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THE GROWLER

Odessa High School, Odessa, Missouri

OHS student section plays an important role in school spirit during football games



The Dog Pound shows support of the football team by packing the stands at a home game

By Kloee Grubb

The 2018 football team is one to be remembered for more than just its winning stats. Students will remember the atmosphere and what it was like to be connected to the team that was the first to beat Harrisonville since 1998 on its way to winning a district championship and making it to quarterfinals in the play-offs.

“When we came into the year, we had a pretty good chance to be pretty special,” Brad Briscoe, OHS principal, said.

Briscoe said he believed the football team’s winning season had a positive effect on the school’s atmosphere. “I think football in a small

community has a broad reaching affect, not only as a school, but as a community,” Briscoe commented.

Kids wanted to come to the games, they wanted to cheer the boys on, and they wanted to be a part of something special. They wanted to be a part of this school’s history.

Briscoe said school administrators were approached by people from other communities who said the OHS student section modeled a college-like atmosphere and set an example for other schools on how school spirit should look.

One of the biggest changes that people commented on this season was the student section and the band. The student section had designated leaders

this year who implemented themes into every Friday night, depending on who the opponent was.

“This year’s student section was the best it has been in a long time,” Leah Wagner, junior co-student section leader, said. “We just really wanted this year to be special and wanted the seniors to have a great final year. We got students involved with the themes, and it made the atmosphere more family-like and made us feel all together. When the boys won, it made it 20 times better.”

One of the most notable themes was the Oak Grove game. The theme was Hicks, and the game was the best turnout of the season. The ongoing rivalry was even more intense this year as students went along with the theme, “We may be hicks, but we are country and we are proud.”

Ellie MacLaughlin, sophomore student section leader, learned new cheers and brought a sense of fire to the students on Friday nights.

“It was my first year here at OHS, and the feelings we had standing in the crowd on Fridays were irreplaceable,” MacLaughlin said. “People continuously helped make our pride grow. That is how we’d get’er done.”

“The student section was more hype because we were winning and hanging out with our friends, Cade Adams, junior, said. “I went to support my friends and what they want to do.”

Jake Smith, senior football player, said his biggest motivator was the people at school. He said he could tell the students’

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OHS sends care packages to Kuwait to support U.S. troops



Amber Deaton, OHS Communication Arts teacher, organized a care package drive for soldiers in her unit with the help of her Bulldog Block class and National Honor Society members. Deaton was unable to deploy because she recently had a baby.

By Lilah Bane

Amber Deaton, OHS Communication Arts teacher, wanted to give back to the soldiers in her unit, the 935th Aviation Support Battalion, so she organized a Veterans Day care package drive.

“It meant a lot to me to be able to show them that I am thinking of them and be able to take care of them even from home,” Deaton said. OHS students celebrated Veterans Day this year, in part, by giving back to those same soldiers who are in Amber Deaton’s unit.

Deaton organized the drive to put together care packages for the soldiers with the help of her Bulldog Block class and National Honor Society members. Deaton, who is a staff sergeant, has been in the Missouri Army National Guard for 18 years

and is a heavy-wheeled mechanic. She has been deployed twice with prior units but was unable to go to Kuwait with them this time because she recently had a baby.

Items and money were collected at a home football game and a competition was set up between all of the Bulldog Block classes at OHS. Approximately \$800 worth of money, entertainment items, snacks and toiletries were collected allowing Deaton to ship 12 large boxes, with the money left over, Deaton was able to ship them a Christmas tree, decorations and each of them a stocking filled with gifts.

Deaton wanted to send the care packages to them because when soldiers are deployed they have to buy those items.

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OHS principal creates a new leadership team to help students

By Kylie Wilder

Walking into Brad Briscoe's administrative office at Odessa High School seems no different than last year—from the black filing cabinet, the red, white, and black Bulldog flag, the wooden bookcases and black leather desk chair. The only difference is the sign beside his door that now reads "Principal."

Briscoe began the 2018-19 school year as the new Odessa High School principal.

Buffie McConville, previous principal, transferred to OUE creating the opening, and Briscoe, who was serving as assistant principal for the past three years, was pleased to fill the spot.

