

# School Board rejects bids for light work

The Oberlin School Board decided Wednesday to get prices and do an electrical project at the grade school with district staff instead of accepting one of four bids ranging from \$10,170 to \$12,605.

The board discussed whether to accept one of the bids or to let Kenny Black, indoor facilities supervisor, put up new lights in the grade school not only to provide more, better light, but as an energy-saving project.

At the regular meeting on Monday, Dec. 8, the board tabled a decision on the four bids from Trenton Electric for \$12,605, Castle Electric for \$10,170 and \$11,196 and one from Garrett Plumbing for \$10,603.

At the meeting Monday, Nov. 10, the board tabled a decision on the bid from Trenton Electric, agreeing to get other bids.

Principal Duane Dorshorst said he thinks Mr. Black will be able to do the work.

The group talked about putting new lights in every other row in the lunch room at the grade school. The current lights aren't as bright and are less energy efficient.

Member Barb Olson said she also doesn't want to cobble the project together and then find out it was messed up.

Why did the lunch room lights become so important over the lights in the classrooms? asked member Dan Grafel. That's what the board wanted, said Superintendent Pat

## School roundup

At a special meeting last Wednesday, the Oberlin School Board:

- Spent over two hours behind closed doors discussing non-elected personnel, accepted the resignation of the superintendent and interviewed the grade-school principal for the job. Story on Page 1A.

- Decided to get prices and do the electrical project at the grade school with district staff instead of approving one of the four bids. Story at left.

Cullen. It was part of the energy-saving plan.

The board didn't need to do anything with the bids that night, said member Mr. Grafel. The project could be done in house, and then if they need help, a local electrician could do it instead of having someone come in and get paid to do the whole thing.

The recommendation, said President Dewayne Jackson, is to get prices for bulbs and what needs to be replaced and do the project in house.

The board approved the recommendation, which became a motion, in a unanimous vote.

# Two Oberlin men face federal charges

Two men arrested in Oberlin last month on drug and explosives charges now face a federal indictment on drug, firearms and bomb charges.

The first weekend in November, Darrel Ferguson, 53, and Kevin Smith, 35, were arrested by the Oberlin Police Department. State charges filed on Mr. Ferguson include two counts of possession of drug paraphernalia, one count of possession of methamphetamine with intent to deliver and within 1,000 feet of a school, one count of failing to have a drug tax stamp, one count of criminal possession of a firearm and one count of criminal possession of explosives were filed in the case. For Mr. Smith state charges include two counts of possession of drug paraphernalia, one count of possession of methamphetamine with intent to deliver and within 1,000 feet of a school and one count of failing to have a drug tax stamp.

Last Tuesday, acting U.S. Attorney Marietta Parker said Mr. Ferguson has been indicted on one count of possession with the intent to distribute of methamphetamine, one count of unlawful possession of two destructive devices and one count of unlawful possession of a firearm.

Mr. Smith has been charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute of methamphetamine. On Saturday, Nov. 1, police ex-

ecuted a search warrant at Mr. Ferguson's home at 201 N. Wilson Ave. During the two-day search, members of the Oberlin Police Department, Decatur County Sheriff's Department, Thomas County Sheriff's Department and Kansas Bureau of Investigation worked together at the house.

A press release issued by the office of the acting U.S. Attorney Marietta Parker after a hearing in federal court in Topeka last Wednesday said investigators found more than \$700 in cash, a loaded 9 mm handgun, 3,000 rounds of ammunition, an SKS assault rifle, drug paraphernalia and two homemade bombs.

The men could face no less than five years and no more than 40 years in jail if convicted and a fine up to \$2 million on the drug charge. Mr. Ferguson could face a maximum of 10 years in federal prison and a fine up to \$250,000 on each count for the other charges.

Bond was set on Mr. Smith at \$25,000 but none was set for Mr. Ferguson.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Matt Treaster is the prosecutor on the case. The Kansas State Fire Marshal's office has also helped with the investigation.

