

Mental health wants money from the county

Representatives from High Plains Mental Health asked the Decatur County commissioners last Tuesday to continue the county's financial help for the next year.

Dan Sturgill, Ken Loof and Executive Director Walt Hill came to the meeting to talk about the budget. Sheriff's Deputy Jay Tate and Ambulance Director Linda Manning, who represent the county on the agency's board, were also at the meeting.

The county gave \$23,573 last year, Mr. Hill said.

Twenty counties, said Mr. Hill, signed an agreement 45 years ago to form High Plains. In Decatur County, he said, the agency served a little over 100 clients last year.

Mr. Hill said he appreciates the board members from the county, noting that Mr. Tate just went on the executive committee.

Of the 105 clients from Decatur County, he said, 66 were seen in Oberlin. Thirty-one were new patients.

The agency has suffered significant cuts in the budget, said Mr. Hill, around \$1 million.

High Plains continues to look into its options, which could include doing video conferencing. Mr. Hill said he learned just recently that the hospital here is going to put in the equipment.

Mr. Sturgill said they are working smarter. There's a new system for the documents, which allows them

to spend more time with the clients and less on the paperwork.

With the proposed budget cuts, said Commissioner Gene Gallentine, will High Plains be able to keep the office in Norton going?

Mr. Hill said they don't know, but the agency does own the building in Norton.

As times get tougher, he said, it will be harder and harder for customers to get services they need.

Total elimination of an office, he said, isn't a good idea. He said they have talked about going to every other day in Colby and Goodland.

Mr. Hill said they are asking counties to continue with the current budget contribution each year.

He said the agency delivered \$162,031 in services to clients last year in Decatur County. Revenues were \$94,000, he said, with the gap covered by money from the state.

Mr. Gallentine asked if the representatives see a correlation between the state spending less money for mental health and more people getting into trouble.

You can guarantee, said Mr. Tate, that without the agency, there would be more people on the third and fourth floors of the courthouse (housing the courtroom and the jail).

If the mental health services were taken away, he said, some people's lives would start to unravel.

The commissioners didn't make any promises about the money.



MEMBERS OF THE JENNINGS and Norcat fire departments checked for sparks while fighting a field fire last Tuesday near Clayton.

— Herald photo by Cynthia Haynes

Fire burns wheat stubble and pasture fields

A field fire a mile east and two south of Clayton brought volunteer firefighters from Jennings, Norcat and Oberlin out last Tuesday.

Stann Hartzog, assistant fire chief in Jennings, said the fire burned around 60 acres, which included 50 in wheat stubble and 10 of pasture.

Chief Hartzog said he wasn't sure, but a crew was doing seismograph exploration in the area and a spark from a truck or other vehicle could have started the fire. A cigarette thrown out the window also could have started it.

The call came in around 2:30 p.m., he said, and firefighters from

Jennings and Norcat responded. The Oberlin department sent a tanker.

While the fire was actually in Norton County, it was in the Decatur County Fire District. The land belonged to Bill Brooks, said Mr. Hartzog.

The fire could have been worse,

he said. The wind was blowing around 15 to 20 mph. If the wind had been stronger or the fire had jumped the road, it would have been worse.

The firefighters were in the field until around 6 or 6:30 p.m., the chief said.

Department heads report to City Council on happenings

Two of the city's department heads reported to the council Thursday night on what's been happening recently.

Administrator Karen Larson said three to four city employees have been attending each of the council meetings. Unless asked to come, she said, employees aren't paid to attend the meetings. They just want to know what's going on.

Mrs. Larson said she appreciates the fact that the employees are interested enough to come to the meetings.

She said she wants to start giving some of them the chance to report on what's been going on. It doesn't

have to be anything big, she said; it can be about the routine stuff they do, but just what's happening in the departments.

Foreman Dan Castle said he and Councilman Bill Riedel went to the Kansas Rural Water meeting. He said they learned quite a bit.

David Sporn just took his wastewater certification exam and passed, said Mr. Castle, and that met with a round of applause from the council and audience. Mr. Sporn is now a certified wastewater-plant operator.

Mr. Castle said they are still repairing the power plant from freeze damage this winter, but they will be

done soon.

Willard Perrin, head of the water department, said he has been talking with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment about water for the shelter house at Sappa Park. The well at the former youth ranch could be used, but will have to be piped over. That well is already in the system.

