



Swings lure kids at recess

ON THE PLAYGROUND at Oberlin Elementary School on Tuesday, Brittani Farr (above) pushed her friend, Tyler Nichols, on the swings, while to their right Drew Juenemann swung on his tummy. Before he headed inside, Cory Wurm (below) had to clean the rocks out of his shoes.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



High school buddies off to the military

By JIM MERRIOTT

Major League Baseball Hall of Famer and long-time New York Yankees catcher Yogi Berra once said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Two Oberlin buddies, seniors Denton Bailey and Joe Mondero, will be coming to that fork in the road come high school graduation in May. Each has chosen a different path to his dreams.

Bailey will take an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, on the Hudson River just outside of Montgomery, N.Y., in preparation to become an Army officer.

Mondero will take the other fork, as he has enlisted in the Marine Corps, most likely headed either to San Diego or Cherry Point, N.C., for basic training.



D. Bailey



J. Mondero

Bailey is the son of Chris and Karen Bailey and the brother of Danielle and Andrea.

He played all four sports, football, basketball, wrestling, and track, in junior high. He started three years as quarterback in high school, earning three football letters, and honors as an all-league defensive back and second-team quarterback. He got honorable mention for the all-state football team his senior year, and

threw for 1,000-plus yards.

Bailey said he learned the fundamentals playing federated football in Norton during fifth and sixth grade. He also played baseball, starting in kindergarten, and continued through his senior year. He is best known, though, for his wrestling abilities, earning varsity letters all four years at Decatur Community High. Last season, his junior year, he made it to state competition. In the spring, he was a regional javelin champion, advancing to state competition. He plays American Legion baseball at Norton.

He participated in 4-H, likes to hunt birds, enjoys going to the movies and plans on majoring in history and government and minoring in forensic science at West Point.

"My dad is my main role model," said Bailey. "I believe I have learned

a good work ethic from him, even when there were times I didn't want to get up so early."

He is a member of the National Honor Society and was named to the National Honor Roll in "Who's Who Among American High School Students."

"I know that there are younger kids in the area that look up to us high school athletes," Bailey said. "I am just trying to do the right thing and be a good role model."

Mondero, on the other hand, moved to Oberlin his seventh grade year, when he and Bailey became friends. Mondero was the other half of the passing/receiving combination, playing wideout in football. His blazing quickness and speed allowed him to letter four years in track, qualifying for state his sophomore year. (See BUDDIES on Page 5)

Insurance being sued over blaze

Bowling alley owners take on Lloyd's of London

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The owners of the burned-out Oberlin bowling alley have filed a lawsuit against underwriters for Lloyd's of London who had the insurance on the building.

The suit, first filed in the Decatur County District Court, was removed to federal court based on the "diversity of citizenship" of the parties.

The suit seeks \$300,000, the amount Centennial Bowl and the Red Crown Lounge, which burned down in May, were insured for by the owners.

Ken Morgan and Maurice Zoderow, through their corporation, Zoderow and Morgan, Inc., filed the lawsuit in October. Their lawyer, Elmo Lund, said this week that it is pending in federal court.

Basically, he said, the insurance company reneged on their contracts and refused to pay for the fire damage. He said the men hired a local insurance company which brokered with a company in Kansas City, which brokered with the underwriters at Lloyd's of London, Med

James, Inc.

Lloyd's is known for working with movie stars and the like to insure things, like an actresses' legs, which might seem odd to some. The company, a loose alliance of partnerships, works through an insurance broker to write policies. The company's website states that they are "trusted to insure the world's toughest risks."

The lawsuit, said Mr. Lund, has been removed from county court to federal court in Wichita. In these cases, he said, it can take one to two years for a decision to be made because of the schedule in federal court.

"Insurance companies like to drag the cases on," he said, "but at some time it will end."

Mr. Zoderow said he was not allowed to say anything about the case, referring the caller to his lawyer. Mr. Lund said in insurance cases, it is normally "a fight for every inch."

The bowling alley and bar were (See ALLEY on Page 5)

Officer ends late-night drive with barbed wire

A 30-year-old McCook man was arrested the morning of Christmas Eve after a city police officer saw him driving out of the Decatur Co-op with barbed wire hanging out the back of his truck.

Although Danny Kofler has been charged only with felony theft so far, he may be looking at bigger charges after \$58,000 in cash was found in the truck along with some suspicious substances.

Court documents say that Officer Scott Zeigler saw Mr. Kofler driving a semi-trailer truck from the co-op elevator around 2:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 24, which he thought was unusual for that hour.

Officer Zeigler said he saw the

rear of the truck was open and there were rolls of barbed wire visible in the trailer.

He stopped Mr. Kofler just west of Rodehaver on Hall Street. Mr. Kofler said he was picking up the truck from the co-op, but was unable to find any paperwork.

