

Shopping event planned for ladies

Oberlin store owners plan to try something new for Christmas shopping, with a late-night ladies' shopping experience being planned by the Oberlin Business Alliance.

Gary Anderson, owner of the LandMark Inn, said Cathy Fraker and Pat Chard, owners of La De Da, came up with the idea.

Stores are invited to be open from 9:30 to 11:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18. Each store could have appetizers and the women would go store to store, he said at the alliance's monthly meeting last Wednesday.

A group of women from Idalia and Burlington, Colo., is planning to come for the evening, Mr. Anderson said, and the alliance needs to find out which stores plan to be open so it can do some advertising.

At the meeting, the alliance members talked about whether they should give cash as change for the Santa Bucks program.

Laurie Wasson, owner of Prairie Petals, said she appreciates the Santa Bucks, but people come in with a \$20, buy a \$2 item and want change. That cash can then be spent anywhere, she noted, though the Santa Bucks, sponsored by (the alliance or the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce), can only be spent here.

This topic comes up every year around Christmas, but no decision has every been made.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner of *The Oberlin Herald*, said one idea is to buy a few \$5 Santa Bucks and then

give those as change. Honestly, said Kurt Vollertsen, owner of Ward Drug Store, said he didn't think that many people abuse the program.

Each participating business, said Joe Stanley, owner of Stanley Hardware, could have \$100 in \$5 Santa Bucks and when someone came in with a bigger bill, it could be exchanged for the smaller bills.

It would be interesting to find out how other communities do something like that, said Mr. Vollertsen since most have a program like Santa Bucks.

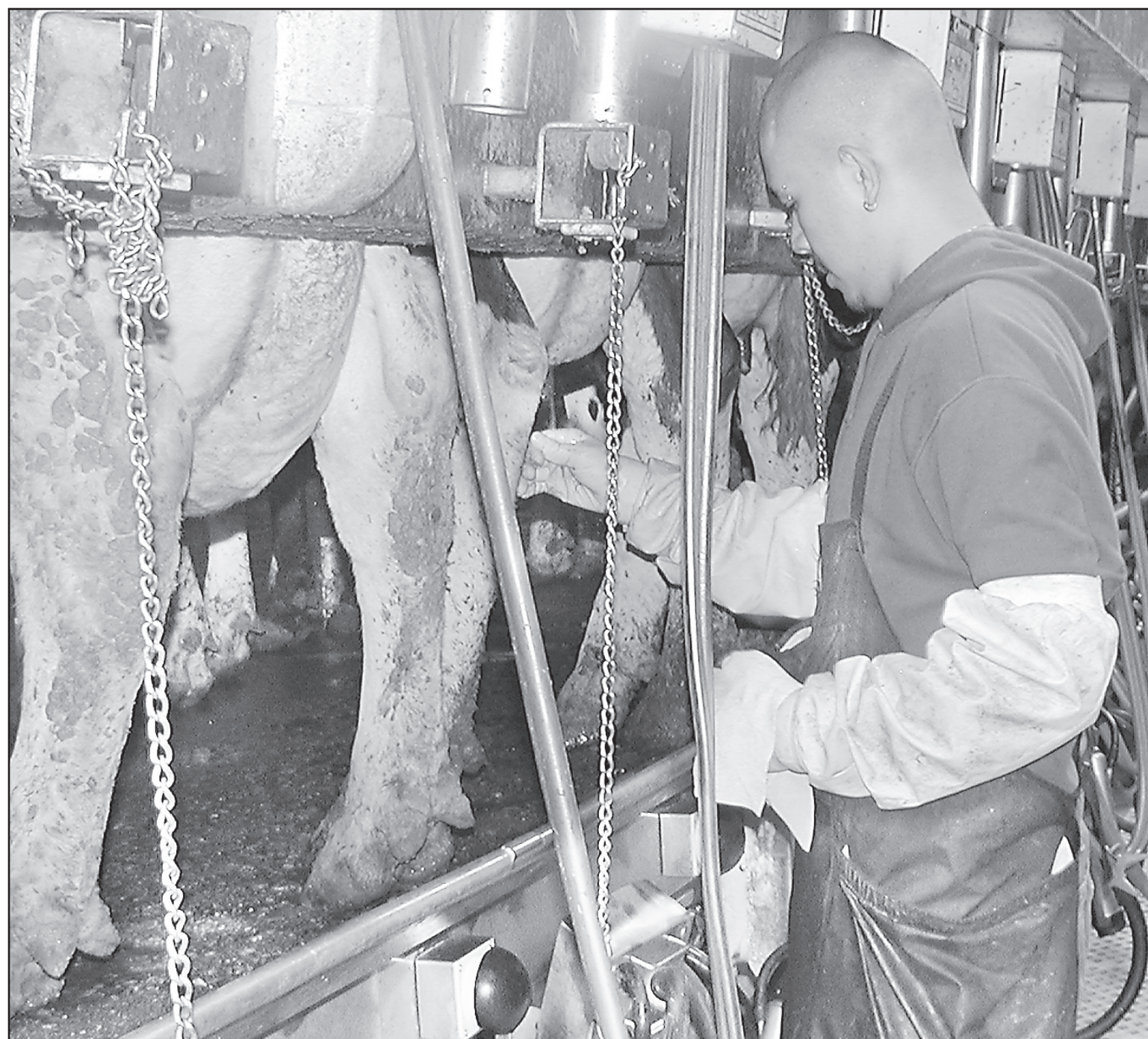
Whatever is done, said Mrs. Wasson, it needs to be consistent for the program.

