



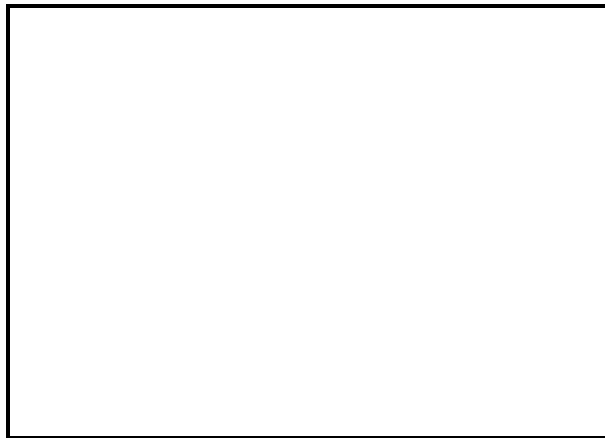
PTIONS

For alternative education

Spring tornadoes devastate the state.....

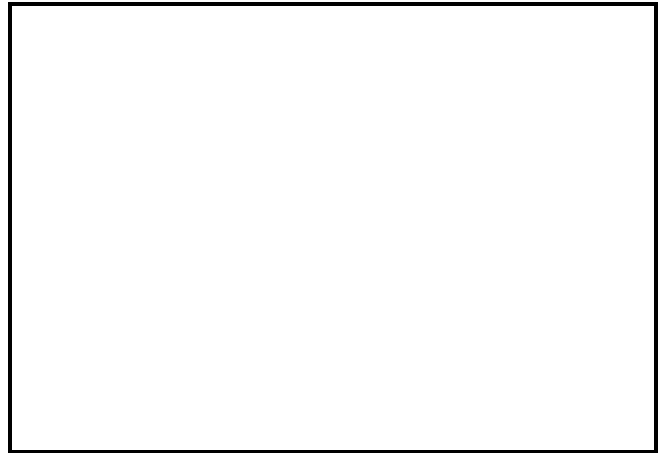
The small community of Bridge Creek, located south and east of Tuttle, has supported an evening alternative education program for two years. On the afternoon of May 3, shortly after the traditional school had dismissed for the day, a small group of alternative students met in the high school's computer lab to begin their five-hour school day. Within an hour, the students were sent home. Within 70 minutes total devastation and destruction reigned as this Grady county community was completely displaced by the single worst tornado in the state's history.

Bridge Creek is not a metropolitan area in the first place. There is no downtown district or community park with swimming pool. A random spattering of houses has sprung up in recent years, bounded on the north by Highway 37 and the south by Interstate 44. The east/west limits are set by Newcastle and Tuttle. Some homes are rural farmhouses, others are clustered on cul-de-sacs, many are trailer homes. Over



300 of them are gone.

Two weeks later.... turning south onto Sara Road from Highway 37. A single banner, strung between a fence post and the stop sign, proclaims the presence



of the Red Cross. One mile south and all homes are intact with maybe a few shingles missing. Two miles south and small piles of debris by the side of the two-lane asphalt road are evident. A solitary table with crushed paper cups and a battered orange water cooler guards a roofless house.

.....from Grady County to Sapulpa

Further south and the fire station is still standing, as is the convenience store. Convoys of semi-trucks, loaded with limbs, glass, and debris head north on Sara Road, continuing a round-the-clock effort to remove the signs of destruction. Four miles south, and topping a hill. There is nothing to see. Not a blade of grass, not a shred of bark on the stubby trees. No homes, trailer houses, churches or barns. The piles of rubbish are spaced much more frequently and are taller than the car, which turns west toward the campus. It is no longer a school, but a military command post.

The end of school is less than a week away. The high school principal has traded his coat and tie for fatigues and a security photo ID. The secretaries are not checking on graduation credits, they are digging through triplicate copies of forms from FEMA, the Red

(Continued on page 8)

The following works were submitted by students from the Hobart Alternative School. Through a grant from the State Arts Council, the students were introduced to art appreciation, color theory, art history, drawing techniques, acrylic painting, block print making, clay pottery molding and creative writing.

