

Superintendent comes under fire

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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More than 30 people filled the board room and spilled out into the hallway during the regularly scheduled meeting of the Oberlin School Board last Monday night.

No one said during the meeting why the crowd was there, but the focus seemed to be on Superintendent Pat Cullen.

Some teachers and students were on

the agenda and left after their presentations, while others stayed for anywhere from one to almost three hours to find out what was going to happen.

Those who stayed said that they would have a chance to fill out a "climate survey" about Dr. Cullen.

Each board member received a copy of three letters sometime before the meeting about the superintendent. The letters came from Carol Brown, the district's Spanish teacher; Abby Hissong,

an Oberlin insurance agent and parent; and Jim and Tammy Fredrickson, who have a family farm and a business on Main Street.

Mrs. Brown suggested hiring Principal Duane Dorshorst as superintendent. All three of the letters suggested not renewing Dr. Cullen's contract or asking the public and teachers how they feel about the decision.

The Fredricksons wrote that they would encourage the board to ask

the community, staff and administrators how they feel about Dr. Cullen's contract.

Mrs. Hissong asked the board to talk with people in the community so that they can make "an informed decision" about the contract. She wrote that she encourages the board to go to the teachers, administrators and staff to ask them how they feel.

"What better way to know what is truly happening than to go to the

source?" asked Mrs. Hissong. "Then you will truly be able to make a well informed decision for our district."

All three of the letters, said board President Dewayne Jackson, suggested that it would be good for the staff to have a say on the issue.

The board has the climate survey, said Mr. Jackson. It might be a good idea to get the survey back before the superintendent evaluation, which he (See DISTRICT on Page 5A)



Pat Cullen



Club members hang greenery

MEMBERS OF THE MAVERICK 4-H CLUB helped to wind Christmas greenery around the canopy poles in downtown Oberlin on Sunday. Luke (above left) and Caleb Koerperich helped their father, Chris Koerperich, decorated one pole while Taylor Macfee (right) worked on one across the street.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



Food drive to start

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Stanley Hardware is getting ready to kick off its 10th annual Holiday Food Drive for the Decatur County Food Pantry.

Each year since 1999, store owner Joe Stanley and his crew have provided both space and advertising to prompt people to bring in non-perishable food, paper goods and personal items for the pantry.

The drive will start on Thanksgiving, Mr. Stanley said, and run through New Year's Day. After that, store personnel and high school volunteers will load all the donated items up and take them over to the United Church, where the Decatur County Ministerial Association runs the food bank.

This is the largest food drive the pantry has each year, Mr. Stanley said, and while the goal of 2,000 items set in 1999 has not gone up, the giving has.

"We haven't really upped the goal yet, but we're collecting more all the time," he said.

The goal was a millennial target in 1999: Collect 2,000 items for the food pantry for the year 2000.

That year, the drive ran for 38 days, from Nov. 12 to Dec. 19. (See FOOD on Page 5A)

Land sells well in auction

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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A Colorado couple with Decatur County ties paid more than \$1.4 million Thursday for 960 acres, or about \$1,270 per acre, for land from the Fred and Henrietta Bremer estate.

The Bremers, who died in March and April of this year, willed their estate to be divided between the Decatur County Hospital and The Gateway civic center.

On Thursday, auctioneer Lynn Johnson said, it took about 1 1/2 hours to sell the seven tracts of land to Gilford and Carlyne Mahaffy of Arvada, Colo. Mrs. Mahaffy, who is from Selden, is a sister to John Simonsson of Oberlin, he said, and Mr. Mahaffy grew up in Mankato.

There was a lot of interest in the sale, Mr. Johnson said, and he had several bidders, some of whom were local, but the Mahaffys hung on to buy the entire property.

Tracts No. 1 and No. 2 were combined with No. 3, Mr. Johnson said, to make up 160 acres, the NW 1/4 of Section 30, Township 4 South, Range 28 West, with buildings. This tract sold for \$180,800, or \$1,130 per acre.

