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THE GROWLER

Odessa High School, Odessa, Missouri

OHS football team gears up for summer training

By Eli Munsterman

OHS football team is preparing to fill holes left in the roster by seniors and is gearing up for summer training.

“Our goal for this next season is to get to the same place we did this year, but finish better,” Mark Thomas, OHS weight training and head football coach, said. The team finished second in the state championships, so they are shooting for a state championship next year.

According to Thomas, losing the seniors this year created quite a few holes in the team. Thomas noted that

the biggest hole to fill will probably be the quarterback position.

“Although they didn’t have much experience playing football, they were very talented and played crucial roles in the team getting as far as it did,” Thomas said. “Losing Ty Wagner will be hard to overcome, especially since we aren’t sure, at this time, who will take his quarterback spot.”

However, Thomas noted that this year’s incoming freshman class is possibly the best freshman class that he has seen since his time at OHS.

“I’m really excited about these freshmen. They’re very talented, had a great eighth grade year and have great depth,” Thomas said.

According to Thomas, there is still much work needed to pull the new team together. Spring and winter are for weight training, Thomas noted, and summer is important for getting the team in shape and increasing their endurance.

Starting April 10, the team members could choose to participate in football open gyms on Sundays at 3 p.m. He plans to keep the players busy with a full summer

schedule. Weight training will be in the mornings Monday through Thursday, and football practices will be June 1-10 and July 11-22.

“We will try to avoid doing anything required on weekends as I feel it is better for our athletes,” Thomas said.

In addition to weight training and practices, quarterback, individual and team camps will be held throughout the summer. The team will also attend the Missouri State Team Camp June 8-10, and the OHS team camp will be July 11-15.

“During our local camp, the team will pull together everything they’ve learned, introduce the kicking game and prepare for the season opener,” Thomas said.

Two-a-day football camp will be held July 18-22, with dead week following July 23-31. The official start of football practice will be August 1. The team’s hard work will be put to the test on August 19 at St. Pius for the opening game. The home opener will be August 26 with Clinton.

Three OHS seniors sign with military



THREE OHS SENIORS, Gabriel Stilwell, Shelby Wisdom and Cameron Taylor (not pictured), are joining the military after graduation.

By Sarah Shelton

Shelby Wisdom, Gabriel Stilwell and Cameron Taylor, OHS seniors, have decided to join the military and will be heading to basic training.

“Each year our students

evaluate their post-secondary options,” Ashley Ray, OHS counselor, said. “Some of them choose to make the honorable commitment to serve in the United States Military. As a military spouse, I couldn’t be

more proud of the choice these three have made.”

Wisdom signed with the Navy to become a mass communications specialist. Wisdom has not decided if she is going to be career military yet.

“It really depends on how I feel five years from now. I’m trying to keep an open mind at the moment,” Wisdom said.

“My parents helped me make a few decisions about what would be best for me, but now it has turned more into me trying to do the best that I can for me,” Wisdom said. “I have just decided that this is the path that I want to take in life.”

Wisdom heads to Chicago for eight weeks of basic training on November 22. She will then

go to Maryland for 27 weeks of school and job training.

“I never thought this would be the path that I would take, but I am happy where I am,” Wisdom said.

Stilwell has signed with the Marine Corps to become a field communicator. Stillwell is planning to be career military.

“My dad was in the military,” Stilwell said. “I’m joining the Marines because I have always wanted to serve. I was influenced to serve by how I was raised and all of the Veterans I grew up around.”

Stilwell will begin training at Camp Pendleton in San Diego, California on June 20.

Taylor has also signed with the Marine Corps for infantry.

“I have always wanted to do what the National Guard and Army do. Ever since I was a child, I looked up to the people in a uniform and wanted to protect my country and those who live in it. I also wanted to honor those who have made an ultimate sacrifice and make sure their families know they are not alone,” Taylor said.

Taylor does not plan to be career military now, but he believes that he will serve more than one term. Taylor starts training in California in October.

“Everything is a challenge, and it is up to you what you do in life,” Taylor said.

OHS Senior receives baseball scholarship



MORGAN MILLER, OHS SENIOR, signed April 26, 2016 with Central Methodist University to play baseball on a partial scholarship.

