

Organizations need to work together to promote town

Duplication of effort. Oberlin is a small town, and getting smaller. Why, then, do we need so many offices and so many organizations trying to make us grow. Why not consolidate and work together?

It won't be easy. Right now, the Convention and Visitors Bureau is working on plans for a visitor's information center at the old police station at the U.S. 83-U.S. 36 junction. It's a prime location, but even with two Green Thumb workers, it'll be hard to man the center long enough to do much good.

Especially in the summer, travelers move all day, as long as it is light, week days and weekend. The center would have to be open 12-16 hours a day, seven days a week to do a lot of good.

Earlier, someone suggested that the Chamber of Commerce office could be moved out there, too. That might make sense, and would save the Chamber rent money, but people objected that it would take the office out of downtown.

Of course, we already have the manned city office across the street at The Gateway, and it's been suggested that we put an information center there.

Wouldn't one center at the corner, manned by city people, the Chamber, Green Thumb workers and maybe volunteers, and open lots of hours in the summer, make more sense?

Where? At the police station? Or sell that land to a business, and put it in The Gateway?

Then there are the organizations. Oberlin and Decatur County have a Chamber of Commerce to promote business. Then there is the downtown-oriented Oberlin Business Alliance, which promotes business just in Oberlin. The Eco-

nom Development Corp., a joint agency sponsored by the city, county and banks, promotes business growth. And the city has a Convention and Visitors Bureau to spend money from its motel tax.

Couldn't they be joined. Often, the same people go to all four meetings. The groups work on projects which overlap and mesh and sometimes they work together. Chamber manager Helen Gee also serves the business alliance and the development agency. Connie Grafel, as marketing manager, works for the city promoting The Gateway and for the development group, recruiting business.

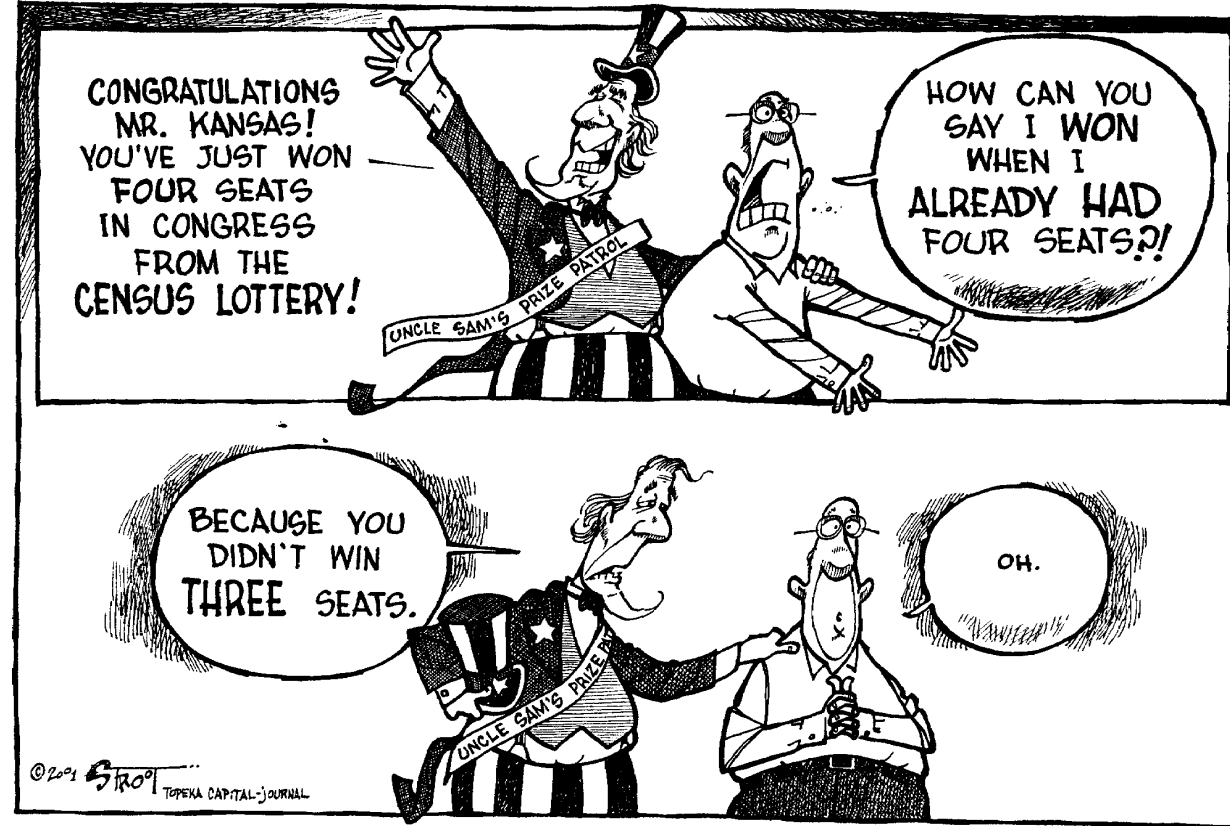
State law requires a board to handle the bed tax money and specifies, to some extent, how it will be made up. It might not be legal for the city to contract the duties to the Chamber, but it would make sense.