Tract 4, the SE 1/4 of Section 25, Township 4 South, Range 29 West, and the NE 1/4 of Section 36, 320 acres, sold for \$451,200 or \$1,410 an acre.

Tract 5, the S 1/2 of Section 26, Township 4 South, Range 28 West, also 320 acres, sold for \$432,000, or \$1,350 an acre.

Tract 6, the NW 1/4 of Section 35-4-28, 160 acres, sold for \$238,400 or \$1,490 an acre.

Tract 7, the SE 1/4 of Section 27-4-28, another 160 acres, went for \$120,000, or \$750 an acre.

"It's as good a dry land as you'll find in Decatur County," Mr. Johnson said. (See LAND on Page 5A)

Graduate serves in Iraq war

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Canaan Bishop is home safe and glad to be back in Kansas.

The 22 year old, who graduated from Decatur Community High School in 2005, said that the things he missed most while overseas were Oberlin, his friends and family.

Spc. Bishop enlisted in the Army in January 2007. He took his basic training at Fort Knox, Ky., then had

advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. He then took airborne school, where he learned to parachute, at Fort Benning, Ga., and is now stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., with the 18th Airborne Corps. He was deployed to Iraq, July 26,



Canaan Bishop

2007, a date he says he will always be able to remember since the initials OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom) are tattooed on his right forearm with the date 7-26-07 just above the wrist.

He spent 15 months in a country that has daytime temperatures reaching 130 degrees both summer and winter, with nighttime lows falling to 100 in the summer and 60 in the winter.

"You drink water, drink water and drink water," he said.

The Army gives each soldier a list of what they can take to Iraq, Spc. Bishop said. This includes basics and such incidentals as a computer. However, once over there, the troops

are issued new uniforms and body armor. You don't need to take a lot of stuff, he said, since you can buy most things in Iraq or Kuwait.

The paratrooper from Kansas said he ended up doing security for truck convoys between Iraq and Kuwait. The security detail would escort anywhere from 20 to 100 Iraqi civilian trucks to Kuwait and then return with a convoy of military vehicles, he said.

However, on one trip in May, his humvee was hit by an improvised explosive device, a homemade bomb placed by anti-U.S. insurgents. The crew was bumped and bruised, he said, but no one was seriously injured. He said he had a light concussion.

"The medics looked at me and said drink water and take it easy," (See IRAQ on Page 5A)

Groups plan holiday feasts

Plans are underway for a community Thanksgiving church service and potluck dinner Sunday, Nov. 23, and the annual community dinner on the holiday.

The weekend before Thanksgiving, the Decatur Ministerial Association and Last Indian Raid Museum will team up to hold a service and dinner at the museum starting at 4 p.m. Sunday.

The service will be held in the old St. Mark's Church, followed by a

potluck in the Bohemian Hall. Beverages will be provided, said Curator Sharleen Wurm, but people need to bring a dish to share and their own table service.

On Thanksgiving, members of St. John's Lutheran Church and other volunteers will work together to put on the annual community dinner.

Teresa Diederich will be cooking the turkey, Peggy Groneweg the stuffing and Jeanette Diederich the rolls. Hosts will be the Marvin May family.

The group needs volunteers to make pies and salads. Anyone wanting to help can call Mrs. Diederich at 475-3525 or Mr. May at 475-2443.

People can call either to make reservations.

The meal will begin at noon in the church basement. After expenses, the proceeds from the dinner will go to the Decatur County Food Pantry.

A Thanksgiving Day service will be held in the St. John's sanctuary at 10:30 a.m.

Telethon needs volunteer helpers

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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After 14 years and more than \$125,000 raised for civic work, the Decatur County "Seeds of Hope" Telethon may have seen its last show.

Last year, the event raised more than \$12,000 for 19 organizations. Each group received between \$300 and \$600.

Lack of volunteers to do the work in the months leading up to the event and problems with the community access channel on the Oberlin cable system have put the project, which normally takes place in February, months behind schedule, said organizer Jack Benton.

