. Details on two other annual contests are also available: the Ferguson Kansas History Book Award and the Nelson

Poetry Book Award.

Rules and guidelines are available from Raymond S. Nelson, 7301 Galoway, Wichita, Kan., 67212, or rskmnel@aol.com; mailing address is also requested.

The Kansas Authors Club Website is www.skyways.org/orgs/kac.



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