

Washington 2006

Students, teachers head for our capital on fifth annual trip

By **KELLEN DOEDEN**

The Decatur Community High School student council sent six of its members and two teachers on the fifth annual trip to Washington, D.C., over spring break. Those attending were teachers Tim and Brenda Breth, and students Denton Bailey, Kellen Doeden, Karli Fredrickson, Aaron Helm, Nikki Lincoln, and Breck Simonsson.

The group took off on Sunday morning and drove to Kansas City where they stayed the night in a hotel. Bright and early the next morning, they headed off to Kansas City International Airport where they took off to Dallas for a brief layover. From there, they immediately flew to Baltimore where they were picked up by John and Heidi Lesinski of Great Falls, Va.

Heidi is a 1983 graduate of Decatur Community High School. She and her husband, a retired U.S. Marine Corps colonel, host six students and two adults each year for a tour of Washington, D.C., and surrounding areas.

Since John raises scholarship money for marines, Heidi wanted to do something for her alma mater. She said she remembered from years ago a church youth ski trip when Greg Lohofener taught her to ski. "He literally took me down the mountain," she said. That type of experience is what she wanted to give to other kids.

"I will never forget the first time I was in Washington, D.C.," Heidi continued. "I had never felt like that before in my life, and I wanted to share that feeling."

Six years ago when in Oberlin she visited with then-principal Buzz Matson, and the program was born. Over the last five years, the Lesinskis have hosted 31 students and 10 sponsors.

Before arriving at the Lesinski home the group visited Fort McHenry, where "The Star-Spangled Banner" was written during the War of 1812. They arrived

at the end of the day, just in time to help fold the large flag that had flown over the fort. After touring the fort the group drove to "Mutt Haven" in Great Falls, Va., the Lesinski home.

On Tuesday, the group did many exciting things. First they visited the Pentagon, guided by members of both the Air Force and Navy. They stood in the area where the terrorist plane struck the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

Following the Pentagon tour everyone rode the subway to Arlington National Cemetery where they saw John F. Kennedy's grave, Robert E. Lee's house, and the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"I was impressed with the changing of the guard," said Mrs. Breth. "The guards are so young."

Next, they ate lunch at the Hard Rock Café, and afterward they walked across the street to Ford's Theatre where Abraham Lincoln was shot.

They also visited the ESPN Zone, a dining and sports entertainment facility, and walked by the White House. They ended the day visiting the Smithsonian Museum of American History where they saw things like Archie Bunker's chair, the ruby shoes from "The Wizard of Oz," and the original of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

For dinner that night, they ate Indian food. According to Heidi, part of the experience is to try new things. Everyone liked at least one of the new foods they tried.

The next day, a member of Senator Pat Roberts' staff gave the group a tour of the Capitol building. They saw the old Senate Chamber and the old Supreme Court room, the Rotunda, the statue of Dwight D. Eisenhower, and many other things.

They also visited other Smithsonians in the area, including the Smithsonian Art Gallery, where they saw paintings by Van Gogh, Rembrandt, and Renoir, as well as



LENDING A HAND Karli Fredrickson, Nikki Lincoln, Breck Simonsson and Kellen Doeden arrived at Fort McHenry just in time to help fold the flag when Old Glory was taken

down for the day. The Student Council members were touring the area on the Washington trip sponsored annually by John and Heidi Lesinski.

— Photo by Heidi Lesinski

the only Leonard da Vinci painting in the United States.

"I really liked the art museum," said Mrs. Breth. "We've read or heard of these famous artists, but to actually see their work is incredible."

The group also visited the Holocaust museum.

On Thursday Col. Delbert Townsend, a 1938 Decatur Community High School graduate who lives in Fort Washington, Md., furnished for the group tickets to Mount Vernon, George Washington's home.

Later Col. Townsend accompanied the Oberlinites on a road trip to Annapolis where they toured the Naval Academy and the Maryland State House. At the Naval Academy, they toured the athletic and aquatic center where former great naval athletes such as Roger Staubach and David Robinson practiced, as well as the chapel, student union, and administrative building. They also saw the tomb of John Paul Jones and Roger Staubach's Heisman trophy.

At the Maryland State House, the students and their sponsors were able to attend a meeting of the Ways and Mean Committee, which was discussing using lottery money to fund education. The chairperson's assistant then gave the group a tour of the State House, where George Washington's inauguration took place.

