

Woman plays softball for over half a century

Full three generations on the team

By JIM MERRIOTT

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Norma Unger played her first softball game in a church recreation league in San Antonio, Texas, in 1952 — 55 years ago.

Now — the mother of three and grandmother of eight still plays second base.

Unger, the softball veteran, plays for the Purple Pack, a team that formed in 1990 from Kansas State University alumni, students and fans.

Besides playing she helps advise coaches and players.

"I started playing at age 10," she said. "I have always enjoyed playing the game and enjoying the camaraderie of my teammates."

"Most likely, I will continue to play until they decide to kick me off."

The wife of Decatur County commissioner Ralph, Mrs. Unger is the secretary for St. John's Lutheran Church in Oberlin.

She is the daughter of Leo and the late Louise Mooty.

"Over the years, I have had hundreds of teammates."

"I am fortunate to be able to play with my son Ryan, my daughter Colleen, and my grandson Christian this season, that's three generations," she said. "My husband Ralph retired a few years ago after a surgery."

"One thing that I have always believed in is keeping in good physical shape."

"I am not sure why I became athletic," she said. "But, my father was always aware of keeping his body in good physical shape, setting a good example."

She said that her father did push-ups on the floor at the Good Samaritan Center, where he was a resident, when he was 80.

"Even though we keep a busy schedule with working on the farm, the church, and with Ralph's work as county commissioner, we have always found the time for summer softball," Norma said. "We just worked it into our schedule. Ralph would watch the kids sometimes when I play. Sometimes, the kids sat on the bench during the games, and other times, there were other parents who chipped in watching the kids playing with their kids."

"Over the years we have seen a lot," she said. "Doctors wouldn't allow women to participate in sports when I was pregnant with my children. Times have changed, as we



OBERLIN SOFTBALL VETERAN NORMA UNGER participated in her 55th season this year. Unger, a member of the Purple Pack, also has her daughter, son and grandson playing on the team. —Herald staff photo by Jim Merriott

played with a woman a few years ago who played until she had labor pains. How times have changed.

"The Oberlin women used to play in women's tournaments years ago, but that died down, and we used to play more games during the summer, but with all the things going on today, I guess there just isn't enough time to keep the league going with school starting in the fall."

Mrs. Unger attributes her love of sports to her heritage.

"My great-grandfather fought for the Union in the American Civil War," she said. "He was a career infantryman for the U.S. Army stationed after the Civil War in New Mexico, where he helped corral

Mescalero (Eastern Apache) Indians in the late 1870s-'80s, and finally settling in west Texas.

"I wouldn't be surprised if Grandpa Tom Mooty didn't play baseball during the Civil War, as troops had ideal time between training and battles," she said.

"I am sure he taught the game to my grandfather, then it was just passed down."

Besides Colleen Rittmann and Dr. Ryan Unger of Oberlin, the Ungers also have a daughter, Dr. Rachele Gorrell, in St. Joseph, Mo.

The grandchildren include Christian and Rielly Rittmann, Connor and Logan Gorrell, and Dillan, Drew, Ty and Brock Zweggardt.

Summer ball season winds down

It was a short week on the baseball diamonds due to the Fourth of July holiday and the end of the season.

With preparation for the playoffs in the youth leagues, only the adult co-ed Sunday slow-pitch games

were played.

Pauls defeated Diederich, 11-4. Then Purple Pack stomped Diederich, 17-1, with the game called after three innings due to the mercy rule which says when one team is 15 runs ahead, the game ends.

Pauls also played a three-inning game, trouncing Decatur County Health Systems, 27-2.

In the final two games, Creative Dimensions beat both Diederich and Decatur County Health Systems, 17-1.

Players lift to prepare for season

Oberlin's young people have been pumping iron and working out this summer.

Decatur Community High School football coach Trevor Williams says he's happy with the number of juniors and seniors in the summer weight-lifting program.

"As for our football players, the turnout has not been too bad," he said. "I would always like to see all the guys in and I am hoping now that harvest is winding down, that I'll see everyone before camp."

The weight room is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 6:30 to 8 a.m. and in the evenings on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Red Devil football camp will be held at the football practice field Monday-Friday, July 23-27, from

5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Following camp, Williams will be fitting and checking out equipment on Sunday, Aug. 12, starting at 6 p.m. in the high school locker room. At that time, he said he will announce the fall two-a-day practice

schedule.

Fall camp will begin Monday, Aug. 13 with two practices daily.

Williams will have a team parents' meeting directly after the evening practice, about 6 p.m., on Friday, Aug. 17.



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People in Our Community

Mary Lou Olson, society editor mlolson@nwkans.com

Jack and Lelia Benton returned home Thursday after visiting several days with her sister, Goldie Moore, in Loveland, Colo.

