

from our viewpoint...

Jazz Fest is spirit of New Orleans

New Orleans residents and visitors alike jammed the old race course in New Orleans for the town's 37th annual Jazz Fest. Jimmy Buffet opened with "City of New Orleans," and people cried.

Fats Domino, whose house in the Lower 9th Ward was swept away by the flood, was the scheduled headliner, but wound up in the hospital. Lionel Richie took his place.

The 78-year-old Domino, a legendary figure in the music business, surprised the crowd by showing up during the show to thank them.

The infield at the New Orleans Fair Grounds Race Course was packed, but the weather was as cool, they said, as the show.

As they did after Mardi Gras, some will criticize New Orleans for putting on such a party. Less than nine months ago, the fair grounds had been under five feet of water. Many New Orleans performers, like Domino, like the 9th Ward, lost everything.

But New Orleans people know better than to listen to the do-gooders and goody-twoshoes.

It's impossible to imagine the city without it's parties, its music and its food.

New Orleans people know that their city is going to survive. They have plenty of support.

There are many decisions to be made, many rules to be written. Some say redevelopment and government aid are months behind. New Orleans people know, in the end, they'll have to do it themselves anyway.

They'll have to make the decisions and build the houses, the schools and hospitals they need.

They will.

They've proved time and time again that they know how to survive.

Festivals and folderol? Sure.

Every city has its character, New Orleans more than most. It's the city of jazz, Cajun food and easy living. It's unique in American lore. It's not going to change just because outsiders tut-tut its excesses.

Nationally known performers like Buffet and scores of New Orleans musicians flocked to town to show their support at the festival.

"This has been a Jazz Fest like no other," one woman said. "So many artists have come down for us. They're trying to inspire us to restore and rebuild New Orleans, both musically and emotionally."

No one outside New Orleans could have said it better.

— Steve Haynes

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We have enough stuff in our yard

If we put in any more flower beds, vegetable gardens or even cement, someone please kick me.

In the spring, a young man's fancy turns to love and a middle-aged couple's turns to gardening.

Steve and I have spent the last three Sundays cleaning flower beds and preparing the garden.

Now, I love spring. I like having a garden. I don't even mind working in the yard. But it seems that there's more of it to do every year.

I started on the lily bed to the north, by the alley.

Last fall, I had planted daffodils in amongst the lilies because Steve read an article in some newspaper that said you should do that to get some spring color before the lilies started to really grow. The idea is the daffodils come up, bloom and die down while the lilies are still trying to figure out that its time to grow.

This really works, except that it's kinda hard to plant the bulbs when you can't see the holes because of all the lily leaves. Still, we have lots of yellow-and-white blossoms among the green rings of lily leaves.

The next project was the asparagus bed along the driveway. I found two tiny asparagus buds coming up through the soil. That was more than



cynthia haynes

- open season

a week ago, and those same two buds are about an inch taller each. They haven't taken off but the ground is clean and I should be able to see the rest of them when they show up.

We got someone to rototill the garden. I've spent many an hour with a potato fork turning the garden, but I've gotten lazy the last few years. The only problem is we forgot to tell our contractor about the small garden next to the house.

Steve and I had that one done in an hour — one-half each — with that trusty potato fork. At the same time, we cleaned the south lily bed (no daffodils over there) and two small iris beds, one beside the back porch and one on the south side of the house, and the tulip beds on either side of the front steps.

On Saturday, we tackled the iris bed that runs

along the front walk and the wildflower bed at the corner of the lot.

We planted spinach, lettuce, peas and corn. Every year, we get the seeds out of the basement where we store them. As spring approaches and the garden areas start to sprout in the hardware and grocery stores, Steve and I start to buy seeds.

It's a sort of spring fever, I think.

We had eight packages of lettuce, 10 of spinach, six of radishes, one cucumber, and 24 flower varieties. Corn and peas we had left over from last year. With the seeds we returned to the basement, we could feed the town for a couple of years.

After we got done with the yard, I swept the garage floor. It had accumulated a nice layer of leaves and gravel over the last couple of months, a lot of them the same ones we dug out of the asparagus bed the week before.

With the old garage, I didn't worry. It had a dirt floor. The new building has a nice cement floor that's really got to be swept now and then. I've thought of paving the driveway, but shuddered at the cost — besides then I'd just have another thing to clean.

And I definitely don't need another thing to clean, outside or in.

I think it is good Kansas has 'conceal carry'

I'm happy, I think, that Kansas finally has a "concealed carry" law that allows citizens to carry a handgun with proper training.

In theory, I think it's a good thing. Statistics show it should deter street crime. People will have to pass a course in gun safety.

It's a constitutional right to own and carry a gun, though states used to ban concealed weapons pretty uniformly. It's always been legal here to walk around with one strapped to your hip.

