

## Holiday gift buying in full swing

### Stores stay open late, on Sundays for shoppers

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

Christmas shopping is in full swing, with Oberlin stores busy over the weekend, promotions underway and shoppers looking for that perfect gift.

The shopping season traditionally starts the Friday after Thanksgiving, which is exactly what happened in Oberlin this year. People were still in town from the Thanksgiving holiday and the annual Parade of Lights was held downtown, drawing a large crowd.

Stores will stay open from 1 to 4 p.m. on Sundays for shoppers up until Christmas, with the exception of Christmas Eve, Dec. 24. There'll be late shopping the week before Christmas, with stores open until 7 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, Dec. 20-22.

At Stanley Hardware, owner Joe Stanley said Friday was the busiest day of the weekend. He said they had shoppers in the store up until they closed about 8 p.m. that night.

Mr. Stanley said he wasn't sure if there was any one particular item that he sold more of than others, although it seemed a lot of people were buying power tools.

He said they made several special purchases on items this year and are

selling those to the customers for good prices. Currently, said Mr. Stanley, they have a Black and Decker cordless drill for almost half the regular price.

Besides power tools, Stanley offers stuff for the home, yard, Christmas decorations and hardware.

At Rocking R, owner Karen Chambers said the holiday weekend had gone well for her. She added that she saw more people on Friday, but had more buyers on Saturday.

There wasn't any one item that sold extremely well, she said; it was a little bit of everything with the emphasis on collectibles and the clothing line. She said she also sold a saddle and some tack.

Rocking R offers clothes for infants up to adults, horse supplies, collectibles and jewelry.

Gary Anderson, owner of the Oberlin Mercantile, said he thought they were busier than last year, with Saturday being his busiest day. Mr. Anderson said he sold a lot of Christmas ornaments, several dipped scented bears and some collectible Santas.

In the past, he said, he's seen trends. A few years ago, people were interested in the glass snowmen. (See STORES on Page 12A)

## Food pantry crew sees increase in use of emergency stores

Use at the Decatur County Food Pantry is up this year compared to 2005.

Melanie Anderson, who works at the pantry at the United Church, said there have been a lot of people who have come through the pantry this year. People come here for jobs and then the job disappears, some are low income families and others need the extra help because of an illness.

This year to date, she said, 92 adults and 66 children have used the pantry while in 2005, 77 adults and 55 kids used the service.

The pantry has had 55 adults and 44 children who have used the service once, 19 adults and 14 kids who have used it twice and 21 adults and 10 children who have used it three times, this year.

The good thing is, said Ms. Anderson, is that donations have been up too, which has helped a lot. The pantry, which is run by the Decatur County Ministerial Association, gets donations from individuals, groups and churches around the area. Each church, she said, takes a month and the members give an offering for the pantry.

Ms. Anderson said both Raye's Grocery and Stanley Hardware donate food every year.

The churches in Norcat and Clayton have been taking up a monthly offering too, which helps out a lot.

The pantry, she said, is open from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday and Thursday. Anyone who wants to use the service needs to bring a picture identification, such as a driver's license and proof of residency. Ms. Anderson said the person can bring

### Shop starts annual appeal

Stanley Hardware kicked off its eighth annual food drive Friday, stacking the first 35 items in the south display window.

The store at 149 S. Penn Avenue had 107 items by Monday. The food drive will last until the new year, said owner Joe Stanley.

The goal is to collect 2,000 items, which will be displayed in the front window. Mr. Stanley said they will have a tally board so people passing by will know how many items have been given.

Anyone can bring in nonperishable packaged food during store hours.

After the first of the year, the food will be taken to the Decatur County Food Pantry at the United Church. Last year, said Mr. Stanley, they collected almost 3,000 pounds.

in a piece of mail with their correct address on it. All who use the service must be Decatur County residents.

Anyone can use the pantry three times in a calendar year, she said, which is January through December.

When someone comes to the pantry, said Ms. Anderson, she lets the people choose what they want. The items that are donated vary and so (See PANTRY on Page 12A)



AT THE COURTHOUSE Friday night, Amanda Grafel (above) laughed as she sat on Santa's lap. One of the entries in the Parade of Lights (below) was this yellow car with a lighted Santa on its hood. One of the youngest visitors for Santa was Madison Urban, 7 months (bottom), who stared into his eyes. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

## Entries light up street

Fertilizer spreaders, fire trucks, four-wheelers, wagons, trailers big and small, all decorated in tiny white or colored lights, rolled down Main Street on Friday for the annual holiday Parade of Lights.

The event, sponsored by the Oberlin Business Alliance, drew 26 entries including a miniature horse, an ambulance, floats, farm machinery and more. Some walked while others rolled, but all had lights.

