

## Man killed in crash

### Four ejected when vehicle rolls

A utility vehicle driven by a 15-year-old girl rolled into a field south of Oberlin about 6:15 p.m. Saturday, throwing four of the five occupants out and killing the girl's stepfather.

Firemen arriving at the scene a few minutes later asked dispatchers to call out all available emergency medical technicians, and three ambulances — two from Oberlin and one from Jennings — responded.

Trooper Charles Boydston of the Kansas Highway Patrol said none of the five occupants had been wearing a seat belt.

The driver, Ashley Anne Coronado, was flown to Wesley Medical Center in Wichita with a possible broken leg, chest injuries and other possible injuries. She was listed in ??? condition Monday night.

Dwayne R. Dickinson, 34, her stepfather, was pronounced dead at the Decatur County Hospital.

Chad Lee Salem, 33, Oberlin, also was flown to Wesley.

Another passenger, David Royan Vick, 36, Redondo Beach, Calif., went by helicopter to a Denver hospital.

Troy Gregory Rush, 29, Almena, was treated at the Oberlin hospital, but released by Monday. He was not ejected, and had been able to walk to a nearby farmhouse to get help.

Trooper Boydston said the driver was going west on County Road 6 South when she lost control on loose gravel. The truck went into the north ditch and rolled several times, winding up in a stubble field on the driver's side.

People in town heard about the wreck on police scanners, he said, and the victims' relatives were waiting by the time they got to the hospital.

"It was a very violent collision," he said. "It rolled several times."

The trooper, who serves as an emergency medical technician in his hometown of Phillipsburg, said the response from emergency crews here was good. The fact that one person survived was almost a miracle, he said, but despite the crushing impacts, the roof of the vehicle held up. He said he could tell how fast the driver was going.

Mr. Rush probably owed his life to the fact that he was not ejected, he said.

"It shows would could have happened," he said.

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## Getting ready for Easter



**CLUTCHING A PALM BRANCH** and his blanket, Rojelio Loya was ready for Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Selden on Saturday night. Many area churches celebrated Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem the week before he died with palms and the Passion reading.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

## Cinema needs cash, moviegoers

By CYNTHIA HAYNES  
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Oberlin's volunteer-run Sunflower Cinema is drowning in a sea of red ink and empty seats that not even top-flight movies seem to be able to drain.

Despite \$3 tickets, reasonably priced popcorn and fairly new movies, the movie house isn't able to pay its bills from what it is bringing in, board members say.

Sunday, theater board member Bev Reiter said that "Juno," a teen-oriented movie that won critical acclaim and four academy award nominations, had pulled fewer than 50 people for a two-day run.

The theater pays either a flat rate, usually \$150 to \$200, or a percentage of the gross ticket sales, whichever is greater, to get a movie, she said.

With "Juno," the price was \$150, she said. At \$3 a ticket and less than 50 people, that equals a loss.

The only way the theater makes any money to pay overhead is through concession sales, she said. A few movies only cost \$100, but some can run up to \$500 minimum.

She said the theater relies on a booking agent, Brad Bills of Kansas City, to find and set up the delivery

of films.

Usually, the board has no choice in what film it gets, she said, but with Juno, she got a call asking if Oberlin would like the film. Since she had heard good things about it and it was rated PG13, she said yes.

Still, no matter how good the movie is, the lack of customers and a sales tax problem inherited from a former board are driving the theater near the edge.

"Unfortunately, we're circling the drain," Mrs. Reiter said.

Besides the cost of films, supplies and overhead, the theater board was hit with a \$16,000 back sales tax bill about six months ago. After some negotiation, Mrs. Reiter said, the state Department of Revenue decreased its demands to \$4,700, or the amount the theater supposedly owes from 2003 when the new board took over.

The board makes \$800 monthly payments on the debt, which would be great, Mrs. Reiter said, except the theater doesn't have that much.

"Personally," she said, "I've never gone off and left anyone hanging owing money in my life, and it really, really bothers me."

But for now, the shows will go on while the board tries to figure out

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## Annual egg hunt set for Saturday

The Oberlin Lions Club will hold its annual Easter-egg hunt for kids in City Park this Saturday.

Jack Benton, with the Lions, said the hunt for candy will start at 1 p.m., with youngsters divided into four age groups, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8.

The Lions will "seed" the area near the picnic shelter with candy before each group is let loose to pick up whatever they can find.

The candy is being donated by Mountain Slope Masonic Lodge of Oberlin, he said.

## School could house alternative classroom

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
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The Oberlin School Board heard a plan to start an alternative classroom at the high school to help students who might be flunking a class, transfer students and others who might need a different way of learning during a meeting last Monday.

