



December 2018

# THE GROWLER

Odessa High School, Odessa, Missouri

## Teacher to complete the 52 Hike Challenge



**Melanie DeMore, new OHS Physical Education Teacher, recently completed the 52 Hike Challenge in Northern Arkansas**

By Kloee Grubb

Melanie DeMore joined the OHS Special Education Department for the 2018-19 school year after transferring from OMS. DeMore coached the JV girls volleyball team to a 21-4 overall finish and said she loves Odessa and the environment the community provides and does not plan to leave anytime soon.

DeMore can be found hiking around the area, and recently she completed the 52 Hike Challenge which challenges people to hike once a week for an entire year. DeMore was ahead of schedule and finished the challenge in November after completing hikes 51 and

52 in Northern Arkansas.

The 52 Hike Challenge is a worldwide movement that encourages people to get out and enjoy the benefits of hiking. The group's slogan is "Changing Your Life One Step At A Time," and participants encourage each other through social media.

DeMore said the goal is not to beat others or to hike further or faster than anyone else.

"It's about self-care," DeMore said. "Taking the time to slow down and enjoy nature along with the physical benefits of exercise."

Hiking can be beneficial to not only the body but to the mind as well. DeMore said she

looks forward to her weekends because she can erase her brain and enjoy nature as she walks and listens.

"Hiking has helped reduce my stress level. Many times I hike by myself, and it gives me an opportunity to self-reflect and prioritize my life," DeMore said.

One of DeMore's favorite hikes was with Linda Walsh, retired OMS teacher. DeMore and Walsh worked together last year. Walsh invited DeMore and her husband to hike with her on her father's property in Hermann.

"She took us on quite the adventure. There were no trails. I am so thankful that Linda shared that with us since I know the property is very dear to her heart," DeMore said.

DeMore's husband, Jack, joins her on some of her hikes. She said he did not enjoy hiking as much as she did at first, but now loves hiking. Even though he is not participating in the challenge, he does hike up to ten miles on his own.

"I want to progress to backpacking, but he isn't quite on board with that," DeMore said.

Some of DeMore's favorite hikes have been when people have joined them or invited them out. She also enjoys when her sister and her children join them for hikes as it is fun to watch the children throw rocks and play.

Favorite hiking spots include Taum Sauk, where she saw a Native American Tree Trail Marker, and Hughes Mountain, which is a rare geological site nicknamed the Devil's Honeycomb.

"We were on top of Hughes Mountain when a thunder See **TEACHER**, page 3

## Third grade debuts its first animal wax museum at OUE



**Bitha Seward, third-grader, dressed as a grey wolf for the animal wax museum**

By Jillian Taylor

Odessa Upper Elementary was filled with a wide variety of animals on November 1. They were all talking about themselves and showing off their spots, coats, tails, teeth and pointy ears. These animals were actually third-graders preparing for their first ever animal wax museum performances held at 6 p.m. in the cafeteria and gym.

The third grade teachers found this creative project on Pinterest and adapted it for their animal unit. The project allowed students to get experience with electronics and practice research skills while covering science standards. The assignment was challenging for some students because researching online resources was fairly new to them.

"Learning about animals and nature is always a favorite of the students," Robin Smith, third grade teacher, said.

After completing a five-week animal unit, the students were ready to start their projects that would end with the animal wax museum event. The final proj-

ect would include dressing as the animal of their choice and sharing information about the animal with the community.

Each student was asked to choose an animal. Some teachers asked students to choose Missouri animals, while others allowed students to choose any wild animal to use for their project. Animals chosen included a zebra, deer, a black bear, a salamander, wolves, foxes, a peacock, spiders, a blue jay, a barn owl and many others.

At the beginning of the project, the teachers showed students costume ideas to spark their imaginations. Students were instructed to be creative and dress in "do-it-yourself" costumes. Some students even brought in a taxidermied animal.

"I think the students were excited about their costumes," Smith said.

