

## Residents talk about wish lists

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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Around 50 people brainstormed about positive things in town and others that can be improved on during a Decatur Tomorrow "community conversation" last Monday.

Michael Hamilton, a banker from Goodland, led the conversation in the cafeteria at the high school. He was filling in for Terry Woodbury, president of Kansas Communities LLC, a Kansas City-based consultant who helped found the group and others across the state.

A lot has been done since Decatur Tomorrow started three years ago, said Mr. Hamilton. This session is a time to celebrate what's been done and to get volunteers to work on projects.

Before breaking into small groups to discuss assets and what the 50 people in the crowd would like to see accomplished, each of the group's "action teams" had a chance to tell what's been going on.

The groups included:

- Sappa Park with Charlie Haag, who showed a map of the park. He outlined with his finger where walking trails have been cut, and pointed out the location of the pumpkin patch planted by Pheasants Forever members last fall.

Pheasants Forever has leased the ground from the city, said Mr. Haag. There's still lots of work to be done on the trails and in other areas. One idea is to put up signs to identify trees and shrubs along the trails. Another is to put in an archery target area.

- Maximize and Use of Existing Facilities with Kem Bryan, who said the group took a look at the buildings in the community and with no budget, came up with ideas for what to do with them. The group sponsored and organized classes on knitting, cooking and other areas using local talent, she said. After the knitting class, a knitting group was organized with 15 to 20 people who meet monthly.

- Leadership Development with Abby Hissong, who said the group had narrowed down its focus to starting a county government day, spending half a day at the courthouse with the students learning about the different offices. She said she hopes to continue the day this year.

- Golden Age/Sunflower Cinema Building with Greg Lohofener, who said the project came out of a need for a new senior center and requests from teens for a place for kids to have a recreation center. The multi-function facility will have a total cost of about \$990,000, he said.

## Auction raises money

With the help of area businesses, the Decatur Tomorrow Steering Committee raised \$1,055 last week for game systems to entertain teens at the recreation center planned for the county's new theater/bowling alley building.

The steering committee asked businesses to donate items for a silent auction, which ended during the "community conversation" last Monday. Bidders purchased the items for a little over \$1,000.

The money will be given over to a group of teens to decide what they want at the new building for kids to do, said Gary Anderson, committee member.

Items that were donated included a microwave by R&M Service Center, a \$50 gift certificate to Stanley Hardware donated by the Bank, two homemade carrot cakes donated by Rob McFee, a 70-piece crescent tool set donated by Goltl Home Planning Center, a University of Kansas sweatshirt donated by Custom Trophy and Engraving.

An ad donated by *The Oberlin Herald*, a nativity set donated by the LandMark Inn, two "silver eagle" coins donated by First National Bank, a Coors belt buckle donated by Bill and Connie Riedel, a pair of Roper boots donated by Rocking R, a \$50 gift certificate from Ward Drug Store, two frosted-glass picture frames donated by Addleman Drug Store, a Skil cordless tool set donated by Stanley Hardware, one year subscription to Market Data donated by Greg Lohofener Market Data Inc., a limited-edition duck print donated by the Riedels, and "Finding 412," an original print by Anna Seeber Shaw.

Mr. Hamilton asked those at the conversation to talk with the people at their tables to discuss areas they (See VOLUNTEERS on Page 10A)

## City, school election will be next week

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**  
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The ballots are ready and advanced voting is open for the city and school elections on Tuesday.

There are seats up for election on each of the four city councils in Decatur County and three spots for the Oberlin School Board.

All three of the spots on the school board are at-large positions, which

means any registered voter in the district will get a chance to vote.

Candidates include Douglas Brown, operations manager for the Frenchman Valley Co-op in McCook; Abby Hissong, an insurance agent for Fredrickson Insurance Agency; and Daniel Wasson, who farms south of town.

Both Mr. Brown and Mrs. Hissong (See ELECTION on Page 10A)

## Surveys allow citizens to voice their thoughts

Most residents inside the City of Oberlin limits received a customer survey in the mail last week.

The three-section survey asks general questions about where a person was born, how old they are, what they do and how they feel about the city, how those in city government are doing and about the city staff.

The idea, said City Administrator Austin Gilley, is to develop a baseline for customer service. The answers from the survey will be compiled and put into a report presented to the council.