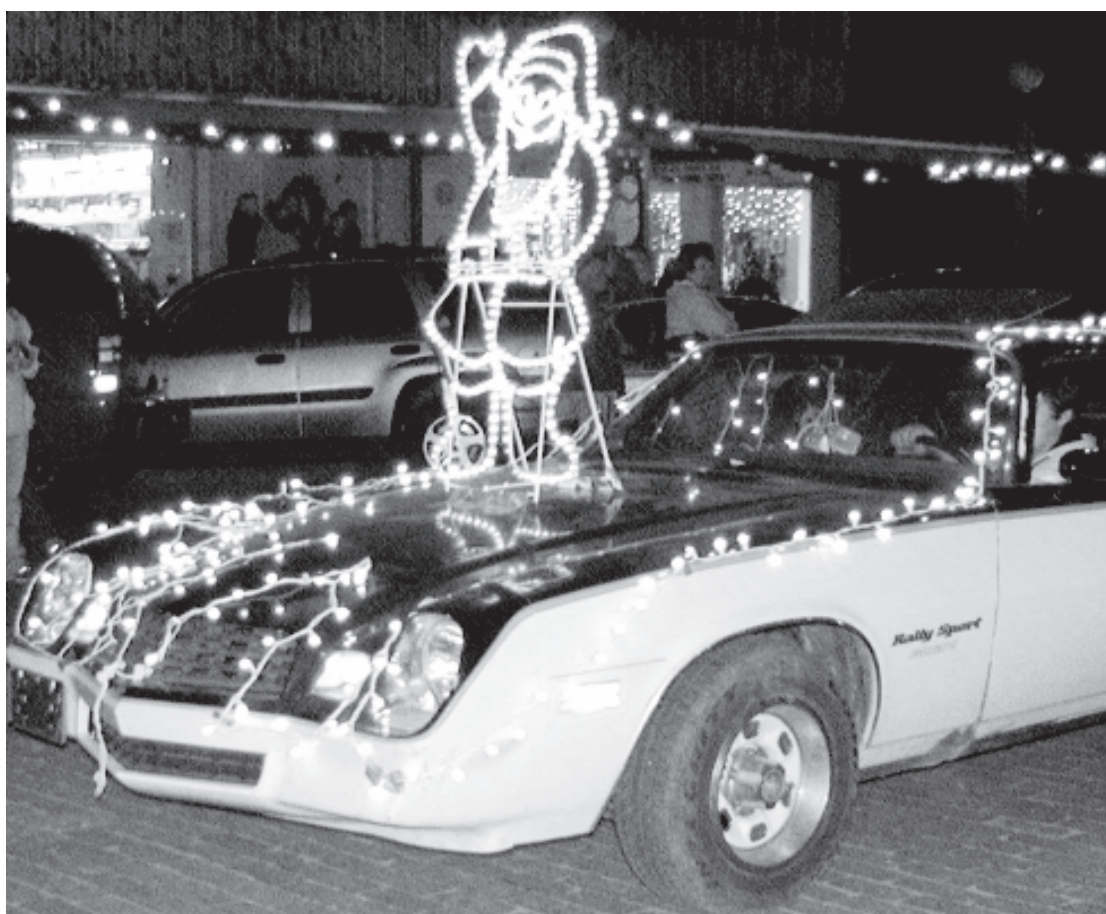
Unlike past years, when the alliance members asked one person or a couple to be the parade marshals, this year they invited the Decatur Community High School volleyball team. The girls, who posted a perfect record in the regular season, rode on a flatbed trailer at the beginning of the parade, after the Oberlin American Legion color guard.

People on or with some of the entries threw candy out for kids, while others honked their horns.

At the end of the parade was Santa Claus, riding in an antique U.S. Marine Corps Jeep with Col. Gary Allen. Santa's elf, played by Carol Morford, rode in the U.S. Army Jeep driven by First Sgt. Jerry Chambers, a National Guardsman back from his second tour in Iraq. Rear security was provided by Machinist's Mate Second Class Walt Pennel in a Navy Jeep.

Glenna Nichols, Chamber of Commerce manager, said The Bank took first place and won \$50 in Santa Bucks for its entry, which had a sleigh on the back, a Christmas tree in front, flashing lights and lots of kids.

The Oberlin Antique Guild took second for its float with kids at a table on a trailer, winning \$30 in



Santa Bucks, and Ward Drug Store with a decorated golf cart driven by Santa and his elf, the cart was decorated with lights and a Santa on the back and R&M Service Center with the service truck filled with lighted presents tied for third, each getting \$10 in Santa Bucks.

After the parade, Santa met with children at the Decatur County Courthouse. Kids and parents lined up outside of the west door waiting their turn for the kids to sit on his lap.

Some of the children were full of smiles while they told the big man what they wanted for Christmas, while others cried.

Each of the 110 kiddies got a bag of candy provided by the Oberlin Lions Club and a ticket to enter an Oberlin Business Alliance drawing for a free pass to Sunflower Cinema for a year.

Kids need to keep the numbered tickets until the alliance drawing on Saturday, Dec. 16. Santa expects to be back in Oberlin at 1 p.m. that Saturday at the courthouse.



## Cable company plans to upgrade, change channel alignment

Eagle Communications, Oberlin's new cable company, plans to get rid of one of the Public Broadcasting channels, upgrade one and add a channel out of Wichita to the basic service package by the end of the month.

The company took over the cable system in Oberlin in June when it bought out Cebridge Communications.

James Miller, business development coordinator and account manager for the Oberlin area, talked with the Oberlin Rotary Club last Tuesday about the changes. He said he wanted to talk with Rotary, since the organization includes a lot of the community leaders.

He said he talked to the organizations

about the company, upcoming changes and the fact that Eagle Communications likes to be involved in community events.

Since taking over, said Mr. Miller, the company has improved the signal on channel 4 and added the NFL Network to the service.

Effective on or before Jan. 1, Eagle plans

to replace the Public Broadcasting Station out of Nebraska with My Network TV out of Wichita. The Wichita channel carries news and a popular show called "King of Queens," he said.

The company will also add KSCW out of Wichita, offering "the CW" network, a merger of "the WB" and UPN services, on

Channel 98.

Mr. Miller said cable customers will still receive Smoky Hills Public Broadcasting, KWKS, from Bunker Hill, on Channel 12. The company plans to upgrade the feed for that channel to make the quality better.

Until talking to Rotary, he said, the com- (See CABLE on Page 12A)