Leyton Burrus, third-grader, decided to choose a black bear because he went on a vacation to Tennessee and saw some. Burrus brought in his grandpa's taxidermy of a black bear's See **MUSEUM**, page 3

# New band director encourages school spirit at home football games

By Olivia Stucker

Students filled the football stadium at game time. Their chants and cheers could be heard along with the pep band tunes. Students raised their arms in unison and copied the dramatic movements of the band director for a crowd participation cheer.

Derek Twombly, new OHS band director, is changing the atmosphere at home football games as well as improving the band's performance. Twombly said his goal for Friday nights is to "be loud, be proud, and have fun. That is pretty much all you need."

This is Twombly's sixth year of teaching. He spent

five years in the Wellington-Napoleon district and enjoyed his time there saying they had good people and good kids. However, he noted that Odessa provides him with more opportunities.

"Here is just so much more," Twombly said. "A great environment. The hospitality that I am receiving is awesome."

Twombly said he wants to build the program and stay as long as he can continue to move the band program in a positive direction. He noted the larger population allows the band to be more exposed and supported by the community.

Twombly said he was excited to come to Odessa because it was an established band program, and he had heard "fantastic things" from colleagues, family members and friends.

"The kids are awesome," Twombly said. "The program itself is awesome, the band boosters are awesome and supportive, and we have a good-sized band program here. It is competitive, and it is just so much fun being here. I love it and couldn't be happier."

Twombly grew up and went to high school in Blue Springs where he played the oboe in concert band, percussion in marching band and participated in winter drumline. He was head drum major his senior year. He attended Graceland University and played oboe in the band

and orchestra.

"We have put an entire show on the field. The kids have grown a lot and matured a lot in just a short period of time. I think they are becoming better people just being in the band."

During a recent assembly, Twombly was awarded a signed football by the players, from Mark Thomas, OHS varsity football coach. He was honored for helping create a great atmosphere at the football games and trying to do whatever he can to make the football games more enjoyable.

At the assembly, he took over and performed his famous cheer, The Roller Coaster. Twombly was quick to share the credit with his assistant band director, Grant Fischer, saying he wrote a lot of the pep tunes, such as Wrecking Ball and Go Fight Win, which the band performs at football games.

"The tunes are more fun, interesting, and up to date which helps the environment a lot at football games," Twombly said.

Michelle Barker, OHS counseling secretary, is an OHS graduate and Odessa resident and football fan. She said she has been watching OHS football for as long as she can remember. She said she enjoys seeing how the band had added energy to the crowd and students that hasn't been here for a while.

"When you can get 150 plus students to have a de-



**Derek Twombly, new OHS band director, poses with his wife Whitney Twombly**

sire to attend Friday night football games and stay and participate through the entire evening, that is a great endeavor," Barker said.

In addition to being recognized for their role at football games, the band has had a successful competition season. The band has done well, according to Twombly, when competing against the larger schools they have come up against such as Raymore-Peculiar, Branson and Neosho. Twombly said it has been a "very successful year."

Twombly said the competition that stood out most to him this year was going down to Ozark, Missouri.

"I hoped and prayed we would have a good showing in prelims, and if we made finals, that would be great," Twombly said.

Not only did they do well

in prelims, but they made finals, swept their class and excelled over bigger bands.

"It was an awesome trip," Twombly said.

Twombly's wife, Whitney, is an English teacher at Wellington-Napoleon. He joked that she is everything he is not.

"She is beautiful, smart and funny," Twombly said.

The couple has three dogs. He said they don't have children yet, and he does not have any hobbies due to time constraints.

"Sleep and eat," Twombly said. "That is all I have time for. I do try to spend time with family and friends, go out to dinner with my wife and cuddle the dogs."



