

Man munching burgers through 105 counties

By DICK BOYD

Bill Bunyan, a retired fifth grade history teacher from Dodge City, takes his membership in the Kansas Explorer Club seriously. He's proving it by visiting all 105 counties and eating a hamburger in every one.

Bill and his wife Susan, a retired kindergarten teacher, were at the Re-Load in Oberlin last Wednesday, when Bill ate his 102rd burger in a Kansas county. On Friday, he was in Norton, where he ate No. 103 at Adventures in Eating, and on Friday evening he and Susan drove to Atwood for No. 104.

Susan always eats with Bill, although burgers are not her specialty. She also takes a picture of Bill in front of the restaurant, plus a picture of the town's water tower and courthouse for their scrapbook.

After they retired three years ago, the Bunyans' interest in Kansas and the Sunflower state's history was enhanced when they heard a speech by Marci Penner of Inman, whose nonprofit Kansas Sampler Foundation is devoted to sustaining rural culture. She is the only paid employee of the foundation, which encourages people to visit small towns by highlighting attractions and businesses through the Kansas Explorer Club.

The creed of the club is that it was created to inspire, educate and encourage the exploration and appreciation of Kansas ... and to have fun doing it! Explorers are urged to look for the rural culture elements in each town — architecture, art, commerce, cuisine, customs, geography, history and people.

Penner publishes two bimonthly newsletters: *The Explorer*, which tells club members about places and businesses in the state, and *We Kan!*, which shares the successes of rural communities.

Bill said he got the idea for his hamburger quest when he met Larry "The Bowler" Woydziak of Lawrence, who had decided to bowl a



AT THE RE-LOAD in Oberlin last Wednesday, Bill Bunyan ate a large hamburger as part of his gastronomic tour through Kansas. The University of Kansas graduate plans to eat a hamburger in every county in Kansas.

— Herald staff photo by Pat Cozad

game in all 79 Kansas counties with a bowling alley.

"Larry gave me the idea," said Mr. Bunyan, "but my wife and I wanted to travel to every county of Kansas. I love hamburgers, and I knew you could get a hamburger in every county, so this is what I decided to do.

"I haven't been disappointed. I've eaten lots of good burgers and had lots of fun. Recently, my quest has taken on a life of its own, since I've been racing to finish by my 65th birthday."

Mr. Bunyan will eat a hamburger in the 105th county on his 65th birth-

day, Thursday, Aug. 21 at Paddy's Restaurant in Sterling, beginning at 1 p.m.

Why did he choose Sterling for the final burger? Two reasons. First, it is almost exactly the center of Kansas and, second, that's where Larry the Bowler rolled his final game.

Why did he leave three northwestern Kansas counties until last? It just might be because the 1961 University of Kansas graduate spends a lot of time driving from southwest in Dodge City to Lawrence in the northeast.

In addition to regularly attending

K.U. football and basketball contests, he and Susan are longtime volunteers for the K.U. Alumni Association and have managed the K.U. Scholarship Program for Dodge City area K.U. students. They host student orientation every spring for high school seniors who are going to K.U. in the fall.

A former member of the Alumni Association board, Mr. Bunyan has received the Association's Fred Ellsworth Medallion and Mildred Clodfelter Award for service to the university and his hometown. He is virtually the heart of KU support in southwestern Kansas.

"People often think Kansas is dull, flat and boring," says Ms. Penner. "If we can do things in a fun manner, that helps everybody lighten up a little bit and enjoy what we have. The whole thing is about exploring and having fun.

"Bill goes out and eats his burgers and, in a small town, it makes a difference when one additional person comes in for a visit and spends money."

Incidentally, annual dues for the Explorer Club are \$18.61, in honor of the year Kansas became a state.

In recognition of the time and money the Bunyans have spent in Kansas, the club has presented the "Feeling Good About Spending Money in Kansas" Award to Susan and "The Kansas Cuisine Award" to Bill.

Variety is the spice of life and Mr. Bunyan has had a variety of burgers in a variety of eating places. One of the more colorful names for a restaurant where he ate a burger was Lizard Lips Grill and Deli, near Toronto, population 320, in Woodson County.

