



February 2018

THE GROWLER

Odessa High School, Odessa, Missouri

Spanish teacher enjoys everything about teaching in Odessa High School

By Alex Wood

OHS welcomed a new member to the Practical Arts' teaching staff this year. Amanda Drinkwater, who has 19 years of experience, filled the Spanish I position and said she is excited to do so.

"Odessa is a wonderful place to be," Drinkwater said, adding that she often tells Buffie McConville, OHS principal, that Odessa is "a little piece of paradise."

Prior to coming to OHS, Drinkwater taught at Wellington-Napoleon and at Bingham Middle School in Independence. Most recently, she taught at William Chrisman High School in Independence for 13 years and was an assistant principal for four years.

During her career, Drinkwater has taken numerous trips abroad. While at William Chrisman, she and the French and German teachers, and students traveled to Europe twice and visited England, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria and Spain. She has also taken students to Mexico several times.

Drinkwater's husband, Brad, teaches engineering classes and coaches soccer at Grain Valley North Middle School. Drinkwater said the way they met is unusual. She attended William Chrisman where her mother and future mother-in-law taught. Brad attended Truman, where his dad taught; however, they didn't date in high school.

She was working at Wellington-Napoleon when they met, and he was a substitute teacher at William Chrisman high school.

"We met on a blind date that



FAMILY TIME | Amanda Drinkwater, OHS Spanish teacher, celebrates Halloween with her husband, Brad, and their children, Ben, 8, and Drew, 12.

my mom and her assistant principal at William Chrisman set up," Drinkwater said. "I did not want to go out on a date at all, but my mother kept calling me and wouldn't stop bugging me, so I agreed to go out with him."

It worked out. They have been married for 15 years and have two children, Ben, 8, and Drew, 12.

Drinkwater said it is refreshing to come back to a smaller district after teaching at a school the size of William Chrisman. She said, at times, there were more than 1800 students in the building and more than 40 students in one Spanish class.

"I have wonderful kids in Spanish," Drinkwater said. "It's a different environment here, where I can get to know kids better."

Drinkwater said she looks forward to getting to know the stu-

dents better and to running into them outside of school like she used to do in Independence.

"I'm excited about teaching here for a long time, and having that same thing [bumping into the kids outside of the school] occur here because, really, you run into kids in the oddest places, and I think that's fun about teaching."

"Mrs. Drinkwater is a fabulous colleague," Kelly Ogle, Practical Arts Department Head and Spanish teacher, said. "She is very knowledgeable and professional. She is doing a wonderful job with our Spanish I students this year."

Drinkwater has a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a minor in speech theatre from Northwest Missouri State University. She also holds a master's degree in Education from Southwest Baptist University and a spe-

Middle School basketball: students first, athletes second

By Victoria Miller

OMS boys' basketball A Team ended the season 11-2 after defeating the Oak Grove Panthers 38-21 on January 23. Christopher Herring, coach, called it "their best game of the season."

The team's first matchup against Oak Grove, earlier in the season, was a tough loss by one point.

The team's motto for the season, according to Herring, was "family." Herring teaches physical education at OMS.

Herring said he wants the boys to continue to develop a sense of family and to take that feeling with them when they go to the high school.

"All of our players play their own special role on this team," Herring said. "Our motto is family, so the team depends on one another to do their job, so the team as a whole can be successful."

According to Herring, the first time the team played Grain Valley was a standout moment.

"We beat them for the first time in four years," Herring said.

Herring said there have been a lot of teaching moments during games as well as at practices. He believes the team as a whole and each individual player has shown improvement throughout the season.

"It is good to have coachable players," Herring said. "We have a positive environment at practice and games. I love teaching the game of basketball, especially to this group,

because they make it fun. We do a lot of running, and they don't complain."

Herring said he expects his players to be students first and athletes second. He held study halls before home games to help ensure students' academic success. However, when it was game time, he expected the boys to focus.

"There are no phones on the bus. They turn them off and put them in a bag. They do this, so they can focus and get ready for the game," Herring said.

To hone their skills throughout the season, the team participated in numerous drills. One of the drills, Warrior Shooting, was a two-minute drill where the players had to score at least 85 points in two minutes. Another drill involved a three-on-two scrimmage.

According to Herring, one of the team's biggest strengths was being unselfish with the basketball. They worked to overcome weaknesses in the areas of defensive rotations, communication on the court and seeing the floor.