By Sarah Pierce

Morgan Miller, OHS senior, has received a \$12,000 scholarship to play baseball at Central Methodist University in Fayette, Missouri.

Miller is currently a DH (designated hitter) for OHS, but eventually he will play first base and outfield positions as well.

In the 2015 season, the senior had a .358 batting average, a .453 on base percentage, 29 hits, 15 runs, 12 walks, 10 stolen bases, 23 RBIs (runners batted in), and he played in 27 games.

Miller is ranked first on the team in hits, RBIs, and number of games he has played in. His batting average comes in second for the team, and he ranks third in stolen bases, walks and on base percentage.

"Morgan is an outstanding hitter with a great attitude," Brad Mayfield, OHS head baseball coach, said. "He needs to improve defensively, but he has plenty of time to do that. Specifically, he needs softer hands, but this will improve with time."

Mayfield became head coach halfway through Miller's sophomore year in 2014.

"Morgan has always worked hard to improve his ability, and he has become a very good leader," Mayfield said. "When Morgan graduates I will miss his work ethic and positive attitude each and every day the most."

Miller plans to major in mechanical engineering. He is currently maintaining his GPA, applying for additional scholarships and taking the ACT again to try to earn a higher score for additional academic money

for college.

"I am going to miss my friends and coaches the most when I am no longer playing high school baseball, but I will also miss playing on a turf field," Miller said. "However, I am looking forward to just playing college baseball. It has been a dream of mine from the time I started playing baseball when I was four."

Mayfield said his favorite memory of Miller was probably last summer, when he volunteered to play catcher during a game late in the season.

"Later on, I found out he had never played catcher," Mayfield said. "That didn't matter to Morgan because he wanted to help the team in any way he could. That really sums up how important Morgan is to our team."

Miller signed his letter of intent on April 26 in the OHS commons.

McQuerry PTO hosts annual Carnival

By Jordan Singer

Despite the cold temperature and biting wind, children lined up outside to ride the Optimist train, a favorite, at the annual McQuerry Carnival.

The PTO sponsored event was April 1, and funds raised are used to help pay for club activities throughout the school year such as paying for the books for the "One School, One Book" program and a field trip for each grade.

"We've been doing the carnival for as long as I can remember, and I've worked here for about twenty years," Donna Howerton, McQuerry secretary, said.

PTO organizes the carnival and gets all of the prizes. A variety of games and activities are set up

in classrooms with parent and teacher volunteers. Some of the most popular activities include skee ball, face painting, the train ride, a bouncy house, duck pond, ring toss, bingo and a silent auction.

"I liked the train," Landon Moore, kindergartner, said.

The children also enjoyed the bouncy house. They lined up to run through the obstacle course and go down the slide, the big finale.

Baskets were featured in the silent auction and most brought approximately \$20. Each classroom decided on a theme for their basket, and the parents donated items and put them together for the auction. Gift cards were also donated by local businesses.



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JV baseball team is young

By Kinly Grubb

OHS JV baseball team is 2-3 so far with an opening win against Higginsville and a recent win against Harrisonville, 15-11. The team is striving toward improvement because Daniel Malone, OHS boys P. E. teacher and coach, has high expectations of the young squad and can see the potential of the players.

"When they are coachable, they learn. When they are not, we don't play well, and as a result, we don't win," Malone said.

The young team starts three freshmen: Jake Smith, shortstop; Will Fox,

second base and pitcher; and Jonas Bennett, catcher and outfield. According to Malone, the three freshmen play pivotal roles on defense and also in the batting lineup.

"As one of only three freshmen on the team, I want to help the team as much as I can in any way that I can," said Fox.

Malone said the players look up to Fox as well as Nick Conn, sophomore, and Brad Coffey, junior.

In addition to team leadership, practice and attitude are important in knocking out a successful season, according to Malone. In order to win

games, he said the boys have to play fundamentally sound.

The team lost their second game against Excelsior Springs and fell twice to Grain Valley, their toughest opponent so far.