The couple said they saw a lot of pickups in the parking lot of the Carver Inn in Minneapolis, boyhood home of George Washington Carver, so decided that was a popular place to eat. They entered and sat quite awhile before one of the local patrons politely told them they were to look at the menu on the wall and tell the cook what they wanted.

"The cook served us, we bussed our own tables after we ate and then paid and made our own change out of a pile of money," said Mr. Bunyan. "I guess she was cutting down on overhead."

Although Mr. Bunyan can eat a plain hamburger or cheeseburger with the works, his friends have reminded him that the sandwich must contain a beef patty. His conscience has caused him to return to three counties where, after thinking about it, he realized he hadn't eaten a real

burger. In Utica, he ate a memorable sausage burger but that didn't count, so he went to Ness City for a beef burger. In Coffeyville, he ordered a steakburger, which turned out to be a real sirloin steak between two buns. Later, he ate a real burger in the same county in Independence.

In Burlington, he knew he might be in trouble when he entered a Mexican restaurant and ordered a hamburger.

The closest they could come was a beef steak rancheros. A year later he returned to Coffey County and ate a burger in Lebo.

He just couldn't eat all of the burger he ordered in the Seabrook Bar & Grill in Topeka, but only one other person has done so. It was the restaurant's three-pound burger complete with plenty of fries and a bowl of cream gravy.

It costs \$20, but if you eat it all in 45 minutes, it's free. Mr. Bunyan said he was told that only 200 people have attempted to eat it all and only one succeeded.

"It was a great burger," he said, "but I gave up."

Will he have a letdown at the end of his burger quest? Mr. Bunyan says "no" because they will continue to carry out the theme of the Explorer Club by traveling around the state, eating in restaurants and seeing the sights.

He also plans to publicize through the Explorer Club his "Dandy Dozen" places to get a great hamburger in Kansas.

"I'll also include friendliness and cleanliness in my decision," he said. "It will be extremely difficult to narrow it down to a dozen because I already have 40 or 50 good places on my list.

"This is definitely one of the better things I've done in my life.

Everyone's invited to his 65th birthday party on Aug. 21 in Sterling, he said.

"Just bring your appetite and money," says the burger king.

Council backs mayor's choice on lawn-watering restrictions

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Oberlin City Council ratified the mayor's decision to order even-odd watering restrictions at its meeting Thursday.

The council also passed several resolutions, some of which have to be done every year, another having to do with water and some for upcoming projects.

The council passed a resolution to ratify the mayor's declaration of a Stage 2 water emergency, which put the city into even/odd watering two weeks ago.

Councilman Jay Anderson asked if there was any way in the document if the city could request that those with private wells follow the same restrictions.

Mayor Ken Shobe said they can ask, but the city can't enforce it. He said he does request it, though, since the water those with private wells use is coming out of the same source.

Two weeks ago, said City Administrator Gary Shike, the city was pretty much pumping at max every day. With the restrictions, rain and cooler weather, that has dropped about 20 to 25 percent. Users have been helping out a lot, he said.

Councilman Patrick Pomeroy asked if it would help residents if they added an hour onto the watering schedule.

Mayor Shobe said he just thought that would make things more confusing.

The resolution was approved unanimously.

The council signed a resolution for the preclosing of the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Development water project loan.

Dave Barber, with the agency, said basically this is wrapping up the project since the final pay request has been signed and sent out.

The official closing isn't until Aug. 15, when the city will move the

debt from temporary notes to bonds which will be purchased by the agency at 4.25 percent interest, said City Attorney Steve Hirsch.

The council approved a resolution to choose the North Central Regional Planning Commission as the inspector as part of the work for the pre-application for a Community Development Block Grant for a housing rehabilitation and demolition program.

One of the first steps, said Mr. Shike, was to send in proposals to inspectors.

The city received letters from interested agencies and firms. The others came from Baker Environmental Consulting Inc. from Lenexa and Hernley Associates from Lawrence.

Mr. Shike recommended North Central.

The group signed a resolution to select Penco from Plainville as the engineers to design the geometric

improvement project at the U.S. 83-U.S. 36 intersection.

The council set by resolution a hearing for alley improvements behind Farmers Bank and Trust for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4. The work is for 125 feet of the alley at an estimated cost of \$12,000.

Members also approved updates

to the standard traffic ordinance and uniform public offense code. Both have to be passed each year.