After an afternoon of shopping in Annapolis, the group went out for seafood with Col. Townsend. That night they visited several national



monuments including the Lincoln, Vietnam, Korean, and World War II memorials.

"My favorite monument was the Korean War Memorial," said Denton Bailey.

On the last day, the group started off at the new Air and Space Museum where they saw the Enola Gay and a space shuttle. Next were the Jefferson Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, and the National Cathedral, which is where Ronald Reagan funeral was

held. A performance by the Capitol Steps, a politically satirical comedy group, concluded the evening.

"To choose one favorite thing of the whole trip is impossible," said Mr. Breth. "But I really liked Mount Vernon because I was intrigued by the mansion itself and the rich history of the area."

The next day, the group flew to Kansas City then drove home.

Denton Bailey said, "I liked Arlington Cemetery and the Naval Academy. The military parts of each

interested me because I'm going to West Point."

"I really liked Annapolis and the Naval Academy. Arlington Cemetery was cool, too," said junior Aaron Helm. "I liked the Vietnam Memorial because I got to see one of my relative's name on the wall."

"This was truly a chance of a lifetime," said Mrs. Breth. "The Lesinskis are incredible, fun people. They have given us so many awesome memories that none of us will ever forget."

Team takes third in Scott City meet

By **AMBER BARRATT**

The Decatur Community High School speech team took third place at the Scott City speech tournament on April 17.

Qualifying for state championship competition were Andy Dempewolf, first in extemporaneous speaking; Jeremy Tally, first in humorous solo acting; and Jenny Hirsch, second in poetry.

Placing fourth were Katrina Wentz in poetry and humorous solo acting, and Karyn Jordan and Sarah Marcuson in duet acting.

Jeremy Tally led the team in points.

Others competing in Scott City were Tricia Dorshorst, Sarah Marcuson, Andy Dempewolf, and Hayley Barrett in prose; Emma Merrill and Jolynda Chase in poetry; Amber Mason and Kim Wessel in humorous solo acting; and the duos of Jolynda Chase and Melissa Hasty, and Rory Wendelin and Jenny Hirsch, in improvised duet acting.

"The team's dedication is outstanding," said Coach Leigh Davis. "Their hard work has paid off."

Student Council cleans high school courtyard

By **ANDY INMAN**

The Decatur Community High School student council cleaned the school's courtyard on Thursday, March 30, to help the school look its best for Regional Music Festival which was held at the high school building the following Saturday.

The project was organized by

Dick Ahlberg, student council sponsor.

Members of the student council raked leaves, picked up trash, and re-laid white rock for the courtyard's decorative "D." After the project was completed, the students were rewarded with pizza from Pizza Hut.

Voice of Decatur Community High School

Decatur Dictator

By the DCHS Dictator Staff

Five more qualify for state tourney

By **JONATHAN SMITH**

Five Oberlin students qualified for the state speech tournament by placing first or second at the Cheyenne League speech tournament held in Northern Valley.

Nine teams participated, but because Oberlin is outside their league, Decatur Community High did not receive a team score.

Earning a trip to state were Jessica Bremer, who placed first in extemporaneous speaking; Destry Jackson, first in poetry and second in serious solo acting; Ethan Merrill, sec-

ond in poetry; Annamarie Larue, second in informative speaking; and Katrina Wentz, second in prose.

Qualifying for the state speech festival were MaKenzie Nelson and Annamarie Larue, who placed third in duet acting.

Others placing were Andy Dempewolf, third in extemporaneous speaking; Jacinta Carter and Alyssa Rippe, fifth in duet acting; Ethan Merrill, fifth in humorous solo acting; and Katrina Wentz, sixth in serious solo acting.

School Menus

May 1-5

OBERLIN SCHOOLS

Monday: Breakfast: cereal, muffin, applesauce. Lunch: lasagna, garlic bread, green beans, applesauce. **Tuesday:** Breakfast: pancake, sausage patty, peaches. Lunch: Polish dog with bun, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, peaches. **Wednesday:** Breakfast: Breakfast Bites, tropical fruit.

Lunch: fish sticks, French fries, roll, peas, tropical fruit. **Thursday:** Breakfast: pancake, ham patty, tropical fruit. Lunch: tacos, potato o'Lays, pears, corn. **Friday:** Breakfast: cereal, muffins, apricots. Lunch: turkey and cheese sandwich, chips, apricots, mixed vegetables. Milk served with all meals. Juice served with all breakfasts. Choice bar served with all lunches.

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