

'Stuff The Bus' To Give Away Twice As Much This Year



Yvette Martin

Yvette Martin told us the week before, about plans for "Stuff the Bus," an annual "Back To School" activity of Shared Blessings and United Way, to collect school supplies for students and classrooms.

The McAlester United official said it is planned to give away some 2,000 backpacks with school supplies this year, more than twice the 680 given away last year.

Local businesses and civic clubs are being encouraged to collect

backpacks and the items for students to put in them.

Items are being collected to put in the backpacks, including paper, pens, pencils, pencil boxes, crayons, 3-ring notebooks, glue sticks, folders, rulers, regular markers, large and small scissors, and boxes of tissues.

The "Bus" has been at Country Mart the past few days, and will be at Wal-Mart on Aug. 1, 2 and 3.

On Thursday, Aug. 7, volunteers will stuff the backpacks with school supplies for various age groups.

Then on Aug. 9, students will pick up the backpacks for their age groups, at the Shared Blessings building, which was the old Seamprufe Plant, 1558 South Main in McAlester.

Volunteers and those with contributions can contact Shared Blessings or the United Way office.

If we organize a support association

Jordan Says State Has Top Seniority to Support McAAP

After the November elections, an Oklahoma Democrat in the House and an Oklahoma Republican in the Senate will move up the "Seniority Ladder" to give Oklahoma the most political power in the Department of Defense "since Carl Albert walked the halls of Congress as the Speaker of the House," Mark Jordan told members of the McAlester Rotary Club July 8.

The McAlester Defense Support Association held its first organizational meeting to offer civilian backing to the Army Ammunition Plant, July 15. One official attending called it "a good start." But Jordan told Rotary Club members that this area "desperately needs to organize and get prepared ...to benefit from our political advantage." Jordan gave a Rotary program on what the organization "could and should be," at our July 8 meeting.

After the November elections, Sen. John McCain either will be president or will retire, Jordan speculated. And Sen. John Warner, said he will retire.

That will mean that Congressman Dan Boren of Oklahoma will move up in seniority and Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma may be chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Congressman Tom Cole of Oklahoma also will move up in seniority. Boren and Cole both are already members of the House Armed Services Committee.

Jordan said that the ammo plant was built during World War II by the Navy. There are 45,000 acres in the plant, which was built as a combination storage depot and ammo loading plant. It has been "the single largest contributor to the economy of McAlester," during the 65 years, from 1943 to 2008, Jordan said.

The economic impact in Fiscal Year 2008 is more than \$150 million, and over the past eight years, totals some \$1.5 billion.

The payroll for Fiscal Year 2008 was expected to be \$114.325 million compared with \$90.547 million last fiscal year. State and local contracts went from \$4.16 million to \$6.93 million in the last

two fiscal years. The DAC went from \$19.8 million to \$24.1 million in economic impact. However, security's impact dropped from \$5 million to \$3.55 million.

U.S. Missile Industry contracts have jumped from \$4.2 billion in 2002 to \$9.9 billion in 2005.

The McAlester plant is the nation's largest capacity explosive storage depot and has a proven work force. However, the "manufacturing world is moving to China" and Mexico, Jordan said.

The facility here has a relationship with the top defense contractors and overwhelming political advantage."

The top 10 Missile Defense Contractors from 2001 to 2004 were Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, Computer Sciences Corp., BAE Systems, Sparta, L-3, Teledyne and SAIC.

However, it is not true in today's economy, Jordan said, that "if you do things the way you have always done them, you will get what you have always got."

Some defense work includes "long term legacy contracts" and some includes multi-year awards, which prevents them from being year-to-year contracts. Yet they are high paying jobs, often with outstanding benefits.

In addition, Defense Work is not subject to being shipped out of the U.S., Jordan noted. However, these rules could be changed, if we do not ask that they remain the same.

That is why we need to organize, and "hire some help" if needed to use our political advantage to keep our jobs at home, Jordan stated.



A BIG CHECK was handed by Rotary President Brett Smith to Lynn Edwards, of the McAlester Boys and Girls Club. It was for a pitching machine and it was for \$1,200. The money came from "our new fund-raiser."

Exchange Student 10 Years Ago Returns, Gives Program



Marina & Alex Durasuva

Marina Ermakova, who was an exchange student from Russia, returned to McAlester for her 10th year reunion, and gave our program on July 1, 2008.

