



By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

A friendship that has developed between John and Joan Osler of Imperial and Ernie Poe of Sharon Springs, Kan., will benefit Chase County Museum patrons this weekend.

Poe will be the guest exhibitor on Sunday afternoon, when several of his barbed wire creations will be on display.

Only a couple of places in this area have creations made by Poe. One is the Chase County Museum in Champion, and the other is in front of the Oslers' home.

While Poe has a slight tie to this area (as a young man he rode the rodeo circuit and remembers riding the O'Conner stock in Wauneta and Elsie), his presence at the museum this Sunday is due to Osler.

Both have a love of history. Osler is president of the Chase County Historical Society. Poe is assistant curator of the Ft. Wallace Museum, about 10 miles east of Sharon Springs.

The Oslers and Poe met on a cold February day, as the Oslers were traveling along U.S. Highway 40 in Kansas and noticed the barbed wire buffalo out in front of the Ft. Wallace Museum.

It was interesting enough that the Oslers stopped. Poe was there, too, checking on the heat in the museum.

As they visited, Poe also showed the Oslers around the museum, where Osler said he discovered Poe's passion for using barbed wire to fashion things.

They learned the buffalo out front contains four Miles of barbed wire. There is also a large collection of Poe's barbed wire in the Ft. Wallace Museum.

Osler asked if Poe would be interested in making a horse for the sleigh at the Chase County Museum. Poe said he'd think about it.

Osler told him he had some 100-year-old barbed wire that John's grandfather, Joe Osler, had strung in northeast Chase County that was in "pretty good shape."

"He said bring it down with a model of what I wanted," Osler said.

About six weeks later, he had it done, Osler said.

On that second trip, Osler noticed several Jayhawk mascots made from barbed wire in Poe's "garage studio," so asked him if he would make a Herbie Husker out of barbed wire. Osler had another batch of that 100-year-old wire from his grandfather.

"He said 'send me a picture of what I wanted' and would think about it," Osler said.

While he had a little trouble with the Husker mascot's western-style hat, Poe finished it after about six weeks and it's now on display in Osler's front yard.

Joan Osler was also given a meadowlark (both Nebraska's and Kansas' state bird) and a gecko that Poe made from wire, which are displayed in the couple's living room.

The museum in Champion will be open Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. Poe will be there for the afternoon, and will enjoy visiting with area residents.

2009 museum schedule

May 24—Barbed wire sculptor (Ernest Poe)

May 31—Desert Storm (David Kahle)

June 7—Piano recital (Rob Browning)

June 14—Welding (Merwin Grafton) and ranch branding

June 21—Chase County Road Show (Bob Jones)

June 28—Undetermined

July 5—Undetermined

July 12—Ice cream social

July 19—Chase County Fair Board

July 26—Square dancers

Aug. 2—Old cameras (Arrie Anna Bentz Olson and Rand Levy)

Aug. 9—Chase County Fair—no special exhibit

Aug. 16—Chase County Fair—no special exhibit

Aug. 23—Undetermined

Aug. 30—Undetermined