

Governor right to support Highway Patrol pay boost

In a year when the state of Kansas doesn't have much money, the Kansas Highway Patrol hopes to get some. Here's hoping they do.

The patrol, long known as the class act of Kansas law enforcement, has slipped to the point where at least two police departments in the state pay officers more than the patrol does. The pool of applicants has shrunk in less than 15 years from about 3,000 to 450 or so, making it harder to hire the kind of trooper Kansas wants.

Faced with at least 106 troopers who can retire in the next five years, and with pay lower than any surrounding state, the patrol wonders where it will find the replacements, let alone more troopers to handle ever-increasing traffic.

Gov. Bill Graves, who directly supervises the patrol, is going to bat for the agency. He's asked for a 5 percent pay increase for troopers while other state employees would get 3 percent. Coupled with an increase in starting pay planned for all workers, that would bring rookie officers up from \$26,000 a year to \$28,000. That's still below Colorado, where another raise is already in the works, but it would be a start toward rebuilding the patrol.

Patrol commanders are not kidding themselves. They know that they have to examine all functions and activities and pare down to the essential core. That means patrolling Kansas highways, the job

the patrol was created to do.

Already, the agency has cut back on such extra-neous duties as searching Greyhound buses as they pass through the state, and heavy involvement in drug operations. There may be more cuts aimed at keeping troopers on the road.

As it is, at least 22 counties (including Rawlins, Sheridan, Graham and Wallace in our area) have no trooper stationed in them. Unless the patrol can hire enough officers, there could be more.

The Kansas patrol has a long and illustrious history, dating back to the 1930s, when a small cadre of troopers was expected to keep the roads safe — and catch the bank robbers who were running amok in those days. For many years, it was under the state Highway Commission, and now it one of the few agencies that report directly to the governor.

By tradition, it is not a state police agency. Its mission is to enforce traffic laws, investigate accidents, protect the governor and a few other important services. A proposal to put the patrol under a new public safety department died in the Legislature last year, and that's just as well. The agency is doing fine right where it is.

But troopers do deserve better pay, and more than one increase will be necessary to get the agency back up where it should be.

— Steve Haynes

Being snowed in wasn't too bad

It was kind of nice getting snowed in. Plenty of food, plenty of heat and plenty to do. We watched a television preacher or two and even called in to a "Find It in the Bible" show.

This was the Sunday our church normally has its monthly carry-in potluck dinner, so I had made this huge stuffed-pasta-shell casserole the day before. A call to Teresa found us with company for dinner and it turned out to be a really nice day.

—ob—

Yes, there is life without cable. We canceled our service several months ago. And, with the exception of the History Channel, haven't missed it a bit. However, Super Bowl Sunday caused Jim to take drastic measures. He climbed our television tower to turn the antenna to boost reception. The game, as usual, didn't live up to the hype and it was another lopsided victory.

The commercials, as usual, too, were the highlight of the show. But, I have to ask, "How could that EDS commer-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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cial (with the rabbits) possibly cost over a million dollars to make? And, what did it have to do with software/technology?"

—ob—

Do you ever notice dumb directions on some products? This was on Nytol SleepAid: "Warning: May Cause Drowsiness." (One would hope.) These instructions were printed on the bottom of a box of bread pudding: "Do Not Turn Upside Down." (Oops! Too late!)

—ob—

Work on the old Kelley farmhouse

is rapidly progressing. All the tear-out work is done and with new storm windows, wiring, insulation and drywall, it is buttoned up nicely. For the first time in my memory, it is actually warm, even upstairs.

Now we are on a search for old wallpaper. Brian wants to restore the house as authentically as possible. We found some old wallpaper Mom must have left out there, but it won't be nearly enough. She even papered the ceilings, but that's where I draw the line.

Check your closets and let me know.

Oberlin girl writes home from Africa

To the Editor:

Greetings from Senegal! In the States, I would dream in my sleep that I was back in Africa. Now I wake up from my dreams, realize the electricity is out yet again, and think to myself, "Yep, I'm in Africa." (And I love it!)

We left France Aug. 14, for Senegal, West Africa. A train, a few buses and a couple of airports later, we landed safely in Dakar, the capital city and our new home for the time being.

In October, we began formal Wolof language study. As we fumble along one word at a time, our Senegalese friends often encourage us with a Wolof proverb that says, "Little by little one catches the monkey in the forest." We're learning, among other things, that in this language, verbs are not conjugated but pronouns are (and there are

a lot of pronouns!) My favorite expression so far is the equivalent of saying "Don't count on it." In the States, we'd say, "When pigs fly." Here it's "When chickens have teeth."

Life has a different pace here in Senegal and at times the simplicity is wonderful; other times, challenging, is a better word for it. Each day, though, God



gives the needed strength and grace.

My prayer is that He change us so that others would see Him in us, be drawn to Him and be saved, to His glory and praise!

