

Redistricting map worries senator

By STEVE HAYNES
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Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer is plenty riled about what the latest redistricting map would do to his district, already the largest in the state. The district needs to add 8,000 to 11,000 people, and the map, known as Ad Astra, would grow it from 18 counties to 20 1/2, fully one-fifth of all 105 Kansas counties. Worse yet, the district would stretch from being nearly square — today Rooks County sticks out to the east like a nose — to more of a salamander shape. On the east, it'd reach

into eastern Kansas by adding Phillips and Smith counties, plus Jewell, which the senator points out, actually is in the eastern half of the state.

And to the south, it'd add the north half of Hamilton, two-thirds of the way to Oklahoma.

"I hope the leadership isn't mad at me," Mr. Ostmeyer joked during an appearance at the Oberlin Rotary Club last Tuesday.

He said out of frustration, he drew up his own map.

"I tried to show everyone you could have

a good-looking map," he said. "I didn't gerrymander out anyone."

And that's one of the problems with the current maps, he added; members have tried to draw anyone who presents a threat to run against them out of their districts. That results in some funny shapes.

Sen. Ostmeyer said he isn't sure why his district got so stretched out. To meet redistricting guidelines laid down by the federal courts, all he needs is to add Phillips County to his 18.

"We just need to be within 4 percent of

the ideal," he said. "That's unlike the congressional districts, which the courts hold to "zero tolerance."

The way things are going, he added, western Kansas could lose another district, as it lost the 37th. The 37th went to fast-growing Johnson County, he said, and the 36th could wind up there, too.

The 36th was held by long-time Sen. Janis Lee, who resigned to take a job with the state Board of Tax Appeals. She was replaced by Sen. Allen Schmidt. Both are Democrats, and the district includes Democrat-leaning

Ellis County.

The House, the Senate and the state's four congressional districts have to be redrawn this year, using population figures from the 2010 Census.

The latest congressional map passed the House, Sen. Ostmeyer said. It would split Topeka, lumping the more urban half in with the mostly rural 1st District.

The House put its redistricting map in the same bill, which was rejected in the Senate. That left things up in the air.

(See SENATOR on Page 5A)

School board discusses options for new calendar

The Oberlin School Board gave conditional approval to one of three calendar suggestions for next year by the district's calendar committee.

The committee came up with three possibilities for the 2012-2013 school year.

Calendar A, the one the board chose, includes 178.5 student days, with school starting on Friday, Aug. 17. The breaks would be for Thanksgiving from Wednesday, Nov. 21, to Friday, Nov. 23; for Christmas from Monday, Dec. 24 to Wednesday, Jan. 2 and for spring break from Monday, March 11, to Friday, March 15. The last day of school would be Thursday, May 23.

Calendar B includes 179.5 days with school starting Monday, Aug. 20. Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks are the same as calendar A and spring break would be from Monday, March 18 to Friday, March 22.

Calendar C includes 180 days with school starting on Friday, Aug. 17. All of the breaks are the same with the exception of spring break, which would be Monday, March 25, to Friday, March 29.

Board member Dan Nedland said the board would have to condition-

ally approve the calendars because the current contract with the teachers is for 189 teacher days and each of the proposals includes only 185. The calendars would violate the negotiated agreement, he said, and the district hasn't offered a four day reduction.

This doesn't have to be approved tonight, said board member Doug Brown.

It would be nice to let the (Northwest Kansas Educational) service center and others know the dates, said Superintendent Duane Dorshorst.

The district starts a week too soon and goes a week too late compared to the other schools in his corner of the state, said board member Dan Wasson. Mr. Wasson said they could add 20 minutes to the start and ending of the day and then line up with the other area schools.

That's getting into the negotiated agreement, said board member Dan Grafel.

There was some discussion over the student contact days on calendar A, which had 178.5, but Mr. Dorshorst said it really would have 179.5.

The board voted to go with calendar A.

Re-employment tabled for district

The Oberlin School Board decided to table re-employment of the teaching staff at its regular meeting last Monday, waiting to see what the state is going to do with the school budget.

Board President Monte Moore said it isn't that the board doesn't agree with the recommendations from the principals, but they want to wait to see what the state will do with the amount the district gets for each student.

The board voted 6-1 in a show of hands to table the recommendations to the May meeting, which is four days before when the board is obligated by law to have the re-employment done. Board member Dan Grafel did not vote in favor of

tabling the decision.

The next board meeting will be Monday, May 14.

The recommendations for re-employment included:

- Kerrie Wahlmeier, third grade.
- Jenny Tally, vocal music.
- Kimberly Witt, first grade.
- Jeni Henningson, fourth grade.
- Belinda Jones, fifth and sixth grades.
- Diana Steinmetz, kindergarten.
- Carol Dixson, fifth and sixth grades.
- Sherri Ruf, fourth grade.
- Cindy Sattler, first grade.
- Kathy Tacha, second grade.
- Carol Wasson, title 1.

(See TEACHERS' on Page 5A)

ArtFest to feature cell-phone category

Organizers of the High Plains ArtFest plan to feature a new category for the People's Choice Award this year.

Anyone who wants to enter a picture taken with their cell phone can do so for a fee of \$3. The pictures need to be printed on photo paper and not framed, no larger than 4 inches by 6 inches. Entries are limited to two per person.

The Cell Phone Art Division will not be judged in the regular show, said organizer Connie Grafel, but will be voted on by people at the event.

Artists entering cell phone pictures aren't eligible for free admittance to the gala on Friday.

