

Council OK's city water on track

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Oberlin City Council gave the race committee permission to get part of the water needed to prepare the track out of a hydrant south of the grandstand at the fairground for the next three races, with the rest to come out of a high-nitrate well south of town.

When summer comes, water use jumps and the city may have to go on rationing again, though, so the council will look at the request again. One member voted no, saying water pressure near the fairground might suffer, inconveniencing people on "the hill."

Committee members Dave Bose, Lee Don Scott, Rusty Montgomery and Ron Uehlin talked with the council Thursday

Council Roundup

At a meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Talked how to deal with houses, businesses and other buildings that are falling down and should be removed. No decisions were made. Story to come.
- Agreed to hire Kelley Drilling to drill a well near the shelter house at Sappa Park. Story below.

• Agreed to pay for labor to supply power to the horse arena at the fairgrounds if the county buys the parts. Story to come.

• Gave the race committee permission to get part of the water needed to prepare the dirt track at the county fairground out of a hydrant south of the grandstand for the next three races, with the other half coming from a high-nitrate well south of town. Story at left.

night about hauling the water to the track. Mr. Scott said they have trouble getting one of the trucks to make the corner at the top of Martin Avenue by the cemetery.

How much water are they using? asked

Councilwoman Rhonda May.

In the summer, said Mr. Bose, the group puts between 80,000 to 100,000 gallons on the track at a time. The committee uses three trucks, he said, with the smallest

tank holding 1,200 gallons and the largest 3,800.

Each truck runs through about \$100 in fuel, added Mr. Uehlin.

The committee asked to fill the trucks at the fairground instead of having to drive through town to the well on the south.

The water out of the hydrant, is that potable water or water from the city's drinking-water system? asked Walt Pennell, who was in the audience.

City Administrator Gary Shike said it is.

The well the race committee is using isn't tied into the system? asked Councilman Rob McFee. Actually, said Mr. Shike, the well is isolated by valves and can be used in an emergency.

What would it cost the city for the com-

mittee to fill at the fairground? asked Mayor Joe Stanley. That depends on whether a meter is put in, said Mr. Shike.

The fair board said it would pay for water, said Mr. Scott. That depends on the cost, too, added Mr. Bose.

What would filling at the fairground do to the water pressure on the hill? asked Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer. No one could say.

There's two questions, said Mr. Shike. Does the council want to use water in the city system and does the city want to build something at the fairground to fill the trucks, because it would take too long to fill out of the two-inch pipe.

It's almost faster to haul the water from the south, said Mr. Bose, than to fill out of (See CITY on Page 5A)

County jobs draw crowd in early filing

Two months remain for people to file for a county office, including clerk, register of deeds, treasurer, magistrate judge, commissioner, sheriff and county attorney.

Anyone who wants to run needs to either pay a filing fee, 1 percent of the salary for that office, or carry a petition, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn, who serves as county election officer. The last day to file is noon on Tuesday, June 10.

Several of the incumbents have registered to run for their seats again, while others plan to retire.

Mrs. Horn, Register of Deeds Judy Gaumer and Doyle Brown, district No. 3 commissioner, have all announced that they don't plan to seek office again.

Treasurer Jean Hale, Sheriff Ken Badsky, County Attorney Steve Hirsch, Commissioner Ralph D. Unger in No. 2 district and Magistrate Judge John Bremer have filed for re-election.

Colleen Geishler, a long-time

deputy clerk, turned in petitions for the clerk's job.

Tiffanie Farr, who works at Decatur Co-op; Melissa Chambers, who works at RJ Metcalf Real Estate; and Judy Marietta, a secretary at the high school, have all turned in petitions for the register of deeds.

Vickie Bailey of Jennings, owner of Decatur County Title and Abstract, turned in a petition for the district No. 3 commissioner spot. Both Bob Strevey and Doc Franklin also have picked up petitions for the seat.

Mrs. Horn said Shawna Long picked up a petition for the clerk's or register of deed's spots. Seth Lohoefer, Carrie Morford and Penny Fringer all picked up petitions to file for register of deeds.

The primary election will be Tuesday, Aug. 5, which is also the first day of the Decatur County Fair and Carnival. The general election is Tuesday, Nov. 4.

City agrees to drill well at park shelter

The Oberlin City Council agreed Thursday to hire Kelley Drilling to drill test wells near the shelter house at Sappa Park and then put a well in the park.

The council agreed to waive the regular bidding process, as the city already had a bid from Dick Kelley of \$3,208 without labor, which he said will cost \$660 to \$880.

Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer said they just need to get people together from the entities working on the park to map out where they want the well to go.

If the city plans to have the well put in, said Administrator Gary Shike, then Mr. Kelley probably needs to dig some test wells first.

The water from the well won't be disinfected, he said, so the city will have to post that it isn't for drinking.

If the city wants this done, said Mr. Shike, Kelley Drilling probably needs to go ahead and get started. The council agreed.

The Decatur Tomorrow Sappa Park Committee asked for the well so there would be water at the park for people who want to camp in the park. Carolyn Burtis, co-convenor, said the water is needed for people to use when camping or playing at the park. It will be used to heat to clean dishes, to wash hands or for general camping use, except for drinking water.



AT THE ANNUAL CARNIVAL last Tuesday at Oberlin Elementary School, Tyler McHugh played Guitar Hero, a video game which was set up in the cafeteria. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Kids, parents enjoy games at carnival

Kids of all ages played games last Tuesday in the gym at Oberlin Elementary School.

Some tried their hand at the pop-bottle toss, shooting a fake arrow at a poster, finding a treasure in the sand or the cake walk, while others headed to the cafeteria for a bite to eat.

Each year, Supporting Our Schools, a volunteer group made up of teachers, staff and

community members, holds the carnival to raise money for the school.

The event went well, said Abby Hissong, who helped organize it. Parents and community people, some who don't even have school-age children, pitched in to help make the carnival a success. Several high school students volunteered also.

In the past, she said, the group has used the money raised to help buy playground equipment and to help the high school yearbook staff pay for more color pages.

This year, said treasurer Dana Koeperich, the carnival probably raised around \$1,000, after expenses. She said that was a rough estimate, since the books haven't yet been done.



FOR SEVERAL YEARS, Mobile Music Express, run by Aaron Ploussard, his father Kent and Stan McEvoy, did the sound for the Oberlin Seeds of Hope Telethon, held each year at The Gateway. — Herald file photo

Crowd gathers to remember friend

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Over 400 people turned out Saturday to remember an Oberlin man who touched the lives of many through his cooking, volunteer service, music and sense of humor.

Family and friends said goodbye to Kent Allen Ploussard one final time in the arena at The Gateway, the civic center where he worked, cooked and made friends, through tears and laughter.

Mr. Ploussard died last Wednesday after a four-year battle with cancer. In February 2004 he found out he had colon cancer. He got better after treatment, but doctors discovered his cancer had spread to other parts of his body.

In December 2006, he had his first brain surgery, said his daughter, Tiffanie Farr. He had three more in a little over a year, said Jodie Ploussard, his second wife.

Kent never showed he was really in pain, said Mrs. Ploussard. He continued working at The Gateway, where he had been the director for the past eight years, even when he was on crutches and with a walker.

"He was the strongest man or person that I know," said Mrs. Farr. "Most people couldn't have gone through what he did for the last four years. He did it for us."

His father once said he would fight until there wasn't any hope, said Aaron Ploussard, his son.

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*Man dies after long battle with cancer

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Last Sunday, just a few days before his death, said Mrs. Ploussard, her husband asked her if he had done a good job of that. She said she told him that he had.

The family spent the end of the week telling stories about their father, husband, grandfather, son and friend.

Stan McEvoy, Mr. Ploussard's business partner, friend and "special brother," said he can remember the first time they worked together as deejays, before starting Mobile Music Express.

It was 1994, said Mr. McEvoy, and 15 minutes until he had to leave for an event in Arapahoe, Neb. He said he was deejaying for H&M Sounds. It was cold, snowing and blowing and the van didn't have any heat. He called his friend to see if he wanted to go along.

Kent agreed, said Mr. McEvoy, adding that he had a Coleman gas heater in the garage that they could take to heat the van.

At the country club in Arapahoe, the drive had a big drop off on the side. Mr. Ploussard got out to direct him into the drive and fell down the hill. Kent got the giggles, said Mr. McEvoy, and he had to slide down the hill to rescue his friend.

That whole night was crazy, said Mr. McEvoy. Later, trying to relight the heater, Mr. Ploussard set the stage on fire.