Officer Zeigler called a Co-op employee who said he knew nothing about the truck being picked up. He found tracks next to an area where barbed wire was stored. Later, the employee told police that the wire had not been sold and should still be in the parking lot.

The 27 rolls of wire were worth more than \$1,500, police estimated. (See OFFICER on Page 5)

Donations top goal by over 50 percent

With the end of the year came the end of the annual food drive at Oberlin's Stanley Hardware, a glorious 1,081 items over the goal.

Owner Joe Stanley said the goal was to bring in 2,000 pieces of dry or canned food and household goods for the Decatur County Food Pantry. Anyone in need, county residents or people just passing through, can get help at the pantry, in the basement of the United Church.

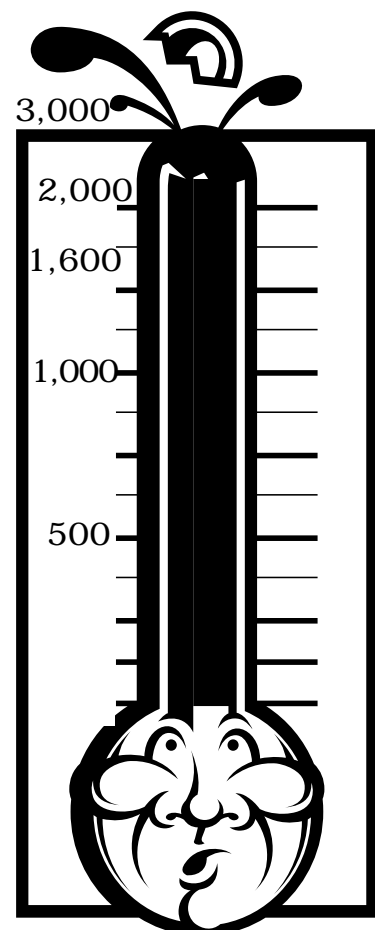
The food supply was hit hard this summer and at the end of the year, leaving the pantry low on just about everything.

Last week, the drive had already passed the goal. By Tuesday, Mr. Stanley counted 3,081 items in the window, 54 percent over the goal and by far the most collected in seven years of the drive.

Mr. Stanley said the hospital staff brought in 250 items, which helped. He planned to move the food this afternoon with the help of the junior high student council.

The drive started just after Thanksgiving and ended at the beginning of 2006.

Although the collection got off to a slow start because of weather, Mr. Stanley said, it took off during the last two weeks of the year.





IN THE FALL, Denton Bailey (above) and Joe Mondero (below) played on the Decatur Community High Red Devil football team. Both young men plan to enter the military after they graduate in May. — Herald file photos



* Buddies decide on different paths

(Continued from Page 1)
 more year in the 100- and 200-meter dashes. He finished second at 100 meters his junior year at the league meet. His relay team finished fifth that year in the 4x100 meters at the Class 2A state meet. Mondero's touchdown reception against St. Francis won the Red Devils' first game this fall. Saintry had beaten Oberlin 13 straight years before that victory. Mondero had over 300 yards in receptions and won second-team league honors as the Red Devil punter. He earned two letters in football and holds eight records for speed and jumping at Decatur Community High. After his enlistment ends in the Marine Corps, Mondero plans on attending college and playing football. This Red Devil is a devoted Nebraska Cornhusker fan, having gone to school in his early years in McCook. Criminal justice will be his major in college, and he says he might work in this area after graduation. Joe enjoys drag racing and working on his 1985 Chevy Camaro. "SOCOM-Navy Seals" is his favorite video game. Mondero likes to spend time at his parents' cabin at Cedar Bluffs Reservoir jet skiing in the summer, and he lifts weights during the off-season. "Try everything within reason," he says. "Don't regret the choices you make, but be accountable for your decisions, be responsible." Joe is the son of John and Karen Mondero. His father is the owner of Cabinetland, and his mom is an X-ray technician in Sacramento. Bailey and Mondero say they have taken the discipline they learned from the gridiron and wrestling mat and intend to apply it to their career goals. This Christmas is a special holiday for them, the men said, as they do not know if they will be home next year at this time.

* Officer arrests man leaving co-op with barbed wire

(Continued from Page 1)
 Officer Zeigler arrested Mr. Kofler. He was taken to the Decatur County Jail and held until his first appearance last Tuesday. He posted the \$25,000 bond that day and was released. The first charge of felony theft, is a level 9 non person felony. If found guilty, Mr. Kofler could be sentenced to 17 months in a state prison with a fine up to \$100,000. Since the stolen barbed wire was left in the semi truck, officers obtained a search warrant last Tuesday to retrieve the wire and any evidence that had anything to do with the case. Decatur County Attorney Preston Pratt said at that time the men found the money and stopped searching since the warrant didn't include

money or drugs. The officers got another search warrant, he said, and with the help of a drug dog from the Thomas County sheriff's office, found some substances that were sent to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. It will probably take months to hear back about the substances. Mr. Pratt said the money is being held and the truck was released to the owner. There hadn't been any additional charges filed against Mr. Kofler as of Tuesday. Mr. Kofler faced a preliminary hearing at 3 p.m. Friday on the theft charge. He has hired Charles Peckham of Brown, Creighton and Peckham from Atwood as his attorney.