In other business, the council:

- Heard a compressor in the air conditioning unit at The Gateway had to be replaced for \$4,341.

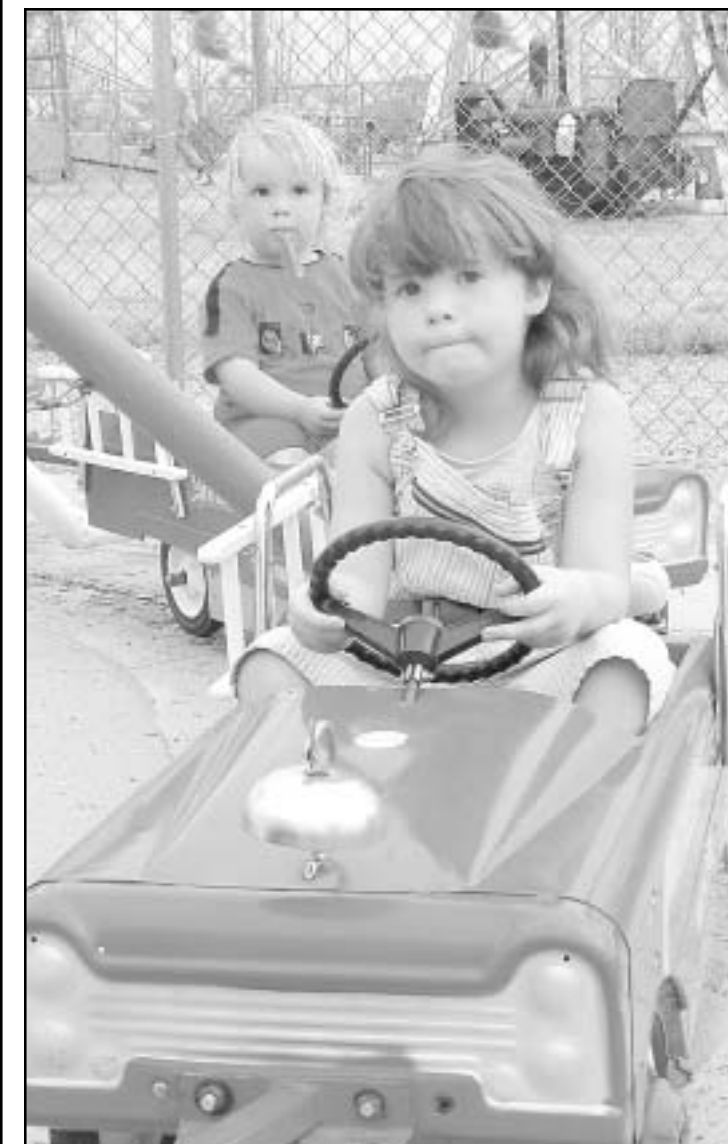
- Heard an air compressor at the power plant which is used to start the

engines had to be replaced for about \$3,500.

- Heard Mr. Shike had signed a gas contract with Midwest United Energy LLC for \$5.45 per million British thermal units on Tuesday.

- Talked about the budget hearing which will be held at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

Round and round



YOUNGSTERS PREPARED to enjoy the kiddie car ride at the Decatur County Fair home-owned carnival on Wednesday night. The ride costs one ticket (25 cents).

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Picnic in the park

The Oberlin Business Alliance, Decatur County Chamber of Commerce and Oberlin School District have joined forces again this year to sponsor a social in the park at 6 p.m. Monday.

Chamber Manager Glenva Nichols said fried chicken, baked beans and drinks will be furnished. Anyone wanting to attend should bring table service, possibly a chair and either a salad or a dessert.

There will be some door prizes given away and KFNF-FM will be playing music.

If the weather is bad, the social will be held in the high school cafeteria.

The Chamber needs reservations no later than Friday. Call 475-3441

Work day is Saturday

The Sunflower Cinema board invites everyone to a work day from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday to get the building ready for opening at the end of the month.

The board hopes people will come in and help clean the theater, which has been closed for over a year. The first four hours will be spent cleaning and then from 4 to 5 p.m., anyone who wants to learn to run the projector will be trained.

Anyone who can't help clean may bring donations of paper towels or cleaning products. Volunteers should bring brooms, vacuums or cleaning supplies.

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