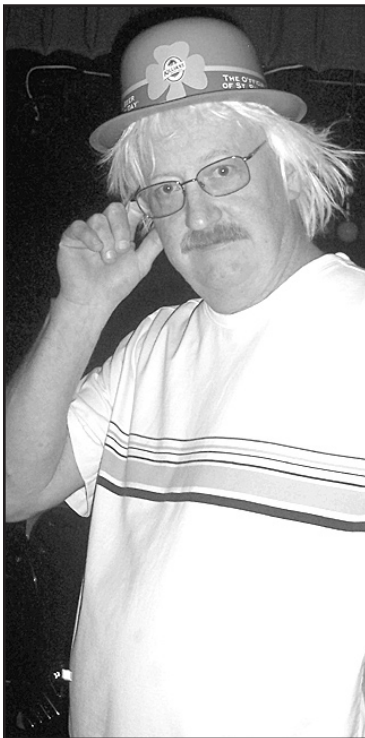
"After that, we decided we needed to do this," he recalled, "and Mobile Music Express started."

Two years later, he said, the men returned for a wedding in Arapahoe. The bride and groom told them they needed to be careful, because at the last dance, the deejays had set the stage on fire.

At the end of 2006, he said, Mr. Ploussard had to stop deejaying after 12 years of 15 to 25 dances a year. His friend wanted his son-in-law, Matt Farr, to get involved, which he has.

Mobile Music Express wasn't Mr. Ploussard's first job in music. Before that, he and his first wife Brenda operated the Powder Keg and K&B Supply. Included in that was PDKG Radio, a deejay service with Mr. Ploussard, Dan Nelson and Dale Boucher.

"We've been groupies since we were born," joked Mrs. Farr.



THE PLOUSSARD BROTHERS, Kent, Kevan and Kris (above right), fished at Lake Jeffrey in Nebraska. In a green hat, Kent (above left) celebrated during a St. Patrick's Day dance at the Oberlin American Legion. Mr. Ploussard taught his kids, Tiffanie Farr and Aaron Ploussard, (below) how to dance.



With her Dad being into music, she added, he wanted to make sure his kids knew the beat and how to dance.

"Dad would set us in front of the speakers and we would have to tap out the beat," she said.

"I still can't dance," added Aaron, smiling.

At the end of the funeral Saturday, the kids showed their moves near their father's coffin.

They said their father had a band in high school and played guitar. Recently they had gotten him another, although he never had a chance to play it.

Mr. Ploussard started working for the city as the seasonal sexton, said City Administrator Gary Shike. Gradually, he said, he became indispensable.

"On a given day," said Mr. Shike, "you might see him doing anything from seasoning prime rib, to moving snow with a front-end loader, to being the bouncer (albeit genially) at the end of a long, excessively celebratory wedding dance."

One of his greatest innate skills was as a salesman, said Mr. Shike. Mr. Ploussard was good working



with the public; helping people plan events and make them special.

He added that Mr. Ploussard continued to work long after he was too weak and sick to be at The Gateway.

anywhere else."

Mr. Shike added that the only time Mr. Ploussard took off was to go fishing.

"I saw him at home the day before he passed away," said Mr. Shike. "The last thing I heard him say was 'thank you'...which I thought was really ironic after all he had done for me."

The family recalled his humor and funny things Mr. Ploussard did. He was always there to help everyone else, they said.

He served for over 20 years on the Oberlin volunteer fire department and often helped the ambulance crew at accidents.

He passed that work for the fire department down to his son and son-in-law, who both became volunteer firemen.

Mr. Ploussard loved to cook, trips to Canada, his family and the Denver Broncos, they said.

His mother, Joyce, said she bought her sons season tickets to the Denver Broncos, when they were 8, 10 and 12. She said she had a sister living in Denver and thought the tickets would be a good gift. The family retains ownership of the tickets.

Mr. Ploussard was born at the Decatur County Hospital on May 27, 1956, the son of Allen "Lee" Ploussard and Joyce (Claar) Ploussard. He attended Oberlin Elementary School and graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1974. He attended Colby Community College on a baseball scholarship.

He married Jodie Bishop on Dec. 31, 2007.

Survivors include his wife; his mother, and his father and step-mother, Lee and Judy Ploussard; a son and daughter, and three grandchildren, all of Oberlin; a sister-in-law, Shona Ploussard, Denver; and his first wife.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents and two brothers, Kevan and Kris Ploussard.

Services were Saturday at The Gateway with the Rev. Doug Hasty officiating and burial in the Oberlin Cemetery.

Donations may be made to the Kent Ploussard Memorial Fund for kitchen or sound equipment for The Gateway in care of Pauls Funeral Home, 121 N. Penn, Oberlin, Kan., 67749.

The family plans a dance dedicated to Mr. Ploussard from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Saturday, April 19, at the Oberlin American Legion Hall.

