



OBERLIN'S ZACH CORBETT (above) got the surprise of his life when he was picked out of the crowd at the Circo Cirque Circus on Sunday. One of the vendors slipped an albino boa constrictor around him in front of the crowd.

Little Tomas (below), a juggling 12-year-old clown from Dallas, entertained over 200 families at the circus Sunday at the Decatur County fairground.

— Herald staff photos by Jim Merriott

Circus entertains a crowd

By **JIM MERRIOTT**
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The circus came to town Sunday and about 200 children, parents, grandparents and other hangers-on came to see acts similar to what their grandparents might have seen 75 years ago.

Pony rides, a side snake show, jugglers, clowns and high trapeze acts brought spectators clapping and laughing to their feet, and most left the filled livestock pavilion at the county fairground with wide smiles.

Cotton candy, soda pop, hot dogs, candy, and popcorn were sold from an old-fashioned concession stand to help the free circus meet its expenses. Tickets were given away last week around town, and the circus paid its own rent at the fairground.

The show, the Circo Cirque Circus, travels throughout the Midwest from February to December, said owner Charles Davenport of San Antonio.

"I grew up in the circus," he said. "In one form or another, my relatives have been in the circus since the American Civil War. My great-great-grandfather started a vaudeville act on the old steam paddle boats running down the Mississippi River from north of Hannibal, Mo., clear to New Orleans."

Davenport said he owned a successful advertising agency in Texas before taking the circus on the road.



"Throughout the years, I have always wanted to put together a show for the people who live in the rural

areas," he said. "Whether this venture is successful or not, at least I can say we tried to show the people

in the Midwest what the circus used to be like when their grandparents (See CIRCUS on Page 5A)

Hail storm hits Selden, Jennings

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Heavy winds, hail as big as tennis ball and tornado warnings sent people in the Jennings area and northern Sheridan County to the basement Thursday evening.

Tornado warnings were issued for both Decatur and Sheridan counties, said Dave Floyd, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland.

No tornadoes were confirmed in Decatur County, he said, but Emergency Management Director Patti Skubal said there were trees and power poles down in Cedar Bluffs, north of Oberlin. She also said an old grain bin had been knocked over by the wind.

There were reports of 65 mph winds north of Oberlin, said Mr. Floyd, and lots of reports of hail.

He said he wasn't sure how strong the winds got, but there could have been gusts over 80 mph for the storm to blow over a grain bin.

About 10 miles south of Jennings at the home of Bill and Marilyn Noone, hail the size of tennis balls came down for 10 to 15 minutes.

Mrs. Noone said it was around 8:30 p.m. when the family heard on the weather alert radio that there was a tornado near Selden. She said they



AFTER THE STORM on Thursday, Stephani Noone held two tennis-ball sized hail stones at her home south of Jennings.

— Photo by Marilyn Noone

headed to the basement, and then the hail started.

At first, she said, it sounded like someone was hitting a tennis or racquet ball against the house time

(See STORM on Page 5A)

Country Club here needs to find money to keep golf course

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Oberlin Country Club, a nonprofit organization which runs the golf course east of town, needs help to continue providing recreation for those who live in the area and for visitors.

Club President Preston Pratt said he hates to sound negative, but the club has lost money or broke even every year since 2000. It needs to make some changes, he said.

The good thing is that the organization doesn't have a debt payment anymore, he said, but the group is operating with old equipment that needs to be updated.

Oberlin Country Club Inc., said Mr. Pratt, was organized in 1964. There was an old golf course east of town, where Jerry Fortin lives now.

Sometime in the 1970s, said Mr. Pratt, the club built a new course on land leased from the city in Sappa Park. The course, he said, was built by volunteers.

"From what I understand," said Mr. Pratt, "there was nothing. It was all trees and the volunteers just started knocking down trees and building fairways."

The equipment was all donated, too, he said. (See GOLF on Page 5A)

Bumper 2007 crops mean profit at Co-op

With bumper crops in 2007, the Decatur Co-op Association made over \$1 million more in profit than the previous year, with a good chunk of that returning to the members.

At The Gateway on Thursday night, around 225 farmers and their families heard the financial results for the year during the co-op's annual meeting.

Derek Hock, controller at the

Oberlin branch, said the association made \$1,390,832 this year. In 2007, it made \$275,104, so there was \$1,115,725 more in profit for this year.

The main reason for the increase, said Mr. Hock, was that the crops were a lot better. There was just more grain this year, he said, with wheat harvest filling up the elevators. (See MONEY on Page 5A)

Rural Health section inside today's paper

Nor'West Newspapers presents a special edition on Rural Health Care in today's copy of The Oberlin Herald.

