

County celebrates 125 years

Anniversary held early to avoid winter weather

Decatur County officials and citizens got together Friday to celebrate the county's 125th anniversary.

Although the anniversary of the county technically isn't until November, the commissioners decided to celebrate it in conjunction with Mini Sapa Day at the Last Indian Raid Museum this weekend.

The county actually was created 131 years ago by an act of the state Legislature, but was not organized until 1879. It was named for Commodore Stephen Decatur, who was born in Sinnepuxent, Md. Capt. Decatur was commended for gallantry in the War with Tripoli and later was a hero of the War of 1812, when he commanded the U.S.S. United States.

After the war, Decatur was sent on a mission to North Africa to end the depredations of the Barbary pirates and to demand reparations from the rulers of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. He succeeded, and on his return to the U.S. in 1815 he was honored at a banquet, at which he proposed his famous toast: "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong!"

Commodore Decatur was killed in a duel with Commodore James Barron on March 20, 1820.

The first recorded journey across western Kansas was in 1843 on the old Fremont Trail, which crossed Sappa Creek in Decatur County. By 1858 there was a stage coach in use in the county.

Officials join school parade

Decatur County officials celebrated the county's 125th anniversary Friday with a parade and cake on Friday.

The county joined the Decatur Community High School homecoming parade, adding a float with county officials, plus an ambulance, fire trucks, sheriff's vehicle, road crew machinery and two semis.

Afterwards, the public was invited to meet on the first floor of the courthouse for cake and punch. The county also had Decatur County History books on sale for \$100 each.

The cattle trail known as the Old Texas Trail cut through what is now Norcatour. Later, it was moved to seven miles west of Oberlin. The trail also was used by the Indians.

Early Decatur County was described by a settler: "The timber lands range from one quarter to one half mile in width and the general varieties are ash, box elder, cottonwood, elm and willow."

There were many streams in the county, including the Beaver, Prairie Dog, Tom Cat (later called the Big Timber,) Long Branch and two forks of the Sappa Creek. Today

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Residents, staff recognize founder of Good Sam home

Residents of the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center celebrated the organization's Founders Day last Wednesday with morning devotions, a balloon launch, supper and singers.

The Rev. August J. "Dad" Hoeger started the Good Samaritan organization in 1922, 82 years ago. The group leases and manages the center here, which is owned by the county.

Residents gathered in the front room at 9 a.m. to hear Bible passages read by employees, listen to the choir, get a short history lesson and honor five area ministers.

Lisa Stacy, activities assistant, said Dad Hoeger was a great man of faith who had a tremendous vision, not his vision actually, but God's vision. Even by the age of 10, she

said, Mr. Hoeger had received the call to ministry.

When he was older, he was sent to North Dakota to start a church. After 10 years of service, he got the call to move to another town in North Dakota.

Mrs. Stacy said Mr. Hoeger would ask the Lord what he would have him do each day. She said he asked the Lord for just 50 people to take care of. He then opened a home for crippled and epileptic children.

Mr. Hoeger later opened a second home, for mentally handicapped kids. He made money from a working farm at the home and trained people to work on a printing press.

His mission has grown to 240 centers in 24 states, including the Good Samaritan Center in Oberlin. The

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ON U.S. 36 HEADED EAST, Bob Kummelehne (above left) and Marc Zabata rode out of Oberlin on Monday. One of 35 firemen (below right), a man from New York, led the

pack. On the back of one of the support vehicles was a painting to recall the Sept. 11 attacks, in which all the New York fire fighters were a part. — Herald staff photos by Kim Davis

New York firemen ride to raise money for widows, kids

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**

A small silver locket hangs around his neck, bouncing a little as his legs pump and get a rhythm going.

Monday morning, Bob Kummelehne pulled out of Oberlin on his bicycle with a smile on his face. Looking at him, no one could guess what he had been through, what he has lost.

California Bob, as the other riders call him, buried his wife just last week after she died from cancer. A retired Los Angeles fire fighter, he had planned to take the ride with his wife. Her death didn't stop him.

In the locket, he carries some of her ashes. She is with him, he says, every part of the journey.

Joshua Gallo, a fireman from New York, said California Bob is one of 35 men who are riding from Los Angeles to New York to help raise money for the New York Firefighters Widows and Children's Fund, which takes care of the wives and kids of firemen who have died.

The group is divided into seven teams, with five riders on each. The one that stayed overnight in Oberlin on Sunday was made up mostly of firemen from Manhattan. Mr. Gallo said each team will ride about 500 miles.



The riders stayed at the Oberlin Inn. Before taking off Monday, they ate at Keeno's, where owner Kenton Smith made everyone Brooklyn pizzas.

This team flew into Denver on Saturday night and then were driven to Idalia, Colo., where they started their leg of the journey.

They headed out Monday morning, with plans to stay in Alma, Neb., that night. The group started its journey in Los Angeles on Sept. 14 and plans to be home in New York by Oct. 25.

The teams average 86 miles a day, said Mr. Gallo. Total mileage for the journey is 3,336, and the teams have traveled around 1,600 miles so far.

The group has corporate sponsors to help raise money. They also have a web site at www.fdnycrosscountry.org for those who



crosscountry.org for those who want to make a donation, sponsor a rider or sponsor the event. (See RIDERS on Page 5A)

Woman plans to give kidney to save her youngest brother

By **BRENDA BRETH**

He's a fighter — he always has been.

At the age of 3, he survived cancer, and today at the age of 39, he's still fighting. With the help of his big sister, he will continue to fight for a long, long time.

Roman Carroll, son of Pat and Madge Carroll of Atwood, is the youngest brother of Gina Montgomery, secretary at Decatur Community High School. On Tuesday, Oct. 5, Gina planned give her little brother one of her kidneys.

Roman, who turned 20 on Sept. 1, is a graduate of Atwood High School and has finished one year at Colby Community College.

Their dad is the magistrate judge in Atwood, and their mom works part-time at the county treasurer's office there. The Carrolls have made their home in Atwood since moving from Denver in 1970.

Pat and Madge have six sons and a daughter. Gina is the oldest. Their son Craig, 39, works for Midwest Energy in Atwood. He and his wife Tina have three children.

Rodney, 34, also lives in Atwood and works for

Finley Construction. He has one son.

Chris, 30, is a pharmacist for Dillons in Colby. He and his wife Nicki had a baby boy in March.

Tim, 21, just got married on Sept. 18. He is a manager at the Goodland Wal-Mart, and he and his wife Tashia live in Goodland.

The oldest of the brothers, Keith, who was 11 months younger than Gina, died in November 1984 in an auto-train accident in Atwood just two months after Roman was born. Keith had a daughter, Ashley, who is 21.

Then there is Roman, the youngest. "I was already out on my own when Roman was born," said Gina, "but I can remember when Mom was pregnant with him, Craig, Keith, and I picked out his name, Roman."

They got the name from the soap opera "Days of our Lives," she said.

"I never lived very far away from Atwood, so I helped somewhat with all of the younger brothers," said Gina. "Roman lived up to his name, 'Roamin'.' Mom could always count on him getting into something or other."

Gina said that her family has always been close, but (See WOMAN on Page 9A)

Queen rides in style



AT THE HOMECOMING PARADE Friday afternoon, David Morris, Nashon Copeland and Emily Howland rode with the queen, Kim Ketterl. For more pictures, see the Decatur Dictator, Page 6B.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

