

# Welcome home alumni!

Reunion schedules on Page 9A.

# THE OBERLIN HERALD

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## Services planned at cemetery

The red, white and blue will fly high and proud on Monday as veterans all across Decatur County are honored and remembered during Memorial Day services.

The ceremony at the Oberlin Cemetery starts at 10 a.m. around the main flag pole. It's sponsored by the Oberlin American Legion, Sons of the American Legion and Legion Auxiliary.

This year, organizers have asked Phil Law present the different kind of bugle calls on his trumpet.

Although the ceremony starts at 10, the work starts at dawn, when volunteers start placing around 380 flags donated by families of veterans.

Anyone who's interested is welcome to come help.

### NORCATUR

Lt. Col. David Johnson will give the Memorial Day address at services at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Norcatatur Cemetery. There will be a parade to the cemetery, beginning at 1:30 p.m. in front of the bank downtown.

The Rev. Larry Danforth will give the opening prayer. The Norton American Legion Color Guard will assist. The Avenue of Flags will be placed at 7 a.m. and volunteers are welcome to come help.

### BIG TIMBER

Memorial Day services will begin at 10 a.m. on Sunday at Big Timber Cemetery with the Jennings American Legion in charge. A dinner will follow at 12:30 p.m. at the Senior Center in Jennings.

### JENNINGS

There will be a Memorial Day service at 10 a.m. on Monday at the Jennings Cemetery. The Jennings American Legion will be in charge.

### SELDEN, LEOVILLE

Services will be held at 9:30 a.m. at Calvary Cemetery at Leoville on Monday, followed by services at 10:30 a.m. at the Selden Cemetery.

The Girls Scouts will lead the flag salute and Legion Auxiliary Chaplain Bernita Aumiller will give the invocation. Dennis Rogers will speak and the Legion chaplain will place a wreath and give the benediction. The Selden American Legion will follow with a rifle salute. Janael Antholz and Brittney Ritter will conclude the services with the playing of "Taps."

### HERNDON

Memorial services will begin at 3 p.m. on Monday at the Herndon Veterans of Wars Post in Herndon, according to Commander Chris Niermeier. Refreshments will follow.

## City rents toilets for Sappa Park

By KIMBERLY DAVIS  
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Anyone walking at Sappa Park recently may have noticed two red portable outhouses provided by the City of Oberlin since the state ordered the old restrooms closed.

The portable outhouses arrived at the park Thursday just in time for the Decatur County Hospital's Community Walk. One is next to the shelter house and the other near the upper campground.

Administrator Austin Gilley said he's not sure how long the city will keep the outhouses at the park. He

said he's getting some real pressure from people and individual council members to keep them there.

The city is paying \$140 a month rent for each one, he said, so that's \$3,360 for a year. They are on lease from Patterson Plumbing. Part of the rental pays for the company cleaning them once a week.

Right now, said Mr. Gilley, the city has them set up to stay at the park until the end of May. He said he's received at least one request for the outhouses to stay through the first two weeks of June. He (See CITY on Page 10A)

## Man gets 12 years on federal charges

An Oberlin man will serve 12 1/2 years in a federal prison on drug charges after a raid at his home on North Wilson at the beginning of November.

Darrel Lee Ferguson, 53, was sentenced to 150 months in prison in U.S. District Court in Wichita last Tuesday for trafficking meth-

amphetamine.

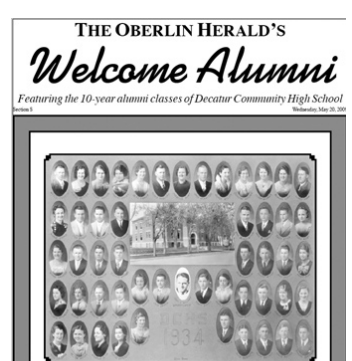
The Oberlin Police Department, Decatur County Sheriff's Office, Thomas County Sheriff's Office and Kansas Bureau of Investigation agents served a search warrant on Mr. Ferguson's home on Saturday, Nov. 1.

