

Let's keep allowing people to choose their own judges

It doesn't seem likely that the Kansas Legislature is going to do anything about the way we choose our judges, and it's just as well.

There is a movement to eliminate election of district and magistrate judges, but it would take a two-thirds vote in both houses to pass it, since it would require a constitutional amendment. Then voters would have to approve the change, and that is not likely, either.

As one legislator put it, the fact that two judges lost their jobs last fall indicates that the system is working. While it's not common for a judge to be voted out, it happens — as it did in Oberlin's judicial district — when judges lose touch with the voters.

And for the most part, voters exercise pretty good common sense when they judge the judges. I've known of times when a good judge was beaten at the polls, but usually, he had lost touch.

Even bad judges are hard to defeat. Lawyers are loath to run against the judge, fearing his or her wrath if they lose. When someone does run, the situation is pretty bad. And voters do occasionally

respond.

At least under the election system, lawyers and voters have a chance to make a change. Contrast that with the appointment system used in some Kansas districts.

Judges are chosen by a committee, which gives a list of names to the governor. He then has a chance to reward his friends or punish enemies who might appear on the list. (This system also is used for Court of Appeals and Supreme Court vacancies.)

Governors usually choose well, but voters have little say in the process. And appointed judges are seldom, if ever, turned out of office in "yes-no" retention votes. Besides, with the appointment system, there is no guarantee that the unnamed replacement judge will be any better than the old one.

As it is today, Kansas counties and judicial districts have a choice of the two systems, but most rural areas elect their judges. And like the system.

As the saying goes, if it ain't broke, why fix it?
— Steve Haynes

It's time for ol' man winter to go

Okay, already! I give! Uncle! Quit! I'm ready for winter to be over.

I'm not necessarily ready for the never-ending work of spring and summer, but I AM tired of gloves and boots constantly drying by the furnace, snow and mud getting tracked in, cats not wanting to go out, electric blankets, chili on every menu, and the sun coming up too late and going down too early.

I'm ready for that — oh so brief — interim period between winter and spring when for about a week, it's cold, but not bitter. When things are dry, but not dusty, when you just feel good. It's probably nature's way of easing you out of the winter doldrums and getting you ready for the spark of spring.

—ob—
Maybe that's why this sounded like a good time to go back to Mexico on another mission trip. We leave Friday for 10 days. It takes two full days to drive down, one day to pick up our perishables, meet our contact and cross the border. House-building consumes the next three to four days, then we need part of a day to pack up and leave Mexico. One "play day" in Carlsbad, N.M., and then two full days to drive back.

The average temperature this time of



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
Out-Back@webtv.net

year in Juarez is 65 degrees. Oh, yes! That sounds heavenly, even if we will work like dogs the whole time we're there. The good news is that we'll be staying in a church that has running water and electricity. There are 34 people going and only one shower, so I foresee lines.

—ob—
In anticipation of this trip, I had been considering getting a permanent. Last summer, without one, my entire time out-of-country was spent with straight, limp, lank hair. This trip, I vowed, would be different. No vain attempts with rag-rollers, no sleeping with pin-curls, no more pony-tail-only hair style.

My sweet sister-in-law, Marya beautician, quickly volunteered to work me in. She quizzed me out with the usual beauty shop questions:

"How long has it been since your last perm?" About three years. "Do you color your hair?" I'm 53, what do you think? "Does your hair curl easily?" Uh, I think so. Well, let's just say, that now we know so. I am the Queen of Curl, the Princess of Perm; I put the "V" in Va-Voom. You know Lisa in the Dilbert cartoon-strip? She and I have a lot in common. It takes some getting used to. Jim still jumps a little when he first wakes up. But all-in-all it's just fine and I definitely don't have to worry about lack-of-curl while we're away.

—ob—
After the Children's Sermon, the preacher sent the kids back to their seats with this admonition. "Now, you kids may stay for regular church. But, remember, you have to be quiet. There are people trying to sleep here."

