



Women serve dinner

AT THE MASONIC LODGE on Thursday, Karen Bennett (above left) and Mary Ann Amack helped serve homemade chicken and noodles and real mashed potatoes. Myrna Jones (right) scraped food off a plate into the trash before it was washed. Each year the women of the Eastern Star make and serve the home cooked meal as a fundraiser for the Forget-Me-Nots. This was the 10th year for the meal. Around 175 people were served and all of the proceeds went to Dennis Brown, who handles the senior program.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Moisture needed for wheat

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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With less than an inch of moisture counted for Oberlin, it's dry, dryer than normal and dryer than last year.

The normal amount of moisture for this time of the year is 1.8 inches from the beginning of the year to Monday, said Greg Guillot, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland.

Last year, from January to the end of March Oberlin received 1.43 inches.

Basically this means Oberlin is 1.3 inches under what's normal moisture for this time of year. Mr. Guillot said that's 27.8 percent of the normal precipitation.

So far this month, he said, Oberlin has only received a trace of moisture.

The whole region is dry, said Mr. Guillot. Actually according to the drought monitor and official climate predictor, this area is abnormally dry as of Tuesday, March 10. Unfortunately the outlook is calling for continued drought development.

Although there's only a 20 percent chance of any kind of moisture this week with a possible thunder-

storm on Friday and Friday night, all hope might not be lost as the wettest months of the year aren't here yet.

Historically speaking, July is the wettest month for Oberlin, said Mr. Guillot, with 3.75 inches of moisture. The second wettest is May with 3.65 inches and third is June with 3.3 inches.

The numbers are based on what's on record for Oberlin from 1971 to 2000, he said.

The area does need to get a drink for this year's wheat crop, said Brian Olson, agronomist with Kansas State University.

"It's dry, but this area isn't as bad as some of the spots to the south since there is still some moisture in the soil," he said.

As the temperatures warm up, the crop is going to start using more and more of the profile moisture, so it's important for the fields to get some rain or snow.

The wheat is starting to green up and will be jointing in the next month or so.

Things are really going to start moving along and the farmers will get busier as they get ready for corn planting at the end of April, he said.

Conversation needs items for auction

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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With just a week left before Decatur Tomorrow's community conversation, items are needed for the silent auction.

The group plans to hold a silent auction during the conversation to raise money for youth activities at the new bowling alley/movie theater downtown. Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, said it's a way to tell the kids thanks for their help with the pre-salvage work before the Golden Age and Sunflower Cinema were torn down.

Letters went out recently asking for businesses to donate items for the auction. The Decatur Tomorrow Steering Committee has asked that the items have a \$50 retail value.

The idea, said Kimberly Davis, managing editor of *The Oberlin Herald* who is helping organize the

auction, is to get those items out this week at businesses so people can start bidding on them using the last four digits of their phone numbers.

Items will be placed at the Bank, Farmers Bank and Trust and the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center.

So far there have only been a handful of items donated.

Anyone who wants to donate can call Mr. Anderson at 475-2340 or Mrs. Davis at 475-2206.

The community conversation starts at 6 p.m., but before that the Spanish Club will serve dinner. The meal starts at 5:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at the high school. Money raised for the meal will help with the club's upcoming trip to Mexico.

Decatur Tomorrow started in January 2006, said Mr. Anderson. Since then the group has held three (See TALK on Page 5A)

Rally set to express love for this country

An Oberlin civic leader says she plans to hold an "Oberlin Tea Party," basically a rally for people to express their love of American.

Marcia Lohofener, a member of the Oberlin City Council, said she plans to hold the event at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, at the Centennial Park gazebo in downtown Oberlin. If the weather is bad, though, the rally will be a week later, on Sunday, April 5.

"This is not a Republican-verse Democrat rally," said Mrs. Lohofener. "It is a means of expressing our love for this wonderful country and our great concerns about the government's actions."

Mrs. Lohofener said she invites people of all ages to write a placard or poster telling their love of the country and carrying them to the rally. She said she would like people to meet at the gazebo and then walk up

and down Main Street carrying the posters, and then back to the gazebo to sing patriotic songs. The United Methodist Church praise band will lead the singing, she said.