Untitled

Standing in the Light
sometimes is a fright
People try and know your business
when really it's none of theirs.
They make more of something than
it really is.
They always wanna diss.
It gets old, getting told on.
It can also be good, when I'm in the right
mood.
I chill and try and stop the kill, to keep it real,
because, damn, I feel.
It's hard in this world, especially when you get
bored.
I try to do the best,
forget the rest,
because this world is one big test!

Alternative School

What is Alternative school really for?
Some say it's for those who have screwed up
their lives. Some say it's for kids who can't
get along with people, the mentally or physi-
cally handicapped, the ones who have single
families or who have bad problems at home.
Well, sometimes these may be true, but when
kids in Alternative school hear these, how do
you think they feel?

Those stereotypes are mostly false. Many
kids just can't take a normal school atmos-
phere. Some are here to finish credits or to
help themselves out of trouble— and some have
to work during the day. Therefore, alternative
students are classified as bad and irresponsible
kids. This isn't true. Some just see this as a
better place. These stereotypes need to stop!
Judgments by people are tearing our world
apart.

.....student stuff

Me

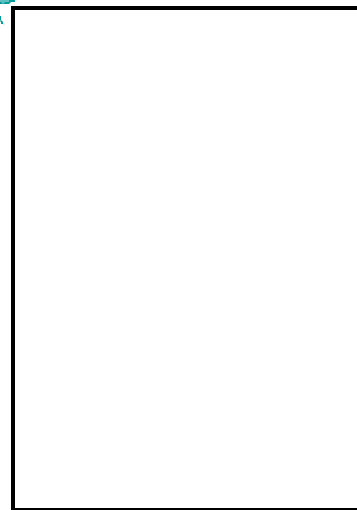
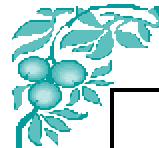
As I stare into the stars
and the heavens high above,
I think of beautiful spring days
and the summer nights I've loved.

I think of the days gone by
and all the days to come,
but mostly I think of me
and I'll that I've become.

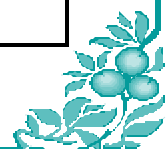
I've grown up from a baby
covered with lace
I've grown up from that child
with a round and chubby face.

I've grown up from a little girl
crying with every fall
I've grown into a teenager
and I feel I've had it all!

Sharee Nicole Johnson
8th grade
Mid-Del Alternative Academy



Sharee in math class



a look at the legislation.....

HB 1284 was passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Keating in June. It contained many issues relevant to schools, and more specifically, to alternative education. The following is a summary of the pertinent language:

- * Alternative education teachers (those in charge of the curriculum and classroom) are not required to be licensed in a particular subject, but they must be certified in some area.
- * Allows alternative education students who meet a district's graduation requirements to participate in graduation ceremonies.
- * Alternative education students may not be excluded from participating in vocational programs, extracurricular activities, athletics, bands and clubs provided that they meet the usual requirements of those programs.
- * Districts receiving statewide alternative education monies from the state must begin their programs by September 15.
- * Funding levels: Year 1—\$1,000 per student; Year 2- \$750 per student; Year 3-\$700 per student; minimum amount—\$10,000.
- * Requires school districts to expend as much on alternative education students as is spent on the average instructional costs of other students in the district. The incentive funding from the statewide alternative system and the other instructional amount from the district must be reported.
- * School districts must offer a local alternative education program or if fewer than 10 students are to be served, they must enter into a cooperative agreement. A waiver may be obtained from the State Department of Education by those schools that believe a cooperative agreement would not be the best option for its students.
- * Materials and equipment purchased with alternative education monies must be utilized by alternative education students during the hours that program is in operation. Other students may access these items only when the alternative education students are not in school. If a district closes its local program and chooses to enter into a cooperative agreement, the equipment and materials purchased with state alternative monies must go with the students.