Thank you all for your prayers and giving in support of this ministry: Pioneers, 12343 Narcoossee Rd., Orlando, Fla., 32827. You are a blessing!

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Letter to the Editor

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THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals mail postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$25 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$29 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$32 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$20 extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

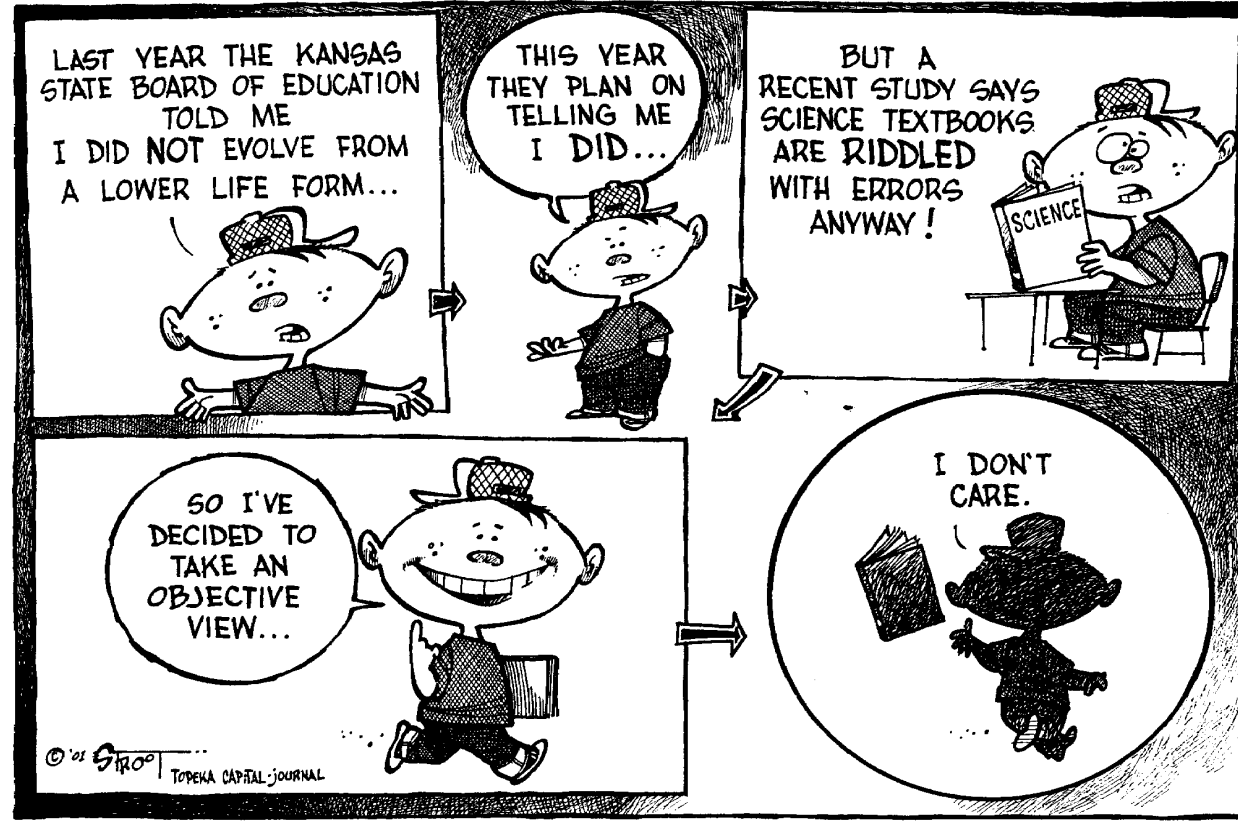
Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon. - Fri. (Also open most Saturdays when someone is in.)

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Initially, she's against all of 'em

I'm a member of the RI, BPW, KPA, CPA, KPhA, CPhA, IP, NNA, DCACC, SFCC, GDCC, CCC and OBA.

I went to school at OLP, NDHS and KU — not to be confused with KSU — a similar but less prestigious institution of high learning farther up the river.

Now that you know all about me — What you don't know is anything about me?

But, you must. I had two children who graduated from DCHS and one from MVHS. My daughters graduated from CU and KU. I have a BS in Ph and on the weekends I work as an RPh.

If all this is initially confusing, let me tell you, it doesn't get any better.

I hate initials. Everyone uses them and half of us don't have a clue as to what they mean.

I think it all started with the AFL-CIO.

Now everyone knows that is an important labor group but only about 2 percent of the population can tell you that it stand for American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations. (I'm among the 98 percent. I had to look it up.)

The funny thing about many groups that we know by initials only is that they don't want you to know what their real name is. I don't suppose anyone in the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations cares if you spit out that mouthful or call them the AFL-CIO.

But, what about the NAACP?

Their name is not politically correct anymore and no one calls them the Na-



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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tional Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Who you calling "Colored?"

But, I suppose it isn't practical to change the name to the more politically correct, National Association for the Advancement of African Americans — the NAAAA — people would think its a motel rating or something.

