

We need to get our schools up-to-date for the future

Oberlin School District citizens will have a chance this spring to vote on the future of our community.

Without good schools, no one is going to want to live here, and if we don't invest in our schools, they will go downhill fast.

Already, new technology has outstripped the electrical systems at both the high school and grade school. And while the high school has plenty of room, the grade school is cramped, offering little place for special teachers and services required for schools today.

While both buildings are solid and beautiful, in a way that a new school would not be, both need work. And we will be using them 30-40 years from now, making the proposed bond issue a good investment.

Some people are going to say that schools were not air conditioned when they attended years ago, and that is true. But school did not start in the middle of the summer then.

Those same people drive around in air-conditioned pickups and cars today, live in air-conditioned houses and work in air-conditioned offices or tractors.

Little education is accomplished in the first two to four weeks of the school year, while kids and teachers sweat away the hours, watching the thermometer and the clock.

It's true, enrollment has been shrinking, but experts don't expect that to continue. Rather, they expect class size to stabilize and, possibly, some students from surrounding areas to come in to larger schools like Oberlin.

We will need the space in both schools, and we need to invest in the facilities now. The slimmed-down bond issue, at \$5.63 million, is similar in size to the last one, 35 years ago, when you account for inflation. You could spend more and not waste the money, but this plan is reasonable, a good start on work at the schools.

Either we can let the school facilities continue to slip away, or we can do something to invest in the future. Oberlin has always been a progressive community, and this is a chance to show that pioneer spirit.

If you can, get out and work for the schools now. Register to vote — the deadline is May 21 — and be prepared to vote "yes" for Oberlin schools.

— Steve Haynes

Alliance needs the Chamber

Sometimes a short memory can be a blessing, but in the case of the Oberlin Business Alliance, probably not.

Members of the group have been questioning the requirement that alliance members also join the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce. No one, apparently, can recall why the rule came into being. Neither can any current member of the Chamber board.

Your editor, before the press of business carried him on to other things, once was a dedicated attendee of business alliance functions and, for awhile, a board member. He remembers when the rule was made, and why.

In fact, several alliance members have been around long enough to remember the group coming and going from the Chamber umbrella several times.

Back in the bad old days in the early 1990s, after the Chamber had been nearly wrecked by its then-manager, the alliance was split from the Chamber.

The group, made up mostly of business owners, soon found that it was burning its volunteers out at a record clip. It had no office and no staff support, no one to help with the day-to-day details of running the group and its promotions.

In short, the alliance was foundering. It joined with the Chamber, then rebuilding from its own disaster, and came under the guidance of a new and vigorous chamber executive. She took minutes, did newsletters, manned the office and shepherded the affairs of



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
shaynes@nwkansan.com

both groups. And both prospered.

It was decided then that to be members of the alliance, businesses needed first to join the Chamber. The alliance declared itself to be part of the chamber, and required membership in the parent group.

This allowed the business promotion group to operate under the Chamber's charter and non-profit status, use the Chamber office and the Chamber managers, and have close coordination with its sister group, since the two often are involved in similar activities to promote the area.

Generally, the plan has worked well here and in other areas. Certainly, the alliance would be lost without the staff and office support from the Chamber. And alliance members, as local businesses, should want to support the broader promotional activities of the Chamber.

Now, though, people are questioning the relationship, saying that the extra cost of Chamber membership may be keeping some small businesses from joining the alliance. That could be, but it wouldn't be many, and it could hurt the Chamber.

Oberlin businesses get a bargain from the deal, paying \$125 a year to join the Chamber and \$75 to join the alliance. In Goodland, for instance, it costs a minimum of \$125 a year to join the Chamber and \$25 to join the Chamber's business promotion committee.

However, it costs another \$280 to go in the committee's two main promotions. In Colby, it is nearly \$300 and in St. Francis \$250. Both Colby and Goodland have a single group, as is common in towns across the area.

The bottom line is, we can't afford, in a town as small as Oberlin, to have several groups competing for the promotion dollar. There aren't enough volunteers or bucks to go around. To make any impact at all, we have to work together.

It's tempting to try something just to be different, but the plan that works is cooperation.

The extra dollars from a few marginal members won't pay for the headaches that splitting the alliance and the chamber up again would cause. It would hurt the chamber, benefit the business alliance very little and do no one much good.

Leader warns farmers of regulation

To the Editor:

A new federal motor carrier regulation goes into effect June 1 that may affect some farmers. This new regulation affects trailers and semi-trailers manufactured prior to Dec. 1, 1993, with an overall width of 80 inches or more and a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more.

