

## Hot weather didn't scorch Fourth

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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About 40 people braved the 107-degree heat to celebrate the Fourth of July last Wednesday, converging on City Park to see the Oberlin Area Community Band play and drink root-beer floats.

The wind was strong enough to make being outside tolerable as people of all ages found their places and set up chairs, taking up the shade from a big tree in front of the band shell.

The Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce board set up a stand to hand out root-beer floats for donations. The city pool had given out free ice cream all day, courtesy of First National Bank.

People from McCook and other neighboring towns came, as well as some kids from the pool, which had long since run out of prizes from the day's games.

The band opened with "The Washington Post March," and it seems as though the oppression of the heat lessened.

While the wind felt wonderful for the audience, the band couldn't say as much.

Players had to use clothes pins to hold down their sheet music, and Director Neal Russell had to chase sheets of music across the park three times before the concert was over.

Veterans of different wars were present, and when the band played "Taps" midway through the concert, the men and women who had served stood, hats in hands, to honor fallen comrades.

Ron Jansonius stood up with the band to read the Gettysburg Address during "Lincoln at Gettysburg." He read it in three parts as a large drum behind him kept a

slow rumble.

Mr. Russell introduced every song, but made a point to tell the audience that the "Ballad of the Green Berets" had been written during the Vietnam War.

"I think when people talk about war," he said, "they tend to forget Vietnam. So I just wanted to point out that this song was written in Vietnam, in honor of those men and women who fought there."

The band closed with a medley, "Armed Forces – the Pride of America," and Mr. Jansonius stood again to announce each

branch of the military in turn. As he did, those who had served in each branch stood and received a round of applause.

When the band finished, people were quick to start packing up and returning to their air-conditioned homes. Though there were no fireworks to light in the end, the audience seemed happy enough to have honored their veterans and sung the National Anthem.

What better way to say "Happy Birthday," after all?

## Rain!

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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Decatur County had its prayers for rain answered Sunday, but one inch doesn't end a drought.

Hansen-Mueller reported 1.2 inches at its elevator in Oberlin and one inch in Cedar Bluffs. The Decatur Cooperative Association said it had 1.5 inches in Jennings and 1.6 in Norcat. D&S Grain in Traer reported half an inch. McCook got a total of 2.81 inches over the weekend, according to the National Weather Service, and Oberlin's official observer reported 1.03 inches.

Unfortunately, for some fields, the rain may be too late. But if we get more rain, the bulk of the harvest may still be saved, said Keith VanSlike, Norton County agent for Twin Creeks Extension.

This year, Oberlin has recorded only 6.95 inches of rain, compared to 15.33 inches at this time last year. The average amount is 11.92 inches, which is still almost 5 inches more from where we are now.

"If we get some regular rain, that will really help turn things around," Mr. VanSlike said, "but in a lot of ways there are some crops that just got hurt too much. So it's hard to know."

"The plants are at or are getting ready to be at a reproductive stage, where they need regular moisture, especially if the temperatures rebound into the highs we've seen. Some of the corn I've looked at has been stunted enough that it's not going to do much. The milo may still have an opportunity, but the corn has been stressed quite a while."

Mr. VanSlike said pollination is a delicate time for corn.

"The corn is at a developmental stage, deciding how big the ears will be and getting ready to pollinate," he said. "During pollination, a lot of things have to happen. One of the big killers of pollen is extreme heat – it can actually fry the male pollen, so it won't fertilize the plant and you won't have grain."

"I think we've been very fortunate

## Water rationing to begin

With Oberlin water users pressing the limit of city's capacity, Mayor Bill Riedel declared a "stage 2 water watch" at Thursday's council meeting, putting the town under water rationing.

The official notice is printed on Page 6 of today's paper.

Water consumption has to be over 700,000 gallons for at least three days in a row before a warning is declared. It has already been that high for the last week, said Willard Perrin of the city water department, and the city's wells have been dropping a foot a day.

Under the water restrictions, people with odd-numbered addresses will be allowed to water their lawns on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Mayor Bill Riedel said. Those with even-numbered addresses will be able to Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Outdoor water use to wash cars or keep up lawns and gardens is allowed only from 12:01 to 10 a.m. and from 9 p.m. to midnight.

nate that we've made it as far as we have, but we need regular moisture to carry it through. There are some fields that you can obviously see trying to silk out and pollinate, and they're definitely hurt. Some aren't quite there. But the way the temps are going, there isn't going to be much."

The National Weather Service said the rain came as a cold front came through and cooled the temperatures.



## Kids have cool fun at the pool

**A FAST GAME OF WATER** basketball drew a bunch of boys (above) during Fourth of July activities at the city pool last Wednesday. Jenna Long (right) got ready to throw a ball in the shallow end and Aden Shaw (left) was ready to jump off the edge as they played in the pool on Monday.

— Herald photos by Susan May (above) and Kimberly Davis



## Grave flowers removed

At least seven people showed up at Thursday's City Council meeting to ask what had happened to the flowers and decorations they had placed on relatives' tombstones at the city cemetery.