A detailed, computer-generated report accounting for the expenditure of alternative education funds for the previous year must be submitted to Dr. Mary Meritt at the State Department of Education by July 1 of each year. The more general OCAS report is routinely submitted to the Financial Accounting Office of the State Department of Education on September 15th of each year.

OTAC

Expressive Arts in Education Conference

- * See successful art programs in action; take home resources
- * Includes arts in alternative education
- * For **all** administrators, counselors, teachers
- * 6 1/2 Staff Development hours
- * Utilizing the arts for goal-setting, teamwork, cooperation, communication, and problem-solving skills
- * Hands-on, interactive workshops
- * \$40 registration
- * Call 1-800-522-0772, Ext. 5101 for more information

Friday, September 24, 1999
 OU College of Continuing Education
 1704 Asp Avenue
 Norman, OK



Sponsored by the OU College of Continuing Education, the Oklahoma Arts Council, the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center, and the Art Therapy Association in cooperation with the State Department of Education

freebies.....

The following materials, plus many more, are available free from the Oklahoma Bar Association/ Law Related Education. These pamphlets and brochures can be relevant additions to your social studies, government, or economics class. Use them to energize class discussions or a debate, enhance/enrich the textbook, or for extra credit. Contact Michael Reggio, LRE Coordinator, Oklahoma Bar Association, P.O. Box 53036, Oklahoma City, OK 73152 to order any of the following freebies or to request a complete listing of what's available.

Create a Campaign Brochure (7-9)

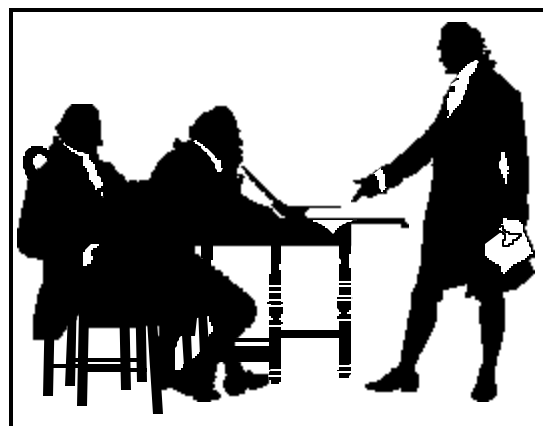
Drunk Driving/Alcohol Abuse (10-12)

Equal Rights (3-5)

“Don’t Touch my Hair!” Freedom of Expression at School (9-12)

What if Women had Written the Constitution? (6-7)

Who Really Wrote the Constitution? (11-12)



OTAC

We would like to use this space to say “Happy Retirement” to Sylvia Olesen, one of our own, and a true friend of alternative education. Many of you know Sylvia and the contributions she has made to education in our state. She worked at the Cushing office for 18 years, first as a prescriptive teacher and psychometrist and later as director of Project Advantage and Co-Director of the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center.

Sylvia was a speaker on several occasions at the National Dropout Prevention Conference and had made over 500 presentations at other local, state and national conferences. Her understanding of educational and legislative issues made her an invaluable resource to this office, and we would like to thank her for sharing her expertise with us for so many years.