Mr. Perrin said the department didn't seem interested in using the well the city drilled a few years ago in front of the shelter house at the park.

The city water-supply wells seem to be maintaining their water level, he said. They are at the same level

they were last year. The city has been pumping 180,000 gallons a day recently, though in the summer it could increase.

Mr. Perrin said he hasn't found any more fire hydrants that have been tampered with.

He said the global positioning has

been done for the water and sewer systems. The locations will be used for mapping, which can be used in case of an emergency.

The company didn't find any lines the city didn't already know about.

Mr. Castle said after going to the

Kansas Rural Water meeting and seeing other city's maps, he was unhappy with the picture used on the city's map.

If someone looked at it and they weren't from Oberlin, they wouldn't know where anything is.

Artfest open to public this weekend

Art from area high schools, along with work by adult artists, novice and professional, will all be on display this weekend for the seventh annual High Plains Artfest.

Over 35 people have reserved tickets for the opening gala and will see the artwork Friday night; others

will have their chance on Saturday and Sunday at The Gateway.

The gala, from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, will feature live music, hors d'oeuvres, time to meet and visit with area artists and voting for the People's Choice Award.

Those attending get the first

chance at buying art works. The full amount of the ticket price can be used toward buying a piece of art.

Others can see the artwork from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and noon to 3 p.m. Sunday.

County sets free week at landfill

The Decatur County commissioners set the annual "free week" at the county landfill as the first full week in May, which includes Saturday, May 7.

The landfill will operate on regular hours that week, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said all the county roads

have been graded. The crew has taken all the snow fence and icy bridge signs down.

The crew, he said, has also pulled in the gravel on the sides of 126 miles of roads.

He asked the commissioners to approve a highway crossing permit in Liberty Township, which allows Murfin Oil to run an electrical line under 800th road.

The commissioners talked about the Meals on Wheels delivery vehicle, which is having some problems. They approved buying new spark plugs, a new ignition coil and a tool needed for the repair, so the job could be done by the road crew. The parts and tool will cost around \$360, they learned.

New Listings



202 South York

1,036 square feet, 3 bedroom, Dine in Kitchen. Large unattached 2 car garage with work benches on a corner lot with central heat and air. Close to downtown. \$45,000

Homes from \$20,000 to \$125,000 with two to four bedrooms available.

Check out our website at homerangerealestate.com.
Home Range Real Estate, Inc.

157 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, KS 67749

www.homerangerealestate.com

Gary Richards, Broker 785-475-3740 • 785-475-8324



207 East Hall

3 bedroom Spacious Dine in kitchen Full two car attached garage with an 8' x 24' workshop On a corner lot, Close to downtown. \$65,900

In Memory of Patricia Ann (Sanders) Ater 1933-2010

This is her life story as she told before her death on Sept. 10, 2010.

I was born in Shippe, Neb., Nov. 24, 1933.

Besides my parents, I had one 5 year-old sister, Connie Mae, to greet me. Even though I chose a bad time financially to make my appearance, the three of them have always made me feel wanted and loved.

My Dad ran a small grocery store and went on to become meat supervisor for J. M. Miracle, Snodgrass Food Co. and others that I don't recall.

We lived in Garden City, Kan., where I had my tonsils out, Elkhart, Kan., where I began school life, Indianola, Neb., where I continued my grade school education, Norton, Kan., where I endured all the joy and heartaches of Junior High and Oberlin, Kan, where I graduated from High School in 1951. After vowing that I would never become a teacher I attended Fort Hays State Teachers College at Hays, Kan.

While growing up my Mother saw to it that I had voice and piano lessons. I learned to play the flute in band.

My Mother, sister and I worked hours memorizing readings. We were asked many times to give these as programs for special events. It was good for me as I was very shy in front of people.

My husband, Don, and I met on a blind date arranged by my older sister and his older brother. We dated for two years, wrote letters for an additional two years while Don was in the service. When two large boxes of beautiful china arrived from Japan my Dad said he began to suspect that Don may have some definite plans.

After his tour of duty in Korea and his discharge, we were married on July 28, 1953.

Our first two years of married life Don worked at a local grocery store in Oberlin, Kansas while I taught public school kindergarten.