## STAFF

**Jenna Roncelli**  
Editor

**Lilah Bane**  
**Gracie Buxton**  
**Briana Coen**  
**Kloe Grubb**  
**Kyra Morris**  
**Hannah Newkirk**  
**Dakotah**  
**Stubblefield**  
**Olivia Stucker**  
**Jillian Taylor**  
**Kylie Wilder**  
Writers

**Kris Poisal**  
Journalism Advisor

## OHS teacher enjoys looking at wildlife on her hikes

**TEACHER** from 1 storm was coming in," DeMore said. "Hearing the thunder reverberate and roll around us was really quite the experience."

One hiking fail occurred in Southeast Missouri at The Sunlands Natural Area. DeMore said she read about it in a trail book, and it sounded like an interesting place to visit.

"The trail was tall grass covered in spider webs, and about a tenth of a mile into the hike, we found out the trail was flooded."

Typical hikes for DeMore are five to seven miles; however, if she travels out of town with her husband, they usually hike for eight to ten miles. Their longest hike was 13 miles on Chubb Trail near St. Louis.

DeMore said that in Missouri, the views can be limited, but she recently drove to Weston Bend State Park in Weston, and was not disappointed.

"The sun shining on the yellow leaves of the trees was one of the prettiest things I have ever seen," DeMore said.

She also enjoys having encounters with wildlife and has seen everything from big bullfrogs, deer to bald eagles.

DeMore said her go to for a "town" hike is William Landahl Mountain Bike Trail or Burr Oak Woods. She enjoys hikes like these on Sundays, so she can prepare and get ready mentally for the work week.

DeMore's advice for novice hikers is to make sure to have a map of the trail.

"I have gotten lost a few times at Landahl," DeMore said. "Luckily, I had cell phone service and the 'parked car' feature was on my maps app."

DeMore plans to participate in the 52 Hike Challenge next year and is already planning some of those hikes.

In addition to planning hikes, DeMore spends a lot of time

planning lessons and practices. Prior to teaching, DeMore was a substitute teacher in the Independence and Fort Osage School districts for about five years. DeMore was also a paraprofessional in a life skills classroom at Fort Osage for three years.

"Last year this position (at OHS) came open. This is what I really like to do, so I decided to move over instead of doing sixth grade," DeMore said.

DeMore transferred to OHS from the middle school at the end of the 2017-18 school year after teaching sixth grade special education (co-teaching ELA) for one year and coaching high school volleyball. This is her second year of teaching, and she said "indecisiveness and life-challenges" caused her to get a late start.

In addition to teaching and coaching, DeMore is in charge of the OHS coffee shop, Dog House Vibes, which gives students in life-skills classes job experience.

Dre Higbee, sophomore in DeMore's practical living class, said his favorite thing about his teacher is her positive attitude.

"I mostly get my good attitude from her. I am always trying not to be 'that kid.' I try to be the good kid for her," Higbee said.

Nicole Madsen, head OHS volleyball coach, said she enjoys coaching with DeMore.

"Coach DeMore is very knowledgeable about the game of volleyball and does a good job of preparing and transitioning them (the JV players) to varsity."

DeMore's JV team went 17-1 in regular season. DeMore, a former college volleyball player at Truman State University, said that coaching and teaching are challenging at times, but she loves it. She has 10 years experience coaching high school volleyball, four at William Chrisman, four at Fort Osage and two at Odessa.

## Third-grade has great learning experience



Chloe Baker, third-grader, dressed as a red fox for the animal wax museum

**MUSEUM** from 1 head and paws instead of a creating a costume.

"I learned interesting facts about black bears and liked when people wanted to pet my real bear," Burrus said.

Jaxon Shull, third-grader, said he chose his favorite animal, a salamander. He said he safety pinned yellow, felt spots onto a long-sleeved black shirt

and black long johns. He said he enjoyed when people pushed his button and he was able to recite what he had memorized.

"I really wanted to pick a unique animal," Shull said.

Students were given class time to complete the research portion of the project. Students were asked to include paragraphs on the animal's habitat, diet and physical features. Finally, when the projects were

almost finished, the students colored 'press me to see me come to life' buttons to make the wax museum seem even more realistic. When attendees pushed the buttons, students would 'come to life' and recite their animal information.

