

## District waits for school money decision

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Though it's under the gun from the state Supreme Court, the Kansas Legislature hasn't decided what to do about school finance, leaving school districts with no way to plan next year's budgets.

Oberlin Superintendent Kelly Glodt said for now, he's not counting on any more money from the state, and he's been assured that small districts probably won't lose much. He said the district is planning based on the idea that it'll have about the same budget as this year.

Every superintendent gets a plethora of information about school finance, he said, from a wide variety of sources. The problem is knowing what to believe.

Mr. Glodt said he thought the Supreme Court decision that education funding was inadequate was a good thing. Now the Legislature is supposed to decide what to do by April 12.

He said the state Department of Education surveyed 55 school districts — Oberlin wasn't one of them — to get information about what they need to give kids an educa-

tion. There is a battle between large and small districts over who should get more money, said Mr. Glodt.

One of the information sheets Mr. Glodt received from the School Finance Task Force, which is made up for school representatives from Western Kansas, showed what districts would gain or lose under their plan. The plan showed that the Oberlin district would lose \$195,114, he said, while Hays, which is bigger, would gain \$2 million.

Mr. Glodt said if the district lost

\$195,114, that would be equivalent to five teaching jobs.

The chart showed that districts in Stockton, St. Francis, Colby, Goodland, Osborne, Russell and Hays would all gain money while the rest of the districts would lose money.

Mr. Glodt said, though, that he called the "money men" at the Department of Education who are in charge of financing, and they said not to worry. They said they think that the legislators understand what is going on with schools and so that districts won't lose

much.

On the other hand, he said, there are rumors that legislators will take away the low enrollment weighting, which pays small schools more per student based on higher costs.

Mr. Glodt said he got information from the Senate Friday showing a proposed increase in state aid of \$125 per pupil for this year and the next two years. The per pupil base has been \$3,363 for four years.

The superintendent said the increase (See SCHOOL on Page 8A)

## Talks continue on county's plan for assisted living

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The county's health committee continued conversations about building an assisted living facility or remodeling one of the two existing nursing homes last Tuesday.

Members also talked about calling the home, now termed "centers," something new so that they are pegged as offering only long-term care.

Margee Wilson, with Cedar Living Center, said she is hearing a lot of advertising for homes now. She said she isn't sure if she is listening for them more or if there are a lot more vacancies.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he received a call from a man about money to build an assisted living facility. He said he would ask him to come talk to the committee.

Hospital Administrator Lynn Doeden said she didn't think it would help unless they are starting from square one.

She wondered if someone from the state could come in and tell the committee whether it is possible to create an assisted living facility from something the county already has.

