

Memorial tree planned by Hospice Services

Hospice Services of Decatur County will be decorating a Christmas Memorial Tree for the holidays at the United Northwest Federal Credit Union in Oberlin. An ornament with the name of each honored person will be placed on the tree for a donation to the annual campaign. "By giving to the Memorial Christmas Tree," said county Hospice Coordinator Carol Duncan, "you honor the cherished memories

of loved ones. It is also a tradition of helping others in Decatur County to receive much-needed care and comfort during a final illness. "By giving to Hospice Services, you allow someone to share their gift of life with family and friends to the very end. "During this season of giving and caring, we invite everyone to help decorate the tree. There's a little bit of an angel in all of us. Thanks for letting yours shine through."

Patronage checks given by electric cooperative

The Prairie Land Electric Cooperative board recently approved a capital credit retirement totaling \$611,000. Checks were mailed to members on Dec. 1 for patronage they had with the cooperative since 1985. In the past five years, Prairie Land has paid more than \$1.6 million in capital credit refunds. In addition to the capital credit payout, they issue monthly billing credits of 1/2 cent per kilowatt hour that will total over \$500,000 in 2004. Since 1999, Prairie Land members have received over \$5.4 million in capital credit refunds and

direct billing credits. The cooperative's financial strength over the past few years has made monthly credits and year-end payouts possible, said President Gilbert Berland. "As a member-owned electric cooperative," he said, "our mission is to provide our members with good quality service and at the same time keep rates as low as possible consistent with sound business practices. We are happy to return dividends to our member-owners at a time when prices for natural gas, propane and fuel oil are on the rise."

Turner concert set in Norton

Nashville recording artist Josh Turner will perform at 7 p.m. on Sunday at the East Campus Auditorium in Norton, sponsored by the Norton County Arts Council. Mr. Turner grew up on a farm near Hannah, S.C., where his grandfather and great-grandfather were farmers. A strong Christian, he says his songwriting ability is a gift from God. He received a standing ovation when he sang his hit, "Long Black

Train," at the Grand Ole Opry. It has been nominated for Song of the Year by the Country Music Association and the Christian Country Music Awards. He is accompanied by members of a five-piece band, including his wife. Tickets for the concert are available at the Norton Chamber of Commerce office. Call (785) 877-2501 for information.

Neighbors hold holiday dinner

Fifty-three Oberlin members and guests, including Jim Huston of Loomis, Neb., a Royal Neighbor field representative, met at The Gateway on Friday for a holiday dinner. Oracle Nadean Stoney welcomed the guests. The flag salute was given and Millie Lippelman gave the invocation. After a delicious dinner, Jim

Huston gave the program, which included advice on letting someone know where important papers are in case of death. He also encouraged each person to make a list to make things simpler to settle following a death. Members were also present from the Norcat, McCook, and Wilsonville camps. Diane Hasenberger and Robin Edgett won the door prizes.

Moran named wheat leader

Kansas Congressman Jerry Moran was recently named the 2004 Wheat Leader of the Year by the National Association of Wheat Growers, the Wheat Export Trade Education Committee and the U.S. Wheat Associates. The award is presented each year to one representative or senator who has gone beyond the call of duty on

behalf of wheat producers, and is the highest Congressional honor given by the wheat organizations. The award will be presented at the North American Grain Congress, the combined annual convention of the National Association of Wheat Growers and the National Grain Sorghum Producers in February in Reno, Nev.

Septic system fee planned

The Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group has had major funding changes. As of Jan. 1, 2005, they will charge a \$50 Letter of Intent fee, similar to a permit, which is good for one year. It is required on the installation of modification of all septic

systems within the Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group area. They will continue to offer free private water testing to private individuals only. For details, contact the office at (785) 421-2769 at Hill City, or (785) 462-8636 at Colby.

K-State sets ag conferences

Kansas State University Research and Extension is offering the following area and statewide agricultural conferences and field days to all interested persons. Dec. 14-15: Kansas Hay and Grazing Expo, Hutchinson, (888) 550-5376.

Dec. 16: Strategic Thinking and Business Planning Workshop, Manhattan, (785) 532-3526. Jan. 13: Strategic Marketing Workshop, Manhattan, (785) 532-3526. For details, contact the local extension office.

