

Alliance plans for holidays

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

It's never too early to get ready for the holidays, which members of the Oberlin Business Alliance are doing.

The group met last Wednesday at the LandMark Inn to discuss upcoming events, including tailgate parties, the annual Parade of Lights, visits from Santa, soup suppers and more.

Some upcoming events include a burger fry downtown on Friday, Sept. 30, the evening before the Mini-Sappa weekend, and the Trick or Trunk parade on Halloween, Monday, Oct. 31.

In November, the group will gear up for holiday shopping. The annual Business-to-Business tour will begin at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 13.

The light parade will be held on Friday, Nov. 25, the opening day for the Christmas season downtown. Gary Walter, with The Bank, will head up the parade again this year. Last year there were 16 to 18 entries. This year he would like to have 25 to 30.

Individuals and groups should start thinking about what they want to enter in the parade, he said.

The group agreed that they will ask kids at Oberlin Elementary School to pick some themes and then members will choose from those ideas.

Rusty Addleman, owner of Addleman Drug Store, said they talked about having some kind of contest on opening night, but there weren't any decisions made.

There was also talk about a window-decorating contest and having someone from out of town judge the windows, said Glenva Nichols, Chamber of Commerce manager. Participating businesses held a window decorating contest last year.

Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug Store, said they will probably need another planning session to nail down some of the details.

City Administrator Gary Shike asked when the members work on the lights for decorating downtown, if possibly the highway stars could be included.

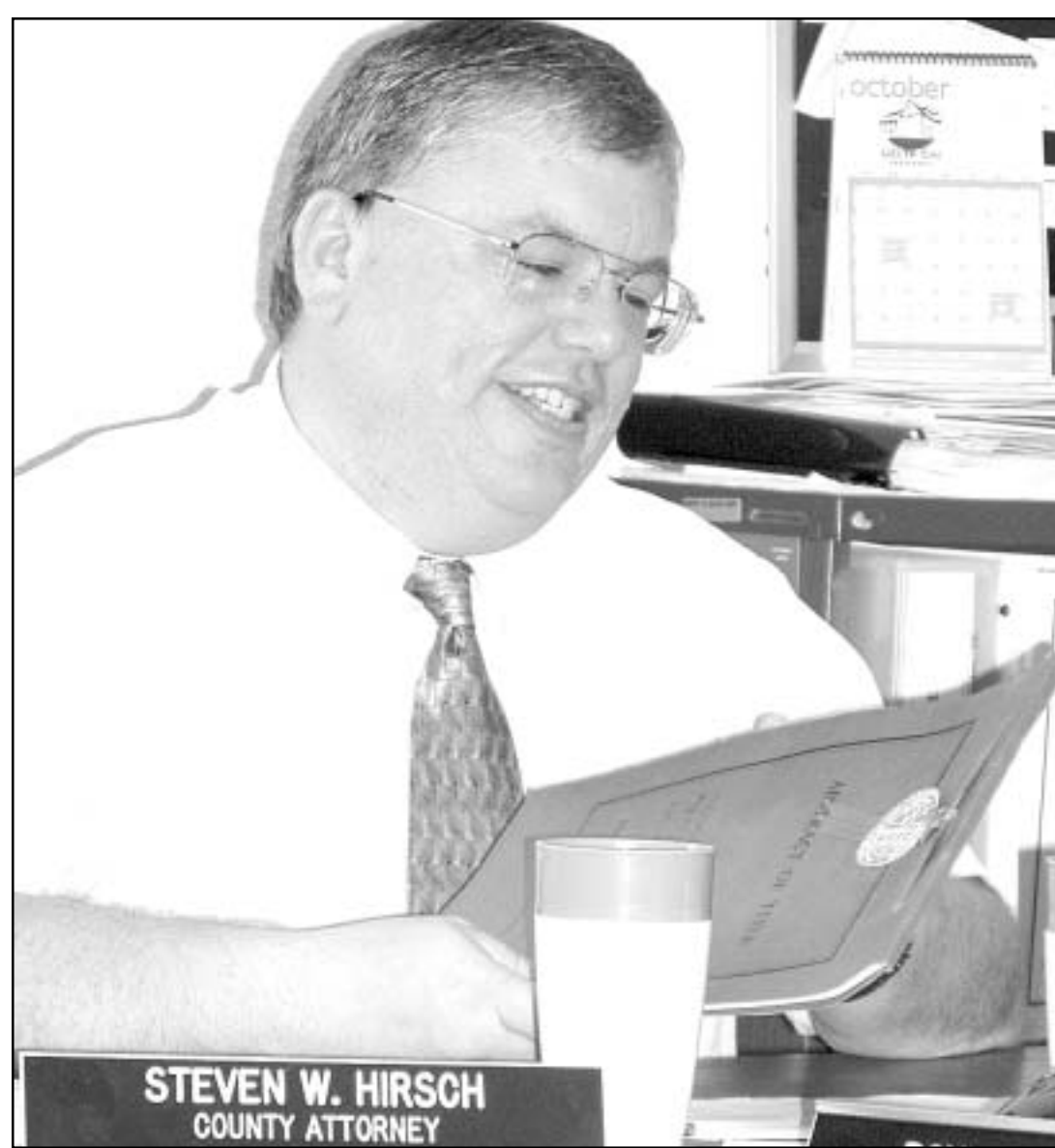
LaMoine Wolfram, with NAPA Auto Parts, checks the lights for the group, said Mr. Vollertsen. He said he will talk with him to see if he wants to do it again this year. Mr. Wolfram volunteers his time to check and fix the lights for the alliance.

