

Alley project short under \$10,000

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The bowling alley project needs just a little under \$10,000 more to hit the \$180,000 goal, backers say, and work will start this week.

Greg Lohofener, with the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp., said a crew from Jayhawk Bowling was scheduled to be here Monday afternoon

and start work on Tuesday.

Mr. Lohofener said the company will start putting in lanes. It will take at least four weeks, so the bowling alley could be done by the middle of February, but it won't be any sooner. He said a man with Jayhawk said the crew will work straight through to Friday, Feb. 28, and then take a weekend off.

The goal, he said, is fixed at \$180,000,

and as of Monday morning \$170,130 had been raised. That leaves a needed \$9,870.

While Mr. Lohofener said he's not aware of any fund raisers scheduled to come up with that last \$10,000, the DreamMakers are working on applying for a grant for the project. He said partners Shayla Williby and Kem Bryan are working on getting it in this week, he thought, and the grant could be for \$50,000.

They have been interviewing candidates for manager for the alley and theater, he said. Mr. Lohofener said they hope to finish the interviews on Monday and make a decision by the end of the week.

There's been lots of interest in bowling leagues, he said, and they plan to start a short season at the end of February to end at the beginning of May.

Mr. Lohofener said the alley does have

several food machines, including a nacho machine, ice cream, pizza and one for hot dogs. They recently ordered some new adult bowling shoes.

"We are gaining," he said.

Anyone who wants to make a donation can contact Marketing Director Connie Grafel at 475-2901 or Mr. Lohofener at 475-3322.



AT THE CHAMBER BANQUET on Thursday, the DCHS Singers put on a show, dancing and singing for the 50 or so people in the audience. Zach May, Amanda Marshall, Sara Kyte and Matthew Helm (above) stood tall as they

belted out a tune. Tiffany Anderson and Tyler Bruggeman (below) danced a little while they sang.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes

Banquet draws members

Around 50 people attended the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce annual banquet last Thursday, where five new board members were elected.

The new members include Carol Stamm, who operates Home Fires Quilting and Needle Crafts; Amanda Grafel, who works at the Dresser; Candy Ketterl, who works at the U.S. Farm Service Agency; Janice Guthrie of Oberlin; and Marvin Slaubaugh, manager of Ampride.

Those whose terms are up include Robert Groneweg, Deanna Castle, Cricket Ketterl and Chris Randel, who resigned.

Board members who will continue to serve include Ken Shobe, Martin Burton, Richard Kimble, Ken Morris and Shelby Hackney.

Entertainment was provided by the DCHS Singers, under the direction of Susan Nelson.

The chamber board meets monthly at 7 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month at the Business Entrepreneurial Enhancement Center.



Terms are up on City Council; no one has filed

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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Two spots are up for election on the Oberlin City Council, along with the mayor's job, in city voting this April.

The slots are now held by Mayor Joe Stanley and Council Members Ray Ward and Rhonda May.

The Oberlin School Board has four spots open, all at-large. Those are held by members Dan Grafel, Monte Moore, Jerry Chambers and Dan Nedland.

No one has filed for any of the jobs, said County Clerk Colleen Geihlser, and time is running out.

Anyone who wants to run for school or city offices needs to file by noon Tuesday at the clerk's office on the second floor of the Decatur County courthouse. People can also get information on city offices from the city clerk.

Ms. Geihlser, who serves as the county election officer, said a few people have registered to vote in the upcoming election on Tuesday, April 5. The deadline for voter registration is Tuesday, March 21.

If enough candidates file for any one office, a primary would be held Tuesday, March 1. The only way a primary will be needed, Ms. Geihlser said, is if more than twice as many people file for a seat. For

example, said Ms. Geihlser, if more than eight people register for the four open spots on the school board, a primary would be needed.

In Dresden, two council spots and the mayor's seat are up. Those positions are held by Mayor Scott Taylor and council members Margaret Rhodes and Erma Jean Spresser.

In Jennings, three council spots are open. Those are held by members Rick Foster, Pat Hall and Stann Hartzog. No one has registered for the jobs.

