

Students receive package, letters from Army officer

The second graders at Oberlin Elementary School received a much-anticipated package last week from Florida, complete with seashells, postcards and a letter from an Army officer who has sort of adopted the classes.

As first graders last year, the students sent cards to service men and women as part of Operation Valentine. One of those notes was received by Capt. Russell Baker, who was serving in the Middle East.

He decided to write the students back and included a little bit about himself, his job and where he was stationed. The students found a new friend, and they have been corresponding with the captain ever since as he moves from job to job.

At Christmas, the second graders sent him ornaments with their pictures and cards.

Capt. Baker said in his letter that he started to respond in January, but didn't get a chance to finish until recently.

Not only did he send a letter to the two classes, but he wrote a personal postcard to each of the students. He asked them questions and answered questions from the last notes they sent him.

Students in both classes received the postcards on Wednesday afternoon. The pictures on them were of Miami, tropical birds and some orangutans. The students read their notes out loud to their classmates and then were able to take them home.

Teacher Kathy Tacha said he even sends a few extra postcards with a brief message, signed by him, to include any new students.

Here is the letter:

Hi Guys!
Did you think I had forgotten about you? Never. Never. Never. Things are really hopping for us right now and there is not much free time at all to play or write or do much of anything except work. In fact, I moved my family to Miami because I could no longer get home to see them (even occasionally). I still don't see them much, but at least I know they are safe and doing well.

I think about you every single day and apologize for only now being able to be in touch. I had written about half of the postcards in January and then things just went crazy! I hope you enjoy them. Miami is my "base" right now, even though there are no military facilities here. It is



HANGING ON TO THE EDGE of her desk, Denae Andersen (left) waited to receive her postcard from Capt. Russell Baker. Capt. Baker sent all the Oberlin second graders postcards from Florida, some of which were like the one above.

they make you smile and think of this sunny and beautiful state. Trade them among yourselves and remember how much I care for you when you see them sitting in your bedrooms.

Right now, I live fairly close to Patrick Air Force Base (the home of the Space Shuttle) and about four hours from Disney World. Maybe after the war I can visit Mickey! I have coconuts on the trees in my yard and there are oranges, limes, tangerines, lemons and grapefruit growing everywhere. It rains VERY hard here almost every day at 4 p.m. and the lightning is very vivid and powerful. The raindrops are huge.

Most of the people here are Latin. In fact, Miami is proudly known as "The Latin Capital of the World." Since I don't speak Spanish (yet), I have more than a few challenges here. I love the various Latin cultures, which are different from one another in many ways. I especially enjoy the music, beautiful colors of

quite a town.

Our command, called the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), is responsible for fighting terrorists who have been moving into Latin America. We all travel a lot and help the Central and South American authorities track down the bad guys before they can travel to the U.S. or do anything to harm us. I am proud to say we have had many, many successes. We are very lucky to have such a strong and courageous President. The terrorists are using drug money to pay for their terrible operations since they can't find money anywhere else — yet one more of about 10,000 reasons to stay away from drugs, huh?

Right now, our team is trying to find three Americans who were kidnapped by the terrorists. They are hiding them in the jungles of Columbia. The Americans were in an airplane that crashed on Feb. 13. We are right on the bad guy's heels and will catch them one way or another. Everybody is working around the clock just like the hostages were members of our own family.

I will soon leave Miami for Columbia and will let you know all about the country. I will replace another captain who has been down there since February. I am spending a lot of my time right now getting in shape to go. Next Tuesday, we will head out for a long march with all of

our combat gear on our backs, about 60 pounds — anybody want to come along? I am getting waaaaay too old for some of this stuff!

Unlike most of my friends, I will not go to Iraq right now since I have just returned from the Mideast. However, on Sept. 23, I will go to call in Texas and then I will certainly head back over. I would like very much to help the Iraqi people rebuild their country and there is a shortage of anti-terrorism officers who can go. I have lived in six places in the past 18 months, so one more is no big deal!

Now, let's talk about more fun things. I have sent you a few Florida seashells for your enjoyment. I hope

clothing and the great food.

Did you know that most of the flowers sold in the U.S. come from Latin America? Flowers are very cheap here, so everyone has lots of them in their yards and homes. It smells great. When I write again, I will send you some candy from a Latin country. I was going to send you a few coconuts, but the box would weigh too much. All in all, Miami is a pretty city, but very hot, humid and stormy and way too crowded for my taste.

Some of you asked about my little dog Maggie. She is doing fine. I did a six-mile workout yesterday and took her with me. She now looks at me like I am crazy and does not rush out the door anymore — I guess once was quite enough. She did not even wake up to eat her supper last night. As you will remember, she is very short with tiny little legs, so I guess she really ran about 12 miles. I think she prefers to ride in the car!

Some of you also asked about a picture of me. I don't have a single recent picture, but will try to have one made and send it along next time. Be sure and wear your sunglasses when you see it so you don't "go blind with ugly," after all, I am just an old worn-out military guy, not Brad Pitt!

Well, I must return to my duties. Please stay in touch, as I really love to hear from you. Feel free to ask any questions at all and I will do my best to get you good answers. I have taken the photos that you sent with the beautiful Christmas decorations and placed them in a little book. I actually have notes about each one of you (kind of like Santa — except no "naughty" list — just "nice.")