Gina Nelson, Elyssa and Kade left for their home in Saginaw, Texas, on Monday, after visiting two weeks with her parents, Rick and Deb Klima. Additional guests Sunday evening for a barbecue to honor Kade on his second birthday were Melvin Klima, Gene and Marsha Morford, Dan and Carrie Morford and Teague, and Brian Klima.

Word was received of the death of May (Smith) Reber, 73, of Phoenix, Ariz., on Monday. She was a sister of Leland Smith of Oberlin. Among other survivors are a sister, Melba Hartley, Pueblo, Colo., and three children.

Glen Krebs, a former pastor at the Jennings and Dresden United Methodist churches before transferring to the church at Bird City, has been assigned to WaKeeney-Prairie Home Church. Raymond Gilstrap will return to serve the Norcatat United Methodist Church as associate pastor, and Charles Grant will transfer from Arkansas City First to the Hoxie-McGraw-Selden United Methodist Church parish.

Weekend guests of Calvin and JoAnn Ufford were Richard and Wendy Ufford, Overbrook.

Grant Reichert, Dresden, graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of arts from Kansas State University this spring. Other area students with graduation honors included Nikolaus Martin, Herndon, magna cum laude with a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering; and Charles Holste, Ludell, cum laude with a bachelor of science in agriculture. Also receiving honors were Valerie Broeckelman and Landon Truetken, Selden.

Dr. Gary and Sarah Fredrickson, Karli and Kaine, and Dr. Kurt and Jean Fredrickson and Tom, Salina, met in Portland, Ore., last week, then visited the men's aunt, Esther Hoffbauer at Toppenish, Wash.; her son, Carroll Hoffbauer, Yakima, Wash.; and her grandchildren, Diane Waterhouse, Sun River, Ore.; Darla Sanders, who was visiting from Phoenix, Ariz.; and Danny Harris, Yakima.

Phyllis Klich and Marcille Berryman of Denver were weekend guests of Leland and Eloise Smith.

Doris Fringer and daughter, Carolyn Shirley, went to Two Buttes, Colo., on Thursday to visit her daughter, Patty and Rod Steinmetz. Other guests were her son, James and Heather Shirley, Megan, Breanna and Aaron of Olathe. They returned home Sunday.

Leslie Marcuson and Ryan Nelson of Topeka spent the weekend

with her parents, Brad and Elaine Marcuson, Sarah and Jared. The Marcusons entertained the congregation of Lund Covenant Church with a Fourth of July picnic and fireworks Sunday evening at their farm.

Leona Helmkamp has returned to her apartment at 304 N. Martin from Decatur County Good Samaritan Center.

Scott and Deb Goltl, Molly, Matthew and Nathan of Wichita were houseguests from Monday to Thursday of his parents, Lairy and Beth Goltl.

Fourth of July week guests of Bill and Dorothy Woods were their daughter, Debby and Mark Crider, Oak Ridge, Tenn., and granddaughters, Amber and Matt Norman, Tate and Cole, Shellville, Ga., and Farrah Brooks, Phoenix, Ariz.

Leona and Lyle Hilker celebrated the Fourth of July with their winter Texas friends, Jim and Mary Jean Steward, in McCook. Other guests were Don and Linda Miller, and Bob and Betty Woodruff, McCook, and surprise guests, Jim and Darlene Ales, Clearwater.

Marie McKisson visited over the weekend with her sister-in-law, Betty and John McVicker, and her sister, Janie and Kent Law, in Abilene, and their daughter, Kristin Morran and family of Houston, who were visiting there. She also enjoyed the play "Bye, Bye, Birdie" at the Great Plains Theater in Abilene. En route she visited her nephew, George Wells of Clay Center, who is recuperating from surgery which he underwent in Kansas City, and his family.

Cheryl Gibson of Denver was a weekend guest of her parents, Charles and Donna Lincoln. Additional guests Friday evening for a belated birthday party with homemade ice cream and cake honoring Charles were Judy Call and family of Colby and Franci Miller of Wyoming.

Suzanne Cahoj, daughter of Ron and Gerry Temple of Norcatat, took over as postmaster at the post office in Stratton, Neb., on Saturday. She will be installed at 2:45 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 7. She had worked in the Atwood Post Office for 20 years. She graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1977 and she and her husband, Larry, live on a farm northwest of Atwood and have two children, Simone and Marcus.

Among area students who participated in commencement at Colby Community College on May 12 were James Arasmith, Rexford; David Barth, Andrea Burmaster, Leia Depperschmidt, Coryamber Marine, Alissa McDonald, Oberlin; Bruce Focke, Ludell; Kasey Kompus, Jessica Rall, Rexford; Abbie Miller, Andrea Mitchell, Selden;

and Betty Vahling, Dresden.