Trailers and semi-trailers that fall within these parameters must be outfit-

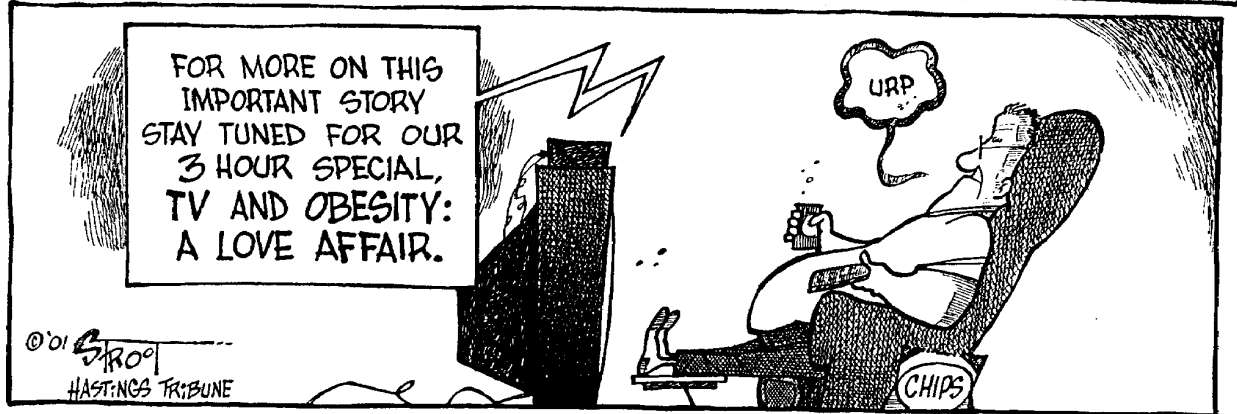
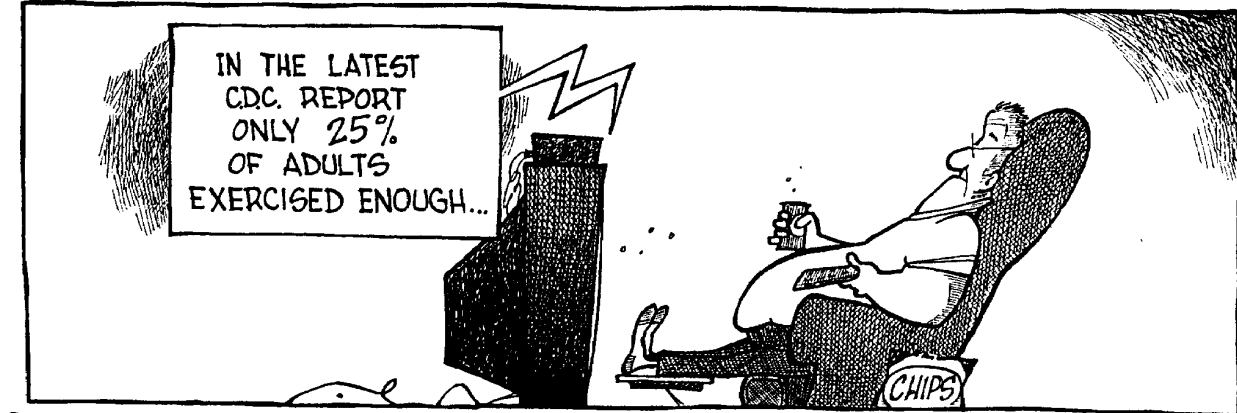
ted with retro-reflective sheeting as described by this regulation. Farmers are exempt if they stay within 150 miles of home and do not cross a state line.

Farm Bureau encourages everyone with this type of trailer or semi-trailer to use the reflective sheeting for safety

even if the regulation does not affect them. For further details, please contact the Farm Bureau office at 475-2238.

Paul Shields
Decatur County
Farm Bureau president

Letter to the Editor



Students dislike article on drugs

To the Editor:

We were very displeased with the article that was printed about the drug activity at Oberlin High School during the recent school dance.

The title of the article implies that the drug transaction happened during school, not at an extracurricular activity.

First of all, TACT was not the only sponsor for this dance. Kayettes were also involved, not that it should matter. As TACT members, we have little control over what is brought into the school unless we search every student as they come through the door.

