

Grievances get answers during special meeting

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

Emergency Medical Services Director Patrick Pomeroy answered complaints about how he runs the department at a special meeting with volunteers and county commissioner last Monday night.

Mr. Pomeroy said that he had received a seven-page list of 45 complaints a day before David Eskew, husband of an ambulance volunteer, took it to the county commissioners on June 8.

Mr. Pomeroy said that he knew he had made some mistakes, but was unhappy that the writer had aired the service's dirty laundry to the public before seeing if the problems could be worked out.

After receiving the list, County Commissioner Doyle Brown, who is a first responder, called a special meeting with the 31 emergency medical technicians and first responders in the county, including those working out of Jennings. Mr. Pomeroy agreed and asked a representative of *The Oberlin Herald* to attend the meeting, which was held at the ambulance barn.

Mr. Pomeroy started out going through the complaints one by one, but after getting through only a dozen in 1 1/2 hours, changed the format and just asked the 18 emergency workers at the meeting which of the rest of the complaints they wanted to discuss.

Many of the complaints centered around the fact that Mr. Pomeroy goes on all or nearly all the runs.

He said that because he's a paramedic and the rest of the emergency workers have a lower level of training, he feels he should go on every run. He said that he has a personal relationship with every patient and can do ground transfers to specialists and other hospitals without using people from the hospital or air ambulances.

"When somebody calls for an ambulance in Decatur County, I'm going," he said. "There's never going to be a time when somebody needed me and I'm not going to be there 'cause I didn't want to show up."

Several complaints were about Mr. Pomeroy starting intravenous drips and giving pain medication.

Mr. Pomeroy said that he only starts IVs when he feels it will help the patient — usually before the ambulance even arrives — and has only given pain medication to a few patients who obviously had a broken bone or other uncomplicated injury. He said he is still working with the doctors on when and what to give for intense pain.

There were several complaints about communication — from Mr. Pomeroy not being in the office and not being available by cell phone to changing the locks on the ambulance barn and not giving everyone a new key.

"I take full responsibility for the key thing," Mr. Pomeroy said, adding that everyone should have gotten a new key when the lock was changed.

Commissioner Brown suggested the service put in a key pad so that keys wouldn't be necessary.

Mr. Pomeroy said that when he isn't at the office or on a call, he is frequently at the ambulance barn working on the computer there.

Emergency Medical Technician Karen Eskew, who handles the office, said that it would help if she had a list of everyone's cell phone number so that if Mr. Pomeroy doesn't have his, she could call someone else on a run.

Other complaints covered on morale, training and public relations.

On one complaint that Jennings volunteers sometimes respond to

calls that Oberlin has been called out on, neither Mr. Pomeroy nor Mr. Brown was sympathetic.

A Jennings worker said that sometimes she was afraid to respond to a call for fear of offending the technicians in Oberlin.

"If an off-duty Jennings EMT hears a call, I want you to go," Mr. Pomeroy said.

Mr. Brown agreed. "We can't make this an exact science," he said. "If an Oberlin ambulance has been dispatched and Jennings has already responded, too bad."

Mr. Pomeroy said that he went to Norton to help them with Emergency Medical Services Week because he hopes that they will help in Decatur County when we have something here.

Nothing was done here during Emergency Medical Technician Week because the ambulance service showed off its stuff at the Health Fair.