While Briscoe attended college with ambitions to become an architect, he later changed his program of study and decided to become a PE teacher. Briscoe has a total of 13 years of experience in education including teaching, coaching, and administration. Briscoe said he would consider a central office position in the future but enjoys what he is doing now.

"I'm just learning this position," Briscoe said. "I have aspirations of central office ad-

ministration one day, but right now I'm extremely happy being principal at OHS."

Briscoe, as principal, is making a few building-level changes with input from a new Building Leadership Team. His guidance is making a positive impact on students and staff alike.

Building Leadership Team is made up of a team of teachers from different departments who meet monthly to discuss new initiatives. The main focus, according to Briscoe, is to help the students.

"We discuss ideas, concerns or things that are going well," Briscoe said. "The goal is to create an environment best for students and make the school the best place for students to be."

Briscoe said he has made a few changes so far with the input of the Building Leadership Team. One change was to the Bulldog Block schedule. Bulldog Block, a student advisement period, was moved from the end of the day to fourth period to provide a better opportunity for students to get help with missing work and to raise their grades.

"We're looking at other changes with semester finals and ways to help prepare kids for college," Briscoe said. He said that because Mrs. McConville did a good job, he didn't need to make any big changes.

Julie Carter, OHS English teacher, has been at OHS for

14 years and has seen a few principal changes during that time.

"I especially like his leadership," Carter said. "Before starting as principal, he asked the staff for input on changes we would like to see at the high school. He values teachers' opinions regarding leadership."

Students also feel like they have a voice with Briscoe's leadership style.

"He is interested in what the students think," Kaitlyn Slocum, senior cheerleader at OHS, said. "He interacts with us."

OHS has numerous new staff members this year, and Briscoe has been welcoming to them as well.

"Mr. Briscoe connects with both students and staff," Hayley Hunter, new FACS teacher, said. "He's a great person to work under."

Hunter said Briscoe is personable and she appreciates that he is willing to help her when needed. Hunter said that Briscoe sat in on her parenting class recently and allowed the students to ask him questions about the impact a father's presence has on an expecting mother as well as ask him questions about his own experiences. Hunter said she appreciated his willingness to open up to students.

Briscoe said his assistant, Dave MacLean, is a good fit at OHS.



Brad Briscoe, new OHS principal, lives in Odessa with his wife, Lindsey, and young sons, Reed and Rhett.

"We fit together and complement each other," Briscoe said. "It's easy to come to work when you love your job. Everyone at OHS is like one big family."

"He is one of the most patient leaders I have observed," MacLean said. "A lot of people have a breaking point, but he doesn't seem to have one. He is a strong leader, and I am blessed to be able to learn this position under him."

MacLean also noted that he and Briscoe tend to agree on a lot of topics and both make student-centered decisions.

However, when they disagree, they are able to address problems, debate issues and come to a consensus for the good of the students and building.

Briscoe was born and raised in Warrensburg, but he recently announced in a pep assembly that he is a Bulldog through-and-through. He currently lives in Odessa with his wife, Lindsey, and young sons, Reed and Rhett.

"Odessa really is a town that gets behind its school and kids," Briscoe said. "The community support is outstanding."

FBLA hosts Spooktacular at McQuerry Elementary

By Hannah Newkirk

A horde of high school students dressed in Halloween costumes, met in room 17 before school; however, it wasn't Halloween. They were reviewing scripts and talking about how they were going to be interacting with younger students as they prepared to head out.

The FBLA members were preparing to participate in the annual Spooktacular event

on October 26 at McQuerry Elementary. Seventeen students spent the first half of the day informing the younger students how to be safe while trick-or-treating.

The purpose of the event is to help provide tips to keep the students safe and to demonstrate what they should and should not do on Halloween. According to FBLA sponsor, Deborah Cox, the information is well-received coming from

high school students because the younger students look up to them and enjoy participating with them.

"The high schoolers put on skits where they demonstrate first, things they shouldn't do," Cox said. "Then at the end they present, what we call, 'the perfect skit' where they demonstrate everything that should be done."

Situations to be avoided included approaching houses

without lighting, walking without a flashlight, walking alone or without a parent and eating candy that hasn't been checked by an adult.

Between skits, students could ask and answer questions about what they had just watched. Cox said the elementary teachers always enjoy this part of the activity because they never know exactly what the younger students will say.