"The areas of weakness still need work, but they are getting better through many repetitions at practice," Herring said.

Players Clay Fox, Brenden Jeffery, Jaidyn Rowland and Blake Heitman all agreed they liked the motto for the year and the feeling of family they developed. They liked the positive environment.

"It is nice to chill after a long day at school but still work hard," Jeffery said.

cialist's degree in Secondary Educational Administration from University of Central Missouri.



Play hard, play smart and make free throws



DRIBBLE | Destiny Dodge, sophomore JV girls basketball player, takes the ball down court.

By Holley Salisbury
OHS JV girls basketball team is 5-4 after their January 18 win against Oak Grove. The girls are coached by Randy Florence.

The team placed sixth in the Lee's Summit West tournament early on. They lost a close game at the buzzer against Saint Teresa in the tournament. According to Florence, the girls have continued to improve their skills over the season.

The team's motto is play hard, play smart and make free throws. Florence drills his team on fundamentals to help them achieve these goals.

According to Florence, the girls still struggle with shooting free throws but continue to work hard.

One example of the team's hard work was seen in their matchup against Warrensburg. Florence called the game "one of the most exciting games of the

season." The girls were down by ten, and late in the game, they came back to win by three points.

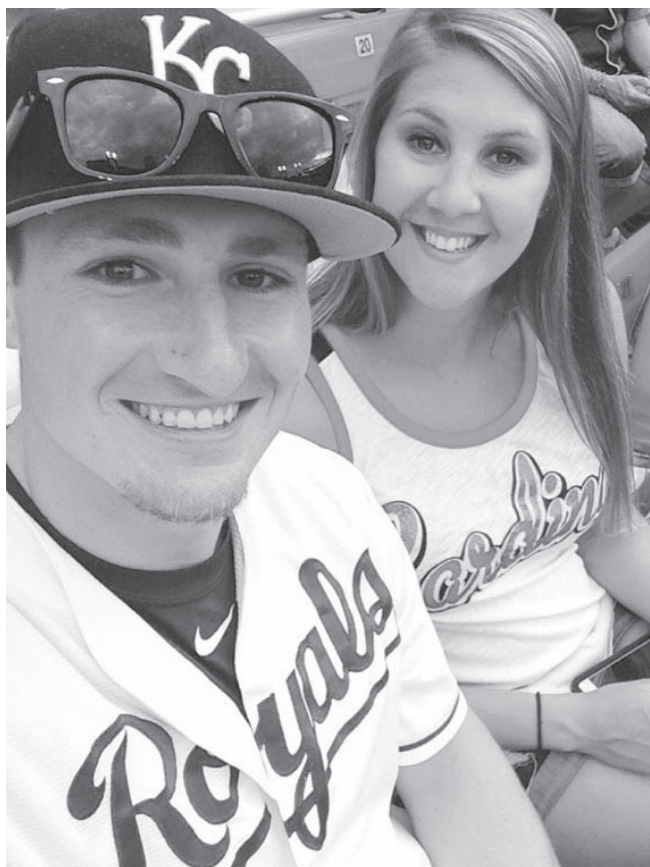
"They want to learn how to get better every time they take the court," Florence said.

Florence said Alexis Hughes is the most improved player throughout the season. He said she has become more consistent on her post moves and has improved her free throw percentage.

Team members are Leah Wagner, Brylee Duncan, Mahalia Lewis, Allison VanLanker, Kennedy Kleoppel, Katlyn Williams, Sydney Futrell, Destiny Dodge and Hughes.

"Coach Flo is easy to talk to," Futrell said. "He is such an amazing coach. He's like your best friend, but your coach, at the same time. He treats you like his family, and he gives you feedback that you can understand."

Thomas appreciates the positive culture OHS has to offer students



GAME DAY | Zach Thomas, OHS personal finance teacher and coach, enjoys a baseball game with his wife, Taylor.

By Sydney Futrell
Zach Thomas, OHS personal finance teacher and coach, said he enjoys working and coaching at OHS because of the "positive culture" and "welcoming people." Thomas, who is new to OHS, said it was a transition coming from a smaller school.

Thomas is an assistant football coach and coaches the JV boys basketball team.

"Coach Zach Thomas brings a lot of energy, enthusiasm and hard work to our football team," Mark Thomas, OHS head football coach, said. "He was able to build positive relationships with many of our players in a short period of time."

