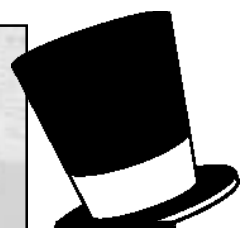




**READING TO YOUNGSTERS** at Oberlin Elementary School on Thursday, Officer Scott Zeigler (above) put on his best hat for a day of reading and fun. Listening were Aaron Cressler (center) and Logan Berry (top hat). Students like Madison Monaco (below) dressed up and got their lunch in a sack.



**Story, photos by Kimberly Davis**



## Hats top fun at elementary

**L**ittle hands reached out for the brown paper sacks sitting on the lunch counter at Oberlin Elementary School.

Normally lunch is served on a tray, but Thursday, the students each got a sack lunch so that they could go to the Mad Hatter's Picnic.

The students didn't have to travel very far from the lunch room, just down the hall to the gym. Still, it was a picnic. Blankets were spread out on the floor for the kids to sit on. About the only thing missing were the ants.

Each class had its own picnic site. At each area sat a volunteer from outside the school to read the kids a story while they ate.

Last week was Read Across America Week, sponsored by the teachers union, the National Education Association, said Principal Duane Dorshorst. This year's theme

at the grade school was "Reading is Where it's Hat."

Mr. Dorshorst said students and teachers got to wear crazy hats all week, and they chose the theme from that.

Teacher Cheryl Soderlund lined up volunteers to come in and read to the kids for the picnic. Each had to wear a hat related to their field. Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, donned a chef's hat. Farmer Dan Wasson had a cowboy hat, while Police Chief Wade Lockhart and Officer Scott Zeigler wore ball caps with POLICE on the front, and Dr. Elizabeth Sliter was in a surgical cap. The picnic was just one of the activities during the week.

Mr. Dorshorst said the goal was for the kids to read for 1,000 hours. By Friday, they had actually read 1,040 hours, both in school and at home.

On Monday, the Red Hat ladies came in to help kick the week off, and several came back for the last activity on Friday.

Last Wednesday, the kids had a hat parade showing off their crazy headgear.

After the picnic on Thursday, the third graders read to business people downtown.

Throughout the week, members from National Honor Society, TACT and Kayettes from the high school went to the grade school to either read or listen to kids reading.

The students also read at home to parents, or on their own, and then the parents could sign off on their sheets.

"We feel that it is important to show the kids that reading is the key to success in any area," said Mr. Dorshorst. "It is hard to have success in any field without reading."



**HELPING WITH READING DAY**, school board member Dan Wasson (above) donned his cowboy hat while Sierra Lohofener (left) went for a more fuzzy style.