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FBLA members teach kids about safe trick-or-treating



Alexis Reifel and Allison Gust, senior FBLA members, dressed as M&Ms for the Spooktacular.

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Alyson Tuckwiller, senior, was the emcee for the event. She said listening to the kids' answers was the best part of her day.

"I asked the kids what they thought would happen if they went to a house without a light on, and a kid raised his hand and said 'my mom would go to jail,' Tuckwiller said. "That was the funniest comment of the day."

Cox noted that Alexis Reifel and Allison Gust, seniors, have been participating since their freshman year wearing various matching costumes. For their last year as FBLA members, they enjoyed dressing as M&M's characters.

FBLA members helped select the scenarios and skits to be performed for the students. They met prior to the event to practice and gather their props and costumes.

"This is very much a student-driven activity. I let the students self-monitor. The first run through of the skits are usually a little rough, but then

they figure out what they need to do to make it better for the next group," Cox said.

Cox felt the students were more prepared this year than in some years. Unlike most years, FBLA members who were also in StuCo had a conflict because a StuCo event was scheduled for the same day. So, National Honor Society members, along with a few of Cox's students, helped fill in the gaps.

"It's a fun event that we do. We've done it every year that I've been here—at least 12 years. It is worthwhile, and something good does come out of it," Cox said.

An upcoming FBLA field trip is planned where members will visit three Kansas City locations: One Million Cups, where entrepreneurs pitch ideas to the business community; Hammerspace Workshop, where crafting areas are available for robotics, welding, woodworking, electronics; and Ennovation Center, a business incubator, which provides networking opportunities and offices for new businesses.

OHS teachers team up to hold this year's special Veterans Day assembly

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"Most people think toiletries and other items are provided, but they aren't," Deaton said.

It is difficult for some of the soldiers to purchase everything they need because many of them are trying to send as much money to their families back home as possible.

There are 53 soldiers in Deaton's unit, and they received so much that they decided to send some to other locations. Deaton said the soldiers really appreciated the care packages.

"When you are over there, care packages are very welcome because it's like receiving a piece of home," Deaton said.

Deaton said she was surprised at the overwhelming amount of support from the town and students. The top ten Bulldog Block classes were awarded an ice cream and popcorn party in the commons as thanks for their participation.

For Veterans Day, each year assemblies are organized by Andrea Birdsong, OHS arts teacher, and Ashley Ray, OHS counselor. Both have friends and family members who are in the military and wanted to help honor veterans at OHS by beginning the assemblies six years ago. They decided to feature Deaton's unit this year.

This year's assembly was held on November 12 and start-

ed after StuCo served breakfast to the veterans. Next, veterans filed into the gym. As the program started, the gym was full of students, veterans and community members listening as the band played "Marches of the Armed Forces" and Concert and Chamber Choirs sang "Thank You Soldiers."

Soldiers from Deaton's unit, who were deployed to Kuwait, communicated with students through a live video-chat and answered questions about what it was like to be in the military and deployed overseas.

"It made my day," Deaton said. "It was so awesome to see all of them gathered and participating."

Football team improves with new support

FOOTBALL from page 1

expectations for the team to win were high, but obviously attainable.

"It felt great to help lead a team who made history, by not only being district champs, but beating Harrisonville after a 20-year streak," Smith said. "No one wants to walk down the hall on a losing team."

Kaylin Hotmer, a junior on the varsity cheerleading squad, stood behind the boys literally and figuratively.

"As they won, it gave us the motivation to support them and help them to keep on winning," Hotmer said.

Mark Thomas, head football coach, said his players were expected to do more this year. The coaches knew they had the potential to be a good team, so the coaching staff stressed upon them that they needed that to become a reality. The team had ten seniors, nine who played all four years.

"We had to overcome a cou-

ple guys getting hurt, who were pretty good players, which forced some guys to step up and fill their spots," Thomas said of Eliyh D'obron's and Colby Wilson's injuries.

"We definitely upgraded our coaching staff from prior years," Thomas said, "and that was probably the single biggest improvement in our program."

Thomas said the athletes quickly formed strong relationships with the coaches which helped contribute to the team's success as well.