### County Roundup

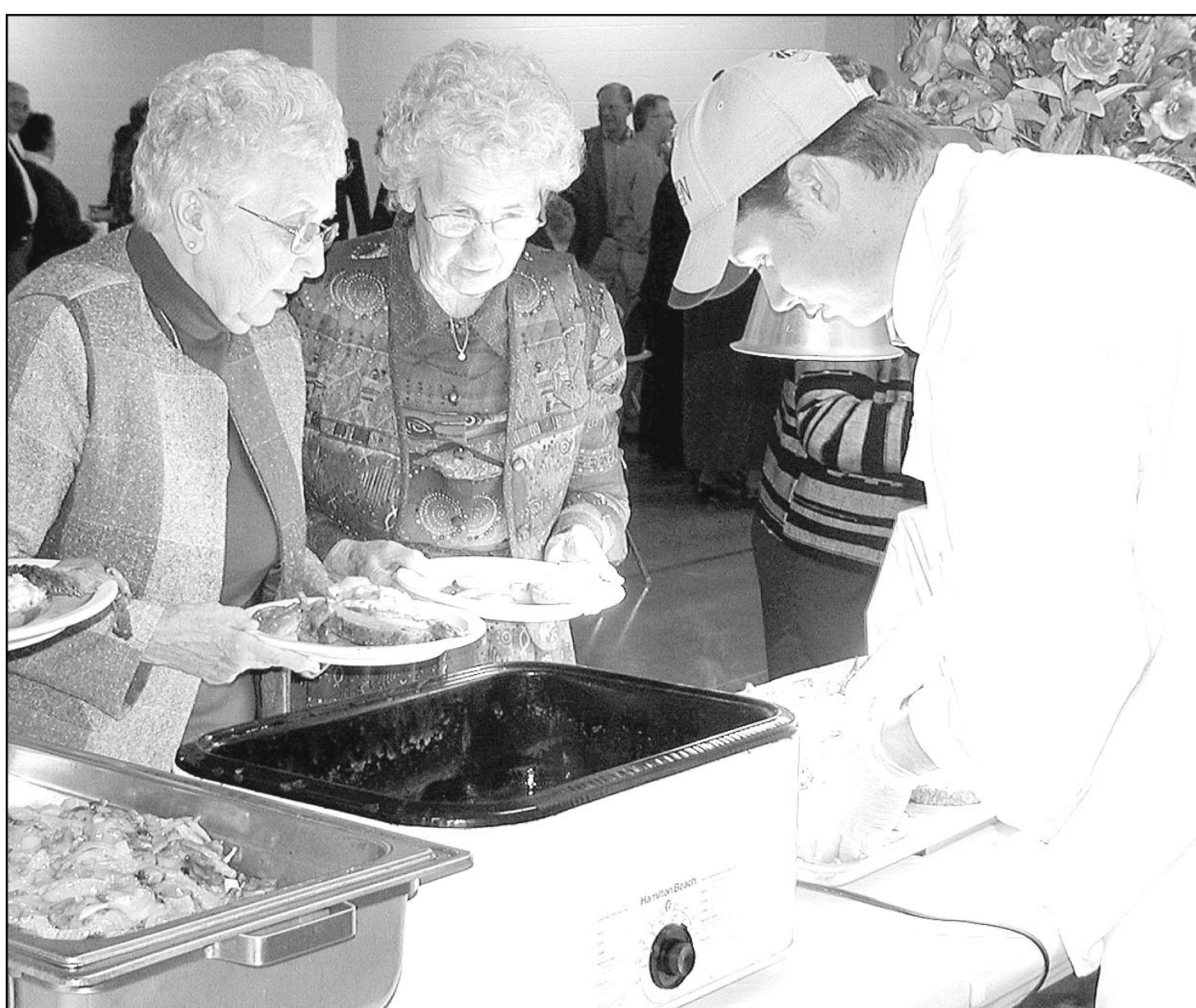
At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Continued a discussion with the health committee about building an assisted living facility or remodeling an existing nursing home to include assisted living. They also talked about calling the homes something new so they aren't pegged as offering just long-term care. Story to left.

- Approved purchasing a little over \$13,000 worth of chemicals for the noxious weed department. Story on Page 3A.

- Talked with the sheriff, who said he would be sending a letter of apology to a young man who was questioned at the school in Jennings. Story on Page 3A.

If an assisted living was put into (See GROUP on Page 8A)



## Crowd charmed by music

**DURING THE DINNER THEATER** sponsored by the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission on Saturday at The Gateway, Patty Brown (above left) and Alice Shirley waited to be served prime rib. After dinner, David Burgess (right) from New York performed over a dozen of guitar pieces from Brazil in Morgan Theater.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



## Conservationist leaving job here for post in Seneca

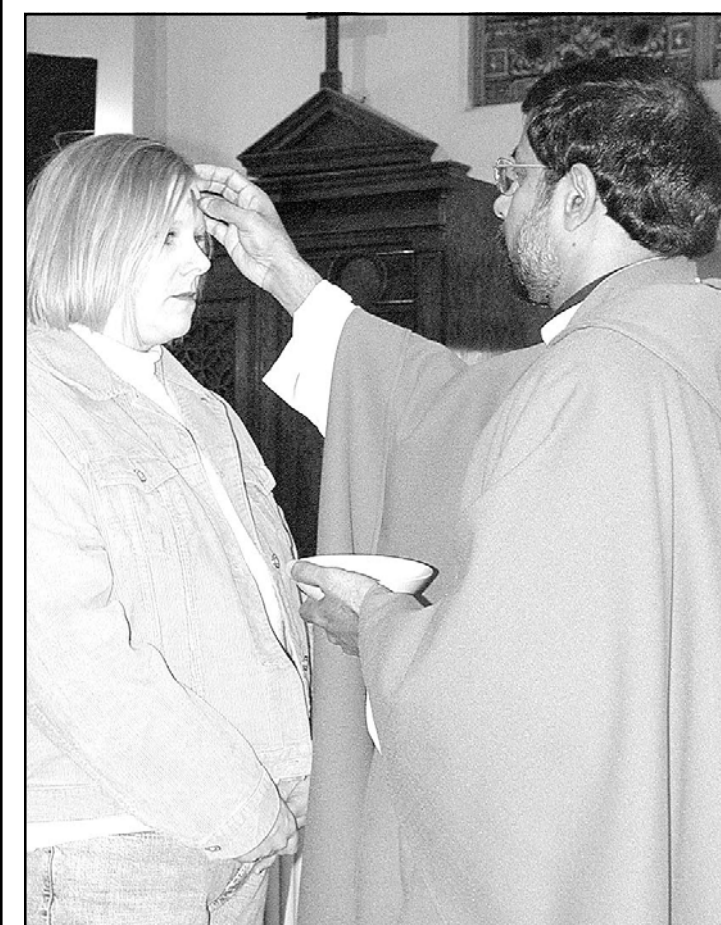
A reception will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday for Lee Copeland, who after five years as Decatur County district conservationist, is moving to Seneca to serve in the same position.