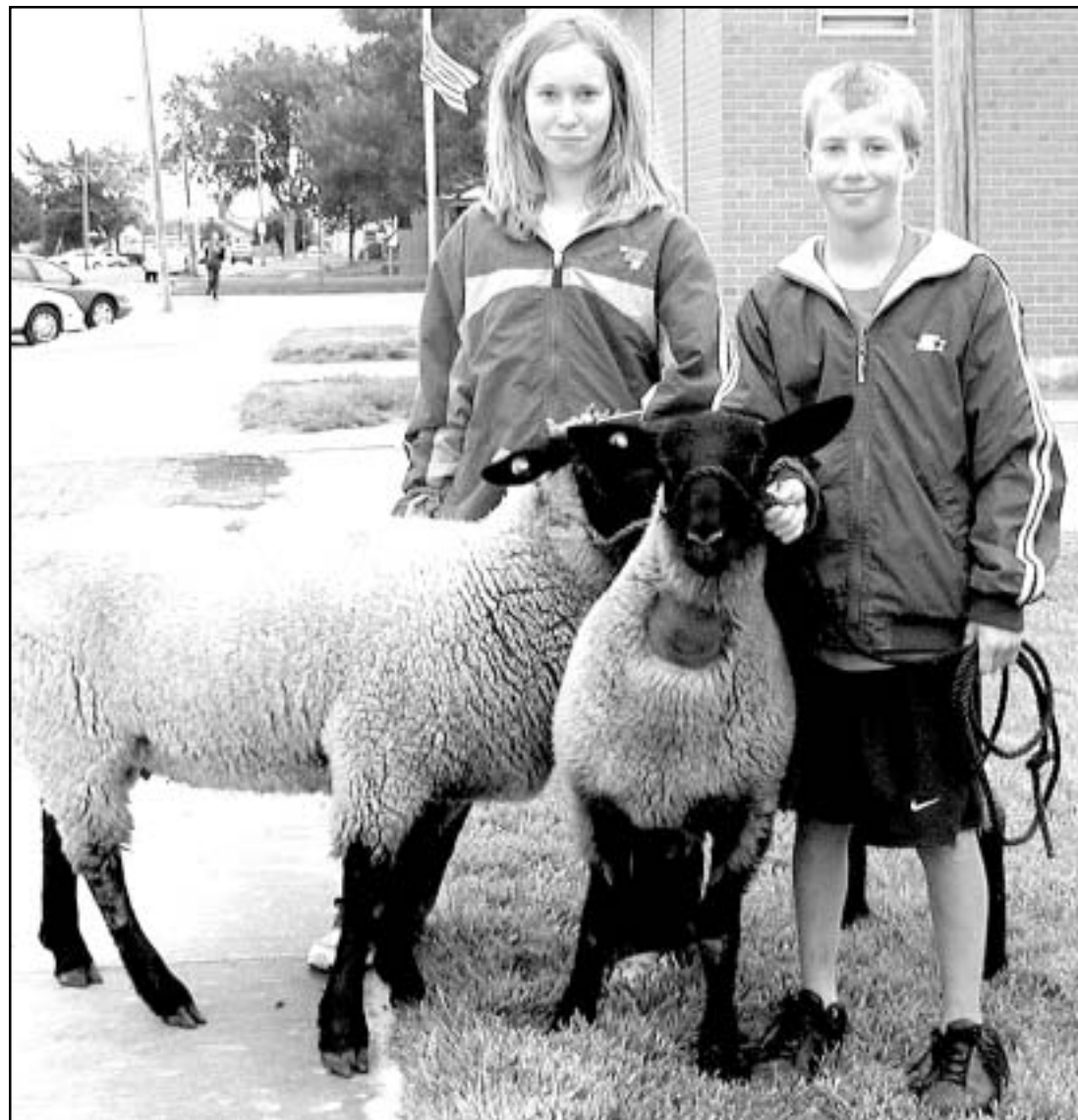
Emergency Medical Technician Brenda Arnold said that there were more than 400 hours of continuing education offered for technicians and first responders in 2003-'04 but that a cardiopulmonary resuscitation class should be given because there are a lot of people who need to update their certificate.

Mr. Pomeroy said once the class is given, all emergency workers will be required to be current to be on the schedule and answer calls.

After discussing uniforms, patches and the need for more radios, the meeting broke up with Mr. Pomeroy reiterating that he felt problems should come to him first before being taken to the commissioners.

Mr. Brown said that there aren't enough people in the county for infighting in any group, and the volunteers need to get along.

Out for a walk



WITH LEASHES IN HAND, Danielle Hachera from Colorado and Matthew Wittman waited outside Farmers Bank and Trust for Matthew's mom, Jody Shike, while the two sheep had a snack. The two had walked the sheep from Mick Glaze's place for exercise Friday afternoon.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

Ambulance director receives list of complaints from crew

The Decatur County commissioners received a list of 45 complaints against Emergency Medical Services Director Patrick Pomeroy from David Eskew, husband of an ambulance volunteer.

Here is the list.

1. We are Not a paramedic level service — never will be.

2. More needs to be done on an EMT level than on stuff the EMT's can't do.

3. If Patrick is going to respond to every call (even when he is not on call), why do we need two other techs on the schedule? This could help our scheduling problems.

4. Having Patrick respond to every run and take over isn't doing much to boost the morale with the EMTs.

5. Why do we need three ambulances in Oberlin?

6. When Oberlin Techs are paged out in the middle of the night (2-3 a.m.) and then have Jennings EMT's say they can go, this should NOT be allowed to happen. It should be Patrick's responsibility to tell Jennings this is unacceptable.

7. Aren't we making out run sheets anymore? If they are being filled out Patrick must be doing them. How can he do this if he wasn't on the run?

8. Patrick needs to do more of what he is getting the big bucks for and a vehicle to drive and not delegate so much that he loses track of what is being done and by whom (example-changing the lock at the barn before everyone had been issued their new key, such as a run in the middle of the night with Karen Eskew on call (as she is most days) and she didn't have a new key and couldn't get into the barn)

9. Patrick is rarely in the office.

10. Patrick trying to start IVs on patients at Good Hospital when they could be at the hospital by the time he gets the job done.

11. Patrick giving Linda Manning the ***** after all the hours she gave the county, she was treated very badly. Poor PR.

12. Training for existing EMTs not scheduled or when scheduled, a storm came up and the director and four others took off to watch clouds, leaving those left to clean up after.

13. CPR recertification not offered to current EMTs.

14. Do we really need to start IV's in town?

15. It seems like he treats other services' volunteers much better than his own.

16. What did we do for EMS week?

17. Uniforms??????????

18. Not giving me a key when he changed the lock.

18. Being on Primary call with Patrick when he would take off to respond to a call in Jennings and leave me with no partner.

