

Welcome home alumni!

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Schools evacuate for bomb threat

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

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They sang, they danced, they performed their material for the state speech, they performed some spontaneous pieces and they laughed.

While they knew that something was going on in the schools, the students from the Decatur Junior/Senior High School took the opportunity to band together and have some fun.

A bomb threat last Thursday meant both of the schools had to be evacuated, and quickly. The high school students were taken by bus to The Gateway. There, they took over the Morgan Theater, where they could use the stage to entertain each other.

Some of the performances were from

the recent concerts or speech tournaments, while others were spontaneous.

One sophomore girl sang a song by the band Cold Play acappella, bringing her fellow classmates to their feet in a standing ovation.

While the students acted and sang one piece after another, police and sheriff's officers were checking both schools for a potential bomb.

The bomb threat had come out of a printer in the upstairs computer lab at the grade school about 10:15 a.m. Superintendent Duane Dorhorst wrote in his weekly update to the school board that the threat was taken off the printer by a teacher whose class was working in the lab.

The note, he wrote, basically said that

a bomb would go off at 11 a.m. It didn't specify where.

The grade school called Mr. Dorhorst, who called Police Chief Wade Lockhart. He and the chief met at the grade school.

Mr. Dorhorst said he questioned the sixth graders who were in the lab at the time and none admitted printing the threat. District officials immediately started tracing where the threat had come from. Since the schools share a common computer network, he said, it could have from any classroom in any building.

The buildings were evacuated, with the high school students bused to The Gateway and the grade school kids walking to the basement of the Catholic church.

Around 11:15 a.m., Mr. Dorhorst said,

officers and school officials entered the buildings and began searching room by room. An hour later, the grade school was declared clear and the students and staff returned. Around 1:15 p.m., the high school was cleared and the students and staff returned.

"The safety of the students and the staff were our first concern," wrote Mr. Dorhorst. "We followed the crisis plan and everything went off without a hitch. It does make some parents upset when we do not release information until the crisis is over – but we do that for the safety of all involved. The staff needs to be commended on the way they handled the event and the students."

On Monday, Mr. Dorhorst said there

hadn't been any arrests made as far as he knows. Chief Lockhart was away at training all day and couldn't be reached.

Mr. Dorhorst did say that they were able to pinpoint the computer at the high school on which the message was printed. Chief Lockhart and Principal Charlie Haag questioned all of students in that class.

"It is also important to mention how well our junior/senior high students handled the disruption," he said. "Once they were relocated to the auditorium at The Gateway, the students just took over. They played piano pieces, sang solos and group songs, did some of their speech pieces and some ad lib acting. I wish I could have been there because I understand it was pretty magical."

(See STUDENTS on Page 10A)

Memorial Day services set at cemeteries

By MARYLOU OLSON

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About 250 flags will fly proudly at the Oberlin Cemetery on Monday morning to mark Memorial Day.

The public is invited to a Memorial Day ceremony at 10 a.m. around the main flagpole at the cemetery. Capt. Chris Coco, assistant professor of military science and Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor at Kansas State University, will speak.

The program is sponsored by the Oberlin American Legion, the Sons of the American Legion and the Legion Auxiliary.

The program will include presentation of the colors by Oberlin American Legion Commander Rolie Avery; John and Connie Simonsen posting the national colors; Miki Dorhorst and Samantha Anderson

singing the national anthem; the Rev. Stanley Chapin giving the opening and closing prayers; Jim Miesner placing the wreath and Sid Metcalf as sergeant-at-arms for the gun salute.

NORCATUR

First Lt. Aaron Helm will give the Memorial Day address on Sunday at the Norcatur Cemetery. There will be a parade to the cemetery, beginning at 1:45 p.m. from the cemetery gate. Pastor Ed Woods will give the opening prayer and the Norton American Legion Color Guard will assist.

Andrea Marshall Spanier will sing "The Star Spangled Banner" and Roger Norman Beachel will decorate the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Taps and an echo will be played by Anthony Marshall and (See SERVICES on Page 10A)



AT THE GRADE SCHOOL last Tuesday, Col. Gordon Kuntz talked with Jessie Isbell (above) while Spencer Wishon listened in. Col. Kuntz (below) demonstrated how

people in Africa would use a flat woven tool to scoop coffee beans.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Colonel thanks students

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

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Boys and girls smiled big, bright smiles as they received their gifts.

Nothing fuzzy or cute. Not gift wrapped or even brand new, but theirs to keep: new (or slightly used) shoes collected by students at Oberlin Elementary School and others in Decatur County.

Last Tuesday, Col. Gordon Kuntz showed students at Oberlin Elementary School a few pictures of the boys and girls in Ethiopia as they received the shoes.

