

Man recalls daughters

The following is a story written by Sam van Almen, formerly of Oberlin. He is a son of Lotus van Almen, and the late Paul van Almen, a former lab technician at Decatur County Hospital. It was written as a tribute to his daughters. He is a Vietnam-era disabled veteran.

Two sisters, hugging and grinning for the camera. Two young women, so different yet so alike ... so much like their mother and so much like me.

Their beauty and potential overwhelmed me. I am baffled that I could have had contributed anything to their grace and stature. Tears sneak into the corners of my eyes and blur the image of the black and white print. I drift back and remember the day the photo was taken. The cloudy sky, the wind in the branches, and the smell of the riverbank. My girls; running, laughing and acting like the kids they once were, and will always be.

If I close my eyes and concentrate I can still see them as those children. Dear-hearted and dirty faced, clamoring for my attention, so quick with a kiss and a hug, so eager to make me laugh or smile. How I hoped then to never hurt or disappoint them; they made a hero of an oh, so common man. As time rolled on, this hero's

facade began to crack, the frail, human face of someone who was only a man began to show through.

When the youngest of my daughters became an adult, the mask completely fell away. Still, they loved me. I believe they had to love me even more, accepting my failures and transgressions. I had to depend on them as much as they ever depended on me. The babies I helped to deliver came to deliver me.

Without shame or pretense I now ask for their advice and help,

and somehow, together we make it through. They are now heroes to me.

Heroes are truly made and not born. We make them for ourselves, in our own minds and hearts. They are far from perfect and are allowed to fail. Their heroism reveals itself in sacrifice, forgiveness, and love in spite of disappointment and pain. The kind of love sisters have for each other, and thank God, the kind of love they have for me.

Club News

Women enjoy coffee

The Prairie Chapel United Methodist Women met at Coffee, Tea and Me on Wednesday morning for a dutch coffee meeting. Five members answered roll call with a Bible verse on prayer. Pastor Linda Willey was also present.

President Cheryl Metcalf opened the meeting and led in prayer for those mentioned, followed by members reciting the purpose and singing, "He Leadeth Me." A donation was received from the Mary Uehlin Kolsky family.

The president read items from "The Voice from Volunteers in Missions," and a newsletter from the Kansas West Conference naming the many ways to

volunteer for various projects in the conference. Phyllis Metcalf passed around a newsletter from McCurdy School, where Labels for Education had been sent. Vice President Lucille Townsend distributed new program books. It was suggested that each member bring a guest for the March 2 meeting.

Five members have completed a plan of books read and a report will be sent to the district officer by Mrs. Townsend. It was also decided to start the salt sock around again as a money-making project.

Angie Wilson presented the program on Prayer and Self-Denial with members participating, after which she closed in prayer.

Students can enter art contest

Kindergarten through sixth grade students: grab your crayons or colored pencils and get creative. It's time for the 2011 Postcard Art Contest, sponsored by the Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom and the Kansas State University College of Agriculture.

Theme for this year is "Celebrate Kansas: 150 Years of Agriculture," focusing on the impact agriculture has on the state.

Entries will be judged on relevance to theme, creativity, originality, use of space and color and clarity of idea and image.

One winner from each grade from kindergarten to sixth and one grand-prize winner will be selected. Each winner will receive a U.S. Savings Bond. Each winner, teacher and the winners parents will be invited to an awards ceremony during the State Ag Day celebration in March at the state Department of Agriculture office in Topeka.

Entry forms and information are available www.ksagclassroom.org. Entries must be postmarked by Monday, Jan. 31.

Work group set to meet

The U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service Local Work Group will meet at 11 a.m. Thursday at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center at 410 S. Buffalo in Oberlin.

The the members will review and discuss cost-share rates for conservation practices, ranking criteria, practices that are eligible for programs and resource concerns within Decatur County.

"Local Work Groups are important," said District Conservationist Matt Barnes, "because they provide recommendations on local and state natural resource priorities and criteria for U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation activities and programs to the Natural Resources Conservation Service Kansas Technical Committee."

For information or to become a member, contact the county conservation district office or the Conservation Service at 475-3131.

Lions plan to serve lunch

The Oberlin Lions Club plans to serve lunch at the Oberlin Invitational Wrestling Tournament on Saturday at the high school.

The event, said Pastor Charlotte Strecker-Baseler, a club member, will raise money for scholarships to be given to two Decatur Community High School seniors this year.

Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the cafeteria.

The menu, she said, includes chicken-noodle soup, corn bread, ham and beans, ham sandwiches and desserts.

Oberlin grad leads new program at Tech

Greg Unger, a 1988 graduate of Decatur Community High School, is one of two instructors at Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland helping to a new "Servicemark" program for the Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology.

Ron Kaus is the other instructor and Lester Cress is department aide and service writer. The Servicemark was approved by the Secretary of State's office in December. Mr. Unger said, and the college will use it to identify technical education in diesel technology.