Each year, the staffs at the six publications making up Nor'West Newspapers join to take a look at health care in rural Kansas. The section includes stories on each of the hospitals in northwest Kansas, the shortage of nurses, the work of dentists, traveling specialists and other health care providers.

Health Fair planned at The Gateway for Friday

The Decatur County Health Department and Hospital teamed up to plan the biannual Health Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday at The Gateway.

Marilyn Gamblin, county health administrator, said the department used to hold the fair every year but a few years ago she decided to do it every other year instead. Now, every even-

numbered year, the department will offer the fair, bringing health experts to town to pass out information and answer questions.

This year, said Ms. Gamblin, the department teamed up with the hospital to plan the event.

At the beginning of April, she said, the department drew blood for 170 tests. People will get their results back at the fair, but there won't be

a doctor available to answer questions this year, unlike past years.

If people have questions, said Ms. Gamblin, they should go see their regular doctor. The lab results, she said, have been sent to the person's physician.

The department did a few more tests than last (See FAIR on Page 5A)

*Circus travels to town

(Continued from Page 1A)

came to town years ago. "I get in touch with the county and town officials in advance to make arrangements. We are fully insured and employ 15 people, among our two families.

"Since we started in November, it has been getting tougher, because gasoline prices have continued to rise. We pull five trailers. Gasoline has gone up roughly 80 cents a gallon since that time."

"The circus is a dying art form. We do not have any animals except the albino boa snake."

People from the West and East coasts put pressure on circus owners because some organizations feel that the circus is cruel to animals, Mr. Davenport said.

"That just isn't true," he said. "If you invested \$150,000 in a car, would you just let anyone handle it?"

One thing most people don't know, the owner said, is that circus children are well educated, though they are home schooled.

"I have put two daughters through college by home schooling," he said. "It isn't the time that kids spend in school that counts, it's the quality of time spent working with the kids. My wife is a teacher, so we see that all our children are well educated."

Mr. Davenport said he wondered how many people know that the largest "big-top" circus in the world, Carson and Barnes, started in Clay Center, not too far from here.

In the 1960s, he said, there were 35 major circuses in America. Today, there are only 11 in Canada and the United States.

When Louisiana passed a law that made it illegal to teach monkeys to perform, he said, things changed.

A 1990 survey revealed that on the average, people only see a circus 2.5 times in their life, he said, adding that he'd like to think that his circus allows kids to get away from computer games.

"Hopefully, we helped families bond here today and allow families to take their minds off some of their everyday problems," he said. "After all, that is what the circus is all about, having fun."

Davenport said the circus travels to Atwood next week.



AT THE ANNUAL MEETING for the Decatur Cooperative Association, Jeannie Gawith served herself dinner at The Gateway. — Herald staff photo by Kim Davis

*Money given to shareholders

(Continued from Page 1A)

tors and then fall harvest doing the same.

Of that profit, said Mr. Hock, \$1,220,288 will be paid out in patronage dividends, meaning the money will go back to the 1,137 shareholder/members. In 2007, he added, the patronage dividends was \$225,921.

Of this year's dividends, said Mr. Hock, the shareholders will get \$366,761 in cash. Those at the meeting, he said, got their checks, and the others are in the mail. The rest of the dividend will be given in deferred stock credits.

The group elected board mem-

bers, which included all of the current members.: Rod Bryan, president; Chris Bailey, vice president; Gerald Benda, secretary; and Paul Nauer, Kenneth Kelley, Gary Orr Jr. and Millard Kyte. Associate members are Michael Wasson and David Stapp, but Mr. Hock said he wasn't sure if they had been re-elected.

During the meeting, General Manager Kurt Anderson announced the four scholarship winners, including Alyssa Montgomery, Jared Marcuson, Jennifer Daffer and Kayla Zadow. Each will receive \$1,000 for college expenses.

*Golf club needs help

(Continued from Page 1A)

The nine-hole course today is supported by memberships only. The course, said Mr. Pratt, doesn't receive any money from the city or the county.

The club, he said, is run by a seven-member board, including Mr. Pratt; Dick Ahlberg, vice president; Vince Carswell, treasurer; Gary Walter, secretary; and Connie Riedel, Scott Carlton and Carol Brown.

About five years ago, said Mr. Pratt, he started to see problems. The best the course could do is break even, with the club never making any money to set aside.

This year, he said, the organization started out with \$10,000 in bills from last year. There were a lot of breakdowns that year, said Mr. Pratt, and it's expensive to fix the equipment.

The organization has to pay for all the improvements to the grounds, he said, even though the city does own the land.

In 2001, they put in a sprinkler system, said Mr. Pratt. The club made the last payment on that system last year.