Superintendent Pat Cullen said he has worked on the idea for some time, trying to find a use for the former youth ranch. The first

idea for the ranch, vacated two years ago by King's Achievement Center, was a boarding school. Then the idea of using a trailer classroom the district owns for an alternative school came up.

After some discussion, said high school Principal Charles Haag, they decided the district could serve these kids in one classroom. The operation would cover not just the boys from the 180 House, an alcohol and drug addiction treatment program in Oberlin,

but students transferring into the district or others who need help.

At a recent board meeting, members talked about the fact that the boys at the 180 House now use the Internet for schooling. That way, if they leave or come in the middle of the school year, it's easier to pick up where the student left off.

The board agreed to help the house with computers for the program, since the 180 House didn't have one for each boy.

What if a student transfers into the district and they took psychology at their old school? asked Mr. Haag. The high school doesn't teach that course and an alternative classroom would give that student the opportunity to finish it online.

There are kids who are flunking a class now, said Mr. Haag. This could help them.

The classroom would need a teacher and maybe one helper, he said.

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## Couple married at old Hall

By MARY LOU OLSON  
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The Old Bohemian Hall on the Decatur County Museum grounds came to life Saturday as Rhonda Workman of Wichita and 1st Lt. Brent Jennings of Topeka were married at 11:30 a.m. in the first wedding since the hall came to town, maybe the first ever.

Officiating was the Rev. Larry Parrish of Falls City, Neb., a retired Army chaplain.

"Since we both had Czech heritages, we decided it would be fun to have our wedding in the hall," said the bride. "My great-grandfather, Charley Vacura, was on the board when the building was constructed."

The former Rhonda Fringer, she is the daughter of Rod and Pat Fringer of Oberlin. His parents are Lawrence and Lila Jennings of Jennings, and Lee and Joyce Ploussard of Oberlin. Grandmothers of the bride are Clara Fringer and Margaret Vacura of Oberlin.

"This is the first wedding held



**RINGBEARER BRENDAN JENNINGS** (left) watched the petals Kourtney Brumley dropped from her basket before the wedding of his father, 1st Lt. Brent Jennings, and Rhonda Workman at the Old Bohemian Hall on Saturday.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

in the building since it was moved to Oberlin, but no one is sure if any weddings were held there in the early years," said museum Director Sharleen Wurm.

Frances (Coleman) Bader of

rural Jennings, who was reared near the hall, said it was the community gathering place for many years and she recalled funerals, dances, lodge meetings, church services and fiery Democrat and

Republican meetings, but no weddings.

Lila (Harris) Jennings said that her two great-uncles, Henry and Williby "Bud" Harris, were the

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## Old burn goes wild as wind whips area

Winds whipping out of the northwest at up to 50 m.p.h. last Wednesday apparently fanned the embers of a controlled burn from three days before, sending flames racing into stubble, grass and the timber along Prairie Dog Creek.

Smoke got so heavy in Clayton, just southwest of the fire, that people were calling dispatch in Oberlin asking if they would have to evacuate, but the flames did little damage.

Jennings Fire Chief Kerry Green said the blaze apparently began near some old hog sheds a mile north and a mile west of Clayton owned by Leonard Harris. He figured manure in pits under the shed had smoldered until the wind came up.

"I went out there and checked it Tuesday and there wasn't any smoke," he said.

The fire raced through corn stubble owned by Harold Mizell and grass belonging to Max Ward. Some of the Conservation Reserve grass was over three feet tall and thick from years of growth, Mr. Green said.

The first call on the blaze came in about 11:30 a.m., said Decatur County Chief Bill Cathcart. Oberlin volunteers went home about 7:45 p.m., but Jennings firemen were out

past 10 p.m. Chief Green said it got to bed about midnight after hours of putting out hot spots in downed and dead trees along the creek.

Firemen had the flames contained within a half hour, he said, but it took much longer to put the smoking trees out. A county bulldozer operator pushed them over so firemen could spray them.

"You hate it when it gets into the creek like that," Mr. Green said, "but that does slow the wind down."

While firemen fought the blaze, he said, farmers used disks and a bulldozer to create fire breaks, holding the blaze to the timber. In all, Chief Cathcart said, 14 trucks from Oberlin Norcat, Jennings and Norton turned out. Water tankers were set up in Mr. Ward's yard along the county line north of Clayton.

Both chiefs said Clayton was never in any danger, though smoke blowing in from the creek was heavy at times.

Ironically, when dispatchers called to get the forecast for the fire crew, National Weather Service officials in Goodland said they were just issuing a "red flag" fire warning because of the sudden wind. It was a little late, Chief Cathcart said, but accurate.

