

## Let us all be thankful for the things we have here

Three years of drought, at the end of a recession, troops at war on distant continents, an impasse in Washington.

What do we have to be thankful for? It might be our schools. They're losing enrollment and fighting budget cuts, but they're mostly the best. They turn out kids with high test scores and a low ratio of violence. They're long on sports and character, short on drop-outs, discipline problems and failure.

They are, for the most part, places where students go to learn and have fun. They're schools, not warehouses. They get the support they need when the chips are down and the budget is tight.

Or maybe it's the weather. Yeah, I know it's been dry. But we live in a place where the summer is bearable and the winter is (usually, not this weekend) sunny, bright and warm. The humidity stays low most of the time and you can be outdoors most days.

There are those long, lingering sunsets in the fall, awesome thunderstorms in the summer. The Lord usually sends us enough moisture to grow a crop and keep some trees.

What more do we need? Well, it'll rain again some day.

We've got miles of wide-open vistas to be thankful for. Back east, you can get claustrophobia driving down the highway. Here, you can see 50 miles on a clear night. In Denver, half the time, they can't see the mountains across the valley.

Maybe it's living in a place where government is both honest and efficient. In Kansas, we take it for granted that the folks down at the courthouse are working for us, not to get into our pockets.

Let one step over the line, take just a few bucks, and they'll wind up in jail.

If the war is dragging on, remember that we were attacked. If we don't vanquish our foes, they'll be back — again and again.

America is the last, the only superpower. We didn't ask for the job of policeman to the world. There's nobody else to take it.

We should be thankful that we're still able. Imagine a world without some sort of order, a place where dictators run rampant and democracy is on the run. Imagine the world in the 1930s, for instance.

And be thankful. We should appreciate living in the best and most free country on earth.

It's not perfect, not by a long shot. But it's a much better place than it ever has been. It's free, safe and, even in a recession, prosperous.

In America, we live better than any nation has in the history of mankind. In America, we're free to think and live as we please, to pray and work as we please. If our country has its faults, that's the price we pay for freedom. But thankfully, there aren't many.

Out here, we should be thankful that we live among the nicest, most generous and friendliest people anywhere.

We live where you can walk down the streets at night and feel safe. Where you can leave your house or your car unlocked and expect things to be there when you return. Where people wave when they pass you on the road.

We've got game, fishing, open fields and the open road.

What more could we ask for? Yeah, there's a lot to be thankful for.

—Steve Haynes

## Yard chores are done for year

The lawn is clean, the hoses rolled up, the sprinklers put away, and just in time, too.

We spend Saturday making the final preparations for winter. We'd already put down the winter fertilizer and planted new grass in the bare spots left over from the city water project.

Flowerbeds were cleaned out and the garden plots had been mulched for the winter.

With the first big storm of the winter coming, it was time to put the hoses away and disconnect the spigots before they froze and cracked.

Besides, you can run water through a dry, empty hose if you need to. That's not possible with one that's been on the ground, frozen full of water.

I cut the grass one last time, sucking up a few green blades amidst a sea of crackly dry leaves. More mulch for the gardens. You can't get too much, or so it seems.

There are green shoots of spinach poking up through the mulch, ready to sprout and grow a salad early in the spring, before the rest of the garden is turned. It'll be time then to turn the mulch under and enrich the soil. We've been doing that for 10 years now, and the plot is a lot easier to work today.

We're lucky the weather has been so nice. Some years, the first big snow comes before Halloween. This year, we've had an extra month



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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of good weather. That translates to two extra mowings, mostly leaves in the bag, but work all the same.

When I got done Saturday, though, I hosed the mower off and got it ready for winter. It won't be needed until March now.

Who's to say it will rain or snow? Nature can be so fickle. But unless it's really hot and dry, there'll be no need to water the lawn for the next couple of months.

Besides, the way the city figures sewer bills, you can't afford to water in the winter. You have to be pretty desperate. The lawn has to be dying.

I just hope the new grass makes it until spring.

And the iris bulbs. Cynthia dug three or four bags of them up near the garage. We hope to have it replaced by spring, and they had to move. There are some miniature purples, a variety from your great-grandmother's garden, and a couple of bags of hybrids that we picked out at the iris lady's field.

