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VETERANS PARADE DOWN Main Street on Monday on foot, on motorcycles (below left), in cars and on trailers (above) pulled by an old Army Jeep. The crowd cheered them all the way to Stanley Hardware, where Mayor Rob McFee

read a proclamation in honor of the vets and the high school band, with Kade Brown (bottom right), played the national anthem. Then everyone headed to the American Legion Hall for lunch.

- Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

Veterans celebrated

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP

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Dressed in uniforms seemingly made of red-and-white fireworks, the DCHS Singers of Decatur Community High looked just as beautiful as they sounded. Harmonies rose throughout the national anthem as if they were a professional chorus, long past high school.

The veterans themselves, most in full uniform, displaying their awards with somber faces, sat together in front of the crowd. Hats came off and went over the heart for the colors and anthem, then remained proudly on as each one stood to have his name and rank read. In contrast, the students, themselves full of respect for the vets, read through their pieces with clear, youthful voices.

The event was organized by the National Honor Society. Chapter President Matthew Helm led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance after an honor guard from the Oberlin American Legion Post brought out the colors.

Student Kade Brown gave a brief history of Veterans Day, which used to be called Armistice Day, in celebration of the end of World War I. Then the singers gave a stirring rendition of "Where Were You," a song about the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks originally composed by country singer Alan Jackson.

Speaker Sid Metcalf, a retired farmer and county commissioner-elect, said he served two years in the Army, mostly in Germany, and is an active member of the Legion.

"Anyone who is undecided about what to do with their life," Mr. Metcalf said, "well, I know I enjoyed my time in the service."

It's not for everybody, but it's a good way of life. I know there are guys in here who didn't, but you never know. And I really encourage

our young people to look into it."

Military training helps a person grow, he said, and he didn't find the draft to be a bad thing. The military gives a young person direction, he said, and sometimes it becomes your life's work. Only 3 or 4 percent actually carry a gun and shoot people, he said. There are many, many other jobs to be done.

After Mr. Metcalf's speech, student Channing Fortin sang the song, "American Soldier" by country singer Toby Keith while playing his guitar.

"I'm out here on the front lines, so sleep in peace tonight," the song went.

Before the honor guard retired the colors, Judge John Bremer noted for the crowd that the flag that had been folded this day was the coffin flag of Alan Addleman, a veteran who died this year. The company folded the flag, called out, and then the veterans saluted as Old Glory marched again out of view. As the veterans themselves rose, they left the hall to thunderous applause.

Outside, as the crowd left the auditorium, people shook the hand of every veteran, saying thanks to the men who seemed delighted to have so many young people giving them the utmost respect for their service.

Not long after, people gathered on Main Street to cheer the veterans as they marched in the parade, and Mayor Rob McFee read a proclamation before they and their families headed to the American Legion Hall for lunch.

The soups and pies there were incredible, but didn't appear to be the cause of the wide grins covering every face. It was America, it was the respect for the uniform, and the honor of those who fight to keep us free that lit everyone's faces. It was a wonderful day to be a veteran.



Commissioners lift county's burn ban

County Commissioners lifted the five-month old fire ban at their meeting last Tuesday, though not without some debate.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine made the motion to lift the ban, as he had heard several requests to burn trash since the weather has cooled, mostly from those wanting to do maintenance burning, like with trash.

Commissioner Ralph Unger, however, said that he strictly opposed it.

"I have too many farmers telling me to keep it up out there," he said gravely. "Those fields are just as dry as they were in June and July. It's a tinderbox."

The topic has been brought up every week for the last month or so,

without any commissioner seriously considering it, even though Fire Chief Bill Cathcart stopped in with the request at the Oct. 2 meeting. But now with one making the motion and the other adamantly opposing it, Commissioner Stan McEvoy quietly weighed his choices.

After recounting the points of view briefly to himself, he cautiously agreed with Mr. Gallentine, but not without some reservation.

"People need to be sure to use extreme caution," he said, "don't do it on windy days. Use common sense. We can put it back on if we need to."

Mr. Unger asked that his dissent be put on the record for the meeting's minutes.

