

State needs to outsource one more job in Topeka

Outrageous. If you call the State of Kansas to ask questions about food stamps, you may well be talking to someone in India.

That's because the state Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services outsourced its "call center" for food stamps to a firm that moved the work offshore.

It may seem a little weird, but with modern communications and the difference in wages, it make perfect sense for someone halfway around the world to pick up the phone and answer questions about Kansas.

It's done every day for business. Businesses have to survive, and if they can get something done cheaper offshore, they will.

When the state does it, using tax money, though, people ought to be outraged.

The Kansas Legislature was, in fact, outraged. The House voted to ban the outsourcing and require the department to contract with a firm that would hire unemployed Kansans to answer the calls.

Then Secretary Janet Schalansky told the legislators that bringing the jobs back to Kansas would cost about \$600,000 a year, money the state does not have.

The Legislature backed down.

Here's how ridiculous this situation is: Social and Rehabilitation Services — the same department that is closing all its county offices — runs the state's welfare programs. Many of these, including food stamps, serve people who are unemployed or underem-

ployed. The department could be hiring Kansas people to do its work, or at least hiring contractors who use Kansas workers. Then it might not have so many people on food stamps.

But the department apparently doesn't care. It's obsessed by an image of a streamlined organization that no longer includes jobs in Kansas, especially rural Kansas.

We thought it was awful when Secretary Schalansky started closing all the rural offices. She said Kansans would be served by toll-free phone lines and visits from the same case-workers and others who served them before.

Eventually, the department admitted it wasn't saving money with the reorganization or cutting its staff. It just wanted to bunch them up in bigger towns.

Then the outsourcing came to light.

It's hard to tell if Ms. Schalansky, an appointee of former Gov. Bill Graves, is running the department well or not, because the agency will seldom discuss its operations. Everything is cloaked in a veil of secrecy when Social Services makes a mistake.

From what we've seen this year, though, you have to wonder why Gov. Kathleen Sebelius kept her on. If any of the department's offices ought to be closed, it's hers.

Why not outsource *her* work, and get someone who cares about Kansans and rural Kansas to run this department in her place?

—Steve Haynes

'Lost' hour leaves her nodding

Losing an hour to Daylight Saving Time has really thrown me.

I stayed up way too late Saturday. After resetting all the clocks, including my alarm, I went to bed for what seemed like an incredibly short night. When that "electric rooster" jangled in my ear, I was not ready to rise 'n' shine.

The first Sunday of every month, Jim preaches at a little church about 20 miles southeast of here. A good preacher's wife should probably never admit this, but I had an incredibly hard time keeping my eyes open Sunday while Jim was giving the sermon.

It was a great talk on the Resurrection, but I'm afraid my eyes were glazed over during parts of it. (It's no excuse, but he'll do the same one next week during chapel services at the prison, so I'll pick up any parts I missed the first time.)

We had a load of construction debris to get rid of, so we made a trip out to "Rattlesnake Ranch" on Saturday. My brother Bill's middle son Mark has been living out at the farm this past winter, continuing the work this brother Brian started several years ago after Brian bought Mom and Dad's farm.

Johnny Appleseed doesn't have a thing on Mark. That young man has planted more new trees than you can imagine, trees of every kind and caliber. There are pine trees, flowering trees, oaks, ashes, maples and even some fruit trees.

Of course, out there on that hill, watering is the main issue. But Mark has rigged up a tractor with a tank unit that he uses to water trees some



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
cplotts@nwkansan.com

distance from the house. If those trees die, it won't be for lack of water.

—ob—

Speaking of which, I need to pull some hose around and give a drink to four little cedar trees we transplanted last week to our lot next door. We're trying to get a wind-break/privacy screen established, and these will be a nice addition.

—ob—

My oldest brother, Bob, called Saturday night to let us know he was coming out for a funeral on Monday and ask if he could spend Sunday

night with us. "Sure," I said, secretly jumping for joy inside because "Hattie, the hired girl" and I had done a "clean sweep" on that room just the day before. I was actually ready for company.

It's true. I've hired help. And it's not that I can't do it myself. It's that I haven't done it. Now, with someone coming at a regular time on a set day, I have to do it. She makes me accountable. It's a little tough on me right now, but I will so appreciate it when it's done.

A place for everything and everything in its place.

Emergency worker quits

To the Editor: I would like to thank the people of Decatur County for giving me the opportunity to serve everyone as an emergency medical technician.

As of April 1, I am no longer serv-

ing the community as an EMT. I can no longer work for the director of this department.

It has been a real honor to serve all of you.

Linda Manning, Oberlin

From the Bible

Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. — John 19, 21-22



There's more to Acrobat than the Reader!

Create and enhance PDF files with Adobe Acrobat 4.0 software

How often does this happen to you? You complete an important document just under the wire and send it off to a colleague as an e-mail attachment, only to hear that she couldn't open the file—she works on a different platform. Or maybe she doesn't have the right application loaded.