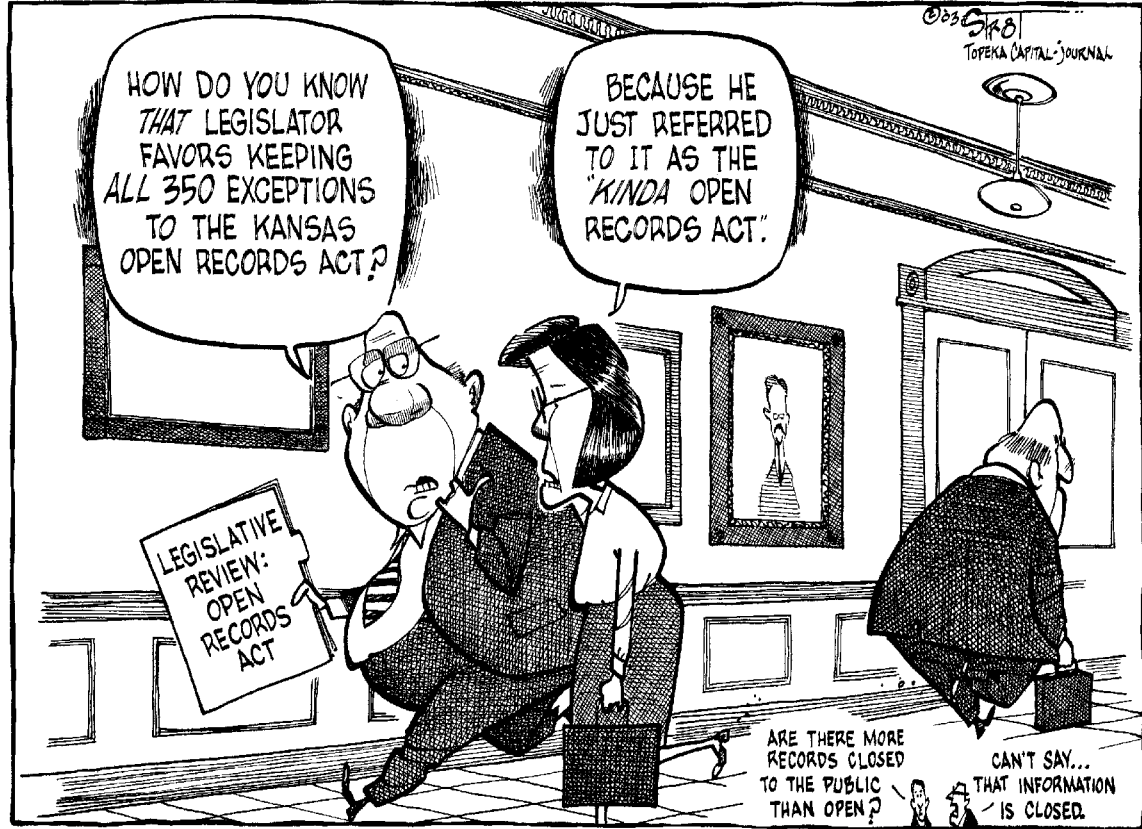
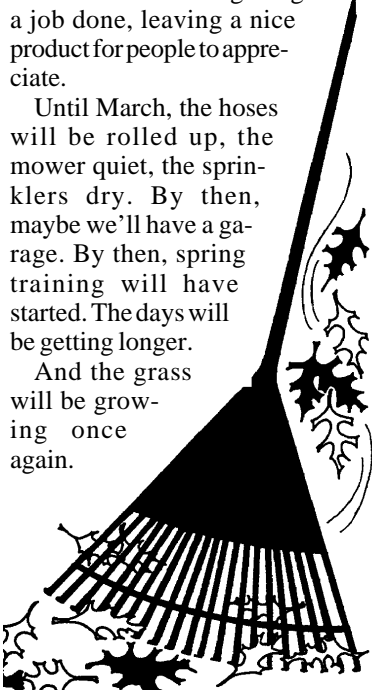
We'll need them to landscape

around the new garage.

I can't say that I'll miss mowing. It's time-consuming and, some days, hard work. But there is a certain feeling of accomplishment that comes with getting a job done, leaving a nice product for people to appreciate.

Until March, the hoses will be rolled up, the mower quiet, the sprinklers dry. By then, maybe we'll have a garage. By then, spring training will have started. The days will be getting longer.

And the grass will be growing once again.



## Four-year-old cracks them up

Four-year-old Taylor has begun to understand the subtleties of delivering a good joke.

It makes you the center of attention, people hang on your every word, and, of course, everyone thinks you're very smart. But, unlike people five times her age, she actually remembers them. She has some great one-liners. She will ask, "What do you call a bear with no teeth?" But before delivering the punchline she will caution, "Think about it."

Then you say, "I don't know. What do you call a bear with no teeth?"

She will double over with laughter and say, ever so smugly, "A GUMMY bear!"

However, the fine line between a "what-do-you-call" joke and a "knock-knock" joke eludes her. Her daddy asked her the standard, "Knock, knock."

"Who's there?"  
"Orange."  
"Orange who?"  
"Orange-ya glad I came to see 'ya'?"

She "got it" but then she wanted to tell her own "knock-knock" joke. Except she didn't know any, so she tried to make some up. She would go through the entire "knock-knock" routine, but then her punchline wouldn't make any sense.