(See OBERLIN on Page 10A)

## Alumni section inside today's paper

Inside today's Oberlin Herald is the second annual Alumni special section featuring graduates of Decatur Community High School, just in time for the annual alumni weekend, reunions and banquet at The Gateway.

The section includes stories and pictures about classes that graduated in 1934, 1939, 1949, 1959, 1969, 1979, 1989 and 1999, all of which will be holding reunions Saturday.



GETTING HER TASSLE moved from right to left by Superintendent Pat Cullen, Jacinta Carter (above) was one of 33 students graduating from Decatur Community High

on Sunday. Earlier in the afternoon, Haley Barrett (below) donned her gown and got ready to march.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

## Seniors walk for last time

By CYNTHIA HAYNES  
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Thirty-three seniors marched into the Decatur Community High gym Sunday afternoon and 33 alumni joined the school's roster an hour later.

After tossing their mortarboard hats into the air, the 106th graduating class marched out into warm May sunshine to receive hugs, kisses and pats on the back from parents, grandparents and friends.

Before that, however, the class went through the traditional ceremonies which mark life-changing events.

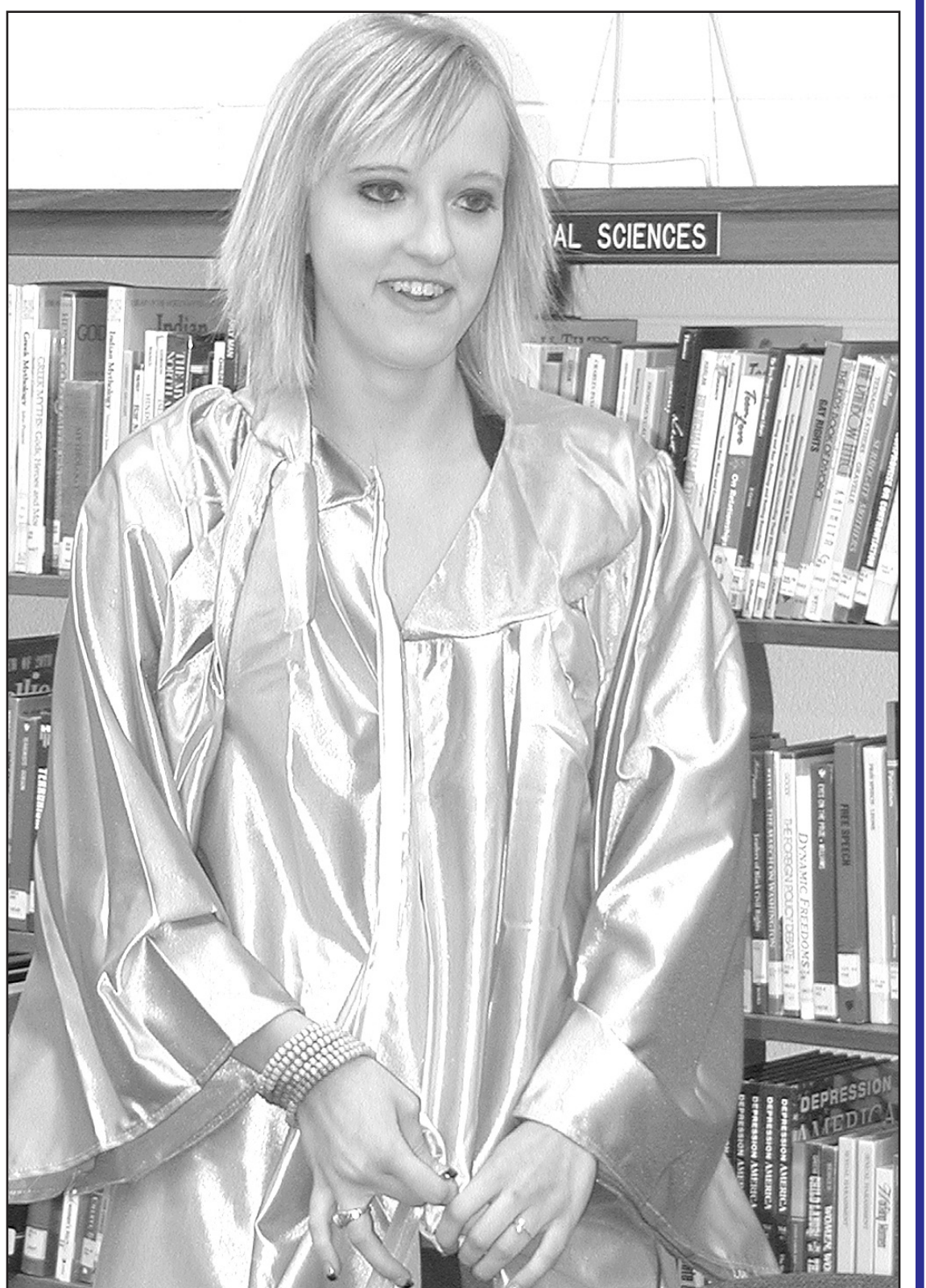
With Mary Olson on the piano and juniors Jessica Fredrickson and Wade Juenemann leading the way, the graduates — boys in black and girls in silver caps and gowns — marched into the gym and took their seats on the floor to the stately strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" and cheers of their many friends and relatives.