19. Continuing Education on Oberlin for EMTs not done on a timely basis.

20. Tends to start a project and never finish it.

21. Promised to do bridge class from First Responders to EMT and has yet to do the class.

22. Hasn't done the CPR classes for the schools that he planned to do the last two years.

23. Getting paper work done in a timely manner so billing can be done.

24. Staying at the office long enough for questions to be answered.

25. Showing up at the office. Days go by when I don't see him and he doesn't answer his cell phone.

26. I thought he said that his cell phone would be on all the time. It isn't. He forgets where it is some of the time.

27. Getting tired of answering the phone at the office to say "I don't know where Patrick is."

28. Wondering why he gets paid extra for transports during to day. Wondering why since I put in more than 1,000 hours last year I wasn't offered KPERS.

29. Tired of hearing taxpayers ask me why Patrick is spending so much money. We did without it before; why do we need it now?

30. Being on call with him at night and he first responds to a minor incident and I have to go to the barn by myself.

31. Being on call with him and having to figure out how to get the Expedition. Usually means having to go back to the scene.

32. Using drugs and IVs in the field that makes it impossible for the doctors and nurses at the hospital to use drugs to treat the patient. I hate having to transport a patient to McCook in pain when I don't have to. Drugs expiring before being used.

33. Just in Observation: Storm spotting seems to be more important than his being on primary call.

34. Remodeling done at the ambulance barn without all EMTs being informed or asked to help.

35. Forming committees to work on a project and then not even listening to their reports — just does what he wants, ie new ambulance, uniforms, patches.

36. Talks about doing PR, getting out in the public. EMS week. Nothing is done.

37. New radios not beeping when paged. Says that it sometimes happens. I have problems with my pager all the time.

More complaints

1. Too many people on a run. Don't need three EMTs, two first responders and one first responder paramedic for an asthma attack. Left the city pretty much uncovered. (This run was in Norcatour.)

2. I don't think that the director needs to go on EVERY run especially in Jennings and ESPECIALLY if he is one of the primary attendants scheduled for Oberlin.

3. If something is bought out of memorial fund, it should be discussed and OK'd with and by the entire service. It should also be for something we really need instead of a golf cart. How about new radios?

4. Why is the lock on the ambulance barn changed so often and why aren't keys handed out as soon as the locks are changed.

5. There is little or no communication among the service.

6. I'm sure that Patrick is an excellent paramedic, but we really don't need those advanced measures on most of our local runs. I'd like to know, if he is paid a salary, which is higher than most of us earn, why is he paid for runs, transports and I believe that a certain person on most of the time when on the clock is not paid. She deserves to be paid also.

7. I also feel he has spent ridiculous amount of money on equipment that he is the only person on the service that is qualified to use.

8. I think more thought and effort should be put into finding people to take the EMT classes, not the First Responder class. First Responders are good but we need more EMTs.

Man charged with battery

Officers arrested 28-year-old J. Lynn Lohofener Sunday for domestic battery.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said he is charged with one count of domestic battery, a class B person misdemeanor. The battery against Mr. Lohofener's mother happened some time on Sunday.

Mr. Lohofener had his first appearance before Magistrate Judge

John Bremer on Monday and requested an attorney. Bond was set at \$500. He was still in jail as of Monday.

The next hearing has been set for 10 a.m. next Monday.

In another case, city police officers received calls that there were three to four car windows shot out with a BB gun sometime during the night Friday.

Widow will file Senate seat

By TISHA COX
Colby Free Press

Sen. Stan Clark Clark's widow Ruth was chosen to fill the 40th District State Senate seat Saturday by a unanimous vote at a special Republican convention at the Colby Community College.

Her name was sent on to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who has the final decision on who will finish the term. The seat was left vacant when Sen. Clark was killed in a traffic accident last month. Mrs. Clark will fill the seat until January. A permanent replacement will be selected in the November general election.

The meeting Saturday was called to order by Thomas County Republican Chairman Bill Adams, who

then was selected as chairman of the convention.

Ruth Clark's name was the only one that came up when the floor was opened for nominations.

After she was selected, Mrs. Clark talked briefly.

"It will be an honor to serve you and the 40th District," she said, adding she will do her best to represent the people and the area of western Kansas, which she hopes she can do with integrity.

Rep. Jim Morrison of Colby, who represents the 121st District in the state House of Representatives, said he was pleased with the results.

"It will be almost like working with Stan, working with Ruth," he said, adding he worked with Sen.

Clark on many projects and working with his wife will allow some of those to continue.

Rep. Morrison was also happy with the number of people who showed up.

Out of 255 eligible precinct or township committeemen and women, 138 people came to vote, along with more than 30 people who came just to watch the proceedings.

Republicans Dan Rasure of Goodland and Ralph Ostmeyer of Grinnell agreed not to submit their names to fill the seat. The two, along with Democrat Tim Petersen of Monument, are all vying for the seat.

Rep. Morrison said by not submitting their names, it took the pressure off the candidates.

Thank you to all who attended our open house and celebrated our 125th Anniversary with us. Your cards and flowers were beautiful and we enjoyed each of them.

We appreciated hearing from all those who enjoyed our 125th Anniversary History section and would like to give a special thanks to the advertisers that made the section possible.

*The Staff at
The Oberlin Herald*