Mr. Unger said he feels the Servicemark gives the college a program identity unlike any other place in the state.

"We have the largest diesel tech program in the state," he said, "and we have a great 100 percent placement rate."

"The program today is more than just overhauling an engine," said Mr. Kaus. "Students also learn about all the electronics and technology found in today's diesel equipment, from trucks, tractors, combines and many other pieces of farm

machinery.

"With addition of general education classes, we are turning out better students. We tell them they need to read, write, do math and know how to deal with a boss and handle working with people."

Mr. Unger said he likes the new approach and feels it will show how the college has a one-of-a-kind program. He said they are getting students from Nebraska, Washington and Michigan.

Part of the difference, he said, is the hands-on approach of having students spend time in class each day, but then spend the rest of the day working on actual pieces of diesel equipment for real customers.

"That is what the employers want," he said. "Our program is run as real as a shop."

Mr. Unger said that with the new approach, the program has sent out good techs. Employers are saying they need a guy who knows how to fix computer as well as mechanical problems, he said.

He is the son of Evan and Sheryl Unger of Oberlin.

THE OBERLIN HERALD —

People in Our Community

Mary Lou Olson, society editor ml.olson@nwkans.com

Diana Solko, who serves as Western Prairie Resource Conservation and Development Council secretary/treasurer, as well as manager of the Decatur County Conservation District and non-point source coordinator, recently received the Earth Team District Manager of the Year award during the state meeting in Kansas City. She has worked in the local office for 29 years.

Winning highs in pinochle at the Golden Age Center last week were Max Carman, Doris Fringer, John Cederberg, Kelva Dryden and Norma Anderson.

Lows went to Ivis Hanson, Eldon Haas, Ardis Roe, Henry Edgett, John Cederberg and Neil Marshall.

Pitch highs were won by Henry Edgett and Kelva Dryden with lows going to Max Carman and John Cederberg.

Gail Marcuson won at Chicken-foot. Bridge winners were Dorothy Cochran, Beth Sebaugh, Annette Miller and Merle Shirley.

Frances Vacura visited from Dec. 28 to Jan. 5 with her daughter and family, Gayle and Jeff White, Amanda, Josh and Megan, in Goddard.

Mary Ann Amack accompanied her son, Kevin Amack of Meeker,

Colo., to Dallas, Texas, where they spent the week after Christmas visiting their daughter and sister and family, Shelly and John Ahrens, Trevor and Peyton.

Laurene Van Otterloo underwent surgery on Saturday at Hays Medical Center for injuries received in a fall at her home on Friday.

160 ACRE CROPLAND & FARMSTEAD LAND AUCTION

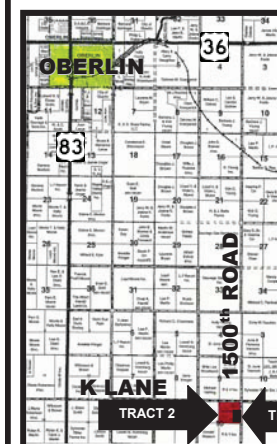
DECATUR COUNTY, KANSAS
SELLER: GAUMER, INC.

TUES, FEB. 01, 2011 @ 10:30, A.M., CST

AUCTION LOCATION: At the farmstead located 8 miles South, 4 miles East & 1/2 mile South of Oberlin

LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS:

TRACT 1: 7.0+ acres w/improvements in NE/4 of 16-4-28
TRACT 2: 153.0+ cropland acres in NE/4 of 16-4-28



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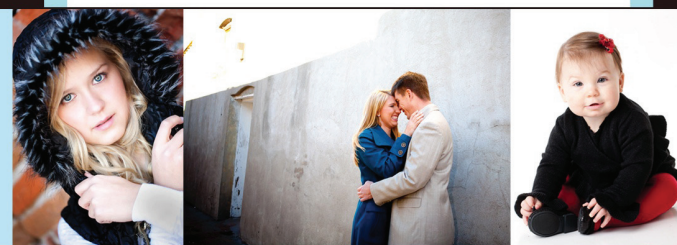
Happy 19th Birthday Daniel Jordan on January 22.



Cards can be sent to:
Recruit Jordan, Daniel K.
3rd RTBN I CO PLT 3214
39003 Midway Ave.
San Diego, CA 92140-3038

Good luck at Marine Boot Camp

GRAND OPENING



Stop by the studio at 120 S. East Oberlin, KS
Jan. 19, 2011 from 11 am to 3 pm

Come and view the studio and gallery of Amanda's work. Register for a chance to win one of two free sessions, or the grand prize of a 20x24 canvas print.

Amanda Sowers photography

Cutoff date extended

The Conservation Stewardship Program cutoff date has been extended from last Friday to Friday, Jan. 21, said District Conservationist Matt Barnes.

Farmers should contact the county office of the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service at 410 S. Buffalo in Oberlin, 475-3131, for details or go to ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp.

This voluntary program encourages farmers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by planning conservation activities and improving, maintaining and managing existing practices.

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