The speeches were short and to the point.

Salutatorian Chris Larson gave his top 10 reasons to be excited about graduation.

Among the items he listed were never having to eat another school lunch, not a single one of us knows what calculus will be used for in our lives, more time for fishing, surviving senior English and "We'll be graduated, like a cylinder," and he held up a graduated cylinder, a piece of chemistry equipment used to measure in milliliters.

Mr. Larson also talked about unity, using as his illustration a painting on the corridor wall outside of the gym of the word "Unity" surrounded by a chain. "Each link on the chain repre-



sents a part of the school," he said, "such as football, choir — and even the sophomore class."

The chain is a great symbol because Oberlin students support each other, he said.

"It always makes me happy when I see our athletes sitting in the audience at one of our music concerts," he said, "and when those performers are not on stage, I see them in the crowd watching

our athletes compete. We all want to see each other doing our very best."

Valedictorian Alyssa Rippe also used a visual aid as she compared (See SENIORS on Page 10A)



## Service requests money

A volunteer with the Northwest Kansas Domestic and Sexual Violence Services asked the Oberlin City Council to continue giving \$500 from the city budget, and more if the city can afford it.

The council didn't make any promises at the meeting Thursday, May 7, although a few members commented on the importance of the program.

Karen Bolt, who said she has volunteered with the organization for at least seven years, said the agency has a main office in Hays and satellite offices in Colby and Phillipsburg.

The organization serves 18 counties in northwest Kansas, but helps people from all over, including transients and people passing through the area. The group has helped one person this year who was pushed off a bus, she said.

Domestic violence, she said, isn't just about men beating up on women. The reality, said Ms. Bolt, is that people just beat up on people. No matter how bad the relationship is, the decision to end it is seldom easy.

The group helped six victims in Decatur County last year, she said.

Ms. Bolt said she checked and didn't find any record that the city had sent money last year. Clerk Karen Larson said a check had been sent in February for 2008, for \$500.

This year, said Ms. Bolt, Peg Smith formerly of Oberlin received the group's Advocate of the Year award for her work with domestic violence.

She asked the city to renew its donation for the group, adding that she does understand that money is tight.



**CLASS VALEDICTORIAN** Alyssa Rippe said the Decatur Community High class of 2009 had all the good qualities of an orange during her graduation talk on Sunday — Herald photo by Cynthia Haynes

## \*Seniors say final goodbye

(Continued from Page 1A)

the class to an orange.

The orange, she said, has a bright color; seeds; an protective outer layer and a squishy, pulp-filled center you can eat.

The class, like the color orange, is exciting and creative, she said.

The seeds represent leadership and the Class of 2009 has plenty of leaders, plenty of accomplishments and its members will become the leaders of tomorrow.

The protective skin keeps the fruit from harm, and the members of the class have bound themselves together to keep everyone safe and moving forward.

The fruit is the best part, though, and the most beneficial. It is like the attitude and actions of society and the class.

