

# Grant program gets OK

The Oberlin School Board gave continuing approval for donations to a grant program for teachers set up by the Decatur Community Education Foundation.

In the past, the board has had to approve each donation given to the district. With the motion last Monday, the board said they would then not have to approve every donation through this program.

Paul Shields, president of the foundation, said the Education Fund was designed to allow people to give back to the schools. The idea is that teachers and staff who need money for something special will apply for grants from the foundation. This might include a field trip or some other kind of special activity. The foundation board will select who to give the grants to each semester.

These will be for things that will make school better for kids, said Mr. Shields, projects that normally wouldn't be paid for by the district. For instance, he said, if there is no money to buy textbooks for something, the fund might pay for them.

The plan is to give grants each semester, said Mr. Shields. Teachers and staff can submit ideas and some will be accepted while some might not. Those with ideas that aren't accepted can resubmit them, he said.

The money amount will differ depending on the project and what's needed, he added.

Mr. Shields said the group wants to grant several requests each semester, but right now they don't know how much money they have. That depends partly on the foundation's investments, he said.

"It sounds like a great idea," said board President Dewayne Jackson.

The board accepted the idea. Mr. Shields said the foundation will get some information out to the teachers and staff.

# Church to offer live nativity

Members of the Lund Covenant Church are preparing for a live nativity for Christmas Eve next Wednesday.

Pastor Doug Mason said the live nativity, with the reading of the Christmas story and music, will start at 5:30 p.m. in the barn at Brad and Elaine Marcuson's farm on U.S. 83. The family lives 9 1/2 miles south of Oberlin on the east side of the road. Pastor Mason said everyone is invited to come see the program on Christmas Eve.

# Subscribers get 53 issues

Subscribers to *The Oberlin Herald* are getting a little holiday present this year — an extra paper.

Subscribers pay for a year of newspapers, 52 weeks, but because of how the weeks fall this year, there are 53 Wednesdays, which means an extra paper.

There's two ways to look at the extra paper for 2008: either subscribers are getting a free paper or each newspaper received throughout the year was just a little bit cheaper.



**DRESSED IN** the new choir robes, Jordan McHugh (above left) and Emma Merrill practiced for the upcoming concert in the high school auditorium. In the vocal room, Makenzie Nelson, Hunter Nedland and Kortnie Fisher (below) worked on a piece for the DCHS Singers.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

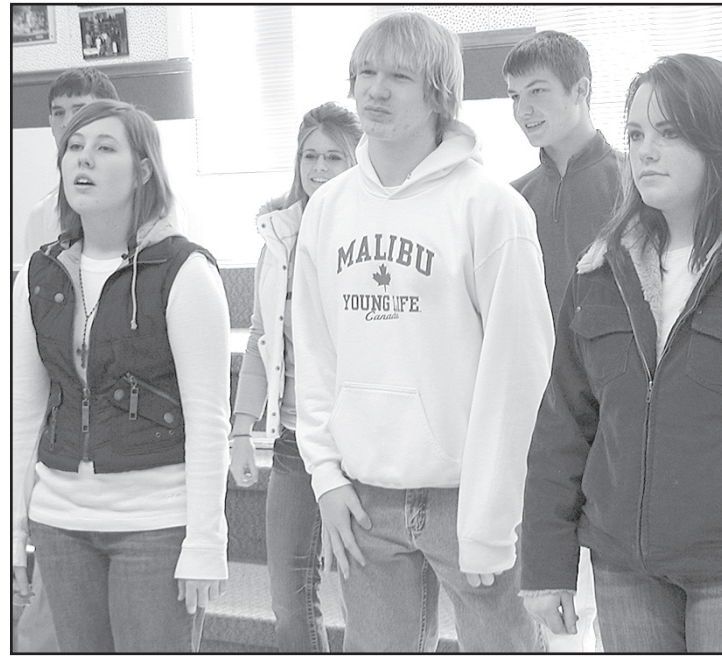
# Students prepare for show

Music students at Decatur Community High School are preparing for their Christmas concert at 7:30 p.m. Monday in the school's auditorium.

Teacher Susan Nelson said the Concert Choir, Chanté, the 4 Js and the DCHS Singers will perform.

The concert is free, but the students are selling raffle tickets for a winter basket that will be drawn that night.

Tickets, said Mrs. Nelson, are \$1 for one or \$5 for six. The



money raised in the raffle will help pay for trip to see "Phantom of the Opera" in the spring.

People can buy the tickets from students now or before the concert, she said.

# Air ducts at school to get cleaned

The Oberlin School Board last week approved spending close to \$17,000 to clean the air ducts at the high school and to add needed items for the heating system.

In October, Garrett's Plumbing out of Norton started to replace a steam condensation return line at the high school.

Superintendent Pat Cullen told the board members last Monday that he received information from the engineer that a butterfly valve and a strainer need to be included in the project. Neither were part of the original bid of around \$141,000.

The cost will be \$2,289, said Dr. Cullen. The board approved the parts and installation.

Dr. Cullen said there is a sewer pipe in the boiler room that's unused and probably needs to be removed.