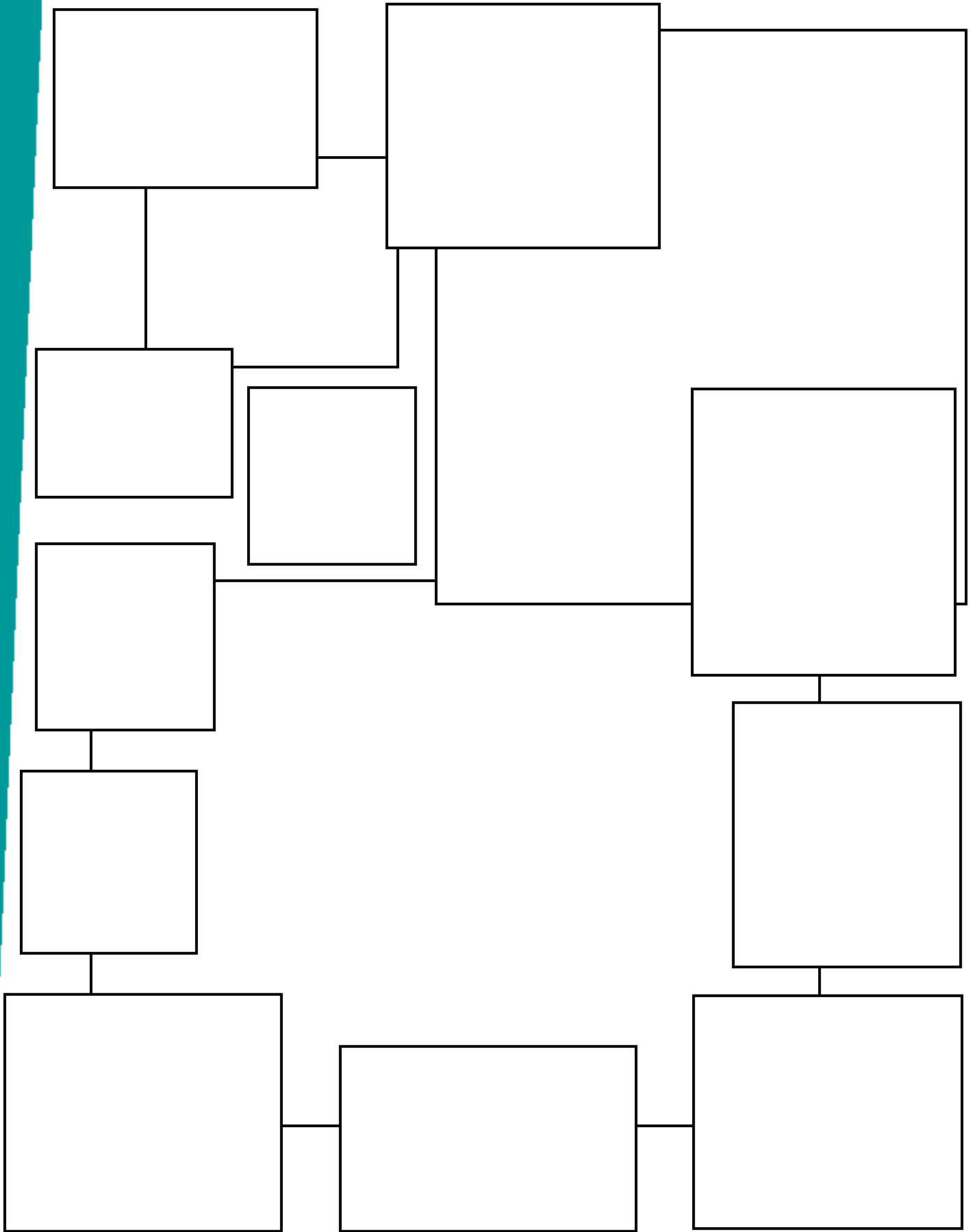
Although Sylvia will be a much more frequent sight at the golf course now, we hope to catch a glimpse of her every once in a while. We just know she won’t be able to stay completely away..... at least we hope not!

....research corner

As the alternative education data for the 1998-1999 school year are being analyzed, it might be worthwhile to review what was happening in this field during the previous year. Here is a summary of OTAC's evaluation findings for 1997-1998 for the Statewide Alternative grants.