"We have become respected by people," she said. "Our class has helped the community through organizations such as National Honor Society and FFA.

"We will benefit society by showing them our orange-like traits of success, leadership and protectiveness."

After the seniors received their diplomas from

school board members Jerry Chambers and Dan Nedland, Superintendent Pat Cullen moved the tassels of each graduate from right to left, showing that they were no longer students but alumni.

Between speeches and presentations, the audience was treated to the song "Friends" by the high school choir; "May the Music Never End," by the DCHS Singers; "Three Spirituals," by the brass ensemble; and "Duo No. 7" by Miss Rippe and Mr. Larson.

Heather Ploussard presented a slide show and the seniors gave roses to their parents and grandparents.

Graduating were Nathan Baker, Haley Barrett, Jacinta Carter, Derek Chambers, Amanda Edmiston, Jacob Fortin, Logan Fortin, Danyel Jeffrey, Elisha Jones, Lucas Juenemann, Tamara Ketterl, Mr. Larson, Annamarie Larue, Cherish Manning, Miss Rippe, Farra McChesney, Ryan McEvoy, Jordan McHugh, John Meitl, Emma Merrill, Ethan Merrill, Robby Mortinsen, Cynthia Murray, Makenzie Nelson, Heather Ploussard, Andrew Richards, Miss Rippe, Desirae Shields, Nathan Simonsson, Samuel Stapp, Jordan Tally, Everett Urban and Jay Wessel.

## Gateway could get fresh paint job

The Oberlin City Council discussed repainting the exterior of The Gateway with a representative from Murray Enterprises, the Colby contractor doing roof repairs, at the meeting on Thursday, May 7, but made no decisions.

The company estimated it would cost \$62,736 to seal and paint the outside, said owner Jim Murray.

The painting, said Mayor Joe Stanley, is separate from the roofing project already going on at The Gateway. The council can choose to paint or not, he said, but the job would have to be opened for bids.

Mr. Murray said his price could change, depending on how many colors are used, how complex the color scheme gets and whether the city wants to have an elastomeric seal coat put on the building before the paint.

He added that if the city decides to send out specs, the company would probably submit an official bid.

The elastomeric coating, which would go on before the paint, is a sealant, said Mr. Murray. The idea is to coat the vertical panels on the building to help keep moisture out. Normally, he said, it's used on roofs to keep them from leaking, but someone said there was a problem with moisture getting in the walls.

It might not be normal to coat the walls in the sealant, but if there's a need to keep the moisture out, said Mr. Murray, this should work. That coating doesn't have to be done, he added.

Councilman Ray Ward said he thought the water in the walls was coming from leaks in the roof.

Personally, said Mr. Murray, he thinks it should be taken care of by the new roof because of the way it was done.

The exterior painting wasn't included in the price for the roof, noted Mayor Joe Stanley.

The price for painting, said Mr. Murray, depends on how many colors are selected and how complex the painting is. Councilwoman Rhonda May said she thinks it will be similar to what it is now.

She asked if the metal panels had been painted or powder coated. With the way the panels have faded, said Councilman Bill Riedel, he thinks they are probably baked enamel.

The council didn't make any decisions.

Something has to be done, said Councilman Ray Ward, because the primer is showing in some places. Some of the painting should be handled as regular maintenance, said Ms. May.

## \*Oberlin man to serve for drugs

(Continued from Page 1A)

At the time, Mr. Ferguson was charged with 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.

Officers said they found homemade bombs and stopped searching so a bomb squad from the state fire marshal's office could remove them safely.

According to a release issued by the U.S. Attorney's office in Wichita, Mr. Ferguson pleaded guilty in

March to one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine. He also admitted to possessing approximately 120 grams of the drug during his arrest.

Court documents show that in October, investigators used an informant to buy methamphetamine from Mr. Ferguson.

When the officers searched the house, they seized a black fanny pack with the methamphetamine that Mr. Ferguson wore around his neck.

Kevin Lane Smith, 35, was arrested outside Mr. Ferguson's house the same day. He has pled guilty to charges and sentencing is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10.