In December, Santa will be in town for an evening, the alliance drawing will be held on Monday, Dec. 19, and there will be a winter farmers market at the courthouse.

Alliance members also discussed briefly the fact that they haven't received a bill for the fireworks for several years.

Mrs. Nichols said she thought the last year she received a bill was in 2002 for 2001.

Mr. Walter said each year he thinks the alliance needs to get the contributions from the city and the county offices and then hold onto the money in the fireworks fund, just in case. Members of the city council and county commissioners can change, he said, and so can philosophies.



AT A COMMISSIONERS MEETING, Steve Hirsch, Decatur County attorney, looked at a document. Mr. Hirsch is also the city attorney and a volunteer fireman and trainer for Sheridan County. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Attorney is firefighter at heart

Editor's Note: This article about Oberlin's Steve Hirsch first appeared in the July/August issue of the *Journal of the Kansas Bar Association*.

By BETH WARRINGTON

Coming from a family farm nearly six miles south of Simpson, Steve Hirsch, the youngest of five, wanted to make a decent living in a small town.

He chose to study law and become a lawyer, but he also wanted to keep feeding his fire fighting habit, which has lasted nearly 18 years.

"I had a desire to live in a rural setting for the rest of my life, but farming isn't the most profitable business," Hirsch said. "The weather, the insects, the lack of control over prices, and so forth make it a very risky business."

He believed that being a lawyer would make it possible to have the way of life he wanted. He enjoys helping people and being a lawyer does just that. Hirsch earned his Bachelor of Science in political science, cum laude, from Kansas State University in 1983 and his Juris Doctor with honors from Washburn University School of Law in 1986.

Hirsch said he likes being both a lawyer and firefighter. His law office in Oberlin is a showcase for his fire memorabilia.

"One day, a full-time firefighter from Salina was in my office on business for his grandmother, who lives in Oberlin," he said. "He looked at my office and said, 'If I hadn't been a firefighter, I think I'd have been a lawyer.' I got a huge grin on my face and said, 'If I hadn't been a lawyer, I'd have been a firefighter.'"

In 1963, his father, Fred Hirsch, started the Mitchell, Cloud, and Ottawa County Fire District No. 1. Hirsch's oldest brother, Gary, also was instrumental in getting the fire department started as a project for the Future Farmers of America chapter at Simpson. In fact, the FFA chapter took first place in the nation for this project. Hirsch said they used to raise money for the department by having chili feeds and pancake suppers at the fire station.

"I grew up on the back step of the fire truck," he said. "One of my earliest memories was going with my dad, in 1967, in the fire truck when a tornado had destroyed many homes in Mitchell and Cloud counties."

Hirsch is certified by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress as a firefighter 1 and fire service instructor 1. He is also certified as an incident safety officer and at the operation level for hazardous materials.

As a firefighter for 14 years at Oberlin, Hirsch

served as the assistant fire chief for 13 of those years. Since 2001, he has served as training chief for the Sheridan County Fire Department at Hoxie. He trains more than 100 volunteer fire fighters on a regular basis and also does training for the Rexford Fire Department in Thomas County.

In 1999, he was elected as a board member of the Kansas State Association of Fire Chiefs. He served in that capacity until he was elected secretary of the Kansas State Fire fighters Association (KSFFA) in 2000, where he still serves.

The association represents all of the 16,000 fire fighters across the state, paid or volunteer, and conducts 12 regional training schools for fire fighters each year.

"I get the chance to teach other fire fighters the practical and safety skills they need to do the job effectively, efficiently, and safely," Hirsch said.

In 2005, he was elected as the Kansas representative to the National Volunteer Fire Council in Washington. The council represents about 800,000 volunteers nationwide, he said.

Since he lives 30 miles from his home department, Hirsch is primarily involved in training, but he will occasionally run some calls.

"I'm not sure there is a typical call," he said. "What gets us into trouble as fire fighters is to ever think that something is 'typical.' Those are the kinds of fires that will kill you, so we have to treat everything as dangerous."