In Norcatour, three spots are open, held by members Wava Reames, Jerry Hill and Jim Plotts. Both men have filed for re-election.

For the first time, the election will include two seats on the Twin Creeks Extension District. The spots are currently held by Peggy Pratt and Sharleen Wurm. No one has filed so far.

With the exception of the extension district, everyone who registers for a seat, said Ms. Geihlser, needs to pay a \$5 filing fee or file a petition.

The number of signatures is based on how many people voted in the last election in each city. Ms. Geihlser said candidates in Dresden need two signatures, in Jennings three, in Norcatour five and in Oberlin 25.



COACH LEIGH DAVIS talked with her speech team during state competition last year.

Newspaper wants nominations for heroes

The *Oberlin Herald* invites readers to nominate a "Hometown Hero" for an upcoming special edition the staff is planning.

The paper plans to take people's recommendations and interview the "heroes" for a section which will be printed in the newspaper. All nominations have to be to *The Herald* office by Wednesday, Feb. 2.

Anyone who wants to nominate someone can mail a letter to Kimberly Davis at 170 S. Penn Avenue Oberlin, Kan. 67749 or e-mail the

nomination to k.davis@nwkansas.com.

Nominations, said Mrs. Davis, have to include the person's name, the nominator's name and the reason for the nomination. If a picture is available, that can be sent or emailed to Mrs. Davis.

The staff will try to write about each of the nominated "Heroes," Mrs. Davis said. A hero can be anyone, she said.

"Use your imagination," said Mrs. Davis.

Winter sports section inside today's paper

The annual Winter Sports section is inside today's *Oberlin Herald*. The keepsake edition includes team pictures from Decatur Community Junior-Senior High School and Golden Plains Middle and High School, and individual pictures of the Oberlin Red Devils basketball players and wrestlers.

THE OBERLIN HERALD'S
Winter Sports '11
Decatur Community High School — Golden Plains High School



Educator remembered for passionate teaching

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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More than once in the past few days, the words passionate teacher, friend, daughter, coach and mentor have been used to describe Leigh Davis, who lost her battle with cancer Thursday.

Ms. Davis, 52, entered her 30th year of teaching at Decatur Community High in August. She was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia two days before Christmas. Her mother Judy said since then they had been in Wichita, at the

Via Christi Regional Medical Center, where her daughter was doing "very stringent" chemotherapy.

Leigh was a loving daughter, she said, who convinced her mom to move to Oberlin to live with her eight years ago. Leigh was worried, said Mrs. Davis, because her mom's health wasn't so good and she wanted to help take care of her.

(See TEACHER on Page 12A)



*Teacher left impression on colleagues, students

(Continued from Page 1A)

"She always cared about other people," said the elder Mrs. Davis.

Leigh taught for 30 years and cared deeply about all the kids. When she got out of college, said her mother, former Principal Herschel Betts hired her to teach at Decatur Community Junior-Senior High School. She taught there all her career, handling English, speech and drama classes.

Mrs. Davis said her daughter had a good sense of humor and really liked doing funny things with the kids, especially at Halloween. She would do a demonstration speech for the speech class and make some kind of weird food for them.

Each year, she said, her daughter held a "lock-in" for the speech team. They would stay at the school until the early morning hours, working and laughing together.

She had a real interest in drama, said Mrs. Davis. Besides working with the students on school plays, she was part of the Decatur Area Theater Association. Last summer, she put on the play "Stanton's Garage" with several former students.

Leigh enjoyed traveling to New York to see Broadway plays, said her mother.

During Leigh's senior year of high school, her mother recalled, the play was the "King and I." Leigh had red hair, which didn't fit her part, so her daughter tried to spray it black. It didn't cover very well, so she died it black.

Then it was time for school pictures, Mrs. Davis said, with a laugh, so she had dyed black hair for her senior pictures.

Mrs. Davis said her daughter enjoyed spending time with her seven nieces. She liked having them come to Oberlin for a visit and having a relationship with each.