The concealed-weapon ban is a law that's been widely violated. A lot of people felt the need to pack heat, especially in the city.

Not me.

I confess, I just don't get it. It's not that I'm anti gun.

I own several, but I prefer to have a shotgun.

I've never had the slightest desire to carry a pistol, even in the 11 years I lived and worked in Kansas City.

I worked the police beat many of those years. I went to the worst parts of town at the worst times. I never felt then I needed a gun.

Getting robbed on the street once didn't make me want a gun. I'd have lost it that night when the guy got the drop on me. He'd have had two, and I'd have had none.

It did make me want even more to move to a small town.

Now I live in one of the safest places on Earth.

The incidence of robbery, assault and mugging here is below zero. Murder is unheard of, unless your wife (or husband) is really mad at you, which is another good reason not have a pistol around.

I have no illusions, though, about getting shot at home. My wife would poison me if she got that mad. Gunshot wounds are way too messy for her.

As a newspaper reporter, editor and publisher for 35 years, I have had just one serious



steve haynes

- along the sappa

threat. A man said he'd "take care of me" if I ever put his son's name in the paper again. His kid was a murderer; I took him seriously. We did, he didn't.

That's as close as I've ever come to even thinking about needing a gun, and that was 15 or 20 years ago.

If you want to get a permit and slip a heater into your pocket or your purse, it's OK with me. As long as you aren't mad at me, anyway.

I just don't expect to join you any time soon.

My Second Amendment rights are secure. I feel safe walking down the street at night. I don't fear for my safety, no matter what I write.

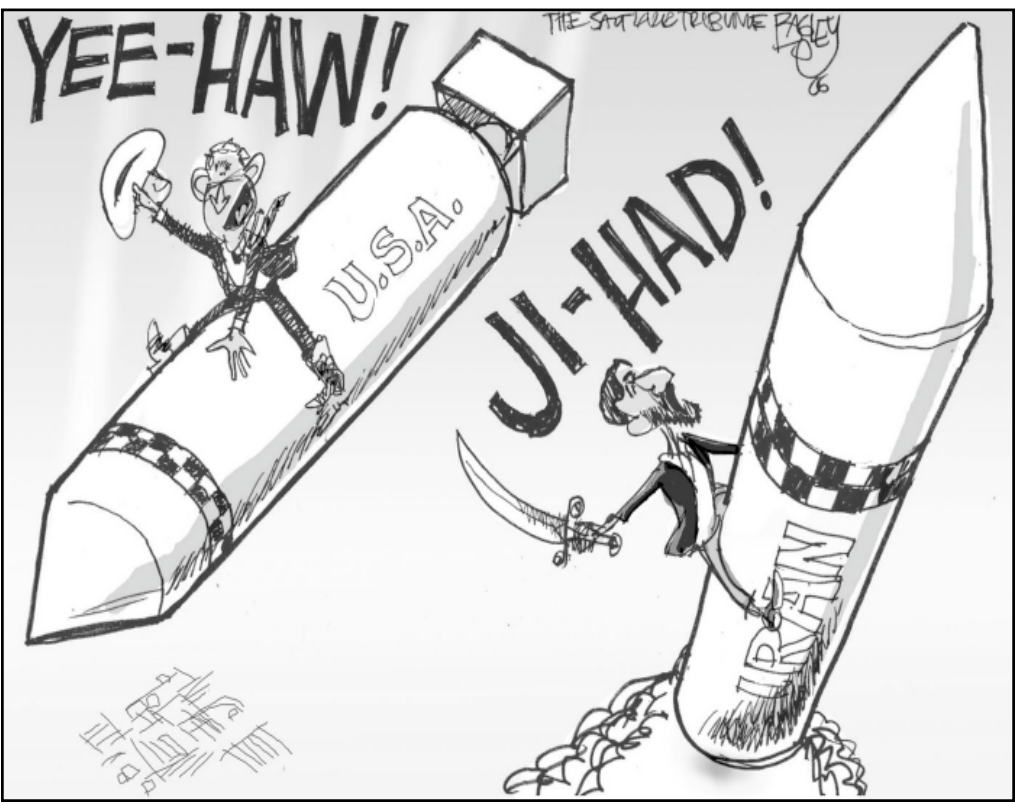
That's one big reason why I live out here.

I am curious to see what happens. Maybe there will be more guns and more accidents. That's one theory. Maybe if a lot of people get good training, there'll be more guns and fewer accidents.

I doubt the murder rate in northwest Kansas will go up or down. I don't think it will make much difference in crime here, because we don't have any.

But if people want to carry, fine with me.

I mean them no ill will. I just don't plan to join them.



garfield