DeLane Sauvage, 24, who was arrested on Sunday, Nov. 2, after officers served a separate search warrant, has been released on bond, said Chief Wade Lockhart.

# Commissioners change insurance

The Decatur County commissioners decided to change health insurance companies at their meeting last Tuesday, going from a partly self-funded plan to a fully funded plan with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for the employees' health insurance.

At the meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 9, the commissioners got some figures from Charlie Krull with Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

He said the county could save \$127,000 if commissioners were to go with his firm, compared to the plan the county has now.

Mr. Krull added that health-care costs are going up, so the cost likely will be up next year.

The county currently has insurance with Corporate Plan Management out of Topeka.

The commissioners asked County Clerk Marilyn Horn to contact Tim Carson with the company and ask for a proposal.

She said the commissioners also received proposals from Rural Health Plan of Centennial, Colo.,

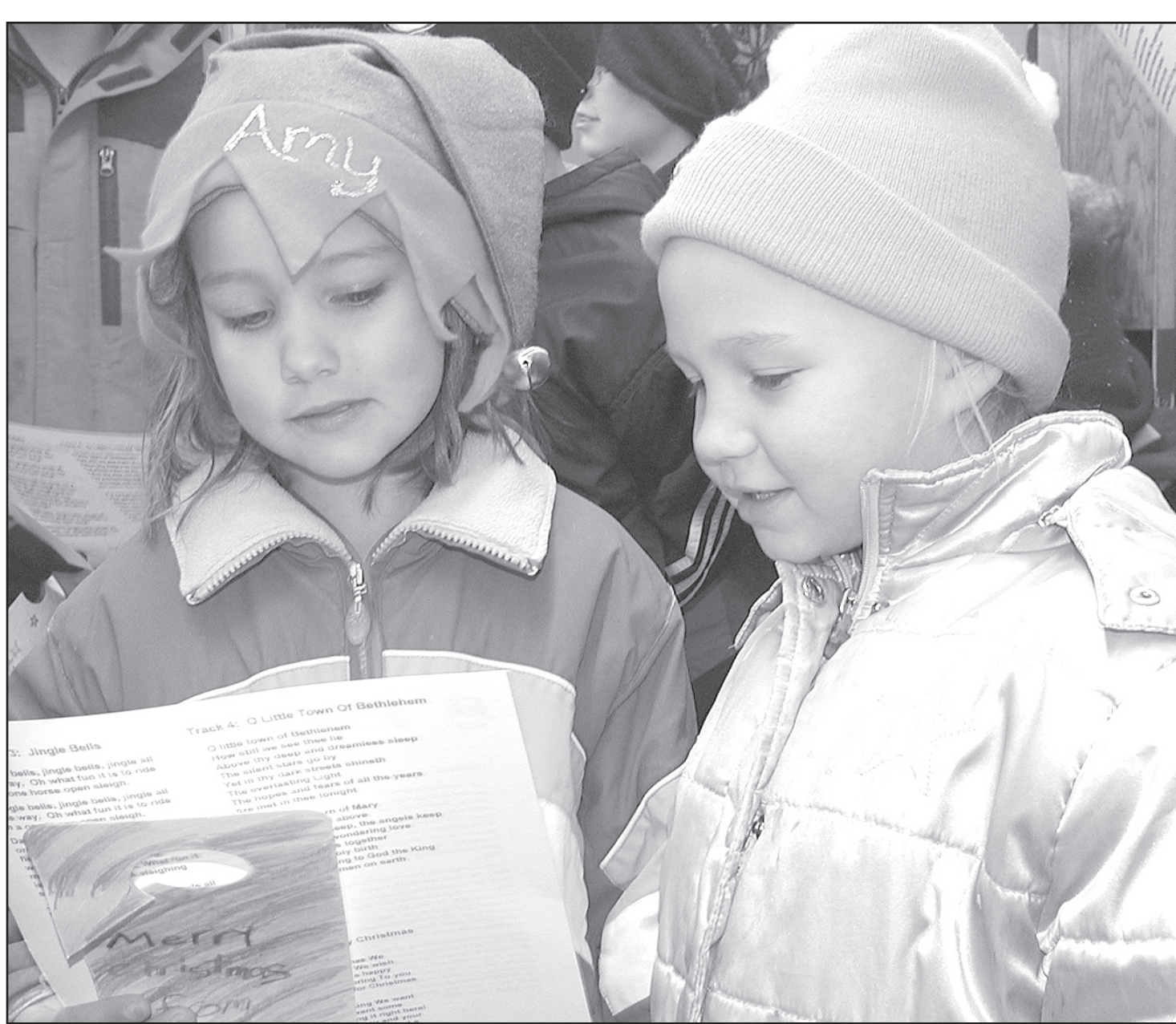
and Freedom Plan of Great Bend. Commissioner Ralph Unger said the change will take some of the liability away from the county.