"Come join your neighbors and friends," she said, "instead of sitting at home in fear and helplessness."

She said she hopes that a lot of people will take the time to make posters and carry them. It's time for people to stand up and express their

concerns and love for this country.

"Stand up for this country and it's Constitution, which requires it's citizens to tell their leaders what is expected of them," said Mrs. Lohofener.

Mrs. Lohofener suggested people bring their own chairs and if they want something to drink.

Walker reports seeing cougar at Sappa Park

An Oberlin woman reported seeing a mountain lion or cougar at the entrance to Sappa Park earlier in the month.

Jeanne Isbell said she saw the lion around 10:30 a.m. on Friday, March 6, on the east side of the entrance of the park, near the sign. She said she watched the large cat, which she commented had a really long tail.

The cat went east along the trees, she said.

Ms. Isbell said she called dispatch to let them know that she had seen the cougar as a lot of people walk in the park.

She said she is positive it wasn't a bobcat, which have also been seen at the park.

Sheriff Ken Badsy said he hadn't received any calls about any cougar sightings.

Mel Madorine, captain of law enforcement with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, said the best thing a person can do if they see a cougar or mountain lion is call the local sheriff's department or one of the wildlife and parks personnel.

Basically, said Capt. Madorine, it is possible to see a cougar or mountain lion here. There has been one confirmed report in Barber County.

Even if someone saw the cat close to Oberlin that doesn't mean that it is still in the vicinity, he said. Cats can travel long distances and move

around a lot. A cougar could travel from Kansas to Nebraska or back to Colorado in a day.

Even though people are 100 percent sure they see a mountain lion, many times it turns out to be a bobcat, he said. After a report is made, officials with the department check for prints, feces or other documentation to see if the cougar has or hasn't been there.

If out walking and someone sees a cougar they should make themselves appear as big as possible and above all, never run, then get someone to check it out. Most attacks happen when animals don't have a fear of humans, said Capt. Madorine.

Plans underway to open Subway here

Plans to open a Subway restaurant in Oberlin are underway, but there hasn't been an official opening date set.

A call to the Subway headquarters turned up no information at the beginning of the week, although a Subway official said she thought they were going to try to open the business in three to six months in Oberlin. She said there wasn't anyone available to talk to.

Kurt Anderson, general manager of the Decatur Co-op, said the co-op does have a lease with Subway for the north side of the Ampride building. He said he isn't sure when the restaurant will open.

The lease between the two businesses started the middle of January.

Subway started running help wanted ads in *The Oberlin Herald* last week.

Cash stolen from Scouts

Cash from Oberlin's Girl Scout cookie sales was stolen last week from the residence of one of the leaders in the 800 block of West Sappa.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart said \$841 made on cookie sales was taken from Michelle Ferguson's home sometime between 8 p.m. Saturday,

March 7, and 10 a.m. on Monday, March 9. Chief Lockhart said all of the checks were still there, it was only the cash that was stolen.

Ms. Ferguson is affiliated with the Girl Scouts. Since she was in charge of the money, he said, she will have to pay it to the Girl Scouts, if it isn't recovered.

Pouring concrete



ON MAIN STREET last week Willard Perrin (back), Dan Dempewolf and David Sporn used a rake and shovels to level out concrete that covered a new water line the men had just replaced.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

*Talk planned for community at high school

(Continued from Page 1A) conversations to get people talking about positive areas in the community and how to build on those.

Five action teams were formed out of the first conversation including Sappa Park, Multi-Generational, Economic Development, Existing Facilities and Leadership.

Volunteers with those groups have helped put in the walking trails at Sappa Park and maintained them. They have provided numerous hours cleaning up the trash at the park, putting up signs and making maps.

Others got county government day started last year, while others have scheduled and held classes in existing buildings.

Mr. Anderson said people with

each of those action teams will talk briefly about what's been accomplished over the years since Decatur Tomorrow was formed.

During the meeting there will be discussion on the groups — do they need to be rejuvenated, are there new volunteers and are any new teams needed?

"The idea is to look at the needs of the community again," said Mr. Anderson.