In some towns, Goodland and Colby, for instance, Chamber and convention-visitors jobs are meshed under one manager. While there are separate boards, all the works gets done in one office. With some planning that might work for Oberlin, too.

In a little town like this, it's hard to find enough volunteers to do all the jobs. People get burned out. With four boards and five agencies (including the city) promoting business, you have to ask if we are spreading ourselves too thin. And what we could do to change that.

Because we need the maximum effort if we're going to maintain a viable community here. To do that, we need unity and unified management.

— Steve Haynes



Bird dog loves watching birds above

Birds — Don't ya just love 'em. Well, all my animals do.

Annie's a bird dog. She sits on top of her house like Snoopy on his Sopwith Camel watching the neighbor's bird feeder with the fervor of a religious convert.

Mollie and Khan also like birds. They view the that thing full of bird seed as a cat feeder — although frankly they almost never eat the birds they catch.

We can go months without the cats ever bringing in a bird. But, since late November they've been hitting the avian population hard.

Maybe, it's the cold weather. It's harder to get going in the cold and the sparrows are easier prey.

Maybe, it's just natural selection. We have a dumber bunch of birds right now — but not for long.

Now, I figure any bird stupid enough to get caught by a cat with no claws deserves to be lunch. I just wish that that's what would happen — I hate waste.

But, the cats catch birds then don't seem to know what to do with them. I don't think that they mean to kill them



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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at all. They're just playing. But, they play a little rough.

So it is that we are forever picking up the remains from the yard.

Luckily, the children are older now and we don't have to have a funeral for each and every bird, lizard and bug that the cats drag in. Back when they were little I did more funerals than a lot of preachers I know.

Still, I've learned to watch out when the cats want in the house. If there is one thing worse than finding a dead bird on your doorstep it's finding an injured one flying around your house.

Trying to catch a scared, injured bird is heartbreaking.

You don't want to hurt the poor thing

any more than it already has been and it keeps running into things like windows and mirrors. You open the door and it flies past.

Meanwhile, the family cat, the perpetrator of this outrage races from room to room hopping on furniture and stimulating the bird to even greater feats of frightened fluttering.

By the time you catch the bird, put it outside in a, hopefully, safe place and used the toe of your shoe to send the cat out, you're about as frazzled as the poor bird.

I've heard of people who tied bells on their cats to keep them away from the birds. I think that would drive all of us dingly.

Late night phone calls always bad

Late night phone calls are, almost always, bad news. The alarm clock is on my side of the bed, the phone on Jim's. I think that's one more way he tries to protect me. Being the buffer for bad news.

"Did they fly her out? Are you leaving soon? Okay, I'll drive up in the morning." That was his end of the conversation Saturday night, late, when Jim's sister, Mary, called to let us know their mother, Margie, had had a mild heart attack. She was stable and in Billings.

Mary would arrive about noon the next day and if Jim left early Sunday morning, he would get there about 10 or 11 that night. That was the plan as we tried to get some sleep.

Next morning we got his things together. Even traveling "light", it took awhile. We had to include foul weather gear, "just in case".

The good news is, Jim arrived, safely, to find his mom sitting up in bed, smiling and joking. He'll be home in a couple of days.

When Jim is away I really miss him. Actually, I'm totally worthless when he's not here. I don't get a thing done. Yesterday, I was a total "vegetable". This morning I had to make my own coffee. That's become Jim's "job". He knows just how I like it and always has my cup waiting for me. Funny, isn't it, how couples have their little rituals. Little habits that are unique, just to them. Habits that might look funny to the outside world, but leave a big hole when they're absent.

—ob-

Babies, babies everywhere! It's a population explosion! There must be about six women expecting at church, my nephew, Sheldon and his wife just had a new baby girl about three weeks



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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ago and now my friends LaDawna and Cody are getting a baby on Thursday.

Whether a baby is born into a family or chosen, it is a special blessing. LaDawna and Cody have been trying to adopt a child for a couple years. But the "rigmarole" you have to go through is tremendous. Paperwork, evaluations, waiting, more paperwork and more waiting.

