

# Big heads pause on trip north

Lincoln, Reagan to join other 40

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

A pair of giant heads passed through Oberlin on Thursday, heading from Houston to Lead, S.D.

The busts of former presidents Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan were the last of 46 presidential statues to be trucked from David Adickes' Sculptorworx to their new home at Black Hills Presidents Park Sculpture Garden, just 40 miles north of Mount Rushmore.

When the busts are installed, they will complete the tally of all 42 presidents, truck driver Rich Lavin said. A 43rd statue, a second one of Lincoln, will go at the entrance of the park. Busts of John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush will be installed in an information center close to the park.

Mr. Lavin said that the park is a place where, unlike Mount Rushmore, people can get close to the statues, touch them and have pictures taken next to the heads.

The presidential busts will be set



**HEADING FOR LEAD, S.D., enormous busts of Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan made a short stop in Oberlin on Thursday.**

—Herald photo by Cynthia Haynes

up in chronological order with biographical information nearby, plus state and national flags of the era in which the president served.

The park has golf carts available for the handicapped and a gift shop and restaurant on the grounds, Mr. Lavin said.

Each bust is from 16 to 19 feet tall and weights about 7,000 pounds. They are made of white portland cement, said the sculptor, David

Adickes.

The project has been underway more than two years, Mr. Adickes said.

Several people from around Oberlin have commented that they have seen other "giant heads" headed north over the past two years.

The presidential busts were collected on a ski area parking lot near the park, Mr. Adickes said, then in

the summer of 2001 all but George W. Bush's were installed. George W.'s bust was installed last summer.

This year the final touches were put on the park, including moving the last four busts for the information center and the entrance from Houston.

The park just opened a few weeks ago. For information, call 866-584-9096 or go to [www.presidents-park.com](http://www.presidents-park.com).

# Dinner, dance to cap benefit

Tickets are on sale for the Decatur County Hospital's benefit dinner and dance on Saturday, Aug. 2.

The tickets are being sold at the hospital for \$25 apiece for the prime rib dinner at The Gateway or just \$5 for the dance that evening. Administrator Lynn Doeden said the deadline for reservations for the dinner is Wednesday, July 30.

An Oberlin band, The Rendezvous, formerly known as the Decades, will be playing after the dinner until about 10:30 or 11 p.m.

There will be a silent auction with an autographed football from Kansas State University, tickets to the time trials for a NASCAR race, other sports memorabilia and donations from local stores.

The hospital will be giving away a golf club and a DVD player donated by Butch Rittman. The board, said Mrs. Doeden, purchased a metal framed gazebo with a canvas top to give away.

That morning, there will be a shot-

gun-start golf tournament at 9 a.m. at the Oberlin Country Club golf course.

There are already 18 teams registered for the event, said Mrs. Doeden, but they will accept more. The tournament will be a four-person scramble.

Registration for each team is \$200, which includes lunch for each member, dinner and the dance. Lunch will be served on the go at the golf course.

In the past, she said, the benefit has raised about \$3,500 for the hospital, but they would like to bring in \$4,000 this year.

The money is being raised for a wellness center the board would like to open in the old Duckwall's building downtown.

Mrs. Doeden said the plan is to have a treadmill, stair steppers, free weights, aerobic classes and wellness education. The center would be something that anyone could come in and use.

# Native of India begins duty as pastor at Sacred Heart here

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Father George Kochevelikkakam from Kerala, India, is the new pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Oberlin, Sacred Heart Church in Selden and Immaculate Conception in Leoville.

He comes to Oberlin from Oakley, where he served for a year, and before that from Beloit, where he preached for about 10 months. He also has helped out at churches in Norton, Colby, New Almelo, Glasco and Lincoln.

The priest is a member of the religious order of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, and as such under the rule of a superior, who determines where he goes.

That superior, Father Mathew Chalil from India, visited the northwest Kansas parishes on Saturday and Sunday and said Mass with Father George and a missionary priest from Nigeria.

Father George said his home province, Kerala, lies on the southwest side of India, on the Indian Ocean near Sri Lanka, which is to the southeast. It is about one-third the size of Kansas but has 31 million people.

Kerala is the most Catholic state in India, he said, with the population made up of about 7 million Catholics, 15 million Hindus and 9 million Muslims. There are very few Protestants in Kerala, Father George said, adding that most Protestants live in the northeast.

Ordained in 1993, Father George said he spent eight years teaching at a seminary in India before com-



Father George Kochevelikkakam at Sacred Heart.

ing to the U.S. He has four brothers and five sisters, one of whom is a nun.

Father George replaces Father Matthew Vazhappilly, also from India, who has gone to Mitchell, S.D., after serving the three par-

ishes here for 11 months. The men are among 86 Indian priests serving in the U.S.

Deacon Stan Chapin, administrator of the parishes and for New Almelo, said the Rev. George Fitzsimons, bishop of Salina, asked for help from India and Burma to alleviate the shortage of priests in the diocese.

From India, the diocese now has two priests, Father George and Father Michale Elanjimattathil, who serves in Manhattan. Father Vincent Thu Laing of Norton and Father Benjamin Saw, Hoxie, have come from Burma to help out.

Each has a five-year visa, Father George said. Near the end of that time, if they want to continue to stay in the U.S. and work, they must get a permanent resident visa, called a green card.

There are plenty of priests in India, Father George said. Each year his order ordains 40 to 50 men. By comparison, the Salina Diocese ordains one or two a year.