Now she is married and her name is Durasuva She is 26 years old and her husband Alex is a support engineer working with phone stations

and Wireline Solutions.

Marina has been a travel agent for six years for a company called Navigator.

After she graduated from high school here, Marina returned to Russia, but found she had more trouble adapting to Russia after being gone and not speaking Russian for a year, than she did coming to the United States when she knew how to speak some English.

She said she had to work “extra hard” to pass entrance exams that

were written and oral, to enter the university in Moscow.

But she graduated and her mother moved to Moscow, from Yakutsk, three years ago. She has been married to Alex for a year.

The Travel Agency she works for has its headquarters in Italy and has offices around the world. They live in Moscow now.

She said she wanted to thank Rotary and the families she stayed with. She said she got to “learn a lot about your country which would be impossible to learn as a tourist on a short visit...I always wanted to come back here, especially after I got married,” so she could show her husband “that part of my life which was here, and to introduce him to my other families besides the one in Russia...You get to know so many wonderful people who want to help you.”

She said made “some really good friends” here and we “had a great time last Saturday at the reunion.”

Her latest visit here lasted three weeks “and we got to see the Grand Canyon, Branson, and Corpus Christi.”

She said she would like to come back in two or three years and bring her family to McAlester.

Cleanup of Illegal Drugs Still ‘In the Works’

Collier Reports Success in Pounds, on Cleanup Drive

J.T. Collier last week gave us a break-down on 1,500,000 pounds of trash that he said his Pride in McAlester organization has collected, so far.

Collier said one of the reasons the drive has been so successful, is that it “helps others help themselves” to a cleaner yard, a cleaner garage, a cleaner home, a cleaner neighborhood and eventually to a cleaner city.

Collier is president of the Pride in McAlester organization. Other officers are Weldon Smith, vice president; Judy Goodyear, secretary; Mark Wilkett, treasurer; Linda Leffel, Public Information director; and Ruyana Fugitt, administrative assistant.

Collier said that the education phase of the drive was done in the schools. The city dump was made available for free dumping, 726 times during May and June. People brought 948,000 pounds of junk to the dump grounds. Then dumpsters were located in each ward of the city. More than 200,000 pounds were collected in that way.

Then the Triad Company headed up a collection of hazardous wastes drive, which brought in 1,800 pounds of batteries, paint,

and chemicals.

Still on the Pride in McAlester calendar are removal of eyesores, replacing missing street signs, and a look at city ordinances.

Collier said there is a city ordinance against “junk cars.” Persons with junk cars in their yards will be asked to remove them voluntarily, first.

Then there are towing services that have said they will work with the Pride in McAlester organization, Collier said. For persons who say they cannot do it themselves, arrangements will be made to haul off their junk cars. If they do not agree to this, the city ordinance will be enforced.

Entrances to the city will be kept clean and neat, with help from people who live in those areas, Collier stated.

Weldon Smith is looking at ordinances to be sure they are all updated, said Collier. And a “Drug Cleanup” is “in the works,” he said.

“We have a lot to do to keep us busy,” the chairman of the committee said.

Attendance, Visitors, Handshakers *And the Big Pot*

Attendance last week was 47. Glen Kramer was the only guest. He is the T.H. Rogers Wholesale Manager and was the guest of Iva Due.

On July 15, the attendance was 37. Eli Bland was a guest of Jim Bland. Aniya Rayne Washington, granddaughter of Louise Washington was a guest of Loise. And Lucinda Francis of Norman was a visiting Rotarian. On July 8, the attendance was 53. Barbara Gilbertson and Larry Nortunen were guests of Mark Jordan. Kayla Bacader was the guest of Orlean Smith. Peggy Peters was

the guest of Iva Due. Nicholas Santine was the guest of Clem.

HANDSHAKERS-Last week Doug Auld gave the dollar to Bruce Hall, a banker. The previous week, John Freeman, a former banker, gave the buck to Bob Thornton. The previous week, Attorney (and Big Pot Official) Ronnie May, gave the buck to Gail Watkins.

Last week, Fred Turner drew the unlucky 10 of diamonds, for the big cash. Sue Hawkins and Ron May didn't get it either. Someone drew the nine of hearts, but the Big Pot is still there, we hope?