TACT is not at fault for this incident. The students in TACT are good role models for other kids. That is why we were there having a good time without alcohol and drugs. TACT students were not the only ones to attend the dance.

Letters to the Editor

The article implies that TACT students were involved in the drug transaction, which isn't true. In fact, it was completely opposite. If we had any idea of what was going on we would have tried to stop it. We feel that an apology to TACT is in order here.

Decatur Community High School
TACT members:
Wade Ploussard, Theresa Smith,
Leslie Marcuson, Corey Fortin,
Chelsey Black

Editor's Note: I have re-read the story involved. The headline is accurate; the drugs allegedly were bought at the school. The story clearly states

that this occurred at a dance on Saturday, not during class. In no place does it imply that TACT members were responsible for the drug sale. It says that no one had been charged.

None of you would be involved in anything like this, but it did apparently happen. It's an embarrassment to you and your school.

We'd all rather it hadn't happened, but none of us can afford to ignore it. Rather than criticize the newspaper for an accurate report about the incident, shouldn't TACT members be concerned with having this kind of behavior at your dance?

— Steve Haynes

Canadian serviceman offers web site

To the Editor:

I am retired from the Canadian Air Force, having served between 1956 and 1979. During that period of time I spent a considerable number of years employed at remote radar stations located in Canada which formed what was then referred to as the Pinetree Line. The Pinetree Line consisted of 44 long range radar stations all of which were located in Canada. The American Air Force manned 20 of these long range radar stations during the 1950s and '60s.

I established The Pinetree Line web site on the Internet on Jan. 15, 1998. The web site is dedicated to the thousands of American and Canadian service and civilian personnel that served at any of the 44 radar stations which formed the Pinetree Line.

Many of these radar stations became operational in the early 1950s and remained in service for close to 20 years.

The Pinetree Line web site is designed somewhat similar to a scrap

book — with a different section for each of the Pinetree Line radar stations. Each radar station has its own area for photographs, maps and historical articles. At last count, the web site offered in excess of 12,000 photos, 100 maps, and 1,400 historical articles. To many, this has been quite adequate for a trip back down memory lane.

The web site also offers a guest book, an internal message system, and a data base — containing detail for 1,400 military personnel — which allows an opportunity to look up old friends. The

Pinetree line web site can be accessed at: www.pinetreeline.org

If you served at any of the long-range radar stations or the gap filler sites which formed the Pinetree Line, feel free to connect with the web site and experience some nostalgia of days gone by. You will not be disappointed.

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Reader thanks city for cleanup

To The Editor:

Now that spring has officially arrived and the snow is gone, it's time we thank our city and county crews for an excellent job of maintaining and snow removal.

The county kept the airport open and clean in case a medical emergency

flight was needed. I know both crews worked hard and long to keep the streets and roads open and clean. Let's all thank our maintenance crews. Here's a big one from me.

Thanks!
Lowell Byarlay
Oberlin

Writer wants office consolidation

To the Editor:

Kansas is one of the few states in our nation where all of the U.S. Department of Agriculture state offices are not located together. Nationwide, most state offices are in the same building because it saves money. Office personnel and equipment are shared and these offices are more efficient. The taxpayer saves money.

Unfortunately, Congressman Jerry Moran wants to stop the collocation of state offices in Kansas for his own political benefit.

Moran wants to run for governor and he cannot afford to offend Salina, Manhattan, or Topeka by working to collocate all three of the state offices into one of these cities. It appears that he has convinced top Bush administration of-

ficials to stop any such move "for the foreseeable future" (*Salina Journal* 3/28/01).

While stopping this action will help Congressman Moran politically, it will cost the U.S. taxpayer because of the savings that would have accrued from merging the three state offices. This is another example of how Republican

leaders such as Mr. Moran want to save the taxpayer's money only when it is in their interest to do so.

If Congressman Moran was an effective leader for Kansas, he would demand that this action be taken immediately. He will not and he is not.

Tim Peterson,
Monument

Former residents send in news

To the editor:

We left Oberlin about five years ago and only lived there 3 1/2 years, but we got to know a lot of people so would like the news of the arrival of our daughter, Amy Elizabeth, on March 24, printed in your paper, if you have the space.

We will mail in our subscription renewal now. We especially enjoy Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts' column, and enjoy seeing the pictures of various of the children we knew.

Mike and Jessie Cheek
Tallahassee, Fla.

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

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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, Decatur, 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, \$28 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$32 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$35 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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From the Bible

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. Romans 14: 8-9.