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New assistant principal is eager to make positive changes at OHS

By Kylie Wilder & Jillian Taylor

Dave MacLean, new OHS assistant principal, enjoys his job and feels like the “luckiest guy being at Odessa High.” MacLean decided to transition from teaching and coaching at Blue Springs South to administration and is following in his parents’ footsteps.

He grew up in Alma. His parents were both teachers and greatly influenced his career choice. His father has been a high school science teacher, administrator and coach, and his mother has been an elementary school teacher, administrator and music director. Both have been in education for more than 40 years and are still teaching.

MacLean has 15 years of teaching and coaching in the books so far. He has taught algebra/geometry and middle school math. He taught at Blue Springs South for seven years, Ray-Pec for two years, Higginsville for four years and at St. Paul Lutheran for two years.

He has coached volleyball, track and boys basketball through the years, as well as club volleyball at the open level and has been involved

with youth training. In college, he coached two seasons of NAIA football and assisted with women’s volleyball during spring and summer training sessions.

Due to his high level of involvement with coaching, he put off going into administration until he felt the time was right. When he saw the opening at Odessa, he knew it was time and he “jumped at the chance.”

“I was attracted to the smaller school system, especially having grown up in Lafayette County,” MacLean said. “I had great experiences both living and teaching in this region and in communities nearby.”

It also helped that he already knew some of the teachers in the school system and his in-laws, Brad and Nancy Peterson, live in Odessa, so it seemed the perfect fit.

“The community progresses yet keeps a hand on the past,” said MacLean. “It’s not in such a hurry to be worldly.”

As assistant principal, MacLean is in charge of discipline for the building. His ultimate goal is for students to learn from their mistakes saying

that everyone makes mistakes.

“Hopefully as we learn, we make less of them,” MacLean said. “There should always be forgiveness and additional opportunities for those who have learned from their mistakes.”

MacLean has some thoughts on how he would like to implement changes at OHS. He believes some schools focus on too many things at once which can impede progress. MacLean thinks the teacher advisory group will be a good place to start due to the “strong pool of experienced teachers” who are “passionate about their careers.”

“I like to be a part of a bigger solution,” MacLean said. “I would like the high school to identify some areas where we can become the absolute best.”

MacLean’s has already started to make impressions on the students and staff.

“He’s very positive,” Halei St. Denis, senior said. “He’s dedicated to his job.”

“I think he’s doing a great job,” Brad Briscoe, OHS principal, said. “We thought he was a great fit in the interview process. He stepped



Dave MacLean, new OHS assistant principal, poses with his wife, Jacki, and their children, Addi and Oaks.

in, and he’s eager to learn.”

MacLean lives in Blue Springs but says a move to Odessa is not out of the question. His wife, Jacki, works at Healthcare for Women in Independence, so their current location works well for her job. Their children, Addi and Oaks, attend fifth grade and first grade in Blue Springs at Timothy Lutheran School where their grand-

mother is one of their teachers.

MacLean couldn’t leave his coaching roots entirely and still enjoys coaching and training volleyball and running training camps in the summer. He coaches his daughter’s club volleyball team and also serves on the board of the Missouri High School Volleyball Coaches Association. When he isn’t working at OHS, attending OHS events or coaching, he likes to golf and cheer on the Chiefs.

McQuerry Elementary hosts sixth annual Fall Festival

By Kyra Morris

More than 300 people attended McQuerry Elementary’s sixth annual PTO Fall Festival held from 6 to 7 p.m. October 25.

The PTO-sponsored community event is a chance for teachers, administrators, parents and students to spend time together and strengthen relationships outside of the normal school day. PTO’s goal was to provide a free fall event to bring families closer together.

Dinner was provided by PTO. Families enjoyed hot dogs, chips, caramel apples and water. Children wore their Halloween costumes to the event,

and after dinner, they trick-or-treated in the school’s hallways going from classroom door to door. Teachers decorated their doors and handed out candy.

After trick-or-treating, the children went to the gym where bouncy houses were set up. A pumpkin contest also was held throughout the evening. Children brought in their carved or decorated pumpkins, and votes were collected throughout the evening. All pumpkins were “winners” according to Julie Begemann, PTO president.

Begemann said the teachers enjoyed handing out candy and visiting, and the students enjoyed the candy and bounce house.

Laura Gillenwater

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