The ArtFest is scheduled for

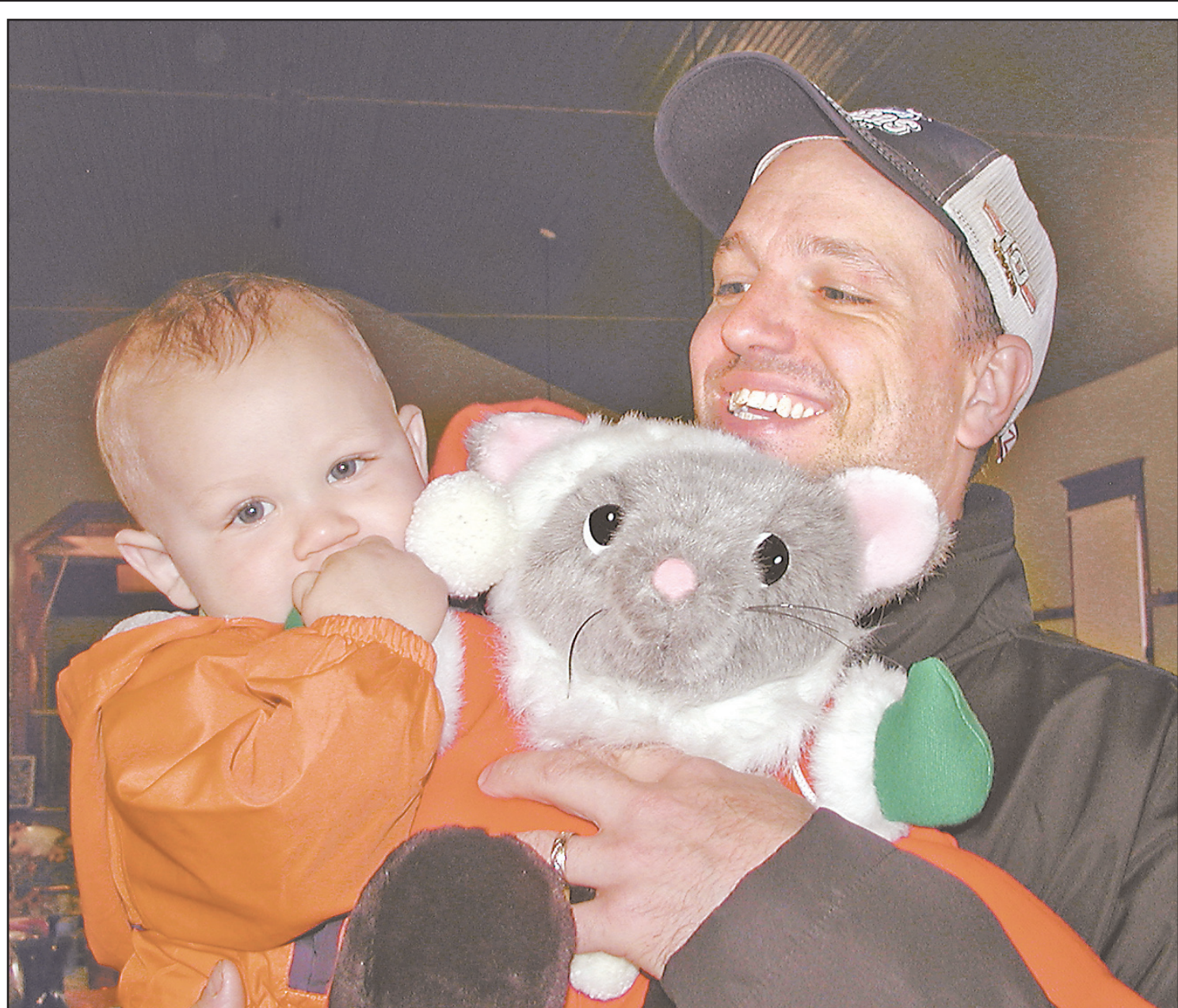
Saturday and Sunday, April 28 and 29, at The Gateway. All artwork needs to be picked up by 3:30 p.m. Sunday.

So far, Ms. Grafel said, 84 patrons have signed up for the gala from 7 to 9 p.m. on Friday. Ms. Grafel said they are still accepting more "purchase patrons" at \$100 a couple. That money can then be put towards the purchase of a piece of art.

Hors d'oeuvres, wine and non-alcoholic beverages will be served. Those attending the gala will be able to vote on the "People's Choice Award."

People can mail in their money for the gala to 104 S. Penn, Oberlin, Kan. 67749 or call 475-2901, she said.

Ms. Grafel said 85 adult artists have entered the show with 225 pieces and 60 students representing 10 high school with 65 pieces.



Looking for used treasures

AT THE RUMMAGE sale at the Last Indian Raid Museum this weekend, Brett Fredrickson of Colorado held his son Jordan (above) and a stuffed mouse they found. Kira Burmaster (right) got dressed up in a coat with a unicorn and wings while museum volunteer Phil Wurm (below) showed off a wig that was for sale.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes and Kim Davis



Vault contains treasure in old city documents

In the back of the Oberlin police station is a big, old vault. In it, Chief Wade Lockhart has saved dozens of old city ledgers, account books and meeting minutes.

For the next few weeks, we will be running a series of letters, notes, minutes and information from those records. The style, spelling and punctuation has been left as it was in those documents.

The first is some good advice that was taken to heart:
Topeka, Kansas



From the Vault
By Cynthia Haynes
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May 25, 1930
Dear Registrar:
We are enclosing herewith your

order on County Treasurer, for the amount due you for birth and death certificates mailed to this office since November 1, 1929. We are again appealing to you for a closer check on your local doctors, to see that they turn in birth certificates promptly, many of them at the present time, hold them for months before reporting. We are mailing to the the parents, as soon as possible after they are received, a notification of birth of each child, this involves the mailing of twenty-five to twenty eight hundred notifications per month. (See REGISTRARS on Page 5A)