People of all ages are asked and encouraged to attend, he said.

Although in the past, Terry Woodbury has been the facilitator, he already had a commitment. The group has asked Mike Hamilton, a banker from Goodland, to facilitate.

The conversation will last until 8 p.m.

Oral agreement made on race track

The Decatur County commissioners found out Tuesday, March 3, that the former promoter for the Decatur Speedway had made an oral commitment to pay \$1,615 of the \$3,615 the fair board says he owes.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine said Joe Bellm, with Blood Sweat and Tears Racing, who promoted the speedway here last year, met with members of the Fair Board recently.

The board had sued Mr. Bellm for \$3,615, said Mr. Gallentine. At

the meeting, he added, Mr. Bellm offered to pay \$465, which he said was 1 percent of the gross proceeds of the track.

He later agreed to pay \$1,615 by Tuesday, March 31.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch said he wrote an agreement and e-mailed it to Mr. Bellm, but he hadn't signed it.

The promoter said he wants his attorney to look at it.

The agreement states that if Mr. Bellm fails to pay the fair board, the board can sue him again.

Data gives council water options to ponder

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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The Oberlin City Council got more information on water at its meeting on Thursday, March 5, but instead of making things clearer, the new data just the members more to ponder.

Wayne Bossert of Colby, manager of the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, and a representative of the Upper Republican River Conservation Projects Alliance, told the council about a possible source of water for the city — and a source of money to help tap it.

Mr. Bossert said the city might be able to tap the little-used, briny Dakota Aquifer, which is believed to extend under this area.

"It's sodium chloride (salt) water," he said. "It's deep here, 1,200 to 1,400 feet, but under artesian pressure. The big unknown is the amount. It was sea water basically. Over geologic times, its being flushed out ... but it's not real fast."

Since no test wells have been drilled to locate the water, he said, there is no way of knowing how much there is. Whatever there is, however, would have to be treated by reverse osmosis because it will be quite salty.

Money to pay for this could come

from a cash settlement Kansas expects to get from Nebraska and perhaps Colorado over misappropriation of water in the Republican River basin, he said. Nebraska has been overusing water out of the Republican for years and the Supreme Court has said the state has to pay Kansas for it. However, no one knows how much Nebraska will end up paying or when, he added.

Part of whatever money the state does get is supposed to be used for conservation and should come through the alliance, he said. Oberlin can request a grant from the alliance to help get water out of the Dakota and run it through treatment.

The city could not get a grant to use the water it has now and use reverse osmosis treatment, he said, because that would not be considered conservation. The city's wells today take water from shallow aquifers which flow into the Republican.

"Is there any assurance there will be any money from Nebraska in my lifetime?" asked Councilwoman Rhonda May.

"No," Mr. Bossert said. "I wouldn't put my salary on it, but when it's settled, the money will come. Even Nebraska agrees they owe us. It's just how much."

David Waldo, an environmental engineer with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment,

came to the meeting to answer questions. He warned the council that the city is running out of time to get started on some type of treatment plant. Existing wells are high in arsenic and uranium, as well as less harmful minerals, under new, tighter federal guidelines.

He said that the state needs an agreement with the city with a schedule as to how it is going to handle the problems. The state doesn't care if the city uses a regular or a reverse osmosis system, he added, as long as it gets going on something.

Five systems in the state are using reverse osmosis to treat their water, he added, including Abilene, Hutchinson and Wheatland Electric in Garden City.

"I think it's feasible technologically, but not necessarily cheaper than what you're doing," Mr. Waldo said of using the Dakota water.

"Would it be in our best interests to wait and see?" asked City Administrator Austin Gilley.

Mr. Bossert and Mr. Waldo both said no.

"You know you have a problem," Mr. Waldo said. "(You) need to start working on it."

Mr. Bossert said that so far, the alliance has seven projects on its list.

After the water experts had left,

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8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	-Bone Density -Cardiac Rehab		-Dr. Jeffery L. Curtis Cardiology	-Dr. Saba Orthopedics		-MRI's -Ultra Sounds -Cardiac Rehab	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
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