Mr. Copeland said he needs to report to Seneca by Monday, March 7. The promotion will give him several more employees, more money and a larger work load.

He said he started in conservation in the Goodland office and then applied for the job here.

This is a bittersweet move, he said. Normally, he said, when you decide to leave a place it is because you are tired of it. That isn't the case with the Copeland family. The move will take them closer to family in Abilene and Herington and (See EVENT on Page 8A)

## Ashes for Lent



**AT IMMACULATE CONCEPTION** Catholic Church in Leoville last week, Father George Kochuvelikkakam put ashes on Melissa Dreher's forehead for Ash Wednesday. The observance opened the season of Lent, when Christians prepare for Easter.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

## Law enforcement buckles down on seatbelt laws for kids

Police officers across the country are taking time this week to talk with parents and kids about buckling up.

2nd Lt. Doug Griffiths said although they aren't doing anything in Decatur County this year for National Child Safety Awareness Week, it is important for parents and kids to know about safety and what they can do.

This is a national program, he said, in which law enforcement and public health agencies across the nation all take part. The groups focus their attention toward educating people about child restraints, including proper placement of car seats and how to restrain them.

The project has been going on for six years, he said. Since he supervises troopers in nine counties, and the week is only five days long, he said they can't make it to every county every year. For the last two

years, said Lt. Griffiths, there have been safety checks at the grade school in Oberlin. The officers have been able to have one-on-one contact with parents and kids about restraints.

This year, he said, there just wasn't enough time to make it here. The officers will be visiting Rooks, Sheridan, Osborne, Phillips and Graham counties this week.

A child has no way of protecting himself, the trooper said. If adults don't take care of kids with the necessary equipment, it defeats the purpose of educating the kids. Hopefully, he said, both parents and kids will learn something this week and parents will be able to teach their kids through example by buckling up themselves.

The officers will be giving out information, having safety lanes and installing car seats through Friday.

## Council will hold hearings on vehicles

The Oberlin City Council will hold two hearings Thursday night on notices given to landowners with allegedly inoperable vehicles at the request of the owners.

Rob McFee and Jerry Miller requested hearings on notices they received recently, said City Administrator Gary Shike.

He said the council will also be discussing water and sewer rates. The city is involved in a project

to replace the waste water treatment plant with a new lagoon system.

There will be a report and recommendation from The Gateway sign committee, said Mr. Shike. He said Councilman Jay Anderson wants to talk about an economic development grant.

The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room at The Gateway. It is open to the public.

## City wants people at meeting Monday

The Oberlin City Council will hold a special meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday at The Gateway.

The only item on the agenda is a public hearing on the proposed drilling of replacement well No.

12. The meeting is open to the public.

The council encourages anyone with opinions about the well to come and speak.



# \* Group talks health Added care discussed

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 an existing facility, Commissioner Ralph Unger asked, could there be a contract to have one of the licensed practical nurses on call at the assisted living place?  
 They would need to look at the state regulations, said Good Samaritan Center Administrator Janice Shobe.  
 Does the Department of Health and Environment provide the regulations? asked Commissioner Doyle Brown.  
 The Good Samaritan Center is run under different regulations than the hospital and Cedar Living Center, said Mrs. Shobe. The hospital and Cedar Living Center are under the Department of Health and Environment, said Mrs. Doeden.