Membership is down, he said. There's been an average of 75 members a year, but in 2007, said Mr. Pratt, there were only 64 members.

Dues for a single, in-county memberships are \$450, for an in-county family \$500, for a student \$100, for kids 14 or under and in junior golf \$50, for out-of-county single membership, \$350, and an out-of-county family, \$400.

A yearly cart path fee of \$40 comes on top of the membership, he said. People can store electric carts for \$120 and gas carts for \$100.

A lot of the older members, said Mr. Pratt, no longer pay dues. They can't play anymore, he said, so why pay. Some people have moved to be closer to their grandchildren.

When times are tough financially, he said, some chose not to pay. A lot of young people don't play and some can't afford to join.

In the past, said Mr. Pratt, some people have joined and not played,

Organized evenings offered

The Oberlin Country Club is offering organized evenings of golf for men, women and couples in the area.

Preston Pratt, president of the club's board, said men's golf night starts at 6 p.m. Tuesday. Nonmembers pay \$10 and then \$5 to enter the tournament. Members pay just the \$5 entry fee.

A point system, said Mr. Pratt, will start for men's night. Golfers will earn points based on how many times they show up during the season and how they play.

At the end of the year, the top players will then win money, he said.

At 6 p.m. Wednesdays, said Mr. Pratt, it will be ladies' night. That hasn't started yet, but the fee for nonmembers is the same

\$10. At 6 p.m. Fridays, he said, is couples' nights, which will cost \$20 a couple for nonmembers.

Normal greens fees for nonmembers, said Mr. Pratt are \$15 for weekdays and \$20 on the weekend. New this year, he said, are twilight green fees, \$5 off the regular fee after 6 p.m.

Fees for memberships for a single person in Decatur County are \$450, family in the county for \$500, student for \$50, single out of county \$350 and family out of county \$400.

If someone wants to be a member, they can get in touch with Mr. Pratt or Vince Carswell, treasurer. Members do not pay green fees.

but it's a donation. Some of them have decided to not renew.

The \$10,000 in bills that were carried forward are now paid off, he said. Members gave donations to close the gap, he said.

Most people start paying for their memberships about this time of year, he said, but this is also the time the expenses to start going up. The grass will grow and need to be mowed, the sprinklers will be turned on.

The club plans to hire several staff people, both part-time and full-time, to work at the course, he said, doing grounds work and keeping the clubhouse open. It's hard to find people, said Mr. Pratt, because the work is seasonal. The job starts before school gets out and goes after school starts, which makes it hard for a teacher to do.

The club, said Mr. Pratt, plans to keep the clubhouse open. There will be tables and chairs set up. He said they are hoping to put in a television and sell beer, pop and snacks.

There will also then be someone there to collect green fees or rent a golf cart.

Mr. Pratt said they are also ask-

ing members to volunteer more this year, helping spray and mow.

The club can't keep carrying bills over, he said, but if the board raises the dues, he's afraid fewer people will decide to join. It costs \$65,000 to \$70,000 to operate each year, said Mr. Pratt.

"If the golf course doesn't have money to operate," said Mr. Pratt, "then it can't be open."

Anyone who wants to make a donation, he said, can give it to him, Mr. Carswell or one of the board members. A donation to the club probably is not a tax deduction, he added.

If people want to make a donation with a tax deduction, said Mr. Pratt, they can do it through the Decatur Area Development Fund, through the Chamber of Commerce. People have to specify that it's for the golf course.

The Oberlin Mavericks Corp. held a recent poker tournament last month, raising \$525 for the golf course.

Mr. Pratt said the club plans a free day of golf Saturday, with a pancake supper that night at the American Legion.

*Storm hits area with hail

(Continued from Page 1A)

There wasn't a lot of wind, said Mrs. Noone, or there could have been more damage. There were holes in the siding on the north side of the house, but they didn't lose any windows. Vehicles that were left outside have dents, said Mrs. Noone, and there is a perfect circle in her windshield.

Hail went through the family's picnic table, too, she said. Her son dug out a baseball and a golf ball, and the ball of hail fit between the two sizes.

Jacque Boultinghouse, mayor of Selden and emergency management coordinator for Sheridan County, said she did see a tornado trying to form west of town, which prompted her to blow the sirens there. Although she didn't see any twisters touch down, others in town said they saw some in the distance.

The town had hail, some as large as softballs, said Ms. Boultinghouse, although most of it was golf-ball size.

Every building in Selden, she said, had some sort of damage. During the part of the storm when the

biggest amount of hail fell, she said, there wasn't a lot of wind. About an hour later, the wind came with sheets of rain and pea size hail.