The committee, which includes Mr. Benton, Regina Stanley and Church of Christ pastor Bill Duncan, should have plenty of help on the day of the event, Mr. Benton said, but the core planning group has shrunk. Several members have left the group or moved away this year. These are the people who collected auction items, organized the food and volunteers, took care of advertising and done all those jobs that need doing long before a major event can take place.

It takes between 60 and 70

volunteers to put on the event each year, Mr. Benton said, most of them on the day of the telecast. But if it was just a matter of recruiting more help, the telethon might still hit the air, or cable, this year.

First of all, it's probably too late to plan anything this year, he said. Plus, the community access channel the telethon uses has a lot of static, which caused him to stop broadcasting Oberlin City Council meetings earlier this year. The static, or noise, he said, is caused by cable modem boxes which are on frequencies that are too close together. The boxes are similar to what people use to bring in wireless Internet connections, he said.

Mr. Benton, who says he has been in broadcasting for more than 40 years, said he talked to a representative of Eagle Communications, the Hays company which owns the Oberlin cable system. He said the person he talked to just didn't seem to understand or care about the problem. Mr. Benton said he thought it affects the school channel also.

Mrs. Stanley said that another problem the telethon is running into is that more and more people have (See VOLUNTEERS on Page 5A)

Two guess right on all eight games in football contest

Two people guessed all eight teams correctly in the Pigskin Pick-em Contest this week, so the tie-breaker was used to determine first and second places.

Having guessed 16 points off the tie-breaker score, Todd Ketterl won first place and \$15 in scrip. Kimberly Solko, 34 points off the tie-breaker, received second place and \$10 in scrip. Both are from Oberlin.

Amanda Adams of Danbury, Neb., was the only one to guess seven teams right, winning third place and \$5 in scrip.

Six people guessing six teams right were Gary Anderson, Ivis Hanson, Travis Raile and Valisha Raile, Oberlin; Cheri Kastens, Herndon; and Mary Kinser, Jennings.

Three people got five right: Ron Solko, Mabel Zimmerman and Owen Wilson, all of Oberlin. Norm Wendelin picked four.

Contest rules are on Page 8A of today's paper, along with an entry

form. Forms also are available at the sponsoring businesses, Wagner Chevrolet, Buick, Pontiac, and Cadillac of McCook, Farm Credit of Western Kansas, Ward Drug Store, Raye's Grocery, the LandMark Inn, Home Planning Center, Fredrickson Insurance Agency, Farm Bureau Financial Services and *The Oberlin Herald* and the *Country Advocate*.

Only official entry blanks will be accepted, no copies.

This week's scores:

- Texas over Kansas, 35-7.
- Baker over Avila, 43-9.
- Benedictine over Central Methodist, 32-14.
- Southwestern over Bethany, 12-7.
- McPherson over Bethel, 28-23.
- Friends over St. Mary's, 57-22.
- Wesleyan over Tabor, 63-34.
- Nebraska over K-State, 56-28.
- Tie-breaker: Smith Center over LaCrosse, 32-14.

*District survey may be done by all

(Continued from Page 1A) said has to be done by the end of December.

Board members agreed that was a good idea.

Who all gets to fill it out? he asked.

Member Dan Nedland said maybe the students shouldn't fill out a survey, which would limit the number needing to be compiled, but certainly all of the staff.

Maybe a number of students should do it, said Member Barb Olson. It would be a good learning experience.

What about patrons, people who pay taxes and who elected the board? asked Mr. Nedland.

Member Jerry Chambers said he didn't see a problem with the public having the opportunity to fill out the survey.

The board decided to make the surveys available in the district office for anyone to pick up. The board members said they would make the

surveys out if needed.

The surveys will be available in the office at the high school for students who want to fill them out.

All of the surveys and the superintendent evaluation that the board members will fill out have to be turned in by Monday, Dec. 8, said Mr. Jackson.

The board will then hold a special meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 17, to discuss the superintendent's evaluation.

The board once again tabled a decision on administrator salaries. The administrator contracts will be an action item during the Dec. 17 special meeting, however.