- * 175 programs - 10,237 students served
- * Program type
 - 37% were considered alternative schools
 - 15% of the programs co-oped
 - 20% were evening programs
 - 28.5% were considered alternative classrooms
 - 13% were supplemental
- * Nearly 1/4 of the programs were established in rural communities (population < 2500)
- * The length of time students stayed in the alternative program was positively correlated with academic and behavioral outcomes
- * 90% of the programs met the 16 mandated criteria
 - Alternative schools rated highest; supplemental were lowest
 - Compliance ratings were highest for graduation plan and screening
 - Lowest ratings were on counseling and collaborative efforts; high ratings on these two criteria correlated with overall program improvement
- * 14.8% of the students graduated; 3/5 of seniors earned their degrees
- * 3.3% of the students were suspended
- * 16.5% dropped out; students most likely to drop out were those who had previously dropped out and those who were directly referred by juvenile justice agencies
- * Asian American and African American students did not perform as well as the other ethnic groups. When community size is controlled, that difference disappears. In other words, African American and Asian American students in rural and urban settings did not academically benefit as much as their classmates both in regular and alternative education.





.....the Summer Conference

The following awards were announced at the Alternative Education Summer Institute, held July 27 & 28 at the Westin Hotel and Conference Center in Oklahoma City.

1999 New High Challenge Grants

Agra Public Schools	25,000.00
Bridge Creek Public Schools	50,000.00
Cottonwood Public Schools	55,763.00
Graham Public Schools	26,553.00
Grove Public Schools	30,249.00
Henryetta Public Schools	50,490.00
Holdenville Public Schools	55,000.00
McAlester Public Schools	66,497.00
Madill Public Schools	57,799.00
Muldrow Public Schools	30,140.00
Peavine Public Schools	68,267.00

Continuing High Challenge Grants

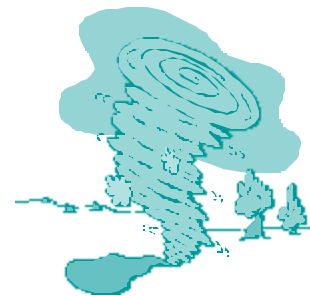
The following schools were awarded monies to continue their High Challenge Grants: Broken Arrow, Checotah, Crooked Oak, Duncan, Guymon, Heavener, Jenks, Mangum, Okay, Perkins, Pickett Center, Pryor/Thunderbird Academy, Robin Hill, Rocky Mountain, Sallisaw, Stilwell, Tom and Tulsa.

FY 2000 Alternative Education Grants

Afton Public Schools	9,066.00
Battiest Public Schools	37,949.00
Belfonte Public Schools	19,300.00
Bowlegs Public Schools	10,000.00
Bridge Creek Public Schools	22,948.00
Caney Valley	69,013.00
Cave Springs Public Schools	70,848.00
Choctaw-Nicoma Park Public Schools	45,155.00
Comanche Public Schools	65,800.00
Fort Towson Public Schools	8,998.00
Frederick Public Schools	70,000.00
Hugo Public Schools	98,000.00
Locust Grove Public Schools	4,700.00
Sulphur Public Schools	25,290.00
Tecumseh Public Schools	17,665.00
Tulsa Street School	100,000.00

Tornadoes.....

(Continued from page 1)



Cross, the National Guard, and the Salvation Army.

The school cafeteria has been transformed into a grocery/department store with neatly organized stacks of clothes, shoes, non-perishable food and necessities. There are even shopping carts, donated by an area Wal-Mart. Signs identify the new and relocated assignments of the administration offices, classrooms, gymnasium, and trailers: the morgue, hospital, post office, aid station, National Guard office, United Way office etc. Uniformed and “official” personnel are everywhere.

The people of Bridge Creek lost twelve neighbors and friends that day, along with their sense of security, privacy and belonging. They don’t need any more clothes, food or bottled water, just the time to reflect, refresh and rebuild. The attitude of “bigger and better” is already growing, fueled by the optimism of “it could have been worse”.

Mulhall-Orlando suffered almost total destruction from the same series of tornados. Bartlett Alternative in Sapulpa missed classes due to flooding. The director of the Moore alternative program, Earl Capps, lost his home and everything in it.

In Chickasha, one corner of the National Guard Armory (where the alternative programs are housed) was damaged, but not extensively. Torrential rains the weekend after the tornado outbreak caused the roof to collapse and the alternative students and teachers finished the last two weeks of the school year in the conference room of the local Best Western.