The group didn't make any decisions.

Connie Grafel, marketing director for the city and the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., said she went to a marketing seminar in Hays recently where Dave Buchholz as the presenter. She said she would like to get Mr. Buchholz here to do a presentation for businesses.

He could do a teaser at the Chamber banquet on Thursday, Jan. 14, she suggested, and then hold two seminars on Friday, Jan. 15. Business owners and store employees could benefit from this, said Ms. Grafel.

She asked the alliance to put up \$100 to \$15 for the appearance. The group approved spending \$100.



WORKERS CAREFULLY AND SKILLFULLY clean each cow that comes in to the milking parlor at the McCarty Dairy west of Rexford. The dairy has 1,541 cows in production and plans to add 40 more before the end of the year. — Photo by Vera Sloan, The Colby Free Press

Rexford dairy observes 10th year

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For some, it might be a dream come true to live in rural Pennsylvania and see the Susquehanna River from your kitchen window — but not so if you're a dairy-farming family needing to expand.

That's a scene Tom and Judy McCarty were willing to give up when they discovered their sons wanted to carry on the family business.

The family had to expand to bring the four sons into the operation, and space wasn't available in Pennsylvania. The winters were bad, and land to expand a dairy was practically nonexistent, Judy said.

The family had read about locations in Kansas in several dairy publications, and a friend who had been to the state encouraged them to investigate the opportunities here.

The youngest son, Tom, was in school at Kansas State University, and liked it, Judy said, so the they came to northwest Kansas looking for an area with enough land to build, along with land to grow what they needed for their cows.

"On our first trip to Thomas County, we knew we had to be here," said Judy. "The weather is so much better here, we like the wide open spaces, and we really like being able to see forever."

"We had no qualm about coming here, so we sold the cows, the equipment and the nonproductive land in Pennsylvania, and basically just started from scratch once we got here. That was 10 years ago, in 1999, and by April of 2000 we were milking."

Today, sons Clay and Tom work at the Rexford dairy, Mike is at the newer Bird City location and David does consulting and manages a dairy in the Syracuse area.

Pennsylvania's loss was a welcome gain for northwest Kansas, bringing jobs and income to the area and students to the Golden Plains School District.

Pennsylvania has several milk marketing cooperatives, she said, but here there is only one, Dairy Farmers of America, and they are captive customers. Still, she said, Kansas has more opportunities for information and knowledge.

The McCartys, who milked about 150 cows back east, began their dairy just west of Rexford milking 750. Today it has grown to 1,541, with 40 more to be added before the end of the year.

The milking schedule is three times a day, 50 cows at a time, Judy said. The milking parlor holds 25 cows on each side. The parlor floor is raised to make it easier on the workers, so that they don't have to bend over to clean the udders and hook up the milkers.

The cows enter through a gate into a walkway that leads them to the lock stanchions. They put their heads through the stanchions, which close automatically. Three workers clean udders, spray them with disinfectant and hook up the milking machines.