The goal with this survey, he said,

is to find any extremes and then go from there to see if the council needs to do any more research in a certain area. It's kind of a textbook survey to see what's going on with the community, said Mr. Gilley.

The idea is to do a customer service survey every year, allowing the "silent citizen" to have some input and to see areas that the city needs to work on and areas where service is well received.

Surveys are due back to the city office by 3 p.m. Friday, April 10. If anyone didn't receive a survey, they can pick one up at The Gateway.



**SHOWING HER SENTIMENTS**, Shayla Williby (above) was among those who brought signs to the Oberlin Tea Party on Sunday at The Gateway. Will Bouts (below in headband) took the microphone from Sid Metcalf during the rally. Decatur County Commissioner Ralph Unger (at bottom) wore his sign around his neck while telling how he feels about what's happening in Washington. — Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

## Citizens voice complaints

By **CYNTHIA HAYNES**  
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About 50 Decatur County citizens gathered at The Gateway on Sunday to express their unhappiness with what they see as a big-spending, controlling government and their support for their country and its Constitution.

The event was billed as a "Tea Party" after the historic anti-British rally in Boston by organizers Marcia Lohofener, an Oberlin City Council member, and Sharon Addleman, a business owner. It basically was a rally for conservative Christians who feel their liberties and way of life threatened.

The rally had been scheduled for Centennial Park with a parade of signs down Penn Avenue. However, windy weather pushed it into The Gateway, where organizers asked for donations to defray the \$193 rental fee.

Led by the United Methodist Church praise band, the group stood and sang "The Star Spangled Banner." People with protest signs paraded in front of the small stage, around the assembled chairs and back to their places.

Mrs. Lohofener was the first speaker.

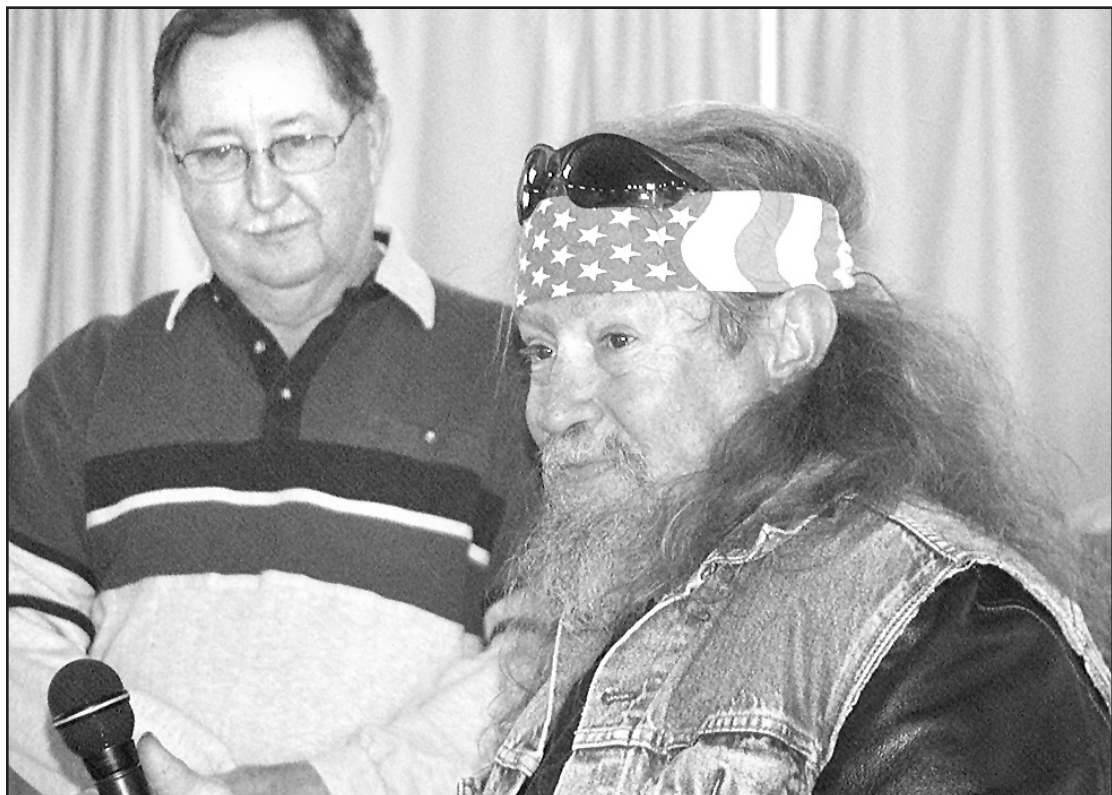
"We the People are directly responsible for allowing Washington to become what it is today," she said. "We can't figure they will just take care of us. Our freedoms are leaking out the sieve, which is our government."