With Corporate Plan Management, which the county has had for the past 17 years, the county had a partly self-funded plan. That means the county subsidized the plan.

In good years, said Mrs. Horn, the county came out ahead, and in bad years, it used up the reserve money put aside for the plan.

With the change in companies, the county will continue to pay for the employee's insurance and then it will cost an employee \$365 for a family premium, which will be \$20 more or less than employees are paying now.

With the current company, the employees could pick which option they were on, which changed what they paid, within \$20 of \$365.



# Students sing out on carols

IN THE COURTHOUSE on Friday, Amy Wentz (above left) and Gracie Vontz sang Christmas songs with other students from Oberlin Elementary school, including (at left) Alexandria Waterman (left) and Shylo Shields. Another group of students sang in businesses on Main Street that morning.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

# Fair board decides to sue promoter

The Decatur County Fair Board wants to go ahead and sue the promoter who put on stock-car races here last year for money he allegedly owes after the promoter failed to show up for a promised meeting.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy told the other commissioners at their meeting last Tuesday that Joe Bellm did not show up at a recent fair board meeting.

The board decided that they want to pursue action against Mr. Bellm, who allegedly owes the board \$3,000.

Mr. McEvoy said Rick Salem, an Oberlin driver who is working with the board to schedule races this summer, was at the meeting. He told

the board he wants to have two or three races at the Decatur County Speedway this year. Mr. Salem will be going to a race meeting in McCook, when the dates will be set for area tracks, he said. Mr. McEvoy said Mr. Bellm said he wants to have some races here, too.

Surely the board isn't going to work with Mr. Bellm, said Commissioner Ralph Unger, if he isn't going to pay them for last year.

There wasn't any further comment.

At the meeting, Mr. McEvoy said, Fair Board members heard that Don Bolt and his wife from Jennings aren't going to promote the Norton race track this year. The Bolts for-

merly produced races here, also.

Gene Gallentine, commissioner elect, said if the Bolts aren't going to promote the track, it might be a good idea to have a practice race day here in March. The Norton track used to

have one and a lot of people came in, paid a pit fee and ran their cars after the winter, he said.

It's a good stream of people and revenue for the town, Mr. Gallentine said.

# student of the week



**Name:** Makenzie Nelson  
**Parents:** Steve and Susan Nelson  
**Grade:** 12  
**Age:** 18  
**We've nominated this student because:** She has worked hard this year to

keep up with her school work and do quality work. She is an individual who is not swayed by her peers. She tries to do the right thing and is a good friend to many. She is a positive addition to our school family.

**Activities involved in at school:** Singers, Drama Club, TACT, Kayettes, musicals and all school play.

**My choice of movies, books, and games:** Musicals, Twilight.

**After I leave Decatur Community High School I intend to ...:** Go to college and major in music business.

**And 10 years from now, I think I'll be ...:** Successful.

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