

## Superintendent comes under fire

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
k.davis@nwkansas.com

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



Pat Cullen

(See DISTRICT on Page 5A)



## 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**  
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

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**  
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

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**  
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

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,

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)



Canaan Bishop

## 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**  
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

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)