Hirsch says he always tells people that fire fighting is the most dangerous thing he does, but at times there are some similarities with his career as a lawyer.

"We put out figurative fires in the business and literal fires in the fire department," he said. "As a firefighter, people are always glad to see you show up. I'm not sure the same can be said about me showing up in a suit as an attorney to prosecute them."

Hirsch has been the Decatur County attorney for nearly 17 years and serves as city attorney for Dresden, Jennings, Norcatour and Oberlin. He said he does a little of everything, but government practice is a large part of his practice, and probate work is also a sizable portion.

"I am pretty passionate about this firefighter thing," he said. "I am lucky to have had some very understanding clients and judges who have let me leave my office — or even court — to take care of other disasters."

He said he is blessed to have a wife, Anita, who supports him and his fire fighting habit, and two children, Joseph, 12, and Jennifer, 16, who understand.

Challenger wants council to raise cash for refugees

After the Oberlin City Council meeting last Thursday, members learned that a member of the community was challenging the council to raise \$500 for the hurricane relief fund.

Mayor Ken Shobe said that if people want to donate, they can pledge money to City Administrator Gary Shike and see if they can get close to \$500.

The money would then be donated through the Oberlin Rotary Club, said Mayor Shobe. Mr. Shike said the council could choose where they wanted the money to go if they decide to accept the challenge.

The Oberlin Rotary Club started to collect money last week for the hurricane victims. All of the money will be sent to Rotary districts in Louisiana and in Houston, where many refugees have been taken.

So far, said Rusty Addleman, who

is heading up the project, the club has raised over \$1,000. Mr. Addleman said they are still working on getting jars out in businesses and possibly will be passing cans at the next home football game on Friday, Sept. 23.

Mr. Addleman said they will collect as long as people want to give since the refugees won't stop needing help any time soon.

Besides cash donations, some have given food and diapers, he said, and those have been taken to Florida. Melanie Anderson said the United Church had a drive for items for the hurricane victims.

On Friday, the items were loaded up in Kirk Young's touring bus, which he drove to Florida to help out.

Students at Oberlin Elementary School also are collecting money for hurricane victims.

Four guess 10 out 11 in football contest

Football fans are getting better at guessing who will win both college and high school football games.

While no one guessed every game right in the Pigskin Pick-em contest this week, four got 10 out of 11. Another seven only missed two games each.

The most missed game was Goodland-St. Francis. The Sainty Indians downed the Goodland Cowboys, 30-6. Everyone, however, picked the Oberlin Red Devils to beat the Quinter Bulldogs, which they did, 27-20.

Since there was a four-way tie, the tie-breaker game came into play.

The Miami Dolphins beat the Denver Broncos 34-10. Only one entrant felt that Miami was going to win. All four finalists thought Denver would win.

Both Connie Grafel and Travis Raile, Oberlin, picked the Broncos to beat the Dolphins 24-17, which was 33 points off. A coin toss gave first place to Raile and Grafel got second.

Third place went to Brock Baxter, Smith Center, who picked the Broncos over Miami 34-24, or 36 points off.

Rodney Solko of McCook also guessed 10 of the 11 games right but came up with Denver over Miami 28-14, or 42 points off the actual score.

Raile wins \$15, Grafel \$10 and Baxter \$5 in scrip spendable at any participating Pigskin Pick-em merchant. They need to pick up the winnings at *The Oberlin Herald* within three weeks.

Missing only two games last week were Denise Bailey, Norcatour, and Colleen Gee, Deb Brown, Sharla Ritter, Sarah Fredrickson, Valisha Castle and Roger Cochran, Oberlin.

This week's games are on Page 8A of today's paper. Entering the contest is free but you need to use the blank from the paper or pick up an official entry blank from any participating merchant. Only original entry blanks will be accepted, no copies.

Every member of the family can enter but each person can only enter once a week.

Winners of the games in last week's paper were Norton over Plainville, St. Francis over Goodland, Fort Hays State University over New Mexico Highland, Kansas State University over Marshall, University of Kansas over Appalachian State, Nebraska over Wake Forest, Oberlin over Quinter, Northern Valley over Golden Plains, Hoxie over Colby, Oakley over Atwood, McCook over York and the Miami Dolphins over the Denver Broncos 34-10 for the tie breaker.

Fund raiser planned to help build new pool

The city's pool committee kicked back into full gear last week with plans of a potato bar and dessert buffet on Friday, Sept. 23, before the Decatur Community High home football game.

The group met Friday at the LandMark Inn to discuss the event, which will be sponsored by the Oberlin Royal Neighbors of America chapter here.

The potato bar and dessert buffet will start at 5 p.m. in the parking lot north of the stadium. The dinner will be for a donation.

The Royal Neighbors will be matching the first \$1,000 raised to help build a new pool for the county.

The group encouraged people to come out and eat before attending the game against the Goodland Cowboys.

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