Veterinarian writes about his aunt

To the Editor:

Feb. 7 was the funeral for my aunt, Helen Tacha. During the services, the pastor invited those who wanted to share their thoughts and memories of Aunt Helen to do so. As Kay Tacha Brown spoke, my cousin, Judy Tacha Vaughn, Aunt Helen's daughter, turned to look at me and encouraged me to speak also. I was unprepared and didn't want to get up and babble, though there is so much I could have said.

Like so many others, I owe a great deal to Helen Tacha. She and her husband, Elmer were as much a mother and father (and Judy a sister) to me as my own, and they are giants in my memory. She expected much but she gave even more, teaching all those she touched how to unlock the potential found within. Others, notably "the Porter

Letter to the Editor

kids," Chuck, Jan, Chay and David, were similarly touched and guided by her firm but loving hand.

The pastor said that Judy would always try to gether mom to smile for pictures. Now that I think of it, it's hard to recall Aunt Helen actually smiling. But there was always a twinkle in her eye, whether she was lovingly scolding Uncle Elmer for one of his jokes or chiding me, after I declared my intention to become a vet, when I complained about the way pigs squeal at cutting time.

"You're going to have to put up with a lot more than that if you want to be a

vet," she said, with a half smile and a bright twinkle. She was right. I never again even thought about complaining when times were tough. She wouldn't have tolerated it.

Helen and Elmer Tacha are the two most remarkable people I have ever known. They have both done far more than their share in service to God, country, family and their fellow human beings. Aunt Helen leaves behind an enduring legacy through her family and others whose lives she has touched and changed.

John Hess DVM
Aurora, Colo.



She's all packed up and snowed in

I spent all weekend packing and unpacking, fuming, fussing and generally being difficult to be around.

I know this, because my husband told me so.

We were supposed to go to William Allen White Day in Lawrence on Thursday and Friday. On Thursday, there was dinner at the country club, then on Friday there were meetings, and afterward we had plans to take our children out to dinner in Kansas City — all very elegant.

On Saturday, we were to drive to Emporia to see Steve's youngest brother and his family, have supper and spend the evening at the lake outside of town with his sister and her family — all very cozy.

I had two long velvet dresses and a suit laid out on the spare bed for Thursday and Friday. I had jeans, a sweatshirt and several T-shirts, plus assorted underwear, makeup and jewelry packed in my bag for the weekend. I was set and ready to go.

Thursday morning we were to leave at 11 a.m. I went to work for a couple of hours and arrived back home at 10:30 to find my husband reading the paper and drinking coffee. He wasn't packed. He wasn't shaved. He wasn't ready.

I was exasperated. He explained that instead of getting



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
chaynes@nwkansas.com

ready, he had been on the computer and phone checking the weather and the roads. The report wasn't good.

I made a few phone calls of my own. The report wasn't good but I was still mad at Steve for not being ready to go even if we couldn't go anywhere.

I put one dress away. We would leave early in the morning and still make the luncheon and afternoon meeting. We would still go to dinner and Kansas City and visit the relatives.

It snowed. It blowed. The girls we had sent to a seminar in Manhattan couldn't get home.

Friday, the *Salina Journal* didn't arrive and the Hayneses didn't leave.

I returned the suit and the second good dress to the closet but kept the suitcase. If the weather cleared, we could still get to Emporia to see the brothers and sisters, and the kids might be able to drive down from Lawrence

and spend the evening with us.

The roads were fine around Oberlin. The roads were good around Emporia. We were ready to go. Steve, dum him, checked the Internet and called highway patrol.

If we had to travel anywhere near Salina, they said, we shouldn't, couldn't and probably wouldn't. So we didn't.

I unpacked the suitcase, put on the jeans and sweatshirt and went to work. I got a lot done, but for some reason Steve stayed a long ways away from me for the rest of the weekend. He said I wasn't much fun to be around.