I know some of you may be worried about the war and are watching it on television. Please don't let it bother you very much — we definitely have it under control. We will win quickly so we can all return to more normal times. Enjoy your upcoming Spring Break, and Happy Easter!

Love to all of you,
Capt. B

Business group has year's events planned

The Oberlin Business Alliance is ready for the upcoming year, with events planned through the holiday season.

Chairwoman Laurie Wasson said members met recently and worked on the calendar, which includes all promotional activities for the alliance. She said the group decided instead of coming up with a promotion for every fifth Wednesday, they will ask people to register to win \$50 in scrip money.

To win, a person has to make a purchase on fifth Wednesday or they can register to win in the chamber office.

The next fifth Wednesday is April

30, and is the first day the alliance will give the money away.

Mrs. Wasson said the two big events will be the beach party in August, 23 and the auction in July, 26 with merchandise from local stores.

The first alliance beach party was held last August. The committee has started working on the party, which will be sponsored by Pepsi and KFNF Radio.

Mrs. Wasson asked people to start looking at the dates of the events to

see if they can volunteer to help.

In other business, the alliance: • Talked briefly about the March promotion, 17 percent off for St. Patrick's Day. Mrs. Wasson said she felt the day was really slow, although the promotion was a good idea. Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, agreed that business was slow.

• Talked about putting flowers and other plants in the planters on Main Street that were alike. Mrs. Wasson said she checked with a lo-

cal person and a supplier, but she is still working on the project.

• Heard that they have 29 entries for their basketball promotion.

Conference to be held for parents

Families Together will host a free mini-conference with the Northwest Kansas Transition Council and Educational Service Center from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 26, at the Quality Inn in Colby.

This is the statewide Parent Training and Information Center for Kansas families and their sons and daughters with special needs.

Project STAY, a behavioral supports team comprised of members who have diverse backgrounds in working with children, has been invited to present information on working collaboratively with families and schools to devise interventions for children with challenging behaviors.

Important information will also be offered on designing a plan to move students with special needs from school to employment and a quality adult life.

Parents, educators, service providers, students and other interested persons are invited. There is no charge and lunch will be provided at the Quality Inn's Prairie Rose Restaurant, compliments of the Northwest Kansas Transition Council.

To pre-register by April 21, call (785) 650-0455 or toll free (866) 775-7710.

YOUR ALL AROUND CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

Roofing
Remodeling
Siding
Windows
New Construction

Wood Frame Steel Skinned Building

NO JOB TOO SMALL OR TOO LARGE

Free estimates and workmanship guaranteed

D&B Construction
McCook, NE
308-345-5735 Office
308-364-2666 Home • 308-345-2141 Home

★★★★★★★★★ **The American Dream** Now Only **\$829.00**

★★★★★★★★★ **POOLS** The Diplomat 19'x31' o.d. Installation Arranged

No \$\$\$ Down Financing!

★ Call Now! Free Home Survey! w.a.c. ★
Homeowners Call 24/7! Toll Free!

1-800-852-7946 B. Carpenter & Sons, Inc.

RAWLINS COUNTY HEALTH CENTER CLINIC
901 E. Hospital Drive • Atwood, Kansas
785-626-3241

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon

Baskar Duval, M.D. • Terrell Hadley, M.D.
Jerry Molstad, P.A.C.

First & third Tuesday afternoons:
Nadja Vawrk-Button, P.A.C.

Spring Fling Sale

New 2003 Chevrolet Tahoe
4 door 4 wheel drive. Summit white with tan leather bucket seats. Z-71 package, 5300 Vortec V-8, automatic front and rear air conditioning and heating, tilt wheel, cruise control, heated seats, power: seats, windows, locks and mirrors, stereo with CD player, 3rd row seating rear audio controls, 17" aluminum wheels, tubular side steps, trailer tow package, keyless entry.
List Price \$43,632.00
0% for 60 mo. WAC or \$3,000 Rebate

2002 Buick Park Avenue
4 door, Light Bronzemist Metallic with Neutral leather interior, 3800 V-6, automatic, dual control climate control, tilt wheel, cruise control, power seats, heated seating, power windows, power locks, and power mirrors, stereo cassette and CD player, keyless entry, chrome wheels, 10,000 miles.
List Price \$26,500.00

2002 Ford Taurus SE
4 Door Light safe green metallic with matching cloth 50/50 seating, 3.0 liter V-6, automatic, air conditioning, tilt wheel, cruise control, power: seats, windows, locks and mirrors, Stereo with CD player, power adjusting pedals, keyless entry, 14,000 miles. Clean local trade-in.
List Price \$14,500.00

2001 Buick Park Avenue
4 door, Titanium Blue Metallic with Gray leather interior, 3800 V-6, automatic, dual control climate control, tilt wheel, cruise control, power seats, power windows, locks and mirrors, stereo cassette and CD player, steering wheel radio controls, heated seats, keyless entry, aluminum wheels, 40,000 miles.
List Price \$22,500.00

FAW MOTOR CO. Inc.

Test Drive One Today At The Home of the "Faw" Better Deal!

520 Patterson Cambridge, NE Matt Faw 697-4444 Delaine Soucie, 695-4689 day or night