Club News

Prayer Partners revealed

Prairie Chapel United Methodist Women met on Dec. 1 at the home of Angie Wilson. Roll call was answered with a custom or gift remembrance by 10 members. Co-hostesses were Traci Uehlin and Joyce Rippe. Coleen Rippe read a story from the book, "I thought there was a road there," for devotions. A thank you card was read from the Macfee family. The Special Mission Recognition pin will be presented at the next meeting. New books were purchased for the reading program. President Angie Wilson had a box of books for anyone who wanted them. It

was suggested that some summer meetings be held in the evening so more working members could attend. The Christmas program will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 22. It was voted to have Prayer Partners next year and names were drawn. Members tried to guess their Prayer Partners, then found out when they opened their gifts. Rowena Cathcart gave the program in the absence of Ethel Railsback. The next meeting will be at the home of Nadene Lafferty on Jan. 5, with Rowena Cathcart as co-hostess. Coleen Rippe will give the program.

Group enjoys Christmas carols

Oberlin United Methodist Women met on Dec. 1 at Wheat Ridge Terrace with residents as invited guests. Devotions, based on the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke, were given by Edla Olson. She also told of her visit to the Holy Land during the Christmas season in 1987. Group singing of several favorite Christmas carols was led by Amy Carman, who accompanied the singing on her guitar. Program chairman Maxine Smith told about the composer of each carol and how it had come to be written. Mrs. Carman also sang several solos, "What Child

Is This?", "O Holy Night" and "Mary, Did You Know?" and was joined by her children, Isaac and Patience in singing "Away in a Manger." Mrs. Smith closed with an appeal for peace in the world by reading "What I Want Most This Christmas." Hostesses were Pat Wright, Marian Fraker and Joan Betts, assisted by Marcia Lohofener. Day of Prayer and Self-Denial will be observed at the Jan. 5 noon meeting with a brown bag lunch in the fellowship hall of the church. Hostess will be Louise Pollnow and program leader will be Mary Waldo.



Home Time

By Tranda Watts
Multi-county Extension Agent

Think safety when traveling with food

It's a time-honored tradition for many people to bring food to gatherings, such as holiday meals. How do you decide who brings what or how to travel with food if you're asked to bring something? When assigning foods or deciding what to take, consider type of food and distance to travel. Remember the two-hour rule: avoid leaving perishable foods at room temperature longer than two hours (one hour in warmer seasons when the temperature is over 90 degrees Fahrenheit). The two hours includes preparation time for foods that aren't cooked or foods that need more preparation steps after cooking. People traveling a long distance might bring non-perishables such as rolls, breads, and cookies. Those traveling about a half hour or less can more safely bring perishable foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy products or foods containing these items. Nearer relatives also are a better choice for providing salads, relishes and vegetables. When traveling with food, keep hot foods hot (140 degrees or higher) by wrapping them in foil, and then in heavy towels. Or, carry them in insulated wrappers or containers designed to keep food hot. Place cold foods in a cooler with

ice or freezer packs, or in an insulated container with a cold pack so they remain at 40 degrees or lower, especially if traveling over a half-hour. On arrival, place cold foods in the refrigerator. Place hot foods in an oven turned up high enough to keep the food at an internal temperature of 140 degrees or above; use a food thermometer to assure the food stays at a safe internal temperature. Plan to serve shortly after guests have arrived. Another possibility is to carry all perishable food in an ice chest and come early, then prepare the food after you arrive. Remember, if you travel with food, take a detour around the "danger zone". Keep hot foods hot (140 degrees or higher), and cold foods cold (40 degrees or lower). If you have further questions about food safety or preparations for the holidays, contact your local extension office. Tranda Watts is Kansas State University extension specialist in food, nutrition, health and safety for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. Call her at 785-443-3663 or e-mail twatts@oznet.ksu.edu. For more information, contact the county extension office, 475-8121.



Please join us in celebrating **Shirley A. Ward's 70th Birthday** with a card shower. Our 'old nurse' joins the ranks of the septuagenarians on December 8th. Shirley's address is: 1002 E. Ash, Oberlin, KS 67749. Thanks! The family of Shirley Ward. Sorry Mom, your kids were behind!

To the Farmer's Son
Happy 50th Birthday

Love,
The Farmer's daughter and Farmer's Grandkids

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