When the milking is finished, the cows are each treated with teat-tip protection, the locks release and cows step to freedom, with 50 more right behind them. Like clockwork, it's clean, spray, strip, treat. The whole process, from the time the cows step through the gate, takes about 12 minutes. They can process five "turns" an hour, Clay McCarty said, equating to 250 cows an hour.

Why milk every eight hours? The production just seems to stay up better when they're milked every eight hours, Judy said.

Every morning at 6:30 and every evening at 6:30, the milking parlor and equipment is thoroughly washed and cleaned to be ready for the next shift to begin at 7.

Fifty cows create a lot of heat in the summer, so cool water mixers are turned on to keep the cows comfortable in the enclosed barn.

Tanker trucks from the co-op come about every eight to 10 hours to pick up the milk from storage tanks, which can hold 7,000 gallons. Production records are kept on each cow, Judy said, and each one gets a health check once a month with the newest technology.

The family and crew of 20 employees do everything from artificial insemination to cesarean-section deliveries. Insemination is calculated to produce female calves to join the milking herd.

"We buy mostly gender semen," said Clay McCarty, son of Tom and Judy. "Because we're raising our own replacement heifers, we can justify the cost of the more expensive semen, because the pregnancies turn out to be around 90 percent heifer calves."

Over 450 calf huts house the babies from just days old to weaning at around eight weeks. The baby

calves are fed milk from cows who are being treated with antibiotics, since it can't be sold. The process equates to good economics, Judy said, saving the cost of commercial milk replacer.

Bull calves are fed colostrum for a couple of days and then are sold.

"Cows are generally kept through three or four lactations before they are replaced," Judy said, "but the first cow to freshen here just left us about a week ago. We had gotten rather attached to her."

Clay said building the heifer yard this year was a good thing, because right now they are raising replacement stock for the family's second dairy at Bird City, and have 3,100 head in the yard. But, he said, a lot of their success lies in good employees.


"Our main feeder has been with us for seven years," he said. "I just don't know what we'd do without them."

Clay says he does all the "heat" checks, to see when the cows are ready to breed at both dairies, plus he does the artificial insemination and the ultrasound pregnancy checks.

But dairying is more than milking cows. It is raising calves, making sure feed stocks are plentiful, staying in compliance with state regulations on water use, meeting and maintaining environmental standards and cleaning barns, equipment and alleyways. It is even making sure the cows' bedding is cleaned so that they are as comfortable and clean as possible.

It's fighting with the mud and gunk in a year with lots of rain, pulling every load of silage to the silo because of the mud, and last but not least, it's hauling tons and tons of manure to be spread over the fields to be used as fertilizer. Running a

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Three win instantly with promotion

There's just a little over a week left to collect red tickets for a chance to win \$1,000 in the Oberlin merchants' annual "Christmas on Us" contest.

The grand prize drawing is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 19, at Centennial Park. The drawing will be moved inside if the weather is bad.

Last week, Bill Flynn, Jeanette Miller and Sandy Zeigler claimed \$50 in instant money.

This week, three people brought in tickets that matched the numbers in the ads.

- Carolyn Hackney brought in No. 989200, which she got at Stanley Hardware. She said she would probably use the money on food for Christmas.
- Sharon Ream brought in No. 251047, which she got at the Carpet Center. She said she plans to use the money on Christmas presents.
- Joyce Juenemann brought in No. 243143, which she got at Home Planning Center. She said she would use the money on Christmas presents.

Each week, more ticket num-

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|--|--|---|-----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | Cardiac Rehab Ultrasounds Diabetic Clinic | Lighter Side Weight Loss Program | MRI's Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab | |
| 6 | 7 Dr. Rubinowitz Oncology Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab | 8 | 9 Dr. Frankum Surgery Bone Density Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic | 10 | 11 MRI's Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab | 12 |
| 13 | 14 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab | 15 | 16 Dr. Curtis Cardiology Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic | 17 Dr. Saba Orthopedics | 18 MRI's Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab | 19 |
| 20 | 21 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab | 22 Dr. Miller Cardiology | 23 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic | 24 Dr. Reeves Podiatry MRI's | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab | 29 | 30 Ultrasounds Cardiac Rehab Diabetic Clinic | 31 | | |



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