

*Tornado 65 years ago kills many

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windows, along with scattered stalks from a nearby field, but I had no idea at the time how many had been hurt or killed in the storm. We used scattered tin from the outbuildings to cover the windows of the house."

A story in an extra published May 1, 1942, by *The Oberlin Herald* reported:

The twister first came to the ground on the Dr. L.C. Tilden farm eight miles south of Oberlin, then struck the Frank Urban farm south-east of town, where Norma Nicholson was killed and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Nicholson, were injured. Their son, Clarence, was in the basement and was not injured.

From there it traveled north to the Fred Bliss property, where Mr. and Mrs. James Beneda Jr., and daughter, Alene, 14, and Duane Harold were living. Alene was killed and the others injured. However, Mrs. Beneda and Mr. Harold died later.

Next in the path of the storm was the Jay Paddock farm a half mile north, occupied by the Dale Paddock family.

He and his wife, Lila; their son, Elvin, 4; and Mrs. Paddock's brother and sister, Leon and Gail Railsback, were killed in addition to their infant daughter. (Mrs. Wally (Olive) Hafner of Herndon was a sister of Mrs. Paddock and Leon and Gail Railsback.)

From there, the tornado swerved to the west and traveled some 400 yards up Sappa Creek toward the Lohoefer and Leinwetter farmsteads. Farther north on the Harold Andrews place, it demolished an unoccupied house before the killer storm headed for the Robert Castle home, a mile north. The house was turned around and moved about 100 feet off the foundation. Windows and doors were blown out, but all of

the family, which included Shirley (Castle) Ward of Oberlin, escaped injury.

Continuing its devastating drive, the tornado hurled itself against the home and farm buildings of the Fred Euhus family, where by an unexplained miracle, seven people were scattered around the yard along with parts of the house without loss of life. However, Mr. Euhus and a hired boy, Lloyd Leavitt, were seriously injured. (Mr. Euhus was an uncle of Dennis Euhus, Stuart Euhus and Shirley (Euhus) Shields of Oberlin.)

"I shall never forget going to the Leinwetter farm after the storm," Mrs. Lohoefer said. "I had been there the previous day and gone to the cellar to get eggs from Mrs. Leinwetter. After the storm, everything in the cellar was in perfect order. All of the Leinwetter family was killed, as well as Mardell Leitner, daughter of Louis and Stella Leitner, who was spending the night at their home."

Two miles farther north, but still in a straight north-south path, a heavy toll was taken at the James Beneda Sr. farm, where the house, all buildings and many pieces of farm machinery were demolished. The Benedas were injured and their son, Frank, 22, hospitalized with a broken back.

The twister apparently lifted for several miles and then, with less fury, came to earth east of Cedar Bluffs to damage buildings on the Dem Moore farm.

The dead listed in the special tornado edition included Alene Beneda, Mr. and Mrs. Dale Paddock, Elvin Paddock, Leon Railsback, Mr. and Mrs. Gus Leinwetter, Stanley and Naomi Leinwetter, Mardell Leitner, Mrs. Frank Urban, Norma Nicholson, Mrs. James Beneda Jr., Duane Harold and Gail Railsback.

Oberlin native loses everything in EF-5 tornado

An EF-5 tornado, the strongest on the 0-5 scale used by weather experts, ripped through Greensburg in southern Kansas Friday night, claiming at least 12 lives.

Julie Gardiner, a native of Oberlin, and her family were among those who lost everything in the storm. She is a daughter of Leona Helmkamp of Oberlin and the late Fred Helmkamp.

Mrs. Helmkamp, who is recuperating from a hip injury at the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center, said that her daughter, her husband Chris and their children, Matthew and Megan, moved two years ago from Pratt to Greensburg. A physician assistant, he has been helping treat injuries and medical problems since the storm.

Matt will graduate next week from Pratt County Community College, she said, and Megan is a junior at Greensburg High School. Matt has the clothes and other things he took to college, but everything else, all the family's possession and their home, was lost.

