

## Getting rid of police car could cause problems

The City Council seems hell-bent on getting rid of one of the town's old police cars, though the decision is liable to cause more problems than it will save the city money.

The oldest of the department's four cars has 65,000 miles on it, but uses oil and may not be in great shape. The city's manager's ride, a former police car, has 95,000 miles on it.

Advertising the two as used police cars, the city won't get much. The police department, as usual, will be left to pick up the pieces. And the city won't save much. The manager will still have a car, the officers will drive as much as ever, and if the city finds a part-time cop to fill out the schedule, he or she won't have anything to drive.

A couple of council members seems to have an agenda to cut and slash the police department. They succeeded this year in eliminating one job, at least for the time, when an officer quit. They have put off buying new police cars for several years, even though the department had proved it was less expensive to buy new cars than fix old ones.

Having only three cars will cause problems: officers are on call day and night, and they'll have to respond in their own vehicles in an emergency. Who's going to pay them for that, or insure them for using their own cars?

If a part-time officer comes on, he'll be driving a car assigned to one of the regular officers. Most police agencies don't like to do that,

because it reduces individual officers' responsibility for the cars.

Maintenance is liable to suffer and the cars won't last as long.

So far, the city has avoided any big bills for the cars, even though they haven't been replaced on schedule. One new motor could turn that around.

A lot of people had an emotional reaction to buying new police cars all the time, even though it saved the city money. The political reality is, the council isn't going to buy many police cars, not when it's under fire for higher taxes and inconstant spending.

With only three officers and no part-time backup, overtime is up and the officers are stretched thin. The chief has to join in the overtime, but unlike his men, he doesn't get paid for it.

Morale has got to be suffering.

There's not much crime in Oberlin. Maybe that's because it's just a nice little town. Maybe it's because we have more cops than some people think we need. A few years down the road, we may learn the answer, but for now, we're gambling that it's a nice little town.

Maybe few nice little felons will drop in off the highway at night.

And three beat up police cars, manned by tired and overworked cops, will be able to catch the bad guys.

Here's hoping it works — *Steve Haynes*

## Little Pooh sent to market

Pooh, the little black Angus bull-calf, jumped the fence one too many times.

Jim had warned him to stay out of the feedrack with the hay and cane. But, no. Pooh wouldn't listen, and in he jumped. So now, he's on his way to market and our reign as cattle barons is over. With only one calf left on the place, we're just "cattlebaron-wannabes".

Still, it was sad to watch Pooh head to the sale barn in the back of Jim's pickup this morning. It was even harder to listen to the mournful cry of his pen pal, Bucky, as they were separated for the first time. Bucky is the only other bovine Pooh has known. They have been together since each of them was only a few days old. Now, it will be just Bucky to look after as we fatten him up.

But, like the lambs, the calves served their purpose: to give our granddaughters some responsibilities during their stay this past summer. Like all kids, it was fun at first. Then after the fun wore off, it became a chore. But a little work never hurt a kid, and it was a good way to teach them that animals depend on us for their survival and we depend on them for our food.

Their mothers didn't want us to let the girls know that Pooh and Bucky would, someday, be pot roasts and hamburger patties. They shouldn't have worried. The girls were way ahead of us. One day in the car, they asked, pointblank, "Are you going to eat Bucky, Grandma?"

They knew. Kids aren't stupid. Parents should give them lots more credit than they do. Why is it, as we get older, we forget just how smart we were when we were their age?

—ob—



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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Our oldest daughter thinks I'm warped because I like to watch those medical shows on television. Maybe it is demented, but when I watch babies being born, I pant and push right along with their moms. I even laugh and cry with them.

Facelifts and real surgeries are

another thing. A nurse I could never be. I have to close my eyes when the actual cuts are made, but I'm fascinated with the end results. Could I ever have it done myself? You bet! I have "Kelley eyes". And when my eyelids finally reach my eyelashes, I'm callin' the doctor!

### Photo Policy

The *Oberlin Herald* wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are

provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in The Herald are available for 50 cents each, first come, first served. Special-order laser prints of photos will be available at \$3 each for about two weeks after publication.

We can take passport photos if you provide a roll of color film. ASA 200, 12 exposure works fine. The charge is \$8.50 per person.

### From the Bible

My flesh and my heart fail: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. Ps. 73:26



## Purchase for cats teaches lesson

We bought a cata-habitat — or whatever they call those carpet-covered perch things.