Sexton Jeremy Tally said he removed the decorations Wednesday in an attempt to clean up the cemetery. City Administrator Karen Larson and Mayor Bill Riedel said it was an honest mistake.

"It wasn't done out of meanness, maliciously," Mr. Riedel said. "Myself and Karen and Jeremy apologize for this.... This is Jeremy's job, and he misread what his duties were. He apologizes, and we apologize for the heartache it caused."

The people who had lost decorations were upset. They said that the cemetery needs a lot of cleaning up because many areas are overgrown and unkempt. The city took down

expensive wreaths and flowers from permanent vases, they said.

"We pay for it," audience member Brenda Ploussard said, "and it's at our discretion what looks bad."

Mrs. Larson and Mr. Riedel said the same thing wouldn't happen again next year. Mr. Riedel pointed out that Mr. Tally had raised over \$20,000 for the new directory at the cemetery, which hadn't cost the (See GRAVE on Page 12)

## City changes blight ordinance

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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City Code Enforcement Officer Jan Ackerman said Thursday she could stay or go, but that she didn't want to be a part of the animosity that was stirred up by the city's recent decision to alter how blighted property is handled.

A revised ordinance said that a property complaint must be signed

by two city residents before it would be handled. The problem, Mrs. Ackerman said, is that she had been taken out of the loop.

In the end, she stayed, and the ordinance was changed.

"I've had numerous calls from the community," the enforcement officer said at the regular City Council meeting, "and Oberlin is the only town that I manage that

doesn't allow me, as code enforcement officer, to find the violations and bring them to the city attorney, or (City Administrator) Karen in this instance."

By changing the ordinance to require two signatures, the council thought it would limit the number of complaints and provide an extra step in ensuring that a property was (See CITY on Page 12)

## Unlocked cars give rise to thefts

Police issued a warning to residents of Oberlin on Monday to lock their cars and take care not to leave valuables inside after a series of thefts from unlocked vehicles.

Police Chief Troy Haas said that the burglaries were crimes of opportunity, and no cars have been broken into. So far, a handgun, a car stereo and at least two wallets have been stolen, he said. The thefts were:

- A 40 caliber Walther handgun, holster and two gun magazines stolen between 10 p.m. June 4 and 8 a.m. June 5 from the unlocked Dodge pickup of Nicholas Wahlmeier at 205 N. Beaver.

- A car radio and subwoofer speaker out of Joseph Seifert's unlocked car parked at 206 W. Frontier Parkway between 2 p.m. Wednesday, June 27, and 5:27

p.m. Sunday, July 1. The loss was estimated at \$1,000.

- No formal report was made, but the wallet of Pastor Charlotte Strecker-Baseler was stolen a few months ago out of her unlocked car, Chief Troy Haas said.

- A burglary was reported between 4:34 p.m. Sunday, July 1, and 8 a.m. Monday, July 2, in the 100 block of East Hall Street. Someone stole the billfold of Terry Keahey of Oberlin out of her unlocked Chevy Blazer. It contained her driver's license, credit cards and some photos.

Police have an idea of who is responsible, he said, but the investigation continues. Chief Haas said it is likely someone between the ages of 15 and 25.

If you have any information, he said, call the Oberlin police station at (785) 475-3392.

## Top cop to visit Oberlin

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**  
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Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt will be in Oberlin on Friday to meet with area prosecutors at the Decatur County courthouse.

Mr. Schmidt said that he's doing what is called an "attorney general's call," a long tradition of meeting with prosecutors and law-enforcement officials to stay abreast of the issues they face. Traditionally, prosecutors were invited to Topeka to meet with the attorney general, but Mr. Schmidt said he likes to do it the other way around and come meet them.

"I wanted to take a different approach," he said. "I think it's healthy to be out and about a little bit – visit folks on their home turf."

(See STATE on Page 12)

## With two good looking wells, city plans to drill another pair in water search

Tests on two wells drilled for Oberlin's water project have come back looking good, and the City Council has decided to drill at two more sites for testing.

So far the city has tried four locations, City Administrator Karen Larson said at a City Council meeting Thursday. The two new sites will be on property owned by Jay and Ann Anderson and Lee Martin.

The state Department of Health and Environment

will need to know by Aug. 16 which sites will become permanent wells in order to issue permits for them, she said. The council hopes to have all of the results needed to make the decision on which sites will become permanent by its meeting on Thursday, August 2.

"We were hoping to find a couple of wells that would pump 400 to 500 gallons a minute," Mrs. Larson said, "but that isn't happening, so we may need to have

more. Basically, if we find a good well, we'll make it permanent."

In other business, the council approved a bid from McCormick Asphalt of Wichita to repave the streets around The Gateway for \$62,000. The city will be using money from the Bremer fund to make the repairs, she said. The fund came from a large donation given to the city by Fred and Henrietta Bremer in their will for

upkeep and improvements to the civic center.

McCormick is already working on the airport project, and will be able to do the streets at the civic center at a savings of one city block, since the firm's supplies and work force are already here, Mrs. Larson said.