The NAACP isn't the only group that doesn't want you to know what their real name is. The FFA has told me they are no longer the Future Farmers of America.

It seems that the term farmers limits their membership and they, well they, aren't all farmers.

Is "farmers" now a politically incorrect term?

Looking at prices for agricultural products, a lot of my friends who depend on that for a living, will tell you it seems to be that way.

The venerable AARP is also asking that people stop calling them the American Association of Retired Persons.

Since they have a starting age limit of 50, a lot of their members aren't retired and don't plan to retire for many more years.

It doesn't look good, they say, to use the R-word anymore.

Well, excuse me. RETIRED. RETIRED. RETIRED. nana nana nana. (see picture of tongue stuck out.)

Well, you organizations can't fool me or the rest of the world, either. We know who what are and what you stand for. The only thing is — we don't understand why you have a problem with it.

(Key to initials: Rotary International, Business and Professional Women, Kansas Press Association, Colorado Press Association, Kansas Pharmacy Association, Colorado Pharmacy Association, Inland Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, St. Francis Chamber of Commerce, Goodland Chamber of Commerce, Colby Chamber of Commerce and Oberlin Business Alliance.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help grade school, Notre Dame High School, the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Decatur Community High School, Monte Vista (Colo.) High School, the University of Colorado, bachelor of science in pharmacy, registered pharmacist.)

Parents feel pinch as feds butt in

Oh, the feds have done it again.

Our Congress, which always wants to be seen as doing something good, has completely screwed up the system for paying child support.

It may have sounded like a good idea, but forcing states to centralize all support payments has not worked out. Kansas may be one of the worst states in handling this mess, but it is not alone.

It seems like every time the government steps in, orders states around and tries to solve a problem, it makes a mess. You'd think they'd learn.

Across Kansas, thousands of divorced parents are getting their checks late each month. Some mothers literally have no money for food. Yet month after month, the state does not pay them on time, even though their ex-husbands (and ex-wives) have paid the state.

Until last year, child support payments were handled through district courts in most Kansas counties. The court bureaucracy could be tough enough to deal with some days, but at least it was local. You could go down to the courthouse and get someone to help you.

Then Congress, in its infinite wisdom, stepped in. It decided that states needed centralized, computerized payment offices to crack down on deadbeat dads. Many states, ill equipped for the



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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task, but facing a cutoff of federal money (sound familiar?), mostly hired outside contractors to build and run the systems.

The result has been chaos. More than 9,000 checks a month are late in Kansas, and while that's only 3 percent of the total, it's a big problem if you are in that 3 percent. It's one of those cases where doing pretty good isn't good enough.

Gov. Bill Graves has pleaded for more time to fix the system, and the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services says it is working with the contractor, Tier Technologies.

But parents are still not getting their checks on time. They complain that Tier workers are secretive, won't say where they are or give out any other information. The firm claims that office workers in similar systems elsewhere have been stalked and assaulted, so secrecy is necessary.

But I can't remember a Kansas court-

house coming under assault from a deadbeat mom, can you?

While Congress is patting itself on the back, though, thousands of parents nationwide, mostly women, are waiting for money for food. For many, the support checks are the bulk of their income. The old system, with local offices, looks pretty good to most of them. There is no evidence that, in Kansas at least, it was not working.

It's just one more example of Uncle Sugar offering his help — or else — and making a mess of things. Will we ever learn?

From the Bible

If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. James 2:8.

Woman wants change in adoption laws

To the Editor:

An attorney who represents both the birth parents and the adoptive parents in dual representation adoptions has a conflict of interest between the two parties and a conflict of interest between him or herself and the birth parents.

The adoptive parents who hire and pay the attorneys' bill want the adoption to take place.

The birth parents are vulnerable and need competent and complete information and good advice concerning their options and the resources that are available to them.

The better quality of legal representation that the attorney provides to the birth parents, the more likely they will choose alternatives to adoption.

The attorney's reputation depends on a high rate for his or her adoptions actually taking place. Future clientele and future income for the attorney are di-

Letter to the Editor

rectly affected by the attorney's ability to get the adoptions he or she handles to take place. This creates a personal financial motive for the attorney to provide less than adequate legal services towards the birth parents.

In many adoptions today the sum total of the legal representation given to the birth parents is 15 minutes to allow them to read forms that have been prepared with legal wording that is difficult to understand and the legal advice of the attorney which consists of "sign here".

When the attorney has more contact than this with the birth parents, it creates an opportunity for the attorney to apply coercion and in many cases to

fraudulently convince a birth parent that papers she signed before her child's birth could be considered binding.

Laws are needed to protect these vulnerable young people from fraudulent misrepresentation by attorneys.

Please write your senators and representatives asking for legislation that prohibits dual representation by attorneys in adoption cases. A license to practice law should not be misinterpreted as a license to commit acts of fraud against the most vulnerable of our society.

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