Mrs. Addleman followed, saying that she was angry with what is going on in Washington. She noted that the government can't give something to anyone that it hasn't first taken from someone else.

She said the federal budget, estimated to be \$3.6 trillion next year, is outrageous and asked if anyone could comprehend how much a trillion dollars was.

Norbert Zander, a retired veterinarian, said yes. In \$1,000 bills, he said, \$1 million would be four inches high; \$1 billion, 380 feet; and \$1 trillion, 64 miles.

Mrs. Addleman went on to say she didn't think the federal government should be involved in health care because socialized medicine has not worked in those countries which have it, includ-



## Where you can write

Among the hand-outs available at the Oberlin "tea party" on Sunday was one with addresses and phone numbers for state and federal officials.

Among them:  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500  
www.whitehouse.gov

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts  
109 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-4774  
www.roberts.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback  
303 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-6521  
www.brownback.senate.gov

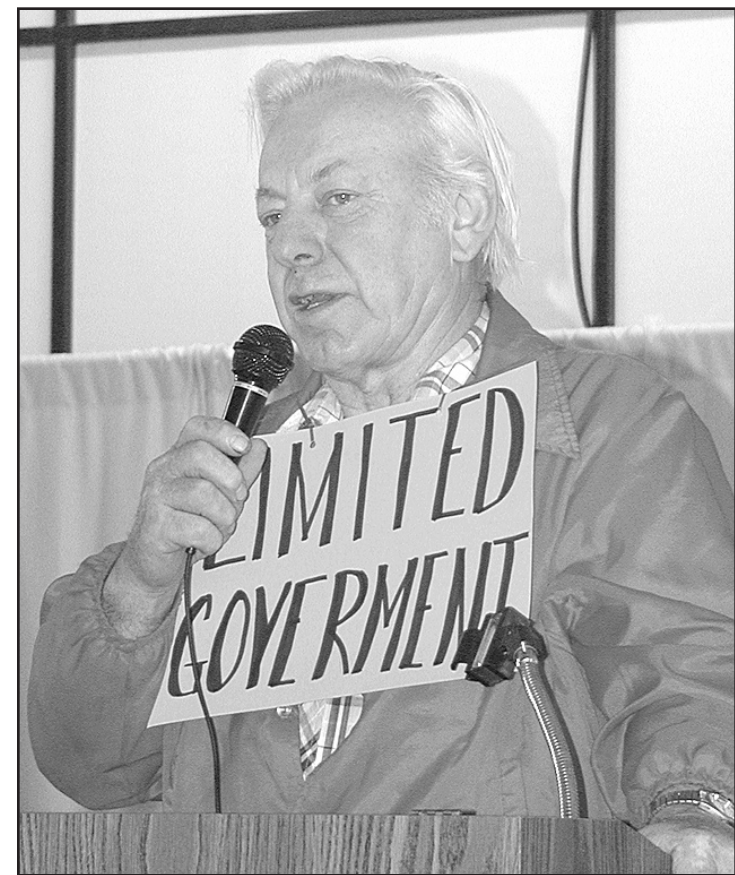
U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran  
2202 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-2715  
www.jerrymoran.house.gov

ing Canada and England.

Derek Chambers, a high school senior who is president of the National Honor Society here and a member of the Decatur Tomorrow steering committee, said he is worried about the problems facing his generation, including the recession, energy problems and the federal deficit.

With the exception of some children who came with their parents, he was one of the few people in the crowd under 40.

Members of the crowd were asked to speak.  
Stuart Henzel, a farmer and



cattleman, said he was concerned about what is happening in the schools and elsewhere.