It's got a nice little snugly cave on the bottom for curling up in, a rope-covered pole for sharpening claws and a carpet-covered perch for surveying their domain.

The way they love the old wicker basket with a piece of decaying foam rubber that I bought them last month, I thought they'd be ecstatic.

Lesson No. 1 — Cats don't get ecstatic.

They like it. Occasionally, one will sit on the perch. I even spotted one in the cubby. No one has tried the scratching post. Why scratch dull old rope when the couch is so handy?

While the cats haven't been just jumping for joy over the cabitat, Miss Molly was in a frenzy the other night.

It seems Steve was in our hot tub when the cat fell in.

Lesson No. 2 — Cats can swim, but they don't like to.

Steve said she had been exploring the edges while he was relaxing when all of a sudden he heard a sploosh. He knew exactly what had happened and tried to help her out. She wasn't in any mood for help,



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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and he has the scratches to prove it. When she got in the house and I got over having hysterics — it really was funny — I got out a towel and helped her dry off.

She wasn't very grateful for my help, either. Later that night, however, she crawled first into my lap and then Steve's. She'd forgiven us for whatever role we had played in her disgrace.

We both noticed that she was still a little damp behind her neck, where it's real hard to lick yourself dry.

We didn't mention it to her, however. She's the touchy one.

Yesterday morning, I got out the snow shovel and scraped the cat barf and half a bat off the back porch.

Lesson No. 3 — Bats do not digest well.

I was not too happy to find the pile of partially digested cat food on my

back porch on Saturday. And there seemed to be something dark under the pile.

I didn't have enough scientific curiosity to investigate. Where is daughter Lindsay, when we need her? (She's the one who found the desiccated bat on our roof and took it home to show her science classes.)

Later I noticed a dead bat in our yard. Actually, it was a dead bat with a large bite taken out of it. That bite exactly matched the dark mess under the cat food on my porch.

I'm not going to complain about the feathers anymore. Finding dead birds is, in my mind, much to be preferred to finding half-eaten bats.

The joys of cats never end, and every week we learn a new lesson from them.

This week's lesson — watch where you step.

## Lawyers take fun out of crackers

The world we live in ... is populated by lawyers.

Take, for example, Sunshine Biscuit's Cheez-It cracker.

This venerable brand has been around forever — the company claims it has been making the little cheddar squares since 1921, nearly 82 years. And they're still a pretty good snack.

A couple of years ago, the company wanted to jazz up the line. They started making all kinds of specialty Cheez-Its, white cheddar, garlic, party mix, you name it.

And they hired someone to redesign the box. Some smart kid in marketing, or at the advertising agency, came up with the idea of a campy little "engineering diagram" for the crackers.

It labels the perforations along the edge as the "no-slip grip." "Helps you grab more Cheez-Its in every handful."

The hole in the middle is the "air intake, improves aerodynamics during periods of rapid Cheez-It consumption."

And the bumpy, lumpy surface is covered under "surface dynamics: bumpy, crispy, crunchy, utterly satisfying."

Cute, huh?

It was, too, until somebody showed it to legal.

Nothing gets done in the corporate world unless you show it to legal.

And legal was, apparently, not amused.

Someone might read the cutsie description of the cracker and take it seriously.

The mind conjures up a vision of Dave Letterman's Dumb Guy: "Hey, Bill, look at this, wouldja, says these crackers can fly."

Then came the disclaimers: Under the heading, "Anatomy of a Cheez-It,"

(but don't believe it!)

And down below, in tiny type,

"These qualities make Cheez-It fun, but do not suggest any serious product performance claims."

Huh.

Heck, it makes more sense for McDonald's to print a warning on their coffee cups: "Contents may be hot."

McDonald's is kind of stubborn that way. They didn't want to turn down the heat on their coffee, even after they were sued, so they added a warning to the cups.

Personally, I think their coffee is way too hot to drink. But I can tell that without a label.

Oh, back to the Cheez-It box. Somebody at legal made them put another line on in tiny type, by a picture of a cracker in the "anatomy" section.

"Not actual size," it says.

Not true. The crackers on the front of the box are smaller than real ones. The one in the diagram is actual size.

But don't believe it!

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Mail letters to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749, or by E-mail to oberald@nwkansas.com.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

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