"I was really impressed with how hard the students worked and how supportive the parents were," Valarie Stark, third grade teacher, said.



Odessa Creamery offers hand dipped Ice Cream, Burgers, shakes, and Organic Chicken.

New winter menu include soups and salad.

816-653-2198  
209 S 2nd St. Odessa MO

## JV boys soccer team improved this season



**Cooper Shipley, sophomore JV soccer player, moves the ball down field.**

By Dakotah Stubblefield

JV boys' soccer team improved in their second year under the direction of Haley Hunter, new JV soccer coach. Hunter, an NCAA Division 2 athlete, shares her knowledge and experience with the team.

The boys ended the season 3-4-5 which was an improvement over last year's inaugural season record of 1-12. The team has improved their ability to score, their energy, their attitude and their teamwork according to Sam Hughes, OHS varsity soccer coach.

The program is growing and players new to the game are continuing to give soccer a try. The JV team grew from 16 to 22 players this year, with eight seeing some varsity time.

According to Hughes, Hunter has brought needed technical expertise with her.

"She really got the guys into shape, and is a very forward thinker," Hughes said.

Hunter has been playing soccer since she was four years old. She lettered all four years at Ozark High School and continued her soccer career in college. She played at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M in Miami, Oklahoma. After two years of junior college, she attended Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska and continued her soccer career playing NCAA Division 2.

Hunter is in her second year of coaching. She was assistant girls coach at Ozark High School last year.

The boys were 1-3-4 early in the season. Hunter said they started off the season lacking confidence and when they fell behind, they would shut down. However, their win against Harrisonville midway through the season was the boys' best game and changed their attitudes.

"During the Harrisonville game, my boys were extremely

physical and winning every ball out of the air," Hunter said. "They shut down Harrisonville quick and possessed the ball the best I had seen thus far. My boys were showing me a side of them I had never seen before."

After Harrisonville, the season turned around, and the boys' positions on the field became more solid.

"We played with a chip on our shoulder and more confident," Hunter said. "Throughout the year, many of the boys played multiple positions. After this game, we somewhat got a niche for where the boys felt comfortable playing."

Trace Kelley and Cooper Shipley, sophomores, were captains. Hunter said they were "two great leaders" because they were encouraging and helpful to their teammates. Kyle Behrman, junior, and Konnar Lundquist, sophomore, excelled on the soccer field and improved throughout the season, Hunter said.

Behrman, at defender, was the most improved player, in Hunter's opinion. Behrman hadn't played soccer in the past, but by the end of the season, he saw some varsity playing time.

"It was my first year playing soccer; it was a good learning experience," Matt Meador, junior, said.

Meador said Coach Hunter was helpful and the team was uplifting. He said the team kept each other in high spirits and gave pep talks to each other before the games.

"The players have a lot of promise," Hayden Moore, senior varsity soccer player, said.

Hunter said the JV team became aggressive and physical throughout the season.

"It threw some of the other teams off which gave us the advantage in some games. It really worked for them. It was amazing to see the boys grow and improve over the season," Hunter said.

## Sports Records

Odessa High School C team Volley Ball	12-3 regular season
Odessa High School JV girls Tennis	8-1-1
Odessa High School JV girls golf	6-2-1
Odessa High School JV Softball	2-8-1
Odessa Middle School Volleyball	A Team 9-1 B Team 10-0
Odessa Middle School Football	2-3-1



*Laura Gillenwater*

*Laura's Florals & Gifts*

**816.230.0202**

121 W. 40 Hwy  
Odessa, MO 64076

*Weddings • Gifts  
Special Occasions • Funerals*

Christmas Shop while kids meet Santa! From  
11 am to 3 pm December 15th



**Jocelyn Buxton**  
Independent Stylist

816-699-3232

[www.mycolorstreet.com/BUXTON](http://www.mycolorstreet.com/BUXTON)

[www.facebook.com/groups/polishmepretty-buxton](http://www.facebook.com/groups/polishmepretty-buxton)