I said, "Taylor, that's not funny. Wait until you can learn some jokes."

Of course, that hurt her feelings. "I'll never get it," she wailed.

Don't worry, kid. Even Jerry Lewis had to start somewhere.

By the way, this edition is coming to you direct from Plano, Texas. Jennifer, Alex and I, along with Jennifer's neighbor, Eileen, made the midnight run between northwest Kansas and Texas on Friday night. Jennifer and I both hate to waste a day of vacation driving, so we left



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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after work and drove during the night. With Eileen along, the conversation was lively and the time and the miles sped by.

Jim has just started another new house, so he will come down the day before Thanksgiving. He was really pushing to get it closed in before winter hit, although a call home reveals "Ole Man Winter" has made his presence known. Jim said we had about an inch of snow on the ground and it was really cold.

Looks like we got rid of our livestock just in time. We had been feeding the calves, Ike and Mike, since spring. Jim thought this would be a good time to sell them, before he had to start chopping water for them and while cattle prices were still up a little bit.

They were nice looking calves, and it sure felt good to put that check into the savings account. When you do livestock like we do, part hobby, part money-maker, it takes the pressure off.

We buy their grain and hay in small quantities, so we don't have to budget much to accommodate them. Then when we sell them, it all seems like profit. Of course, if we kept records on our profit vs. costs ratio, it might not look so profitable. But then, keeping records would take the fun out of it.

I'm trying to ease into Thanksgiving preparations this year. I already have my rolls made and in the

freezer. Pie crusts are next on the list, and since Jim is bringing the turkey, I need to remind him on Tuesday to take the bird out of the freezer. It's ironic, isn't it, how we take days to prepare this feast and it takes about 20 minutes to devour it.

How blessed we are to have no more cares than how many varieties of salad to make. We have such an overabundance in this country, we have no idea how the biggest share of the world lives. The very poorest of our poor are still wealthy by comparison to most people in the rest of the world.

I know I can't save the whole world, and if I could send my leftovers to a starving child in China I would. But, I still try to do my part by helping feed people somewhere. Won't you?

Have a happy and hearty Thanksgiving!

### From the Bible

I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings. Psalm 17: 6-8

## Writer offers Thanksgiving message

To the Editor:  
In just a few short days, hopefully, you, with family members and friends will gather to celebrate the traditional Thanksgiving Day festivities. In anticipation of this important day in our lives, may I offer my annual Thanksgiving Day message:

The past year has been a period of many changes for the citizens of the United States of America. The major events varied from the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, to the constant threat of terrorist activities throughout this great country of ours, to major natural disasters, including drought, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes to the terrible fires on the

### Letters to the Editor

West Coast.  
The potential introduction of nuclear, biological and chemical materials into our great land by our adversaries and the results of these natural disasters has brought reality to the heretofore unthinkable and unimaginable. The current state of affairs and the environment have changed the lives of every American. These adverse conditions and potential threats only strengthen our resolve.

In the face of these many

problems, now is the time to pause and reflect on our many blessings. We are fortunate to be living in a time and place where we can make a difference and help make this world of ours a better place to live. Let us be thankful for our family and friends and pause to give thanks for our many blessings.

God Bless you.  
Delbert L. Townsend  
Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Fort Washington, Md.  
A proud and grateful citizen

## Check yourself for diabetes signs

To the Editor:  
November is American Diabetes Month.

Are you a diabetic and do not know it? Many people are, and go undiagnosed until they end up in the hospital with a heart attack, stroke or other serious complications from diabetes.

Or you may have symptoms of blurred vision, frequent urination, excessive hunger or thirst, dry skin, extreme tiredness, drowsiness and nausea.

It is time to get serious about your diabetes, as diabetes is a serious disease. But if you know how to take care of yourself, along with help from your doctor and health professionals, you can live a happier and healthier life.

You are the leader of your health care team, so it is important that you learn all you can about diabetes. The more you can learn, the better for your health. This will help prevent complications now and in the future. The Diabetes Under Control

groups work with the American Diabetes Association to learn more about the disease.

To help yourself, you can:  
• Take charge of your diabetes by checking your blood sugar. If it is over 250 several times, be sure and call your doctor.  
• Monitor your diet and exercise, and take medications as prescribed.  
• Have your HbA1c tests. Your doctor can explain these.  
• Have a yearly dilated-pupil eye

exam.  
• Every time you visit your doctor, have a foot care inspection.  
• If you do not have diabetes and there is a family history, you should also have checkups for this disease, as some people do not have any symptoms until it is too late to prevent complications.

Elsie Wolters, coordinator  
Diabetes Under Control  
Oberlin

### 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. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality.

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