Even parts of the state not directly affected by the storms felt the impact. The alternative education teacher in Ketchum, located in Craig county in NE Oklahoma, missed two weeks of school because his guard unit was on duty in the Oklahoma City area.

We are certain there are hundreds of other alternative education programs and personnel who were impacted in some way by the events of May 3. The OTAC staff would like to offer condolences to those who suffered personal or property loss. We would also like to thank those of you who helped in the rescue, recovery or clean-up efforts, volunteered your time, donated goods or services or simply supported those in need.

**“My school
administration courses
never prepared me for
anything like this.”**

**Bruce Wedel, Principal
Bridge Creek High School**

*Charity and personal force are the
only investments worth anything.*

Walt Whitman

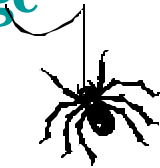
Do your students know how their lives change when they turn eighteen? Do they understand what are their new rights, new duties and responsibilities, and possible liabilities? Unfortunately, most do not. To help educators, the Oklahoma Bar Association/Law Related Education is distributing the Young Adult Guide for high school seniors (1997 edition). This 40-page booklet describes these areas in detail as well as lists assistance agencies, both government and private, to which young people may turn when confronting many of the difficult problems in their life. It informs them of their rights, responsibilities, and possible liabilities and how these change when they reach the age of eighteen. Topics covered include criminal charges, driving, traffic accidents, employment, marriage and divorce, contracts, buying a car, consumer credit, and landlord/tenant relations.

To order free classroom sets of these materials contact Michael Reggio or Chris Grove at OBA/LRE at (405) 416-7023 or (800) 522-8065.



OTAC

....from our web page



Our staff can't wait for you to see our new website! You can find us at our domain address which is www.csdcotac.org. We are striving to make this a place where you can find all kinds of resources related to alternative education—from the original legislation to professional development workshops and job opportunities. We are working on a chat room and bulletin board so you and your students can communicate more easily with other alternative education programs. You will also find our most recent data and evaluative research information, along with our email addresses.

So please bookmark us as one of your favorite sites to visit on the web. Leave us a comment about our “new look” or email us with questions. We truly do want to be accessible to you and this is a great way to accomplish that goal.....see you on the web!

*Alternative Education Tip:
Design your intake/screening form so that all the pre-data information OTAC needs for the year-end report is included—saves time later on in the year!*

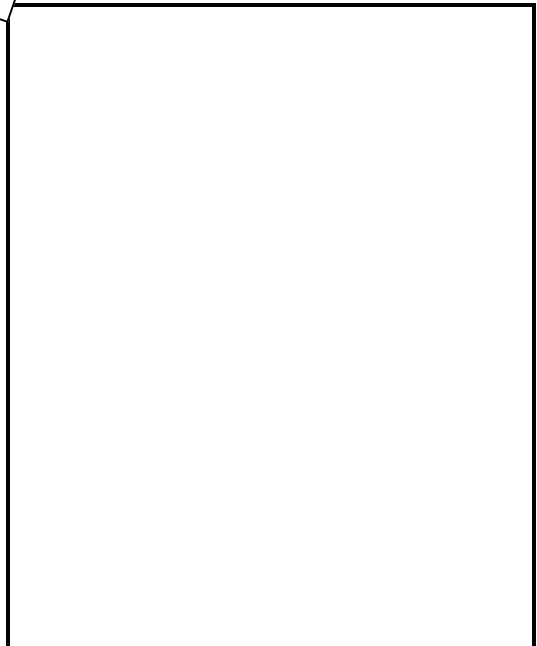
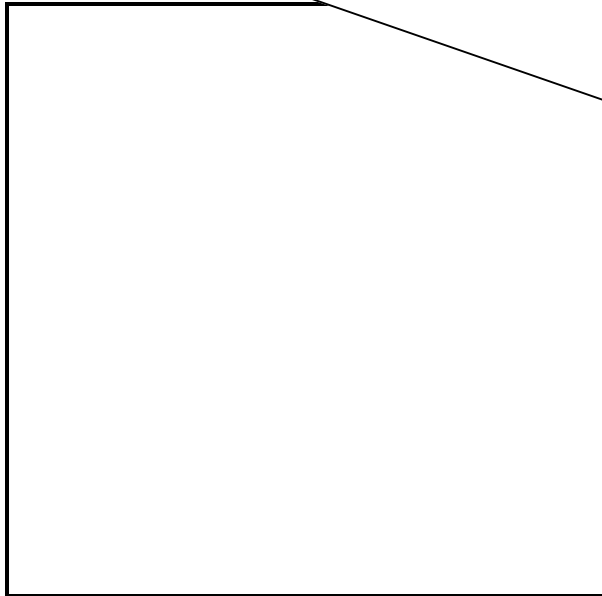
OTAC Field Coordinator Rick Rogers is headed for Austin, Texas in December along with Jarry Hillman, principal of Lincoln Alternative School in Enid. The two submitted a joint proposal which has been selected for the program at the Eleventh Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference. The Enid program had previously been awarded the 1998 NDPN's Crystal Star of Excellence Award.