Ralph Unger, a farmer and Decatur County commissioner, said he was in Washington recently and was appalled by the way the words of the founding fathers were being reinterpreted for political correctness.

"A lot of the Bill of Rights is being trampled all over," he said. "They (members of Congress) don't even know what was in the stimulus package. What a hell of, excuse my French, a way to run a country."

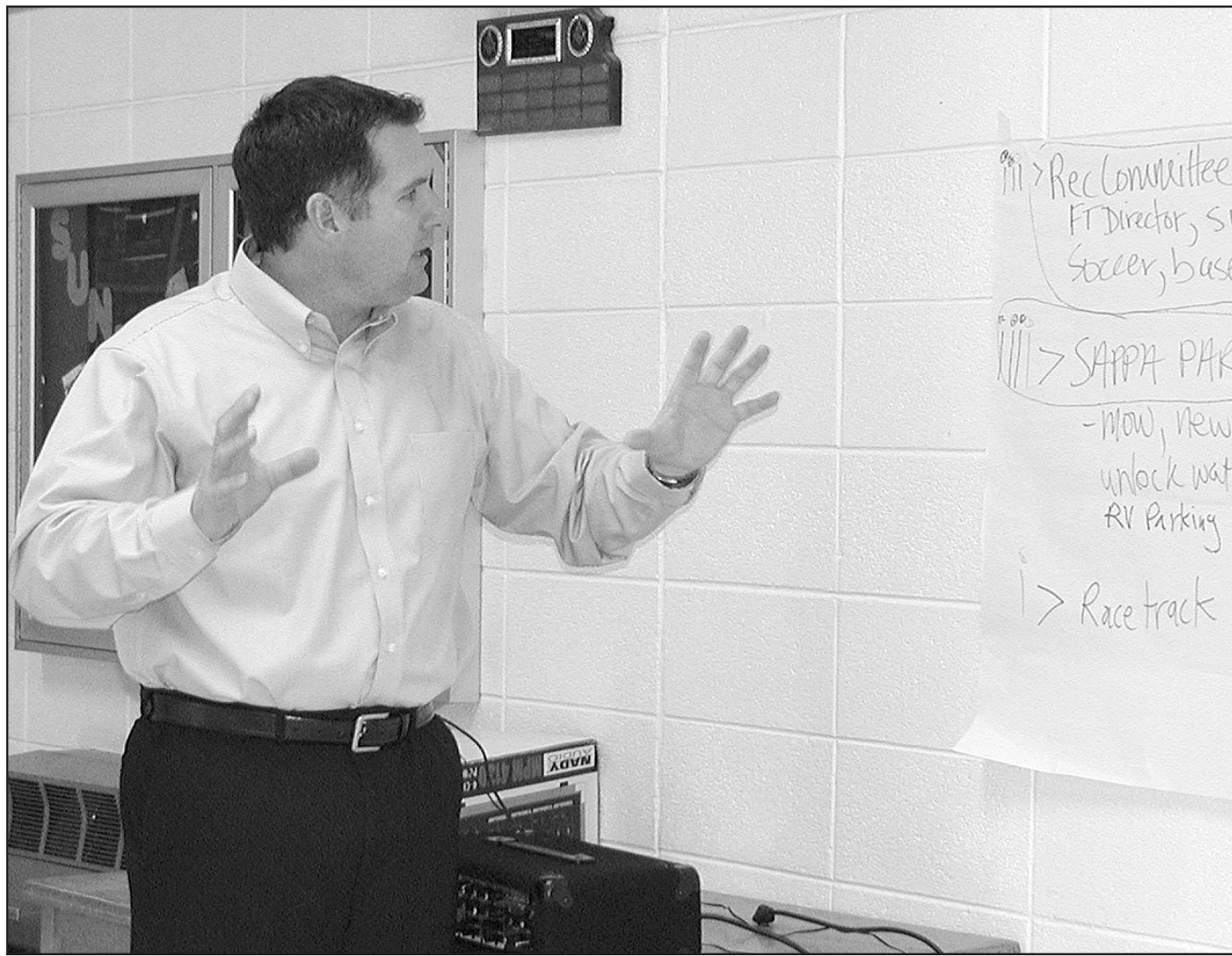
He urged everyone to call and visit their elected representatives and asked everyone to come out of see Rep. Jerry Moran when he visits Oberlin on Monday, April 13.