* Alley owners fight underwriter

(Continued from Page 1)
 destroyed by a fire in the middle of the night May 30. A deputy state fire marshal investigated the ruins along with Undersheriff Randy McHugh. Cash boxes had been emptied and evidence of possible accelerants used to start the fire were found. The fire marshal said the fire was caused by arson, but so far, despite many rumors, no charges have been filed, and no case has been presented to the county attorney. The case is still pending, said Undersheriff McHugh, and they are waiting on some test results. No arrests have been made. The petition says that the cost to

replace the building is more than \$250,000 and the personal property more than \$125,000. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Zodrow had a general liability insurance policy which insures the building for a maximum amount of \$200,000 and the contents for \$100,000. The men are asking for \$300,000 to be paid for the building and the belongings which were ruined by the fire. The defendants in the case are Heritage Managing Agency, Ltd., an underwriter for Lloyd's. At 3 p.m. on Tuesday, those involved are scheduled to have a telephone conference on the case.

Consultant to help schools with insurance

The Oberlin School Board agreed Monday, Dec. 12, to hire a consulting firm to help shop for insurance for district employees and also to be an advocate for the district. Superintendent Kelly Glodt said the district has used the McInnes Maggart Consulting Group for the last few years to help get better insurance prices, but the group has worked on a commission. This year, the agreement is that the district will pay the group \$6,000, or \$500 a month. Since the district pays hundreds of thousands in benefits each year, said Mr. Glodt, the money spent for the consultants is more than worth the cost. He said the district will still have an insurance committee to look at the information, but the consultants will contact the agencies. Mr. Glodt said the group has more pull with companies than he would if he

called. For example, he said, if the district gets a rate quote from one agency and it is lower than what another one quotes, the group will call the higher one and negotiate. The consultants will search and compare to find the best rate. The group, said Mr. Glodt, will also come in handy if one of the employees has a problem with the insurance company not paying a claim. He said he thought the work the district would get from the group would be well worth the money. A few years ago, said board President Dewayne Jackson, when the district went with a different insurance plan, it seemed there were a few problems. Board Clerk Vickie Lippelmann dealt with the agency the first year on the problems, he said, then the consulting group came in.

Merchants to provide gifts for first baby of 2006

Oberlin businesses have teamed together to offer a whole bunch of gifts to the parents of the first baby born at the Decatur County Hospital this year. Each year, *The Oberlin Herald* asks merchants to round up gifts for

the New Year's Baby. In the past few years, people from outside the county have won the gifts for the New Year's baby because their home hospitals don't deliver babies. As of Tuesday, there had been no

new babies reported. Gifts include a case of baby food from Raye's Grocery, a pizza for two from Pizza Hut, a \$20 gift certificate from Mary Kay, a gift from Fredrickson Insurance Agency, a \$10 gift certificate from Ben Franklin in McCook, a gift from Ray Jewelry, a \$10 gift certificate from Ward Drug Store, a \$25 gift certificate from Rocking R, a \$25 savings bond from First National Bank, a \$10 gift certificate from Stanley Hardware, a \$25 gift certificate from Shear Creations West and Day Spa, a \$25 gift certificate from Addleman Drug Store, a \$10 gift certificate from the Dresser and a year's subscription to *The Herald*.

Council to continue rate discussion

The Oberlin City Council will hold its first meeting of the new year at 6:30 p.m., Thursday at The Gateway. The council plans to continue a discussion that was tabled in 2005 about an increase in electric rates. With the cost to get power to the city, the council has been looking at increasing rates for a while. City Administrator Gary Shike said, though, that he isn't sure if the council will decide to increase the rates or not. The group will also have begin-

ning-of-the-year items to take care of at the open meeting, including generally accepted accounting practices resolution and designate the banks. The meeting will be in the Morgan Theater. It is open to the public and will not be on cable.

Newspaper crew takes Monday off

Due to the New Year's holiday on Monday, *The Oberlin Herald* is being printed a day late this week. The paper went to press on

Wednesday, so copies will be on the newsstands and at businesses on Wednesday afternoon and reach area subscribers in the mail on Thursday. The regular printing schedule will resume next week.

Book by Kansas Native
Douglas Yocom

THE OBERLIN HERALD
170 S. Penn Ave.
Oberlin, KS 67749
Phone: 785-475-2206

\$25 + Tax =
\$26.64 Picked Up
Plus \$5 Shipping/Copy
Mailed and Handling

"If you don't have your health..."

Dr. Ryan Unger and Dr. Douglas Fair

**Review the Six Steps to Wellness on-line
and Solve Your Health Puzzle!**

www.fairchiropractic.com
or
www.fairwellness.com