The board held seven five-minute closed sessions and one 10-minute session without Dr. Cullen to discuss nonelected personnel. The board then held one 10-minute closed session with the superintendent.

There was no action taken afterward.

Business alliance plans light parade

Oberlin Business Alliance members are getting ready for the holiday season, starting with the annual Parade of Lights on Friday, Nov. 28, in downtown Oberlin.

The theme this year, suggested by students in the fourth grade at Oberlin Elementary Schools, is "Believe in the Spirit of Christmas."

Gary Walter, with The Bank, who is organizing the parade, said at a meeting last Wednesday at The Gateway that entries will stage at the Decatur Co-op at 6 p.m. and the parade will start at 6:30 p.m., traveling north up Main Street.

Mr. Walter asked if they should send out postcards or something to the clubs and businesses who participated in the museum parade to ask them to participate in this one. Although many said it was a good idea, no decision was made.

He suggested generating some flyers. Anyone who wants to participate can call Mr. Walter at 475-3817 or the Chamber of Commerce at 475-3441.

After the parade, Santa will be on the first floor of the courthouse, talking with kids and handing out candy donated by the Oberlin Lions Club.

Jack Benton, with the Lions Club, said they will not be holding their annual soup supper that night.

The alliance members discussed their Christmas giveaway, which will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 20, after *The Oberlin Herald's* Christmas on Us Giveaway and a soup lunch sponsored by the alliance.

The lunch will go from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center.

Santa will return that day to hear Christmas wishes, although it wasn't said where he will be.

The alliance will use the tickets from *The Oberlin Herald's* drawing for its drawing. That means that if someone doesn't win the Christmas on Us giveaway, they still have a chance at scrip money from the alliance.

Kids will have a chance to sign up with Santa to win tickets to Sunflower Cinema again this year.

Kem Bryan, Chamber board chair, said the Chamber is handling the Santa Bucks in house this year, saving around \$300 to \$400. She said they would like to find something like a stamp that would make an impression on them, so that people can't reproduce them.

In other business, the alliance members:

- Heard that Tina Watson, who works at Stanley Hardware, has been hired to be the new secretary for the Chamber.
- Discussed the spook parade on Halloween. Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug Store, said it looked like there was a record crowd downtown, with lots of people staying around for a while.
- Talked about the Longest Tail Feather contest, which normally happens at this time of the year, but didn't this year, since there wasn't any advertising or discussion about it prior to the opening of pheasant season.
- Talked about buying a \$50 gift certificate for LaMoine Wolfram for helping with the bulbs for the Christmas decorations.
- Watched a new promotional DVD for Decatur County.



"OIF" PERMANENTLY DISPLAYED on Canaan Bishop's right forearm stands for Operation Iraqi Freedom with the date he deployed, July 26, 2007.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

*Iraq war veteran displays his record

(Continued from Page 1A)

he said. While he missed home, he said, he was able to keep in touch via e-mail and an occasional phone call.

After 15 months overseas and a short time on leave at home, he will return to Fort Bragg. His enlistment will be up on July 5, 2010. After that, he said, he doesn't know what he will do. He might re-enlist, or

maybe not. Right now, however, he's enjoying what he's doing and just glad to be home.

While in Oberlin, he said, he's gotten a hold of most of his old classmates who are still around, but said he'd enjoy hearing from others. He can be reached at canaan.g.bishop@us.army.mil.

*Food drive helps provision pantry

(Continued from Page 1A)

On the 19th, members of Teens for Christ rolled 10 shopping carts filled with food from the store up Penn Avenue to the church on N. Griffith.

At the same time, a loaded pickup took most of the 2,136 items collected to the food bank.

Last year, the store collected 2,637 items by the end of December. This is about 20 to 30 percent of what the pantry needs in a year, Mr. Stanley said.

In a story in the Oct. 15 edition of *The Oberlin Herald*, Melanie Anderson, who runs the pantry, said they needed toilet paper and paper towels; personal hygiene items like

toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner and deodorant; and cleaning items. She said that the needs can change quickly, but canned fruits and vegetables are always in demand.