Orville Mockry of McCook celebrated his 80th birthday on July 1. He is a former resident of Cedar Bluffs. He and his wife, Donna, live at 1202 Norris Ave., McCook, Neb., 69001.

Courtney Gillespie of Oberlin was among 189 students named to the Barton County Community College Dean's List for the spring semester. Her parents are Sonya Gillespie and Elton Gillespie Jr.

—After Harvest Sunday Brunch Buffet, Sunday, July 15, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. LandMark Inn. Call 475-2340 for reservations.

Chance Harman, son of Ron and Renee Harman of Norcatat, graduated in May from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, Neb., with an Associate of Applied Science Degree.

Winning highs in pinochle at Golden Age Center the past week were Doris Gilbert, Dorothy Moore, Henry Edgett, Max Carman, Ve-anna Carman and Barb Solko. Lows went to Aleen Van Vleet, Elden Haas, Merle Shirley and R.D. Thornton. Pitch highs were won by Floyd Edgett and Dewaine Stapp with lows going to Dorothy Moore and Barb Solko. Bridge highs were won by Cynthia Matson, Ila Ray, Marie McKisson, Merle Shirley and Leone Purton. There will be a senior potluck at 12:15 p.m. Sunday at Golden Age Center.

Maurice and Faith Anderson, and Mark and Linda Marcuson of Denver were weekend guests of Donald Wasson. A gathering for cousins and other relatives was held at the Midway Cafe in Selden on Sunday.

Guests of John and Pat Wright from Tuesday to Saturday were Mike and Susan Wright of Lawrence. Additional visitors were Mary Stoecker, Michelle, Mark and John of Oakley, who visited Thursday and Friday. The Mike Wrights also visited her parents, Loyd and Mary Waldo. Luncheon guests on Friday at the Waldo home were John and Pat Wright, Mike and Susan Wright and Michelle Stoecker, who remained to visit at the Wright home until Sunday.

Visitors of Jim and Linda Hollowell during the past week were their grandson, Jordan Coburn, Aurora, Colo.; Jim's mother, Mrs. Vera Matthews, Denver; and his sister, Sherri and Steve Hudson, Bria and Brenden, also of Denver.

Friday evening dinner guests of Bill and Dorothy Woods were Jerry and Shirley Gallentine, Rapid City, S.D.; Jerry Gallentine Jr., Carrie, Tyler and Brook, Greenwood, Neb.; Amber, Matt, Tate and Cole Norman, Shellville, Ga.; and Farrah Brooks, Phoenix, Ariz.

Churches collect replacement items

The Jennings and Dresden United Methodist churches plan to take a trailer-load of appliances, furniture, dishes and other supplies to Greensburg, which was destroyed by a tornado in May.

The storm leveled more than 95 percent of the town and caused heavy damage to surrounding communities. Both the Greensburg and Trousdale United Methodist churches were destroyed.

The debris is more than 90 percent cleared, and many from Kansas United Methodist churches as well as other denominations have been involved in this cleanup. The area is now in the recovery stage, where various organizations are attempting to meet the needs of the victims. Many survivors will be living in

337 mobile homes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency set up in a park just outside of town, known as Keller Estates, as soon as the electricity is turned on next week.

These people need furniture, large and small appliances, prepackaged foods, laundry supplies, tools and all other things needed to maintain a home.

People will have up to two years to relocate or rebuild. Clothing and toothbrushes are not among the items needed, said Carrie Buhler, pastor of the Jennings and Dresden United churches.

"At one time it was reported that there were over 90 toothbrushes for every resident in Greensburg," she said.

"To those folks who have donated and will donate to the community of Greensburg," the minister said, "I say thank you... It is in times like these, when the media has moved on to other headlines, that the light of God can really shine in us and the entire world can see... we truly are our brothers' and sisters' keepers."

Small items can be left at the Jennings United Methodist Church, said Marjorie Hartzog. Arrangements should be made with someone from the church before bringing appliances and furniture to town, however.

Leave messages with Louise Cressler at (785) 678-2233, Mrs. Hartzog at 678-2664 or 678-3010, Dalene Gawith at 475-3679 or Mrs. Buhler at 627-3573.

Women's group meeting July 20

Shirley Holso of Sioux Falls, S.D., will share how her life is similar to the tortoise and the hare story when McCook Christian Women's Club meets from 10 a.m. to 11:30

a.m. on Friday, July 20, at the Chief Poolside, 612 West B in McCook.

Bruce Lester and daughter, Alli, will entertain with song.

Those planning to attend should

make reservations by Wednesday, July 18, by calling Dollie at (308) 345-4011. For free child care, notify when making reservations. Cost is \$4.

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