Football is nothing new to Thomas, who says it is his favorite sport to coach. He played football for his high school team. In 2010, he graduated high school in Sweet Springs, where he was born and raised. Then he had a standout football career while attending Missouri Valley College in Marshall from the fall of 2010 through

the fall of 2015.

Thomas played college football for four years, and the team won three straight conference championships going 38-7. He was an all-conference tight end his senior year, and he won the Most Improved Player and the Most Unselfish awards. In addition to football, Thomas also played basketball, baseball and ran track in high school.

At Missouri Valley, Thomas majored in middle school education with an emphasis in social studies. After graduating, he taught and coached for three years at his alma mater before coming to Odessa. He decided to apply at OHS because of the coaching opportunities and because he had friends from Odessa and knew it was "a great community."

Thomas said his favorite part of teaching is when he knows the students start to understand the material, and he can tell they are comprehending what he is teaching.

"Mr. Thomas has been a

welcome addition to the OHS family," Buffie McConville, principal, said. "Zach has made a positive impact from the start, building good relationships with students and staff. I appreciate his school spirit and willingness to jump in and help in our school community. He also makes a mean breakfast casserole for his Bulldog Block students. I'm so glad he chose OHS as home."

Thomas and his wife, Taylor, are expecting a baby girl in April. They plan to name her Audrey Ella. Audrey has a good chance of inheriting athletic ability because Taylor was a college athlete as well. She played volleyball at Missouri Valley College and was a First Team All-Conference selection as a middle hitter.

While waiting on Audrey to arrive, their house is not empty. They have three dogs to keep them busy, Bourbon, a St. Bernard, Hera, a black Lab, and Daisy, a Corgi.

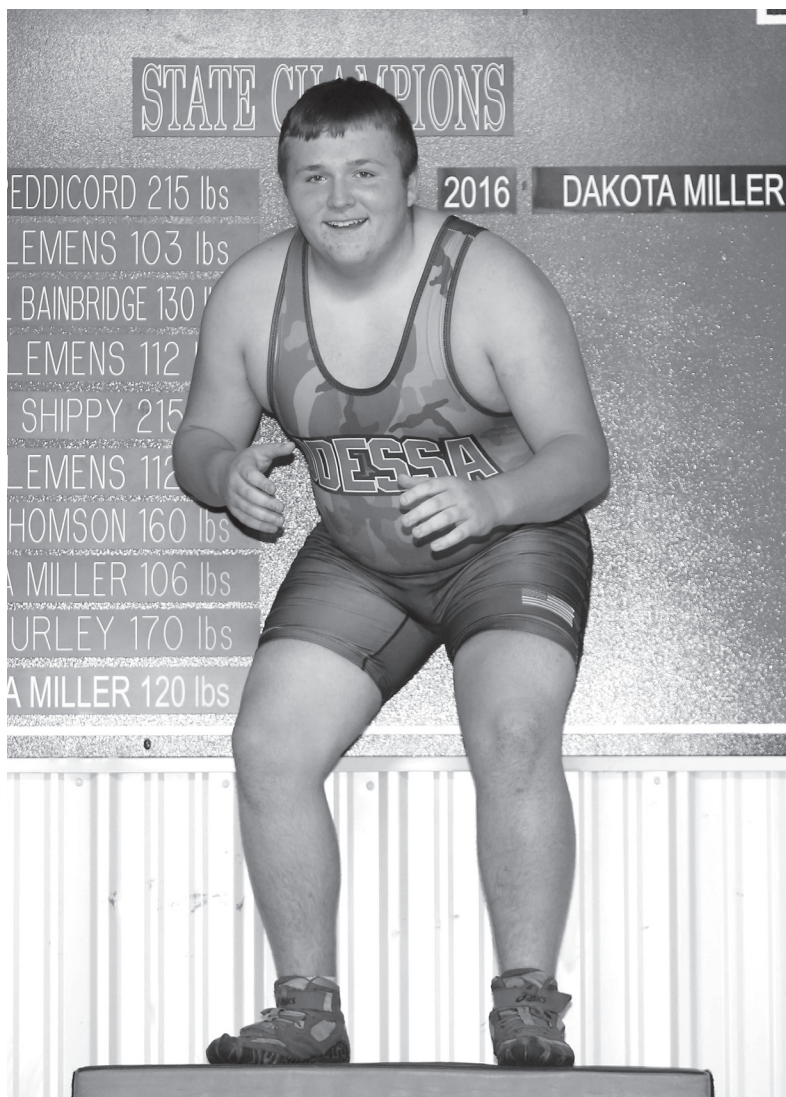
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Stacked wrestling squad benefits Odessa JV team



IT'S WRESTLE TIME | Nick Wright, sophomore JV wrestler, is 15-2 and has had a phenomenal wrestling season. He and his teammates continue to get better to push the varsity squad.