"Grain Valley spread us both times we played them," Malone said. "Excelsior Springs is also tough, and they have gotten noticeably better with their young core, so they're solid competition as well."



ALEC MUNSON, sophomore JV golfer, prepares to putt.

Boys JV golfers strive for excellence

By Sydney Shackles

Seven golfers round out the JV golf team coached by Chad Meyer, OHS business teacher. The team is young and down a few players compared to last year, due to injuries. They are currently 1-4 for the season.

"This is the youngest JV team I have coached," Meyer said. "I usually have some juniors on JV, but this year we have all sophomores and freshmen."

Meyer said the players are very coachable and are pushing to improve each day. Meyer noted the golfers worked incredibly hard during the pre-season.

"After only five weeks into the season, you can see our players are getting comfortable with their swing and improving on important skills daily, like putting and chipping," Meyer said. "Golf is a mentally challenging game. You are looking for those few perfect shots in a day to keep you going and trying to repeat that swing," Meyer said.

Christian Haynes,

sophomore, leads the team, according to Meyer.

"It is important for him to be a good player, and he is always asking questions and wanting to improve," Meyer said.

Zeke Kirkman, sophomore, is the most positive player, according to Meyer, because of his funny personality.

"He is always keeping things interesting for the rest of the team," said Meyer.

"My favorite part of golf is going to the matches and meeting new people there. I also enjoy seeing how good the other golfers are and trying to learn from them," Kirkman said.

The most improved golfers are Kirkman and Alec Munson, sophomore.

"Zeke has improved greatly from last season to this season," said Meyer. "Alec has also improved from last season. He is working hard, and I think he could get a varsity spot next season if he plays a lot in the summer."

JV golfers are: Nick Embree, Haynes, Kirkman and Munson, sophomores; Skyler Barber, Logan Mitchell and Hunter Scott, freshmen.

"I try to help out the team. If someone has trouble with their swing, I try to help them. Coach Meyer is a good coach and a good guy," Haynes said.

The golfers practice Monday through Friday at Adam's Pointe in Blue Springs. A clinic is also available. The Odessa Boys Golf Clinic will be open to students in grades 5-12 from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. on June 1 and 2 at UCM. Austin Jarchow, golf professional, will be instructing. Transportation will be provided.

The golf program will also offer the Odessa Girls Golf Clinic to students in grades 5-12 from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. on May 25 and 26 at UCM. Kris Ambrose, golf professional, will be instructing. Transportation will be provided. Contact Meyer at OHS with questions.

OMS Honor Society members volunteer at animal rescue

By Bianca Woodward

OMS Honor Society members will visit Midwest Animal ResQ, a licensed small non-profit foster home based rescue in the greater Kansas City area.

The field trip will allow members to continue to obtain community service hours toward the members' goal of 30 hours. Members who achieve the 30 hours of community service will be able to attend a field trip on May 11 to the University of Missouri for a campus tour.

Students have already put in some service hours completing small jobs at the rescue. Erin Morse, director of Midwest Animal ResQ, relies on volunteer workers and welcomes students.

"I like getting to help people. It puts me in places that I wouldn't expect to be," Ashley Dye, Honor Society member, said.

Travis Lewis, OMS Honor Society sponsor, chose the rescue because he and his wife have helped there for the past four years.

"Students helped landscape and clean the Holden facility, groomed and bathed dogs, painted and helped setup the new Raytown facility, and generally helped wherever they were needed," Lewis said.

Lewis and the club members support Morse's mission to help as many animals as possible whether they are abandoned or at

risk of being put down.

"We have a continual rotation of foster animals within our own homes," said Morse. "Volunteers foster many cats, dogs and horses. These animals live as part of our families until we can find them the perfect forever family."

Earlier in the year, members volunteered at Harvesters in Kansas City. Lewis said that one purpose of the field trips is to give the students exposure to many different aspects of volunteering.

"The animal rescue field trip is great because it's different from the Harvesters field trip because it's very small," Lewis said.

Morse said people can

help by donating items such as old blankets and towels, paper towels, dog kennels, treats, toys, food, cleaning supplies, bleach, and gift cards for gas and pet supplies. Visit their

website midwestanimalresq.org for more information or to adopt a pet.