## Group plans burger feed

The Oberlin Business Alliance plans a burger feed downtown on Friday for alumni weekend.

Members of the business group will be cooking from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the drive through south of the Chamber of Commerce office in the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center. The meal will be served for a donation, with the proceeds going to help pay for the new sound system downtown.

## \*City rents toilets for park

(Continued from Page 1A)

Mr. Gilley said he's had at least 10 calls about the outhouses and others have talked with him about them.

He said the city had received a formal notice from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to close the old outhouses on Thursday, April 30. Mr. Gilley said Mr. Diederich brought that notice to him on Monday, May 11.

At that time, said Mr. Gilley, he directed that signs be posted in front of the permanent outhouses, which the city crew did last Wednesday. The black signs state that the outhouses are closed and if someone has a question, they can call the city at 475-2217.

Before the Community Walk on Thursday, the crew returned to board up the doors of the old outhouses.

Upcoming events scheduled for Sappa Park include alumni reunions, a wedding, family reunion and vintage trailer show and camping.

## Council discusses water circulators

The Oberlin City Council talked about the possibility of getting solar-operated water circulators for the lagoons at the city's sewer plant, but put off a decision after hearing its engineer say a winter-time odor problem could be solved more easily.

The council members talked with engineer Chris Miller, with the firm of Miller and Associates, about the idea. Miller handles most of the city's work and planned the sewer plant. Starting last fall, the city got complaints that the lagoons were not working right and had begun to smell.

The city could get the equipment with a loan and grant from the state Department of Health and Environment. The total cost would be \$173,694, with \$86,000 of that being added to the existing 20-year loan from the department with a 2.98 percent interest rate.

The solar-powered water circulators, said Mr. Miller, will work fine for the lagoons, but he has mixed feelings about them. The city has three lagoons south of town, two large cells at 10 acres each and a small one at four acres.

The cells, he said, are running now in a series, so the waste goes into the first, then the second, then the third and then the clear water is discharged.

Part of the reason to look at the water circulators is because of the smell coming off the lagoons in the spring, when cold water keeps the cells from operating properly.

If the city wants to operate the lagoons in a series, that works fine, said Mr. Miller. In September or October, he said, they need to be moved to split cells so that the bacteria in either of the big cells doesn't die. Once a cell is killed off, he said, it takes a while for it to come alive again and start moving, and the lagoon starts to smell.

By running the lagoons in a series year round, said Mr. Miller, the city is killing the cells each year. When asked why the city is running the lagoons the same way all year, he couldn't answer the question.

The lagoons can be switched to a split system, run in parallel instead

of in a series, by changing some movable gates, said Mr. Miller.

The air from the solar circulators won't hurt the lagoons, he added, they're just expensive.

"If the lagoons are run in a split system," asked Councilman Bill Riedel, "will the discharge be within state limits?"

"Yes, said Mr. Miller. "Then why not run the lagoons the way they are designed?" Mr. Riedel asked.

Mr. Miller said he's not saying running parallel will get rid of the odor, but it won't hurt, and when the lagoons turn over in the fall and spring, it should only smell for a few days instead of for weeks.

Foreman Dan Castle or Willard Perrin, with the water department, probably have logs on what they have been doing at the waste water treatment plant, said Mayor Joe Stanley. He said he would have the city administrator check with them.

"I hate to look grant money in the mouth," said Mr. Miller, "but I would also like to see the lagoons run parallel and see what happens."

The city could just buy two this year, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, and use the grant-loan from the state.

Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer asked about maintenance costs on the machines.

They run on solar packs, said Mr. Miller, but there are moving parts. The life expectancy, according to the company that sells them, is seven to 12 years. He said he figured that means five to seven.

He said he thinks the lagoons will come back to life in a month or so without the circulators.

"I don't think we should spend \$86,000 for our half if we don't need them," said Mr. Riedel. "If you are confident that it's working, then we shouldn't even spend the \$40,000 for two of them."

The council didn't take a vote or make any decision.

On Monday, Administrator Austin Gilley said he had heard from Mr. Miller, who now said he suggested getting the solar circulators.

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