By Hanna Goodman

JV wrestlers practice with some of the best wrestlers in the state, according to Kirk Gross, coach, who said “iron sharpens iron.”

OHS JV wrestlers have 77 individual wins and only 14 losses which gives them an 84% win ratio.

“They have all had phenomenal years. We are excited by the present and future of Bulldog wrestling,” Gross said.

Gross said he thinks what made the JV wrestlers so tough and able to improve their records was going up against the varsity wrestlers.

Varsity and JV wrestling teams practice together and lineups can change after each

practice with JV wrestlers challenging and bumping out varsity members during wrestle-offs.

“Wrestle-offs do two things,” Gross said. “It doesn’t let the varsity wrestler become complacent, and it takes coaches’ judgment out of the occasion. If wrestler A beats wrestler B, then wrestler A is varsity. Kids learn to compete rather quickly.”

Gross said he is most impressed with Nick Wright, sophomore. He said he has shown exceptional work ethic, positivity and performance this year. Wright is 15-2 for the season.

“Nick Wright really sticks out. He has had a tremendous year. Our JV lineup is always in flux, but I have been im-

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WINTER SPORTS

JV boys 4-3

C team girls 4-9

C team boys 7-6

OMS

B team girls 4-8

B team boys 8-4



Middle School girls team looks ahead to promising future in high school

By Ashley Dye

OMS girls basketball A team finished the season 10-5 after losing to Oak Grove in the final game of the season. The girls finished 7-3 in conference, only falling to Oak Grove in an earlier game and to Pleasant Hill.

“We have a lot of winnable games ahead, and we are hoping to finish 6-0 in the back half of the season,” Don Aulbert, coach, said midway through the season. While they fell just short of that goal, the girls did bring in several more wins.

Aulbert, who teaches Social Studies at OMS, is assisted by Lauren Walkenhorst. Walkenhorst coaches the B team.

Aulbert said the girls had up beat and focused attitudes at practice, and they stayed positive about the game and with each other.

Some of the players have

participated in competitive basketball, and Aulbert believes they could be a big help to the high school teams in the future. He expects some of the girls to make JV their freshman year and varsity their sophomore year.

“I could sit here and talk about all of them,” Aulbert said.

Lexi Moody, according to Aulbert, was the MVP of most of the games and is a very talented player. He said Brittany Affolter was also a “tough competitive player.”

“I wouldn’t take anyone over them because of their heart and hustle,” Aulbert said.

When asked what she enjoyed most about basketball at OMS, Moody said, “I’m with my friends, and basketball is my favorite sport to play. I also love it because of my coaches. They are my favorite teachers, and are also really great coaches.”

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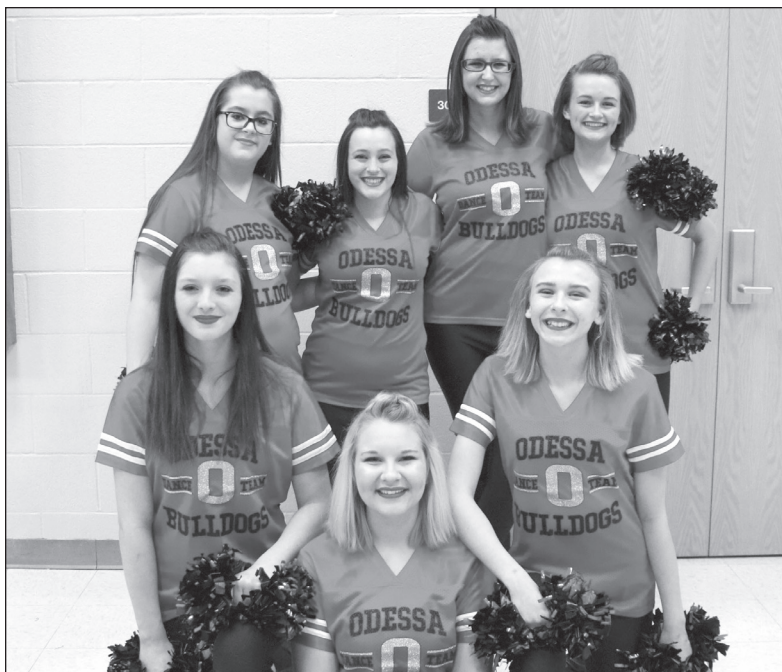
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Odessa Prom
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OHS Dance team shows off new uniforms and routines