"We need to speak up or we're going to lose our country," he said.

Norma Unger, Mr. Unger's wife, added that it was never the intent of the founding fathers to take God out of the country.

Former downtown businessman Steve Arnold warned the group about socialism.

Zane Geis, who said he retired (See RALLY on Page 10A)



AT THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION last Monday, facilitator Michael Hamilton talked about the different areas of interest on which the crowd voted. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

## \*Election has lots of people seeking office

(Continued from Page 1A) song put their names in when former member Delayne May resigned last year. Neither were appointed to the board at that time.

Mr. Wasson isn't a stranger to the board, however, having served from 1993 to 2003.

Currently those seats are held by members Chris Bailey, Jerry Chambers (who was appointed last year) and Dewayne Jackson, current board president. None of the three is running for re-election.

On the Oberlin City Council, candidates on the ballot for three positions include:

- Incumbent Jay Anderson, a retired veterinarian who has served for eight years.
- Marcia Lohofener, an incumbent who retired as the manager of Wheat Ridge Terrace apartments, and has served for two years.
- Incumbent Rob McFee, a clerk at the post office who has served for four years.
- William Riedel, a fresh candidate who retired from the Coors Brewing Co. in Golden, Colo., and has owned a home here for the past 14 years.

Since election filing closed, Stephen Horn, a custodian at Decatur Community High School, decided to put his name in the race as a write-in candidate.

In Norcat, Von Johnson is running for mayor, while Jerry Wescott

has his name on the ballot for council. There are two council spots open and both Larry James and Carol Lyon are running as write-in candidates.

In Jennings, no one filed to run for the mayor's spot while Louise Cressler is seeking reelection for a council spot. There are two council positions open.

In Dresden, there are three council spots open and no one filed.

People can vote at the normal polling places, including:

- The Jennings Senior Center for those who live in Allison, Pleasant Valley and Jennings townships or in the city limits of Jennings.
- The Dresden United Methodist Church for those in Custer, Lyon and Dresden townships and inside in Dresden.
- The Norcat City Hall for those in Garfield, Grant and Lincoln townships and in Norcat.
- The Gateway in Oberlin for everyone else, including residents of Oberlin and the west half of the county.

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

As of Monday, two people had voted, said Clerk Colleen Geihlsler, county election officer. Advance ballots will be available at the clerk's office until Monday.

Mrs. Geihlsler said first-time voters should remember to bring a photo ID if they registered online.

## Supper planned

Mark your calendars for the Decatur County Helping Hands for Healthcare supper Friday at the high school.

The group plans to serve pancakes, eggs and sausage from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the high school cafeteria

before the All-School Play at 7:30 p.m.

The group is raising money to help people in Decatur County pay excess medical expenses. This is the first year for the group.

## \*Volunteers needed for action teams

(Continued from Page 1A) would like to see improved in the community or things they would like to see started.

He asked each group to write their top three ideas on an index card. The cards were collected after about 20 minutes of discussion and the votes were tallied.

The top vote getters included:

- A new motel, with eight votes.
- Completing the longer runway project at the Oberlin City airport, with five votes.
- Entrepreneurship with a men-

toring program, with five votes.

- City beautification, with four votes.
- Sappa Park including unlocking the water faucets, fixing the bathrooms, signs on the trails, maintaining the trails and water, with four votes.
- A recreation committee with a full-time director to oversee the ball program, camps, other possible sport programs and anything dealing with recreation, with three votes. This vote was combined with a plan for a new swimming pool.

• volunteerism network, with three votes.

Other ideas that people came up with that received one or two votes included improving the recycling program, the race track, Gateway development, a community garden, finishing the recreation center, more entertainment brought to the area, more employment for skilled workers, legalizing golf carts in town, training for health care, doing something at the former youth ranch, a "farm experience" vacation package, community auction, more classes using talent,

maintaining and preserving the brick streets, an outdoor movie, playground equipment and an assisted-living facility for the elderly.

If someone wrote down an idea and it isn't one of the top vote getters, said Gary Anderson, a member of the steering committee, and a few people wanted to work together on that idea, the committee probably won't turn them down.