Picky, picky, picky. The *Journals* arrived by Saturday afternoon and the girls got back from Manhattan by 8:30 p.m. — only 48 hours overdue.

My sister and brother-in-law are still waiting on us.

There's another way to fix drive

There seems to be a great demand to have a doorside dropoff point at The Gateway. The current plan is to build a drive up to one of the doors, either the front door on the south, or the west door on the second floor.

The problem is not accessibility — the civic center was built to accommodate wheelchairs — but the distance from the street to the building. Many elderly people do not want to walk that far.

In the last couple of years, I've seen drivers take their cars right up the sidewalk to the main door. With pedestrians trying to get into the building, dangerous would be a good description for this.

But can the city afford to spend \$15,000 — or possibly a lot more — on a drive up to the doors? And do people really need to be delivered there? The walk is only 50 feet or so.

No. It isn't worth the money, and the building was not designed to have a drive up to either door. It would be easier at the west door, but then people will be a long way from the arena.

Because there are some people, especially those who use wheelchairs, who may have trouble with the existing walks, it makes sense to provide an alternative. Why not make access from the rear (north) doors, which face a driveway already, a little easier? Save the money and avoid messing up the building.

☆☆☆☆
While the City Council debates whether to cut the police department from four to three men, what about the terrible way they have treated our police chief?



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
shaynes@nwkansas.com

He's taking a pay cut of 10 to 15 percent this year because the council cut off his overtime pay without giving him a compensating raise. Is that how the city should treat a dedicated and valuable employee?

While some of our councilmen don't seem to like the police department very much, you can't argue with the results, in terms of the crime rate.

How would you feel if your boss cut your pay, but told you to work harder, with less help? Like leaving?

☆☆☆☆
Being police chief can be a thankless job anyway. How do you suppose those property owners reacted when served with letters asking that they remove their junk vehicles? Yet the police did their job.

Nobody ever thanks the cops for most of what they do, though we all agree it's important. But traffic tickets, nuisance citations, dog-at-large tickets and a lot of other things are necessary to keep a town like ours functioning smoothly.

All the cops get in return, usually, is complaints, pay cuts and abuse.

Thanks guys. Some of us think it's important.

☆☆☆☆

When city elections come around, there will be two factions. One will say they want to get in there and save us money, but what they really want is to run things. These candidates will want to micromanage the city.

Other candidates will want to listen, react, and do the right thing. You'll know which is which.

☆☆☆☆
And finally, is there anything more awful than the squawk the downtown speakers make after the tape runs out and the machine just keeps on generating noise? It's that way most Sundays lately. Ugh!

From the Bible

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. St. Mark, 13: 30-31.

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

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800

E-mail: obherald@nwkansas.com

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STAFF

Steve Haynes editor
Kimberly Brandt news editor
Mary Lou Olson society editor
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Woman unhappy with neighbors

To the Editor:

In regard to the issues of the home occupation permit of Judy and Roger Cochran, Elsie and Gus Wolters did ask the city to revoke the permit for the following reasons:

According to the zoning ordinances of Oberlin, both the Wolters residence and the Cochran residence across the street have been zoned as residential. As for a home occupation, the zoning ordinance states on page 5, paragraph 36:

- To operate a home occupation you need to be the owner of the home.
- The home occupation must be done in the home or a building attached to the home — not detached.

To us, a storage building is one thing — but two businesses is another situation, as Metz Baking was to use the Cochran building as a warehouse.

Letter to the Editor

This issue got completely out of hand as there were at least two large trucks going back and forth at various times of the day and night. This is also bad for the traffic on this residential area, as several older people frequently use these streets for walking.

We think the Cochrans were using this building both for a warehouse and a construction business, therefore were having two businesses in the building.

It has always been my understanding that a warehouse is a building used for storage — I would not have thought a large truck and a semi-truck could be doing business out of such building some five days a week, several times a day and night. I think especially con-

struction needs to be out of the city limits, because it involves so much traffic, heavy equipment and many large items.
Elsie Wolters
Oberlin

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