In 1955, we left Oberlin for Greeley, Colo., for Don to further his college education. I worked for Dr. Russell, a Pediatrician in Greeley. We lived in the basement of a Sorority House so Don was the only man in the whole house.

He suffered a little loss of popularity when our lovely little daughter, Leslie Ann was born December 2, 1956. She was delight to us both and we found a new joy that we didn't think possible.

Don graduated with his Bachelors Degree in May 1958 and began work on his Masters that summer. Leslie Ann had not enjoyed good health at all. It was with reluctance that I left the Pediatrician that had always cared for her to move to Las Animas, Colorado. Don taught Business and Distributive Education at the High School. The change of climate actually proved to be a great help to Leslie Ann.

During those two years Don did not feel he had found his niche in education. Our move to Lamar, Colorado in August 1960 was a happy one when he assumed the duties of Business Administrator of Lamar School District Re2. I was asked to teach Kindergarten which was in the basement of the Lamar Carnegie Library.

Our chocolate-eyed son made his appearance two months early in May 1961 making our family complete. After a three months struggle he rapidly became a normal, active boy. I thoroughly enjoyed my two children. I loved being a Mother.

Although little Sammy, being premature in birth, developed normally, my "what ifs" prompted my interest in the children and young adults at Melvin School. I began teaching there in 1963. For two years I very much enjoyed this work. However, I wanted a Nursery School experience for Sammy, so I started Miss Pat's Pre School in the family room of our home in the early Spring of 1966. Then in the Fall of 1967, with enrollment taking up more space than the family room would allow, the School was opened at the property on 7th street. It was the first licensed pre school



in SE Colorado. The enrollment grew. The Pre School building again needed to be larger. Don and I had built the school building on Walnut Street. Many, many friends have been made because of Miss Pat's Pre-School. I am still enjoying the blessings of all who passed through the doors, whether parent or child or one of my priceless teachers. I owned Miss Pat's Pre School for almost 20 years.

After retiring from the Preschool, I continued being with children as I had the Story Hour at the Lamar Public Library and taught Sunday School at the First Baptist Church.

I was asked to organize a Pre School that would be housed in the First Baptist Church in Lamar. The First Baptist Church Preschool was a tremendous success. Many children benefitted from the experience. Later, our government caught sight that preschool education was such an asset to a child's development. Preschool then became more readily available through public schooling. I was honored to be asked to serve on the Colorado Governor's Board for Education.

I have enjoyed PEO, Zonta, Fortnightly Book Club, Clio Club, and delivering Meals on Wheels.

Helping out at my church has always been a bright spot. I have served as Deaconess, Chairman of the Board of Christian Education, and Sunday School Teacher for many years.

Leslie Ann and Roger Stagner were married in 1977. We have had so many wonderful times together. It truly is as they say that you gain a "son". How true in this instance. How blessed am I.

I hold so dear to my heart my grandchildren, Annessa and Bronson. We have enjoyed playing and being silly to talking of the future and praying together. Being called "Granny" has been one of the best things. I remember wishing to be a Grandma even when I was little girl. I thought Grandmas always have little children around, and I liked that idea!

The years seemed to pass quickly. Don retired after being the Assistant to the Superintendent of the Lamar School District. He and I began intently caring for both our Mothers soon after the deaths of both our Dads.

Those were busy years. Both our mothers died in 2001. We felt good helping them live a quality life.

In 2003 Don and I celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary. It was such fun to visit with friends and family. Sometimes it feels like only yesterday we were married.

The next year our chocolate-eyed son, Sam died. He had been living in Pueblo. My heart broke when I heard the news.

My health wasn't very good around this time, and after a of couple surgeries, the Drs. diagnosed me with Lewy Body Disease. It is a type of Parkinsons but is more severe and advances at a much quicker rate.

They told me this disease would take away my ability to walk or even move and many motor skills even such as swallowing or breathing that we all take for granted. When I feel afraid, I think about how much God loves me and how many friends he has blessed me with.

When I was a girl, I had asked Jesus into my life to be my Savior. I have always wanted to live my life in such a way that others can see just how strong and wonderful Jesus really is. I look forward to my already prepared home in Heaven.

My faith keeps me encouraged each day. And Don, the precious love of my life, continues to be my faithful and loving caregiver for which I am so grateful.

Now that my days are so very different than they were, I am willing to walk this path of uncertainty because if it, in some way, will bring glory to God. . . I want that.