The hospital has a copy of the regulations for assisted living, she added. Is that the next step, asked Mrs. Shobe, to jump into the regulations and dig a little deeper?  
 Is there a way to add on to one of the county facilities so it could include a separate entrance? asked Mr. Brown. That way people who are living in the assisted living could not feel attached to those living in the nursing centers.

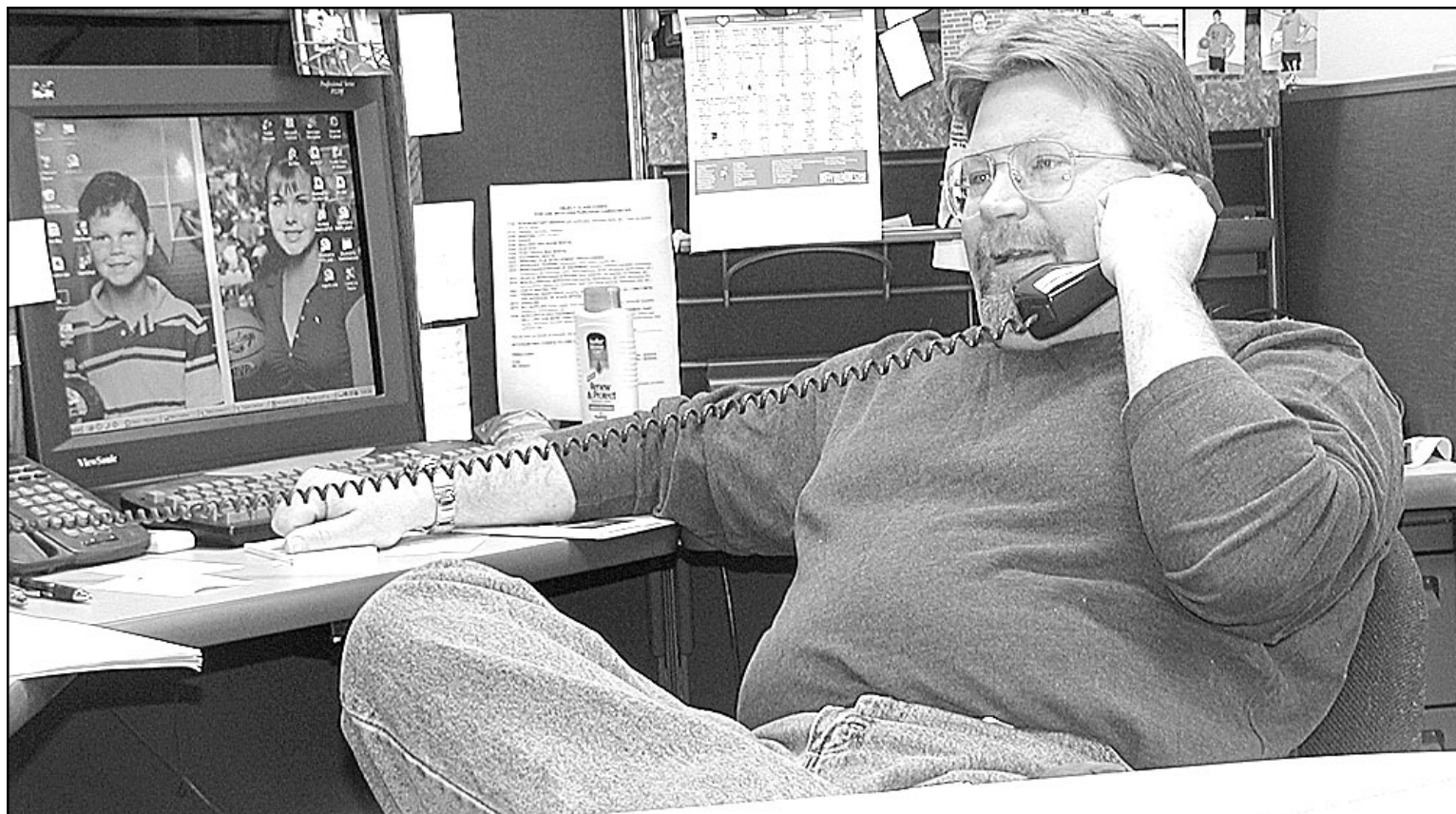
The county owns the land to the west of Cedar Living Center, said Mrs. Wilson.  
 Is the committee still talking about a 12-unit assisted living facility? asked Mrs. Doeden, or six? Mr. Brown said he didn't think they could afford to put in a 12-unit place.  
 County agencies have done a good job on home health care, said Mr. Brown, and that has helped people stay at home longer. No one is sure about how many people will move back here in the next 25 years or what is going to happen, but that is how long it would take to pay for a new facility. Does the county need a new facility, he asked, or is there room in a center that the county already has.