Ms. Boultinghouse said she hasn't heard of any serious injuries because of the storm.

The grade school in Selden was closed Friday, she said, because of damage to the roof. The hail punched holes ranging from the size of golf balls to softball size through the roof. When she checked the building out on Friday, she said, there were buckets catching water everywhere.

*Fair to host over 20 booths

(Continued from Page 1A)

This year's booths will include: Decatur Health Systems, which runs the county hospital, nursing home, senior apartments and a home health service.

Lab results with the county Health Department.

Fair Chiropractic with brain wave neurofeedback.

Decatur County Extension Office with health and fitness information.

Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center with information on early childhood education and parents as teachers.

Lifetime Eyecare with glaucoma screening.

Kelly's Home Medical with medical supplies and either a color cane or walker to give away.

Jill's Helping Hands with home-maker services.

Osteoporosis Services with \$20 bone density scans.

Unicare with health insurance.

Northwest Local Environmental Protection Group with information about well testing and other services.

Norton Valley Hope, an alcohol and drug-abuse treatment center.

Ward Drug Store with diabetic supplies, walkers and with diabetic monitors to giveaway.

Smart Start of Northwest Kansas, early childhood education.

Regional Prevention Center, substance abuse prevention.

Early Detection Works, which provides free mammograms for women 50 and under.

Northwest Kansas Domestic and Sexual Violence Services.

Apria Healthcare with medical supplies.

Southeast Kansas Independent Living center, which helps people with disabilities continue to live at home.

Living Independently in Northwest Kansas, which helps people with disabilities be able to live at home.

Technology for Kansans and the Kansas Equipment Exchange.

Reliv International, which sells health products.

west region.

Alzheimer's Support, a new booth, out of Liberal.

Decatur County Relay for Life, fund raiser for the American Cancer Society.

Decatur County Ambulance Service volunteers will check blood pressure.

Counseling Services of the

Prairie.

Ms. Gamblin said The Gateway staff will sell lunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Those who are at work on Friday can come have lunch and walk around the health fair, too.

This year, she said, her department will give away two car seats and two booster seats.



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WICHITA

Saturday, May 17, 2008

8:00 a.m.-noon

McCook City

Auditorium

West 5th
& C Street

Health, Wellness & Fitness Expo

Join Community Hospital and healthcare partners in a community-wide health, wellness & fitness expo! We'll offer a full range of healthcare services and a variety of health screenings, free or at a reduced rate. Also door prizes, snacks & giveaways!

Screenings & Exhibits

- Blood Tests on 3 different days (See info at left)
- Free! from Community Hospital:**
 - Occupational Therapy grip strength test
 - Colorectal cancer home screening test kit
 - MRSA info & germ black light screening
 - Senior exercise class/demos/participation/info
 - 5-minute massages
 - Health and exercise books
- Free!** Blood pressure screening-County Health Dept.
- Free!** Retina health screening & macular degeneration screening-Lifetime Eyecare
- Free!** Goggles screening test-Midlands Toxicology
- Free!** Foot screening-High Plains Podiatry
- Free!** Otitic ear canal check-Stevens Hearing Ctr.
- Free!** Spinal screening-Hinze Chiropractic
- Free!** Glaucoma screening-Burrows Vision Clinic
- Free!** Spinal exam-Nielsen Chiropractic Health Center
- Free!** Flexibility, strength & endurance testing-YMCA
- Free!** Quit spit kits & personal health assessment-Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department
- Free!** Check oxygen levels, blood glucose & CPAP pressure verifications -U-Save Pharmacy
- Free!** Wii game participation-Game On
- McCook Fire Department-Ambulance & firetruck
- Apria Healthcare
- DaVita McCook Dialysis-Kidney education
- West Central Area Agency on Aging
- Beauty by Jeunique
- Reliv

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Comprehensive Metabolic Panel & Lipid Panel—\$25

This test gives 22 results including:

- Cholesterol (LDL and HDL)
- Electrolytes
- Blood Sugar
- Liver Health
- Kidney Function
- Triglycerides (Blood fats)

For accurate results, **fasting is required** (no food or drink other than water) 12 hours before test

PSA (Prostate Cancer Screening)—\$15

TSH (Thyroid Disorder Screening)—\$15

Blood Tests Dates:

Thursday & Friday, May 8 & 9

6:30-8:30 a.m.

Community Hospital

Pioneer Conference Room

Saturday, May 17

8:00-10:00 a.m.

McCook City Auditorium

Note: No PSA or TSH tests will be offered on Saturday.

- Payment accepted prior to blood draw; insurance/Medicare will not be billed
- Appointments not necessary
- Blood test results from May 8 & 9 blood draws available at the health fair on Saturday, May 17

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