"Leigh was such an incredible teacher," said Brenda Breth, a colleague and fellow English teacher at the high school. "I loved standing out in the hallway by her door and listening to her teach. She had such passion for what she was doing."

She inspired not only countless students, but her colleagues as well.



TEACHER Leigh Davis helped a student in the library get ready for the 2008 Decatur Community High School graduation. As the class sponsor Miss Davis helped seniors get their caps and gowns on each May. — Herald file photo

She was usually the first to arrive at school and the last to leave. She dedicated her life to our school and to DCHS kids. I doubt anyone will ever know the extent of her legacy — it circles the globe and encompasses generations."

Mrs. Breth said Miss Davis taught outreach classes for Colby Community College for several years, including college speech, English composition and Intro to Literature in the evenings and summers.

"If a student succeeded," said Mrs. Breth, "it was the student's success, but if a student failed, she always felt she had failed. That's the kind of person and teacher she

was. When she was in the hospital in Wichita, she was still worrying about 'her kids.'"

Mrs. Breth said her friend also loved her dogs. She said as soon as Miss Davis bought her first house, she got a dog, then another and another. Miss Davis named her pets after famous authors, said Mrs. Breth. There was Charlie for Charles Dickens, Willy for William Shakespeare, Ginny for Virginia Woolf and Oscar for Oscar Wilde.

"Most people knew her as Miss Davis, the teacher/coach/director, but she loved another title — aunt," said Mrs. Breth. "She adored her nieces and had special relationships

with each of them. She loved spoiling them and being an important part of their lives."

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said Miss Davis not only taught for 30 years in the district, but also was the debate coach until that activity was dropped in the early 2000s. She was the speech coach for 30 years, leading the teams to many accomplishments.

She is recognized as one of the outstanding speech and drama coaches in the state, said her mother.

"Her teams always did well in state competition," Mr. Dorshorst added.

Miss Davis was the assistant

director of the fall musicals and director of the all school play.

Mr. Dorshorst said Miss Davis started the Drama Club and has been the sponsor since its inception. She also has been the senior class sponsor for many years, and took on the responsibility of preparing the seniors for the graduation exercises.

"I will miss her passion, I will miss her laugh," said Mr. Dorshorst, "I will miss her ability to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse."

Since Miss Davis's death, former and current students, colleagues and friends have posted many items on Facebook.

"What can I say to you except

thank you, thank you, thank you for being my guide in the theatre world," wrote Rory Wendelin, "for cultivating my love of the arts, coaching me in speech and shaping me into the actress I am today. The hard work you put into teaching and coaching me has not gone to waste. Thank you."

"What a tragic loss for so many" wrote Joy Farr. "Leigh was not only an inspiration to me as a teacher, but she was a wonderful colleague to have when I started teaching and coaching. She was considerate and caring, yet tough enough to let students earn their own success. I'll never forget what she meant to my growth as a young adult and a new teacher. A bright light, out too soon."

Miss Davis was born Feb. 6, 1959, in Hays to Donald J. Davis and Judy Broadbooks Davis.

She grew up in Norton. She attended Norton Grade School and graduated from Norton High School in 1977, then graduated from Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina with a masters degree in education.

In 1981, she moved to Oberlin, where she taught English, speech and drama and served as a senior class sponsor at Decatur Community High School. She started the Drama Club at the school and directed school plays. Miss Davis was a member of the Lund Covenant Church and the Kansas National Education Association.

She loved her pets, enjoyed reading and had a soft spot in her heart for her students and all children. She touched and influenced the lives of many during her 30 years of teaching.

Survivors also include her father and step-mother, D.J. Davis and Helen Keller-Davis, Palco; two brothers, Donald Jr. and Cynthia Davis, Phoenix, and Larry Davis, Denver; a sister, Barbara Balsler, Salina; seven nieces, Monica Graves, Lisa Balsler, Erica Balsler, Sarah Davis, Madeline Davis, Kallista Davis, and Gabrielle Davis; and two great-nephews.

She was preceded in death by an infant sister, Kimberly.

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