At the end of the evening, people had the chance to sign up to work on the top vote-getting ideas.

## Riding group may need to lock arena

The Decatur County commissioners talked with a member of the Triple Creek Riders, a horse club, about locking the arena at the Decatur County fairground.

Club representative Mick Barth told commissioners people who are not members of the Riders are using the arena, but non-members are not covered under the group's insurance. The commissioners agreed that the riders are the responsible party for the arena.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said it's up to the group what they want to do. If locking the arena doesn't work, he said, then they can come back.

Mr. Barth said he wanted to make

sure everyone is on the same page.

The arena is an asset to the community, said Mr. Unger, one he would like to keep.

Mr. Barth asked County Attorney Steve Hirsch if the group should lock the arena. It's a delicate situation, said Mr. Hirsch. The property is county owned, so maybe you need to talk to the club and then ask the others to become members.

The group talked about whether using the arena without permission, even if it's locked, would constitute trespassing. There was some question about that, Mr. Hirsch said, because the property is owned by the county, not the riders.

If there are just a few people abus-

ing the arena, said Commissioner Gene Gallentine, maybe someone from the group could just talk to them.

"They've done that," said Mr. Barth.

Mr. Unger said he would hate to see the arena locked because it would make it hard for someone following the rules to use it, but if it gets bad enough, that will have to happen.

It's hard to say it's open for people to use, said Mr. Hirsch, but then put a lock on it.

Mr. Barth said he got a call late one night from dispatch because someone was passing through with horses and wanted to use the arena

to let the horses out. Mr. Barth said it was OK but told them there was no water and they couldn't feed the horses inside the arena.

Mr. Gallentine asked if those people paid anything to use the arena. Mr. Barth said no, but added that the club could charge a small fee.

The commissioners agreed that the solution is up to the riders.

## Congressman to visit

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran invites people to come talk with him at 3 p.m. Monday, April 13, when he stops at The Gateway during his 1st District "listening tour."

Mr. Moran will be in town for an hour on his annual tour of the

69-county district.

Before coming to Oberlin, he plans to talk to people from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. at the library in Norton. That evening from 7 to 7:30 p.m., he will be at the Church of Christ in St. Francis.

## \*Rally brings out 50 people

(Continued from Page 1A) here from Wyoming, told the group that his Marine unit lost 50 out of 72 men and he had a friend who died at Iwo Jima.

"They didn't fight for socialism," he said. "They fought for freedom."

Jerry Lohofener, a retired farmer and Marcia's husband, warned that forces in the government are seeking to control the flow of ammunition, thus controlling people's right to have guns.

Will Bouts, a heavy-equipment operator, said that people should guard the Second Amendment and invest in the 4Bs — bullets, beads, blankets and Band-aids.

Ann Anderson, wife of city Councilman Jay Anderson, spoke next:

"When did we turn our government over to representatives who care nothing about us?" she asked.

Mary Henzel, Stuart's wife, warned against the "liberal media," saying that she felt blessed to have the voices of Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity available.

Former Oberlin resident Peg Smith said she felt that elected officials are supposed to be accountable to the people, not the people to the officials.

Judi Stricker, pastor of the United Church, quoted Thomas Jefferson, who said that every generation should pay its own debts and that

banking is more dangerous than armies.

There are 545 people responsible for the mess we're in, she said, the president, Congress and the Supreme Court justices.

"The need to be held accountable to their bosses," she said, "and folks, that is us."

During the rally, the group sang "This Land is Your Land" and "God Bless the U.S.A." The rally ended with "God Bless America."

After the rally, Mrs. Addeleman said she had forgotten to tell everyone to send a tea bag (without the tea) to the White House with a note saying they have concerns about the way things are going.

## Council to discuss grave work

The Oberlin City Council will discuss a contract for the person who digs graves at the city cemetery when it meets Thursday.

The city has had a signed contract with plumber Marvin Hansen to dig graves, said Administrator Austin Gilley, although the most recent one he has found is from 1998.

The council will also discuss a proposed water treatment plant, roof replacement at The Gateway and heating and air conditioning for the building.

The meeting starts at 7 p.m. upstairs at The Gateway. It is open to the public.

## Lost:

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