Father George said that he is glad to be in Oberlin and looks forward to meeting and visiting with all his parishioners and has already attended some baseball games and the July 4 fireworks.

Mr. Chapin said that he is happy to have Father George and looking forward to working with him.

"We will try to blend his culture with ours and all be better for it," Mr. Chapin said.

Father George will live in the rectory next to Sacred Heart Church in Oberlin.

# City hopes to save \$20,000 by refinancing bond issue

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Oberlin City Council agreed to refinance the housing bonds for the publicly owned Sappa Valley Manor apartments at a meeting last Thursday, hoping to save \$20,000 with a lower interest rate.

The bonds were issued by the city 25 years ago, in 1978, for \$560,000. The interest rate on the ones left to pay is 7.2 percent.

There is \$185,000 left to pay, said City Attorney Steve Hirsch. The city can get a private placement bond issue on that.

He said the city's Housing Authority has done a lot of legwork and research on this issue. Member Ray Lohofener said they asked all three banks to bid on the bonds, but only First National and Farmers Bank and Trust got back to them.

Mr. Hirsch said the bonds can be reissued for \$190,000 through First National Bank with a 3.95 percent fixed rate.

There will be a substantial savings, with this change including \$12,600 in interest over the remaining five years and \$7,500 in trustee fees.

If the council wants to do this, he said, they need to adopt the resolution, which they did.

Mr. Lohofener said there are 47 apartments in the complex, 30 of which are paid for and 17 which are still being paid off.

At what point do these become the city's? asked City Administrator Gary Shike.

They are all city property, Mr. Lohofener replied. Other Department of Housing and Urban Development buildings, after they are paid off, still have a contract and subsidize apartment operational costs. The government basically helps with the expenses at the apartments so they can be used for low-income living.

# Council Roundup

At the Oberlin City Council meeting Thursday night, the members:

- Heard a declaration from Mayor Ken Shobe stating that the city had entered a water watch, meaning people need to monitor their own use, although no restrictions have gone into place. Story on Page 1A.
- Agreed to refinance housing bonds for Sappa Valley Manor to save almost \$20,000 over the next

five years. Story to left.

- Approved a federal tax credit for Commercial Management Co. for the Parkview Apartments, which won't cost the city anything. Story on Page 8A.
- Received a report on \$2 to \$3 million worth of work needed to bring the waste water treatment plant up to new state and federal standards by 2005. Story on Page 1A.

Manager Ardith Louderback said 30 years after the last federal payment, the complex will go to the city.

Steven Zodrow from Mapes and Miller presented the 2002 audit to the council. He said both the special liability and the bond and interest funds showed decreases, which is normal. He said that two funds, the police department and pool, were a little over budget. The police department was over budget when an officer was out with an injury and others worked overtime to cover, he said.

For the most part, Mr. Zodrow said, the audit looked good. There were two issues he said he had to report on.

The first one is that the staff size isn't adequate for segregation of duties for handling money. The second is in utility collections.

There are 95 accounts that haven't had any activity in them. Mr. Zodrow said his recommendation is to have collection and deposit policies set by the council so the city doesn't lose revenue.

Mr. Hirsch said some of the accounts that aren't active could be really old. Mr. Zodrow agreed and that it could just need to be cleaned

out. The council approved the audit and gave Mr. Zodrow permission to send copies of it on to where it needs to go.

In other business, the council:

- Recognized Mr. Lohofener and Lee Ploussard, owner of Flowers by Lee, with plaques for each serving 25 consecutive years on the Housing Authority board. The two men are still serving on the board.
- Approved appointments of Gale Cook, with First National Bank, and Judy Cathcart, with Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, to the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals until July 2006.
- Heard the first budget meeting will be at 6 p.m. Monday, July 21.
- Heard that contractor Liquid Waste Management out of Longmont has started to clean sludge out of the east pond at the sewage treatment plant.
- Noted that the power plant has had to be operated every day in July except the Fourth.
- Heard that an oil circuit breaker bushing at the substation broke and had to be replaced for \$2,040. The part was found in Pittsburgh and is being sent by United Parcel Service.

# Blood drive at hospital today and Thursday

A blood drive will be held from noon to 6:30 p.m. today and from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday at the Decatur County Hospital in Oberlin.

Those planning to give are asked to use the south door of the hospital. The need for blood is critical, so this is considered an "Express Drive," said Pam Harmon, the local coordinator. They will be taking donors

every 15 minutes.

If you want to volunteer, call before coming to the hospital, Mrs. Harmon said. They will only be taking people by appointment if there

is time.

For details, contact Mrs. Harmon at the hospital at 475-2208.



From left: McKenna O'Hare, Brooklynn O'Hare (nieces of Emily Williams) and Sabryn O'Gara (daughter of Emily Williams)

# Want to feel glamorous?

How about you and your friends sign up for a free makeover with Emily Williams at the Washboard!

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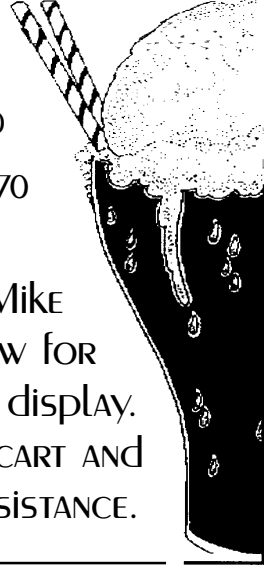
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