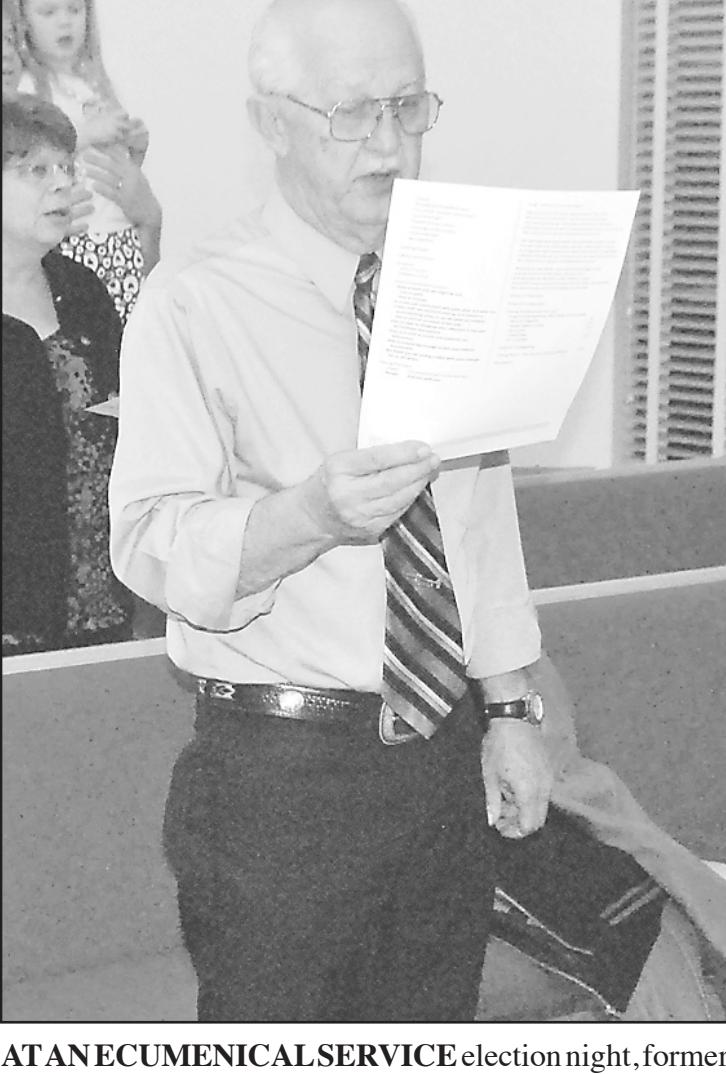
Council agenda full

The Oberlin City Council has a few things to celebrate and a lot to prepare for in the coming year.

City Administrator Karen Larson said that there will be a reception for airport manager Bob Fraker at 6:30 p.m., at The Gateway a half-hour before the usual council meeting, since he won the Charles E. Taylor Master Mechanic award from the Federal Aviation Administration. Refreshments will be served, she said.

"After that, we'll be discussing how to proceed with the new tax for the swimming pool," she said.

"There will also be some proceedings for the closeout of the streets construction project and Phase 1 of the airport. So there will be a walk-through of the airport with the engineers to make sure everything is set. And of course, we'll be approving some payments for those projects as well."



AT AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE election night, former Decatur Community High bandmaster Neal Russell was one of many people to sing and pray for God and country. The service was held at the Oberlin Evangelical Covenant Church.

- Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

No surprises from canvass

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP

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County commissioners canvassed the votes from last Tuesday's general election on Monday and found no change in the previously reported results, although they had two ties to resolve in the races for Dresden and Sherman townships.

In those townships, several people had been written in on ballots though they already held offices and could not accept the positions of trustee or treasurer, said county clerk Colleen Geihlsler. While these disputes are typically solved with a coin toss, she said, there only needs to be a little reshuffling, and the problems should work themselves out by the week's end.

Election results are never official until the commissioners canvass, or recount, all of them to confirm the numbers, make sure all votes are valid and come up with the final tally. On Monday, commissioners confirmed the previously reported results in the race for county commissioners of District 3 and for two ballot issues, one city and one county.

This year, said Ms. Geihlsler, who serves as county election

officer, they had 364 advanced voters, when around 400 is the usual. By 6:30 a.m. last Tuesday morning, she said, there were already 12 voters at The Gateway, the county's main polling place, which opened at 7 a.m. The county saw a 78 percent voter turnout, as compared to the last presidential election in 2008, when the figure was 80 percent.

There were a handful of provisional ballots, however.

"There were several (ballots) that were provisional," said Commissioner Ralph Unger, "because they had moved but not registered. There were maybe four or five votes we had to throw out for that, not a lot."

"There was one where they moved within a precinct. I think it could have been counted, but it wouldn't have made a difference because none of the races was close in that instance. It was all because they didn't reregister when they moved; people forget how important that is."

Commissioner Stan McEvoy agreed.

"Everything checked out good," he said. "They counted correctly and didn't find any (See VOTE on Page 8A)

Pheasant season opens to poor numbers of birds, hunters say

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP

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This year's opening weekend of pheasant season may have been one of the worst on record, with the summer's drought and fires wreaking havoc on bird numbers.

"In all the years I've been hunting – and I've been hunting since I was 10, and am now 48 – this is the worst year I've ever seen," said Gary Bruggeman, president of the Oberlin Gun Club. "A lot of people say it was nice and warm and all, but there just wasn't enough moisture for those poor little eggs to hatch, and not enough water for even

the adults. And there's a high percentage that were killed by hawks, owls and other predators trying to make it by. It's going to take awhile to build back up."

While Joe Dejmala, co-owner of Dale's Fish 'N' Fun, wasn't quite as downcast about the weekend, he said it had been considerably less busy at his outdoor sports store.

"There were a lot of hunters in," he said. "I was surprised for the number, being a dry year. We had a nice crowd on Friday and everybody was upbeat. On Saturday, there weren't many that came back with

bad reports. I heard that people found birds, just not a lot."

"There were definitely less people than there has been in the past."

"It really was not very good," said Mr. Bruggeman. "The bird numbers are really down. I think with the drought, there just wasn't enough moisture to soften the eggs and everything. Until the wind storm came in Saturday morning, we were hunting, but only got a couple birds."

Mr. Dejmala said he had heard about a rough Saturday too, though he hadn't made it out hunting himself.

"That wind coming up Saturday made it tough for everyone to be outside," he said. "It was too hot and all the dust was up in the air, so I think probably a lot of the hunters didn't hunt Saturday just because of the weather."

All of the symptoms pointed to a tough year for the pheasants, said Mr. Bruggeman, as he had a hard time finding hens, whereas at the end of last season, in January, there had seemed to be plenty.

"I don't know where they went, either," he said. "I know east of here was a little better, around the Logan area, and some

guys said it was all right, but (the population was) still down."

"The cover for the birds is thin with the drought, and we walked some good land. We didn't even see more than six or seven birds. I talked to one group of 10 guys with only nine birds."

"The problem is, everybody needs the revenue from the hunters. The inns, restaurants, everyone. It's a big part of the community."