Mrs. Helmkamp said she received

a call from a neighbor of the Gardiners at 3 a.m. Saturday morning to report that the family was all right. The neighbor said he had gone to the Gardiners' basement with the family after the tornado warning sounded.

Mrs. Gardiner had been working part-time at the hospital in Greensburg, her mother said. Mrs. Helmkamp said both she and her other daughter, Lori Brewer of Limon, Colo., have talked with the Gardiners since the storm. The Gardiners are staying with friends in Pratt.

The tornado, with winds of 205 miles per hour, a path 1.7 miles at its widest and moving at 20 mph, took out most of the town. Monday, crews were still searching for people trapped in the ruins and cleaning up from the storm.

The Kansas Department of Transportation said Monday morning that U.S. 54 into the town would be closed indefinitely. Travelers will be routed around the area. Only those with proof of residency will be let past the roadblocks.

Rates to increase for postal service

Those extra pennies will come in handy over the next week as the U.S. Postal Service gets ready to increase its rates on Monday.

First-class letter stamps, which is what people use to mail bills, letters to friends and other correspondence, will go from 39 cents to 41 cents.

The 41-cent stamps are already on sale at the Oberlin post office. The facility also has two-cent stamps for those who still have 39-cent stamps.

Other rates that will increase include:

- Postcards, from 24 cents to 26 cents.

- Priority mail up to one pound, from \$4.05 to \$4.60.
- Priority mail flat-rate box, from \$8.10 to \$8.95.
- Express mail up to half a pound, from \$14.40 to \$16.25.
- Express mail up to two pounds, from \$18.80 to \$21.40.

Interim Postmaster Ken Zerr said the last postal increase was in January 2006, less than a year and a half. These increases are needed to cover operational costs, he said. Changes to the periodicals-class rates, covering newspapers and magazines, he said, have been delayed until the middle of July.



JUST IN TIME for college, Jessica Soderlund received a new electric wheelchair worth a little over \$3,000 from the Mountain Slope Royal Arch Masons of Oberlin. The lodge paid for the chair from the Dr. Larrick Fund. On Thursday,

Jessica and her mother, Penny Soderlund, were shown how to use the chair after it was delivered to their home.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

*Hospital may need building permit

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thing about that, said Mrs. Doeden.

There could be some setback issues, said Mr. Hirsch, who is also the city attorney. The land is in the city and the hospital needs to get a permit, he said.

Normally, said Commissioner

Ralph Unger, the architect would take care of getting a building permit.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn called the city office and found there was no permit on file for the hospital or the new livestock barn at the fairgrounds.

"We have been meeting for months," said Mrs. Doeden. "Shouldn't it have been communicated that we needed a building permit?"

The administrator said she would call the architect, which she did after the meeting. She said the archi-

tect said he called the city about a permit and after talking to them, had been told to send in the plans. Then the person at the city said the hospital didn't need a building permit.

She said the city administrator was out of town when she called, so she will try to get in touch with him.

Library catalog on-line

Ever wonder if the Oberlin City Library has the book you want to check out?

Now you can see from the comfort of your home. Duane Dorshorst, who serves on the city library board, said the library recently put its card catalog on-line. That way people can check from their home to see if the library has the book.

"We are really proud of the technology we have put in over the past year," said Mr. Dorshorst, "and will be working with a professional to better utilize our space so that we may continue to grow."

To check the on-line card catalog go to www.rootsweb.com/~ksdclirm/Library/oberlin_city_library.htm.

Council asks for street bids

The Oberlin City Council decided to advertise for bids for street sealing and see what it would cost to repave some of the streets in town.

The north-south streets and east-west streets are sealed once every three years and then the city takes a year off before starting the cycle over.

The council decided Thursday get bids for the street sealing, but asked for those placing bids to include other options for street repair.

At its meeting on Thursday, the council also:

- Appointed Richard Carman and Theresa Shaughnessy to the library board for two-year terms.

- Reappointed Bob Berkheimer to the Oberlin Housing Authority board for a four-year term.

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