Next, he said, the air handlers and ducts need to be cleaned. That's the

biggest expense, said Dr. Cullen. The air ducts are full of dirt, he said, and that is a health concern. He said he recommends getting them cleaned.

The price is \$11,291, he said, with a company that Garrett's Plumbing will subcontract out to. There weren't bids taken on the project.

That figure, said member Monte Moore, concerns him. Aren't there other companies that can do the cleaning. It seems like a truckload of money to clean those ducts, he said.

Member Barb Olson agreed that she wasn't crazy about spending that kind of money either. Are there other companies with the equipment that can do the work?

It does need to be done, she said.

Dr. Cullen said he's been told that Diversify Mechanical Maintenance Inc, out of Arapahoe, Neb. is the only one in the area that does the clean-

ing. Garrett's Plumbing found the company and will subcontract with them, he said.

The board approved getting the air ducts cleaned.

Also, said Dr. Cullen, the main steam line in the east tunnel is uninsulated and needs to be insulated.

What's the timeline for when the heat will be working? asked member Dan Nedland. Dr. Cullen said he thinks the heat will be on by Christmas.

Dr. Cullen said they have been good about shutting down the work at the end of the day and turning on the steam heat, but then the next day they have to open everything back up again.

There's an electric conductor on the air handler that provides electricity to the air handler that's burned up and can't be used now, he said.

# County talks about bridges with engineer

The Decatur County commissioners, road and bridge supervisor and a private engineer discussed future bridge projects in the county last Tuesday, noting that costs have nearly doubled.

Jerol DeBoer, with Penco Engineering of Plainville, said the state has mentioned changing the way it pays for bridges, giving the county the money up front, no strings attached. The county would then be responsible for putting up the bridges. The state would give the counties only a percentage. As it is now, he said, the county pays 20 percent of the price and 80 percent comes from the federal government, but it's passed through the state.

Costs have gone up, said Mr. DeBoer, with a 1040-foot bridge that's on the list to be replaced costing around \$400,000. That's around double what it had been, he said.

The two bridges by the Morfords' place southwest of town about two to 2 1/2 miles, just need some clean up work around them and they are done, he said.

The next bridge on the list is three miles west of Lyle, said Mr. DeBoer. A contract should be let soon.

Actually, said Mr. Stallman, there will be two bridges to be done in 2010. Mr. DeBoer suggested pushing the one up to 2009.

The other bridge, he said, is in Prairie Dog Township half a mile north of the Sheridan County line. Mr. Stallman said he wants to do the bridge in Prairie Dog Township first.

# County roundup

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked briefly about health insurance for county employees, planning to make a decision at the next meeting. Story to come.
- Received a picture of the laying of the cornerstone of the Decatur County courthouse. Story to come.
- Talked about future bridge projects, noting that costs have doubled. Story at left.

Mr. Stallman suggested that Mr. DeBoer hold back on some of the engineering until the money for sure is there. Mr. Stallman said he would hate to have the engineering work done and then have to back off the project.

New rules, said Mr. DeBoer, will require two bridge inspectors who will work at the same time, which will mean higher costs for the two.

The only good news is that 80 percent of the money for the bridges still comes from the federal government, he said. The other 20 percent is from the county. The bad news is that the 20 percent, with costs up, will be twice as much as in the past.

# Ad and news deadline on Friday this week

Anyone who wants to put an ad in the Christmas Eve edition of *The Oberlin Herald* needs to remember the early deadline on Friday this week.

The staff will put the newspaper together on Saturday, allowing printing and mailing to be done on Monday, a day early. Most people should get their papers in the mail before Christmas Eve that way, and newsstand copies will be out

Monday afternoon. All ads and news need to be turned into the newspaper office by 3 p.m. on Friday.

The *Herald* office will be closed on Thursday, Dec. 25, and Friday, Dec. 26.

Because the office will be closed, the ad deadline for the *Country Advocate* for Dec. 31 will be next Wednesday, two days early.

# student of the week



**Name:** Farra McChesney  
**Parents:** Donald and Julia Ray  
**Grade:** 12  
**Age:** 17

**We've nominated this student because:** She is the yearbook editor and is doing a fantastic job. In fact, we are doing something for the yearbook that we've never done before. She is the manager for the boys' basketball team and even went to two-a-days with the team. She is active in Student Council and has helped with many projects.

**Student Comment:** I am honored to be nominated as Student of the Week. I

love helping in any way I can and to know that there are people who appreciate me, makes it all the more worth it. I am very excited for this year to play out!

**Activities involved in at school:** Boys Basketball Manager/Stats, STUCO, speech, Drama Club, Yearbook staff, Weight Club, D-Club.

**My choice of movies, books, and games:** Horror and comedy movies. Any football movies and games. Books by Sherrilyn Kenyon and Keri Arthur.

**After I leave Decatur Community High School I intend to ....:** Attend Kansas State University with their ROTC program. I am currently enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve.

**And 10 years from now, I think I'll be ....:** Enjoying my life with family and friends. I'll be in Oberlin a lot to attend my little brothers' school event.

**Favorite Quote:** "If you want something you've never had, you have to be willing to do something you've never done."

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