Ms. Anderson said that use of the pantry is up this year. Anyone needing help can come to the United Church basement between 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, she said.

In the meantime, watch for the tote sign in the window at Stanley's Hardware announcing the number of items that have been donated. Donate whatever you can spare, making sure it's in date, unopened and in good condition.

Emergency director quits to work for city

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Patti Skubal has resigned from both her job as Decatur County emergency management director and as a sheriff's deputy as of Friday to take an office job with the City of Oberlin.

The commissioners accepted her resignation at their meeting last Tuesday, but they had known of her intentions since Friday, Nov. 7, when she told them of her plans during their ballot-canvassing meeting.

Mrs. Skubal said that she had enjoyed her time with the county but felt that the job as city treasurer was a step up for her.

The commissioners said they would advertise her position but might contact Sheridan County Emergency Management Director Jacque Boultinghouse of Selden to see if she could help Decatur County until a new director is hired.

The commissioners also:

- Met with the Register of Deeds-elect Kari Ketterl and heard that the present register, Judy Gaumer, has hired her full time so that she can get training in what she will need to do after she is sworn in in January.
- Told commissioner-elect Gene Gallentine, who attended the meeting, that state law requires him to resign from his position as clerk of Garfield Township and his place on the county hospital board before he takes office on Monday, Jan. 12.

- Signed a resolution ordering County Attorney Steve Hirsch to start the process required for the annual sale of properties.

- Heard from County Clerk Marilyn Horn that she is sending out letters asking what day would be good for a coin toss to determine the election winners in two township contests which ended in ties. The four who had ties in the general election were George Ruzicka and Ron McDougal for trustee of Center Township, and Linda Schroer and Greg Ritter in Dresden Township treasurer.

- Agreed to continue health insurance for Chief Dispatcher Jeanne Pachner and dispatcher Beverly Reiter, both of whom are retiring and then being rehired by the county after a month. Ms. Pachner will take off January and Mrs. Reiter, December. The month of retirement is a requirement for collecting their Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs) benefits.

- Discussed changes in county radio frequencies that will be required in the future and how to purchase only that equipment which is absolutely needed, since the new radios required by the changes could be quite expensive.

- Set the next meeting for Tuesday, Nov. 25, as the commissioners and county clerk are attending the Kansas Association of Counties meeting in Wichita this week.

*Volunteers needed to put on telethon

(Continued from Page 1A) dropped their cable service in favor of satellite television, which gives a broader range of channels and choices.

Mr. Benton said that he had talked to management at KFNF Radio some time ago about turning the event into a "radiothon," but it had been too expensive.

However, the ownership and management of the radio station has changed since then, he noted.

Over the 14 years of the program, Mr. Benton said, the telethon has made donations to 235 recipients for an average of \$578 each.

This year's recipients included

Teens for Christ, the Decatur County Museum, the City of Jennings, the City of Norcatour, Kansans for Life, the Oberlin Area Concert Band, Oberlin Lions Club, the Salvation Army, Relay for Life, the Decatur County Ministerial Association, Tripple Creek Riders, Decatur Professional Women, Oberlin Girl Scouts, Creative Movements gymnastics, Awana Club, the Golden Age Center, the Decatur County Fair Board, the Decatur County Summer Recreation Program and Frogs Day Camp.

Anyone interested in helping with the effort should call Mr. Benton at 475-3174 or Mr. Duncan at 3259.

*Land sold at auction to Colorado couple

(Continued from Page 1A) son said.

Reached in Colorado, Mr. Mahaffy said that he and his wife haven't made any plans for the property yet but will probably rent it out.

The money from the land will be given to the hospital and the city as soon as bills are paid, said Certified Public Accountant Warren Bainter, who is handling the estate. Besides the land, the couple had certificates of deposit and

personal property, he added.

Mr. Bainter said he gave both the City Council and the hospital board \$500,000 each the middle of September, when the certificates of deposit were liquidated. The personal property was sold just last month and, he said, but he didn't know how much will be left after the bills are paid. However, he said, he figures each beneficiary will receive more a \$1 million from the estate.

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