Then one day, out of the blue, (I call it a miracle) they learn of a baby that needs a home. A couple of phone calls later, LaDawna has a stunned look on her face and says, "I think we're going to have a baby!" "When?" was our question. "In

three weeks!" she said. Now, LaDawna is a cute little ball of fire and when she gets rolling, nothing slows her down. In record time, the baby's room is ready and all the necessary legal work has been processed. Come-home-from-the-hospital clothes are waiting and the parents-to-be are anxious and excited.

They are also grateful. Grateful that a young woman didn't take the easy way out nine months ago and that she is making the right, but difficult, decision now. This baby is SO loved. Loved by a woman whose arms have been empty and loved by the mother whose arms will be.

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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Letters will not be censored, but will

be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals.

From the Bible

To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted. Ecclesiastes: 3:1-2.

Evolution issues before education board

To the Editor:

At its January meeting, the state Board of Education is scheduled to revisit the Kansas Science Education Standards and perhaps consider a new draft that restores evolution and related concepts.

Advocates on both sides would be well-advised to check the actual documents that will be discussed in order to avoid the misunderstanding that accompanied much of the 1999 testimony. With the exception of the consistently accurate reports by the education reporter for *The Kansas City Star*, much media reporting was inaccurate and led to confusion for school personnel and the public. In 1999, the original proposed science education standards did not force students to believe in evolution and the alternative standards adopted did not require equal time for creationism or prohibit the teaching of evolution.

The current standards approved by the board in 1999 have been distributed

Letters to the Editor

to school districts and are available in print from the Kansas Department of Education, 120 S.E. 10th Ave., Topeka, Kans., 66612-1182 and can be found on-line at www.ksbe.state.ks.us, by routing to the science standards.

The proposed standards (Draft 6) by the 27-member science writing committee has been updated since the Draft 5 proposed in 1999. Tentative and final text of Draft 6 will be available on line at kabt.org/standards as they become available, and in print from Schrock, 1101 W 18th Avenue, Emporia, Kan. 66801.

There are many differences of substance between the two versions: nature of science, tolerance statement, "big bang," evolution, geological history, etc.

Those who wish to testify at the

board's public forum will likely have a short time allotment. Speakers should prepare written testimony and be prepared to stop at the end of their time period; speaking overtime harms your cause. All members of the board are concerned with what is best for the school children of Kansas. Uncivil comments and failure to respect the board's position likewise harms a speaker's cause. Many speakers in 1999 were polite, civil and constructive. Some were not.

If all advocates do their homework and mind the manners their mothers taught them, then this round of science standards deliberations may be less contentious.

John Richard Schrock
Emporia

Shortage of natural gas questioned

To the Editor:

They tell us there is a drastic shortage of natural gas. Prices are doubling almost daily, it seems. But natural gas is odorless, colorless and tasteless (not to mention priceless). The gas is buried deep in the ground where you can't see it, or for that matter, know how much is really buried there. So if the gas companies say there is a shortage, how are you supposed to know if that is the straight skinny?

So they tell us there is a shortage, but I still run my furnace 24/7 and the pilot

light has not flickered even once. Wouldn't you think if there was a shortage, that some days we would have to do without?

We have all heard of company executives who lie, cheat, steal, misrepresent and deceive just to increase company profits ... and their bonus. It doesn't hurt their reputation as a smart businessman who knows how to make a buck, either.

Several years ago, David Letterman jokingly said that there would be a shortage of toilet paper. There was ... in

just a few days ... because people were hoarding toilet paper out of fear of the shortage. Deja vu.

So maybe if I ran something like a lima bean store, I could spread the word around that lima beans were getting more scarce by the day. What a simple way to get rich quick.

Deja vu all over again.

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Stolen money returned to taxpayers

To the editor.

There he goes again! Mr. Bill has just blown \$300,000,000.00 of my (our) money to help the "poor" pay their energy bill. Has it ever occurred to anyone that the "poor" might just be "poor" because of the onerous taxes imposed by our various government entities? Why must the government "steal" our money and then give it back as a "many splendored gift"?

Go figure this! First the income tax. Then the state income tax. Then the sales tax. Then the real estate tax. Then the auto license tax...

Then the tobacco tax. Then the alcohol tax. Taxes are one thing that never seem to decrease. We are paying taxes on top of taxes that are even yet still on top of other taxes ... and with dollars that are taxed 30-40% before you ever see your paycheck! If you don't know

how much of your annual income is eaten up by taxes then you are the perfect fool ... and the politicians love you folks to death!

When you add it all up ... then boil it all down ... Mr. Bill isn't giving us "Jack" ... he is merely returning STOLEN PROPERTY!

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