"We are so appreciative of the help from the kids. They are great," Morse said.

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Band and Choir students participated in state solo and small ensemble competition

By Seth Bayless
OHS band and choir programs prepared for state competition, which was held on April 28, at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

This year's choir program sent four soloists and two small ensembles, and band sent four soloists and one percussion ensemble to state. To attend state, participants must receive a 1 rating, the highest rating possible, at district competition. Harry Hamblin, choir director, Jeremy Meyer and Brandi Holt, band directors, put in extra time to prepare students.

State-bound choir soloists were Alec Maple and Gabe Stilwell, seniors; Alexa

Gust, sophomore; and Hunter Todd, freshman. Mixed Quartet includes Caitlin Dillon, Alec Maple, and Stilwell, seniors; and Alexa Gust, sophomore. Women's Trio C includes Angela Boutross, Gabby Holmes and Katie LeBlanc, seniors.

"We practiced every Wednesday during BEST and came in every day before class to run through our songs," said Boutross. "I think we improved in telling the story of the song and not just singing it."

Band soloists were Marley Shackles, senior, playing the harp and piano; Dawson Curtin, junior, on snare; Kirstin Clark, junior, on snare; and

Alyzabeth Munsterman, freshman, on flute. The percussion ensemble includes Chris Smith, senior; Kirstin Clark, junior; Maddie Stewart, sophomore; Allison Gust and Zach Reynolds, freshmen.

"I was looking forward to catching up with people that I don't usually get to see, like students who I have met through music organizations," Shackles said. "It is fun to see them progress."

Hamblin said that choir participants showed consistent, hard work and dedication to advance to the level that they're currently at. To get ready for state, participants have been taking voice lessons

once a week because they have to prepare to sing two songs from memory. Hamblin had them choose one song in English and one in a foreign language. Participants have to choose one of the songs from a list approved by the State Board of Music Educators as well.

Meyer said that band participants displayed strong work ethic and determination while putting in lots of practice to get to this point. Participants continue to meet with either Meyer or Holt on a regular basis to work on their chosen songs. They have to choose songs that suit them, including one song from the state-approved list.

Meyer said that he believes the band soloists all have a good shot at earning a 1 rating, and he has a high amount of confidence in the ensemble.

Maple, Gust, Todd, Women's trio and Shackles on playing the harp all received 1 ratings.

Stilwell, Curtin, Munsterman, and the percussion ensemble all received 2 ratings,

Clark and the Mixed Quartet all received 3 ratings.



OUE fifth-graders attend Children's Literature Festival

By Mikaylee Hobson
Leslie Roepe, OUE librarian, took 14 fifth-graders to the 48th Annual Children's Literature Festival at UCM. For many, they can remember the trip as one of the first times they were on a university campus or had the opportunity to visit with a published author.

Thousands of students, grades 3-10, attend the event each year to listen to children's authors and illustrators. Over 30 authors were in attendance.

The festival is held during the first weekend of the UCM spring break each year. This year's festival was held March 20-22 with a luncheon and guest speaker presenting on the 20th and book signings, illustrator exhibits and author presentations happening on the 21st and 22nd.

The students attended presentations by the following authors: Obert Skye, Marie Smith, Antony John, Roland Smith and Kate McMullan.

"One of the kids' favorite authors was Roland Smith because he was very animated and funny," Roespe said.

Roepe said she has been taking students to the festival for the past three years because she wants to encourage them to read the Mark Twain nominees.

"My favorite (Mark Twain nominee book) was

Navigating Early because it was very interesting and kept me on my toes," Alayna Sisk, said.

To be eligible to attend the trip, OUE students needed to read four of the 12 Mark Twain nominees and read a book by one of the authors presenting at the festival, as well as complete a book report for each book.

The following students attended: Zack Miller, Caitlyn Sanders, Maggie Hotmer, Sisk, Lauren Hensley, Ethan Unruh, Jackson Murry, Abby Gibson, Gracie Rockhold, Emma Lett, Alyssa Bullock, Lilly Malizzi, Aaliyah Logan and Lexi Adamec. Makayla Wilder was eligible but was unable to attend.

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