Mrs. Wilson said people need to know that the centers aren't just offering long-term care. People who come to either home can get healthy and move back home. Just because a person moves to one of the centers, she said, it doesn't mean they are going to die there.  
 Maybe that is an education thing, said Mr. Brown. Maybe a new term needs to be coined for the centers.  
 All of this goes back to having a strong hospital, said Mrs. Shobe, because people won't even look at a town without that. Mrs. Doeden said she doesn't think that is a problem.

Commissioner Patricia Glenn suggested that news from Wheat Ridge Terrace should go in the paper weekly. It should include visitations, games and more. It might help promote the facility.  
 "We do have a lot of pluses," said Mr. Unger, "if we can promote them."  
 He said he understands people who move their parents to facilities close to them, which may mean taking them out of town.  
 The committee decided to meet again in March after members have had time to look at the regulations. They plan to also talk about remodeling at that time.

# Legislators to be here

The Decatur County Farm Bureau will sponsor a "town hall meeting" for state legislators on Saturday, March 5.  
 Rep. John Faber and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer will be here to talk with voters. The meeting will be from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the courtroom at the Decatur County Courthouse.



**DISTRICT SOIL CONSERVATIONIST** Lee Copeland will be leaving his post after five years when he and his family move to Seneca in March. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

# \* Event planned for official

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 help Mr. Copeland's wife, Lisa, further her education.  
 Mrs. Copeland plans to get her criminal justice degree on-line through Washburn University soon. She wants to become a lawyer, said Mr. Copeland, but the only way for her to do that is to go to a law school.

The move will get the family closer to Topeka or Lawrence, where she can attend law school and the family won't have to be split.  
 Currently, Mrs. Copeland is working at Elmo Lund's office and is a part-time deputy for the Decatur County Sheriff's Office.  
 In the five years the Copelands

have lived here, Mr. Copeland has become active in golf and the Oberlin Rotary Club and coached youth football and basketball. He said there probably isn't a kid sixth through eighth grades that he hasn't coached.  
 So far, no one has been hired to replace Mr. Copeland by the state

office of the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Services.  
 Mr. Copeland and his wife have two children, Sara, 13 and Chase, 11. In a week, he said, the family will be checking out homes in Seneca.  
 Everyone is welcome to the reception at the Department of Agriculture office on South U.S. 83.

# Over 100 attend annual district banquet

More than 100 people attended the annual meeting of the Decatur County Conservation District last Monday at The Gateway in Oberlin.  
 A steak dinner, provided by the Decatur County Bankers Association, was served by The Gateway staff. Entertainment was by the DCHS Singers, directed by Susan Nelson, and accompanied by Mary Lohoefer.

Kansas Bankers Awards were presented by Key Banker Doug Brown of The Bank and Rodney Brantley, and David and Theresa Brantley, and Gary and Sarah Orr. He also presented the Windbreak Award to Jim and Pam Wesch.  
 Rangeland Awards were presented by conservation board Chairman David Wilson to Brent and Diane Phillips, and Roger and Angie Wilson. Mr. Wilson accepted the award for his parents, who were

