

Historic explorer of 200 years ago to speak at banquet

The Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce annual banquet will feature Capt. Meriwether Lewis talking about his epic journey across the unexplored American West.

The chamber holds the banquet at the beginning of the year to elect new board members, get people together and to honor some outstanding people from the area.

Tickets are \$17, which includes dinner by The Gateway staff. The evening starts at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 18. Chamber Manager Glenva Nichols said reservations need to be made by close of business the day before, Tuesday, Jan. 17. Stop by the Chamber office in the Business Enhancement Center at Penn and Commercial or call 475-3441.

The chamber will honor an outstanding teacher, community volunteer, agriculture builder of the year and community leaders for an individual or group.

Board seats held by Brian Loker, Sid Metcalf, Marilyn Horn and Peg Smith are up. Mr. Loker, Mr. Metcalf and Mrs. Horn are eligible to serve again. Anyone interested in serving on the board should call

Mrs. Nichols.

The speaker this year will be Phillip Thomas, a history professor at Wichita State University, who will portray the noted explorer Meriwether Lewis.

Mr. Thomas has a doctorate in history from the University of New Mexico and has published and spoken on medieval history and science, Western American history and art, exploration of the West and conversation.

A member of the Kansas Humanities Council Speakers Bureau, he portrays Capt. Lewis, part of the team that first explored the West.

President Thomas Jefferson chose Mr. Lewis and Capt. William Clark to lead an expedition across the new Louisiana Territory to the Pacific Ocean. Their Corps of Discovery reached the Pacific and returned back home.

Mr. Lewis was rewarded with the governorship of all Louisiana in 1806.

Dr. Thomas will talk about what Mr. Lewis found during his exploration, including the wildlife, the plants, people and the geography from the Continental Divide to the Oregon coast.

City adds \$19,810 to budget for 2005

The Oberlin City Council held a quick meeting Friday night to pay end-of-the-year bills and amend the 2005 budget.

The council published a budget of \$195,750 for 2005, but actually spent \$215,560.

City Administrator Gary Shike said there were a few things that were budgeted wrong and they added up.

Personnel services cost \$2,000 more than expected, Mr. Shike said, going from \$72,000 which was budgeted to \$74,000. Equipment and supplies cost \$2,500 more than budgeted, food preparation \$5,000 more, utilities cost \$300 more, contractual expenses cost \$500 more and the sign cost \$15,710 more.

The city also saved some money because they spent less than was budgeted in some areas. The city saved \$50 on Internet, \$800 on advertising, \$2,000 on telephone, \$350 on other costs and \$3,000 on the marketing director.

All of this added up for an increase in expenditures of \$19,810.

The item that made the biggest difference was the new sign at The Gateway, he said. The city had \$25,000 budgeted for the sign, but it actually ended up costing \$40,000. The city didn't pay for all of the sign, he said; some came from donations and other money, but it all shows as coming out of the budget.

The council agreed to pay the bills and amend the budget.

Sheriff's deputy to help with emergency plans

The new sheriff's deputy will be helping part-time in the emergency preparedness department, although the Decatur County commissioners are still looking at hiring someone for the manager's job.

Bert Cool, former undersheriff and still a part-time dispatcher, has held the job of emergency preparedness director for years, but decided to step down over a month ago. He said he would stay on in dispatch. Since then, the commissioners have discussed hiring a director to share with another county, but haven't made any decisions.

Mr. Cool told the commissioners a few weeks ago that he would help out in the position, since papers need to be signed. Deputy Patti Skubal, who is taking over office work in the sheriff's department, will help him out with the job.

At the commissioners' meeting last Tuesday, Mr. Cool and Mrs. Skubal talked with commissioners. Mrs. Skubal said she had been to Sheridan County to talk with Jacqu-

Boultinghouse, who serves in their emergency preparedness department. Mrs. Skubal said the deadline for the animal disease plan was been extended to April.

Does the county need to file for an extension or is the new date good for all the counties? asked Commissioner Ralph Unger.

Mrs. Skubal said Ms. Boultinghouse promised to send her the letter from the state.

There was supposed to be an organization that would come around and help counties with their plans, said Mrs. Skubal, but that organization never came here.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Decided to appoint Steve Hirsch, county attorney, to be on the regional homeland security council.

- Held a 10-minute closed session for non-elected personnel with Sheriff Ken Badsky. Afterwards, they agreed to pay part-time employees in the sheriff's department \$7.50 an hour.

Down come the decorations



THE CITY CREW, including lineman Ron Beneda, helped take down Christmas decorations on Tuesday. Many were damaged during the blizzard in late November. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Postage to go up two cents

The cost of mailing a letter will increase by two cents Sunday so the postal service can help reduce the federal deficit.