More from Mid-Del.....

Mid-Del Alternative Academy sophomore Cher Ghoram relies on her fellow classmates for support at the ROPES course in Oklahoma City.

Kid's Kampus opened in April, serving parenting teens who attend the Mid-Del Alternative Academy. Lorraine Wester, teacher, is helping 4-month old Dwan while Mom Jacquelyne is in class.

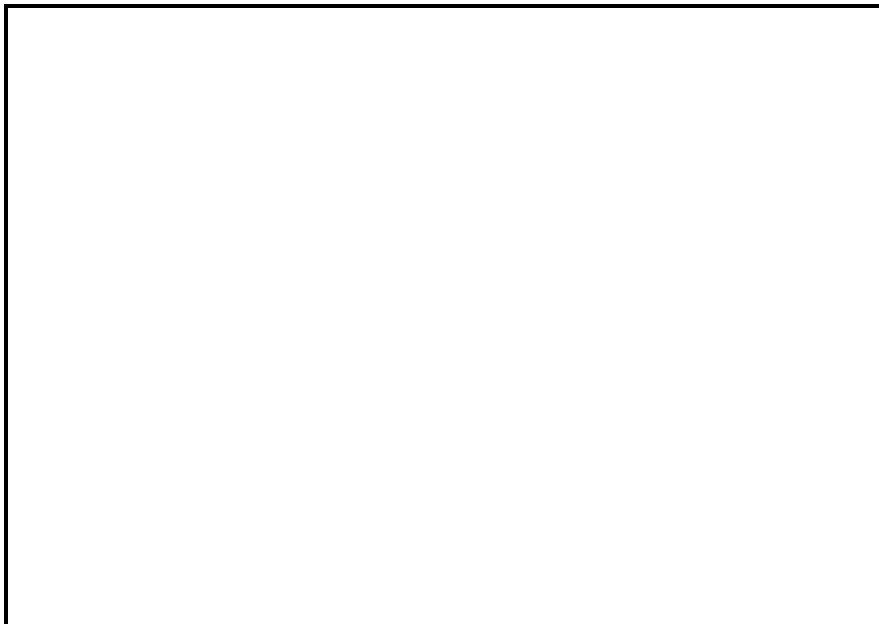
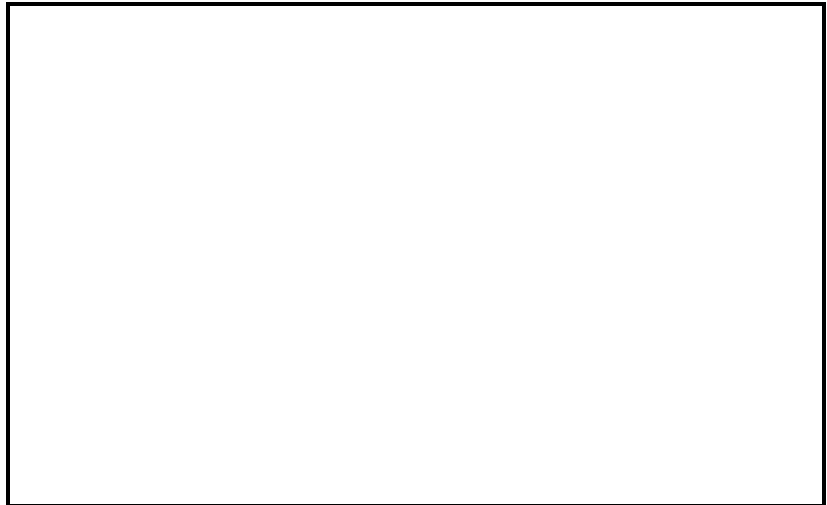