SORRY, NOT SORRY | 2017-18 OHS dance team members
Front row: Mikaylee Hobson, Abilene Mosher and Grace Ludeke. Back row: Robin Shobe, Tausha Hurley, Kylie Wilder and Jordan Singer. Not pictured: Sophia Immer.

By Gracee Gurney

Fans can catch a performance of the OHS dance team at home basketball games and wrestling matches. New routines and new uniforms give them a sophisticated look in 2018. Ashley Ray, OHS counselor, coaches the team.

"We have a couple of different uniforms this year and try to mix them up to match the routine," Ray said. "For our hip hop and pom routines, we like to wear our jerseys for a more sporty look. We prefer a more sleek look for our jazz routines, so we wear our long-sleeve performance tops."

To prepare for the season, the team attended summer camp during July at Smith-Cotton High School in Sedalia. At camp, the girls learned three sideline routines, three full routines and attended classes on turns, leaps, lifts and hip-hop skills.

Dance team will perform three routines this season. Two of the dances were choreographed by Ray and Brittany Carroll, who is Ray's sister. Carroll is a dancer and choreographer who lives in Las Vegas and helps Ray when she is in town. The final routine was choreographed by the dance

team girls.

The first two routines are performed to the songs, "Thunder" by Imagine Dragons and "Sorry, Not Sorry" by Demi Lovato. "Thunder" is a hip hop routine with poms, and "Sorry, Not Sorry" is a jazz and pom routine. The jazz routine the girls designed is performed to "Love so Soft" by Kelly Clarkson.

Dance team members are Abilene Mosher, Jordan Singer, Mikaylee Hobson and Tausha Hurley, seniors; Kylie Wilder and Sophia Immer, juniors; and Robin Shobe, sophomore.

"Dance team is fun because there's no pressure to compete, and the teammates are getting closer each year. We have definitely improved since my freshman year," Immer said.

Dance Team began practicing in November and practice two or three times per week. Dance season concludes at the end of basketball season.

The dance team held a junior dance clinic, for students in kindergarten through fifth grades, on February 1. The routine, choreographed by Carroll, was performed to "Stay" by Zedd and Alessia Cara.

Bulldog Drink Shop provides students opportunity to learn real-world skills



DRINK SHOP | Robyn Arnott, senior, and Raegan Sticken, freshman, serve an appreciation lunch to OHS teachers hosted by the OHS Bulldog Drink Shop.

By Jenna Roncelli

OHS Bulldog Drink Shop, created in 2013, offers special education and at-risk students a chance to gain skills needed to transition to the workplace. To practice these skills, the students treated teachers to an appreciation lunch before Christmas break.

Students served chili, chicken noodle soup, slider sandwiches

and desserts along with their signature drinks.

"I loved everything about lunch, the kids, the company and of course, the delicious food," Buffie McConville, OHS principal, said.

Stephanie Clevenger, OHS Special Education teacher, was instrumental in opening the drink shop which serves students and staff. Clevenger runs

the drink shop with the help of Sam Hughes, special education paraprofessional. Hughes, who is new to OHS, also helps coach boys soccer and middle school wrestling.

Students can order drinks ranging from lemonade, hot and iced coffee, hot chocolate and hot and cold tea during passing times. Teachers and staff can order drinks to be delivered to their rooms or offices as well.

"I love my morning coffee everyday," Mat Vleisides, OHS activities director, said. They are such a great group."

During the school year, students have the opportunity to work a variety of positions to gain workplace and social skills: cashier, menu design, barista (drink maker), drink delivery, inventory, accounting and interviewing.

"It gives the students job-related experience because they have to learn customer service, to be on time and to clock in," Clevenger said.

Clevenger said she came up with the idea of starting the drink shop while talking and brainstorming with McConville about how to provide opportunities for students to learn real-world skills.

"It teaches us about how to run a business and work in a business," Shawna Smith, sophomore, said. "It gives us communication and business skills. Working the coffee shop has given me a sense of importance because everybody there has a job to do."

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