Currently it costs 37 cents to mail a letter, but come Sunday that will increase to 39 cents. Postmaster Linda Smith said they have a lot of two-cent stamps for people who want to use their old 37-cent stamps.

The Postal Service says it's raising prices because Congress required it to make a \$3 billion-per-year contribution to an escrow fund for possible pension costs. The payments have been suspended for three years because the service was overpaying its pension fund. The excess helps the budget deficit look smaller, though, and the Bush administration has opposed reducing the contributions.

Mrs. Smith said everything is increasing. The flat rate on a priority envelope will go from \$3.85 to \$4.05, the express mail flat rate will go from \$13.65 to \$14.40 and postcards will go from 23 cents to 24 cents.

Letters mailed with a 37-cent stamp after Sunday won't be returned, but the person receiving the mail will have to pay the additional two cents as postage due.

Mrs. Smith said the post office is already selling the 39-cent stamps and has been for awhile.

Logs show ambulance kept busy

The Decatur County ambulance service had worked 332 calls as of Tuesday, Dec. 20, with a week left in the year.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy said that was an all-time high. During the meeting that ambulance was called out, bringing the total to 333. He said he thought the old record was 323, and there were 285 calls last year.

The service, he said, has been bringing in \$2,000 to \$3,000 a week.

Mr. Pomeroy suggested and the commissioners agreed to table a bill for vehicle repair from Tad Hartsough of the Norcat Fire Department from the blizzard. Mr. Pomeroy said he is getting more information on the incident.

Mr. Hartsough asked the commissioners to pay for the \$400 repair to his vehicle since he used it to do county work. Mr. Hartsough said he was sent out to do some work in his own vehicle, but Mr. Pomeroy is supposed to bring the dispatch logs for the commissioners to check.

Ambulance truck trade shot down

The Decatur County ambulance director and sheriff talked about trading the old ambulance and a truck with each other at a commissioners' meeting Tuesday, Dec. 13, but decided it wasn't worth the trouble.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy said Sheriff Ken Badsky approached him about trading a four-wheel-drive pickup for the old ambulance.

What would you do with it? asked Commissioner Doyle Brown.

Mr. Pomeroy said the only thing

he could think is maybe selling the pick-up would bring more than the ambulance.

Is the truck owned by the sheriff's office or is it his private vehicle? asked Commissioner Ralph Unger. If it is a private vehicle, then the county offices can't trade.

Later in the meeting, Sheriff Badsky came in. He said the truck is one the office got in a drug seizure. He said he talked with Mr. Pomeroy about it because it has four-wheel drive, although it does need some work. After the last snow, Mr.

Pomeroy complained that his county-owned Expedition, also from a drug seizure, got stuck. It has two-wheel drive.

Mr. Pomeroy said he wondered if the truck would bring more at an auction than the ambulance.

Mr. Unger asked Sheriff Badsky if he is aware that the ambulance has been decertified and needs to be repaired. Maybe the ambulance isn't something the office wants, the sheriff said. Maybe they can just sell the pickup.

student of the week



Name: Anne Wasson
Parents: Dan and Carol Wasson
Grade: 12
Age: 18

We've nominated this student because: She is a hard working, organized person who is pleasant to be around. She is very positive and always willing to help others.

Student Comment: I have enjoyed my high school experience and hope that my future will be as great as it can be.

Activities involved in at school: Cross country, National Honor Society, weight club, Singers, volleyball, basketball, Spanish club, student council, Chante, band and choir.

My choice of movies, books and games: Hitch movie, "The Chocolate Wars," book and Skip Bo, game.

After I leave Decatur Community High School I intend to: Go to college at Kansas State University and study apparel marketing.

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be: Out in the business place, hopefully working for a major company.

Favorite Quote: "Never explain-your friends do not need it and your enemies will not believe you anyway." Elbert Hubbard

student of the week



Name: Jeremy Tally
Parents: Eugene and Tonya Tally
Grade: 12
Age: 18

We've nominated this student because: His efforts in many different areas including speech, drama, National Honor Society, robotics and music. He is very modest, talented, kind and makes an effort to do the right thing. He marches to his own drummer and is not influenced by the crowd.

Student Comment: I am very privileged to be nominated for this honor.

Activities involved in at school: National Honor Society, drama club, TACT, science club, Singers, robotics, speech, musical and the all school play.

My choice of movies, books and games: I like a good action movie full of adventure. I like books that are a little on the fantasy side.

After I leave Decatur Community High School I intend to: attend Kansas State University architectural program.

And 10 years from now, I think I'll be: 28 and living a very good life with a family of my own.

Favorite Quote: "Speak softly and carry a big stick," Teddy Roosevelt.

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