Mid-Del students relax with their teacher, Miss Laman, at Frontier City. Pictured are Krystina Hursh, Sharee Johnson, Kenny Ford, Nikki Buchtel, Mathew Cramer and Chris Jones.



Accepting accolades and awards at the successful Oklahoma Alternative Education Association's spring conference are (l. to r.) Lori McGinnis, President-elect of OAEA; Dr. Mary Meritt, SDE; State Senator Penny Williams, recipient of the Steve Cowden Award; Dr. Kathy McKean, Co-director of OTAC; Darlene Buelke, recipient of the Janis Updike Walker Award; and Rick Palazzo, Conference Chair.

Senator Tom Thomas, Atoka, takes time to visit with students from the Atoka-Coal County Alternative School and to learn about the Native American village they made as an art project. The students had traveled from Atoka and Coal counties for Alternative Education Day at the capitol.



April 29, Alternative Education Day at the capitol, brought hundreds of students and teachers to the Rotunda area. Many schools brought artwork, scrapbooks or collages to display. Legislators were seen visiting with their constituents and future voters.

anything goes.....

We hope you noticedwe have a new look! Desktop publishing is a growing industry and we want to keep up with the times. We have renamed our newsletter, scaled down the size, and will have regularly featured columns each month. The number of alternative educators and alternative education advocates in our state continues to grow and we are trying our best to keep everyone updated on what's new in research, legislation, curriculum and policy.

This column will appear monthly and will give you a bit of insight into the workings of OTAC from the inside.snippets of life on the road and observations made from a moving vehicle. Our field coordinators can tell you which quick-stops have the cleanest rest-rooms or the best ice (crushed, not cubed), which restaurants serve the tastiest burgers or where the best gasoline prices can be found. We know toll-gate attendants on a first-name basis and highway patrolmen make up over half of our Christmas card list.

We traverse Oklahoma on interstates (free), turnpikes (toll, with toll gate), two-lane turnpikes (toll), multilane (controlled access), other multilane highways, two land paved roads (with passing lane), other paved highways, and gravel surface roads. By the way, these are the highway classifications found on the offi-

cial State Map of Oklahoma. We would like to add the category "Under Construction" to this list. It seems impossible to drive to any of our schools without slowing down for construction, detouring, or completely turning around and backtracking at least five miles.

A field coordinator's job presents diverse challenges. Most of these are pleasurable, a few are not. Working with dedicated teachers and appreciative students are highlights, as are attending year-end awards assemblies and mid-year graduation ceremonies. We love meeting with administrators to figure out what their alternative program should look like, based on the resources, support agencies and space available within the school and community.

So what is the downside? An increase in gasoline prices, the lack of healthy fast foods (we found out that a chocolate shake is not one of the seven basic food groups), severe storm warnings, following large mobile homes down a two-lane road, dodging deer in the fog, passing double-trailer semis in the rain, or getting caught at a railroad crossing.

That's a little bit about us, what we do and how we spend our working hours. Be sure to watch for this newsletter each month during the school year!



Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center
"Meeting the needs of Oklahoma's alternative education students"

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