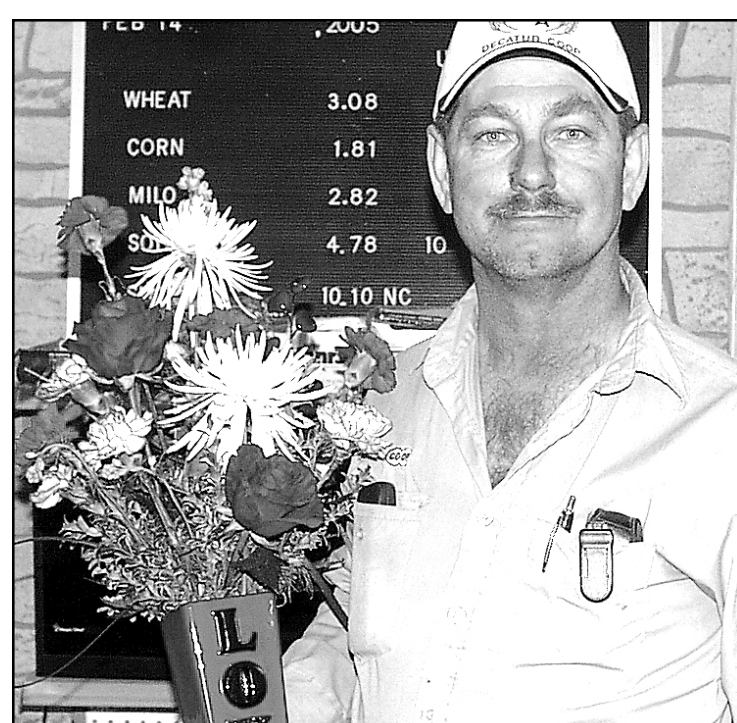
out-of-town. The Rangeland Award signs were provided by Sharp Brothers Seed Co. of Healy.  
 Poster winners were Chris Anderson, son of Richard and Maureen Anderson; Cheyenne Soderlund, daughter of Gene and Cheryl Soderlund; and Tiffany Anderson, daughter of Tom and Karen Anderson for first place honors.  
 Second place poster trophies were presented to Hannah and Zach May,

daughter and son of Roland and Pam May, and Dakota Soderlund, brother of Cheyenne. Chris Anderson and Cheyenne Soderlund received engraved medals as their posters will become state entries in November.  
 Elden Huff and Lawrence Jennings were elected as district supervisors for three years. Other board members are Vernon Ketterl, Ron Bryan, and Carl Wahlmeier.

## It's all in the cards



**TWO OBERLIN MEN** won flowers Monday for the Valentine's poker contest, "Don't Gamble With Love," sponsored by Oberlin merchants and *The Oberlin Herald*. Bob Berls (left) got white roses from Jeanette Krizek at Flow-



ers by Lee for a full house, three 5s and two kings. Jack Brown (right) received a mixed bouquet of red roses and carnations from Prairie Petals for his three aces and two queens. — Herald staff photos by Dave Bergling

5x6  
 Wagner Ford Mercury  
 in Goodland

# \* School won't panic

(Continued from Page 1A)  
 would be nice, but it's far from certain.

There are two rumors which cause him to worry, though.  
 The first is that the state will decide to change the low-enrollment and correlated weighting formulas, which adjust a district's budget to pay for higher costs. Last year, the Oberlin district's full-time equivalency number was 794.9 at \$3,863 each. Of that the district's weighted enrollment is 232.8.  
 "We know we need that low enrollment to survive," Mr. Glodt said.  
 The Department of Education knows that if the weighting is done away with, he said, it will devastate small schools. The schools that will be hurt the most, said Mr. Glodt, are among the state's best.

"Small schools are the highest achieving schools in the state," he said.  
 The second rumor is forced consolidation. There has been some talk about this in rural schools, he said, and at least two proposals have been made in the Legislature.

Mr. Glodt said the Oberlin district is not going to count on the extra money but will make plans assuming that the per pupil money won't decrease either.

He said they have talked with State Rep. John Faber and Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer about the situation.

The district plans to take teachers, board members and citizens to Topeka to lobby for small schools on Thursday, March 17. Anyone interested in going should call Mr. Glodt.  
 With all the information coming out, said Mr. Glodt, other schools are starting to panic. Some have issued non-renewal notices to all their staff, and then plan on hiring them back again.

"We are not going to panic," said Mr. Glodt. "We are going to prepare for the future with the numbers we are getting now. We are going to continue to provide the best education possible for our kids."

# Money to be given for college

The Kansas County Clerks and Election Officials Association has scholarships for seniors who want to major in journalism, political science or communications.

The \$500 scholarships are also available for college freshman or sophomores. The money is raised through efforts by county clerks, the secretary of state's office and Voters News Service, which collects election returns.

Applications can be picked up at the Decatur County clerk's office in the courthouse or from the school counselor. They need to be returned to the clerk in person or mailed to Marilyn Horn at Box 28 Oberlin, Kan. 67749 on or before Friday, April 1.

Winners will be announced at the group's seminar in May.

Internet tonight!  
 Call  
 475-2206!