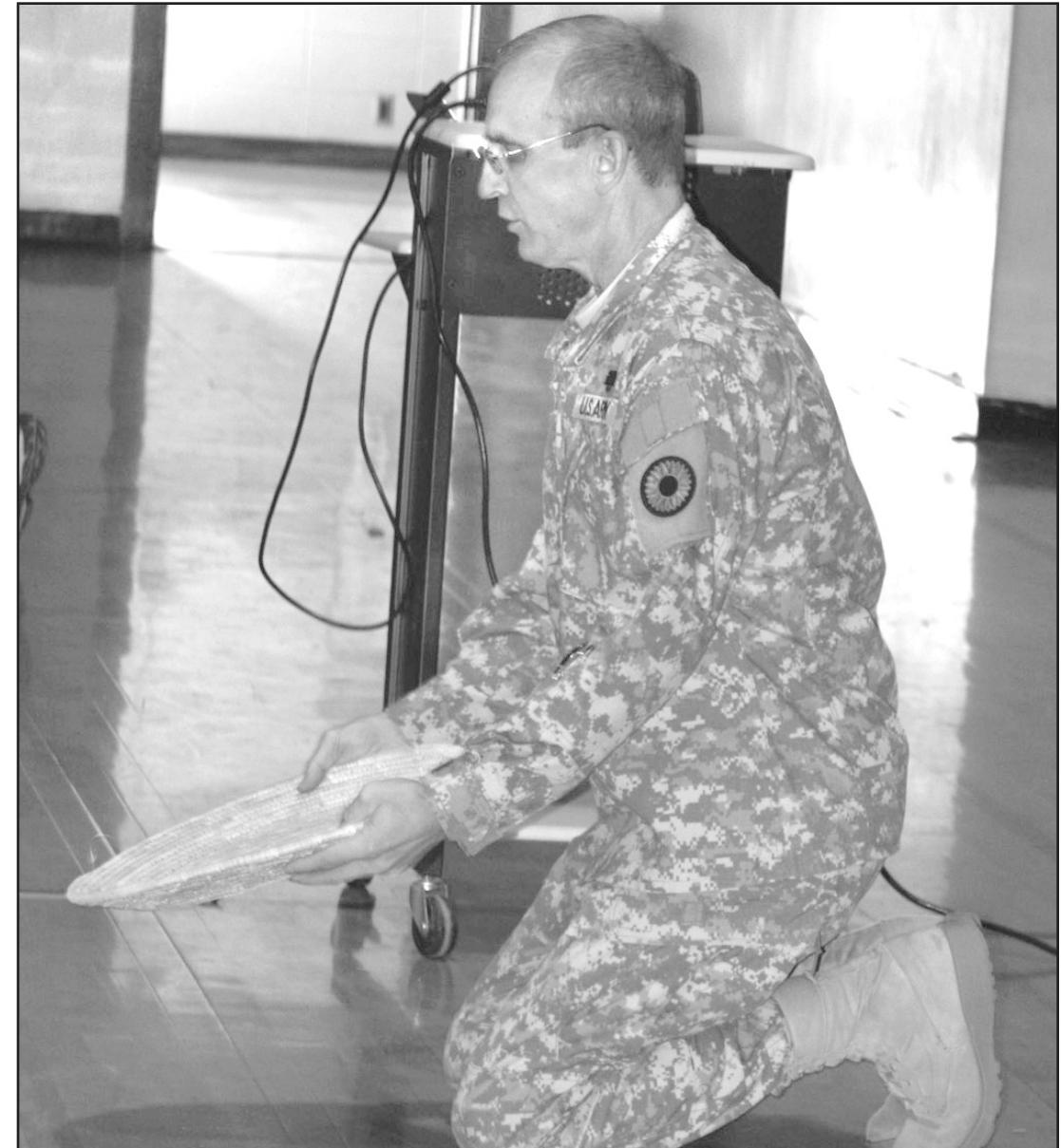
The Oberlin kids brought the shoes, some used and some new, to the school last year. The boxes were then sent to Col. Kuntz in Ethiopia, east Africa, by his in-laws, Doyle and Kay Brown, Jennings.

Col. Kuntz said they took the donated shoes in a pick-up to the Dawit Aid for Aged Person Association. The place was open once a week and the elderly would go there for a cooked meal. Often, he said, they would bring their grandkids with them.

The association, said Col.

Kuntz, was one of the places that

handed out the shoes.



"Whether they are new shoes or used shoes," he said, "they don't care. They are happy to have shoes."

The people who went to the (See SHOES on Page 10A)

Chief checks house for banned constrictor

Oberlin's police chief told the City Council Thursday night that while he doesn't know where a seven-foot boa constrictor has been moved, the serpent wasn't in its cage the last time he checked.

After the deadline set by the council at the beginning of May, said Chief Wade Lockhart, he waited a day and then went to Aiyya Eaton's home. She wasn't there, but her mother was.

The chief said he saw the snake's cage. It appeared the animal hadn't been in the cage for some time, since there was no water or food in it.

A city ordinance bans keeping poisonous snakes or constrictors, such as the boa. Despite an appeal from the owner, the council refused to grant an exemption to the ban.

The chief said he has no clue whether the snake is in town or somewhere else. If the snake is still in town, said Chief Lockhart, someone will talk and he will find out.

Chief Lockhart said he left a message to have Ms. Eaton come talk to him. As of Thursday night, he added, she hadn't done that.

He said he can't get a search warrant for the snake. He has to rely on her honesty.

If someone in town has the snake, the chief said, that person could get a citation.

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