County to write letters

Two Decatur County representatives on the High Plains Mental Health board asked commissioners to talk to and write state and national legislators about continuing to pay for mental health programs.

Jay Tate, a sheriff's deputy, and Linda Manning, county ambulance director, told commissioners at their meeting Tuesday, March 25, that money for mental health agencies is being cut in a "tricky way."

Instead of just chopping money out of the budget, Mr. Tate said, the state wants Medicare Medicaid to pay for individual services. The problem, he said, is that not everyone has this coverage and not everyone is eligible for it. The bottom line could be less money for mental health.

In reviewing Decatur County's money contribution, said Mr. Tate, everything is fine. The county is No. 2 in per capita contributions among those that help pay for the services with High Plains Mental Health.

The county could petition the state government about the switch in how the mental health program will be paid for, said Commissioner Doyle Brown. Mr. Tate suggested either that or a resolution.

It seems like as the years go on, he said, the state money is going to decrease more and more, which will probably mean fewer services for people who need help.

When the representatives from High Plains come to a future meeting, said Mr. Brown, are they going to ask the county for more money?

Mr. Tate said he didn't know. Decatur County, he said, is at a good level for funding.

In counties which don't support mental health, he said, the belt will tighten and they might see services drop off. Mr. Tate said he hates to see that happen, but it might.

*City to provide track water

(Continued from Page 1A)
the pipe at the fairground because of its size.

Someone suggested filling the trucks out of the hydrant near the grandstand.

Basically, said Ms. May, the track needs around 540,000 gallons of water a year.

The water itself, said Mr. Shike, isn't expensive, but the labor and parts are. Also, in the summer the trigger for water rationing is 700,000 gallons and the city could hit that easier if the track is pumping 90,000 gallons out of the system in a day.

It sure seemed to be working using the well high in nitrates, said Councilman Jay Anderson.

Mr. Uehlin said he thought the fair board was talking about paying \$100 a race for water. Is that even in the ball park? he asked.

"I put more on my lawn in a month," said Mr. McFee.

The city could work out a flat fee system for the track, said Mayor Joe Stanley.

When it's hot and windy, said Mr. Bose, the committee can put the 3,800 gallons on the dirt track and then it takes an hour to go get another load. By the time the truck is back, a lot of that water on the track

has evaporated.

The fairground tap would probably have to be shut off during water rationing in the summer, said Dr. Anderson.

But, said Mayor Stanley, the city doesn't shut water off to other businesses, and the track is a business.

What's the price of water at the city dock? asked Mr. Shike. Twenty-five cents per 170 gallons, said Foreman Dan Castle. The city should consider a meter, though, he said. The city has to record water loss, and if there isn't a meter, it will show as a loss.

Mr. Bose said the Decatur Speedway is the only track around that doesn't have a water source at the track.

What about drilling a well? asked Mr. Uehlin. The council said they don't own the land, so that would be something to ask the county.

Although the track is a good idea, said Mrs. Lohofener, it is a concern to hook into city water because of the pressure on the hill. Drilling a well would be a good idea, she said.

Someone would have to come up with the money to drill it, said Ms. May, and you don't know what the productivity would be, but you need a well to produce 90,000 gallons in a

day. In two days, said Mr. Bose.

With the hydraulics on the hill, said Mr. Castle, opening a hydrant every five minutes, could mean some people will be out of water.

What if they try it at the race on Saturday and then see what happens, Mr. McFee suggested.

It won't be real critical then, said Councilman Ray Ward, because it won't be hot and people won't be watering their lawns.

The council approved the committee filling the two smaller trucks, which are hard to get in and out of town, through the hydrant south of the grandstand and taking the big truck, 3,800 gallons, to the well high in nitrates for the next three races.

After the Monday, June 16 race the group will revisit the water issue.

The vote passed 4-1, with Mrs. Lohofener voting against it.

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Movie on bullying planned

Girls: Don't forget to sign up for the bullying movie geared for girls in the fifth through eighth grades on Tuesday, April 22, at The Gateway.

The movie, "Odd Girl Out," will start at 6 p.m., with all girls in those grades and their parents invited. The evening is sponsored by Oberlin Elementary School and the Regional

Prevention Center.

Anyone who wants to attend needs to call Sheila Jansonius, grade school counselor, by Tuesday, April 15 at school at 475-2122 or at home at 475-2648. Dinner will be served.

Mrs. Jansonius said since the movie is rated PG13, she sent permission slips home with the girls.

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