Perhaps you've just distributed an eye-catching new brochure or ad for review. But when your clients open the electronic file, text and columns are askew, the logo has mysteriously vanished, and computers have substituted plain vanilla Courier for the elegant font you selected. Then, after you've taken the extra time to distribute paper copies, your clients return a hodgepodge of papers cluttered with scrawled comments, sticky notes, and stapled attachments.

Sound familiar?

Then you need Adobe Acrobat 4.0 software on your desktop.

It's the essential tool for universal document exchange. Acrobat allows you to convert any document, no matter what application it was created in, to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)—the standard digital file format that faithfully captures and preserves the look of the original document, complete with fonts, colors, images, and formatting.

Distribute PDF files anywhere: in print, attached to e-mail, on network servers, or posted on Web sites—PDF's compact file size makes it ideal for electronic delivery. If you're reading this document, you know that anyone with the free Acrobat Reader can view and print PDF files from any computer.

Think if you've got Acrobat Reader, you've already got Acrobat? Think again. Acrobat Reader lets you view, navigate, and print PDF files. Adobe Acrobat 4.0 software is a complete solution for sharing, reviewing, and distributing information. It makes PDF an integral part of your everyday workflow—here are just a few of the capabilities Acrobat offers:

- Create PDF files in a flash—it's as easy as drag and drop.
- Use Acrobat 4.0 as the ideal desktop companion to your favorite business applications like Microsoft® Office and Lotus® Notes. Collect memos, spreadsheets, presentations, and graphics from a variety of programs and turn them into a single PDF file for distribution.
- Convert scanned paper documents to PDF. Bring all your important documents together in a single universal format.
- Streamline document reviews. Acrobat 4.0 gives you and your workgroup a powerful yet easy-to-use feature set, including text annotations, stamps, a pencil tool, underlining, and highlights, for paperless PDF mark-ups.

Interested—or ready to buy?

Go to www.adobe.com/acrobat to learn more about the many ways Acrobat can help you communicate more clearly, reliably, and productively than ever before.

You'll discover there's much more to Adobe Acrobat software than just viewing!

Ready to buy Adobe Acrobat?
Go to www.adobe.com/acrobat



Cemetery taken from 'traitor'

Arlington National Cemetery — the name conjures up images of row upon row of white markers, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the eternal flame over John F. Kennedy's grave.

Well, that's what we saw, and a little bit more.

My mother tells me we visited Arlington National Cemetery on a two-week trip to Washington and Baltimore when I was in high school. I remember the trip, but I don't remember the cemetery.

This time, we were on a mission. Members of the National Newspaper Association who gathered in Washington had a wreath to lay at the Tomb of the Unknowns.

Four of our members were escorted to the tomb, and they handed over the wreath, which was placed on a stand in front of the burial site. We watched the changing of the guard and left quietly as the sentry continued his march.

We were told that the tomb is guarded 24 hours a day. Last fall, when a hurricane came up the Potomac and hit Washington with 120 mph winds, the guard just kept walking. On Sept. 11, 2001, when a plane crashed into the Pentagon, the guard on duty, who could see the crash, turned to the tourists lined up behind the barricades and calmly told them to leave quietly because the cemetery was closed. Then he went back to marching without having any idea what was going on.

Down the hill, we stood in front



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
chaynes@nwkansan.com

of the graves of John and Jackie Kennedy and two of their children who died in infancy. The stones, which lie flat on the ground, came from land owned by the Kennedys, we were told.

When John Kennedy Jr. died in a plane crash, there was much discussion of burying him with his father and mother. However, our guide told us, John Jr. was not eligible to be buried in Arlington, being an adult who had never served in the military. There was also his wife to consider. Eventually, their ashes were buried at sea.

Just a little ways from the president lies his brother, also felled by an assassin's bullet. Robert Kennedy lies alone under a white cross, the only wood marker in the place.

There are about 20 burials a day in Arlington. When we were there, we saw a horse-drawn caisson bearing a casket to a grave on one side of the road and a troop of Scottish pipers at a funeral on the other.

Arlington did not have a great beginning. It was the home of Robert E. Lee and his wife, Mary, who

was the step-granddaughter of George Washington.

During the Civil War, they needed a place to bury the dead. The government decided to bury as many as possible in the front yard of "The Great Traitor." The officers, they buried in Mrs. Lee's flower garden.

After the war, the government kept burying people on the estate — usually soldiers who had no one to bury them. In the early days, Arlington was a pauper's graveyard. Our guide told us it wasn't until the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was built that the graveyard became a national shrine.

There are three soldiers buried in the tomb — one each from World War I, World War II and the Korean Conflict. A fourth soldier from the Vietnam War was disinterred in 1998 and identified. His remains were returned to his family and are now buried in St. Louis. The fourth crypt in the Tomb will remain empty, most likely, because with DNA testing there will never be another unknown soldier.

School board deals with cuts

The Oberlin School Board is dealing with its financial crisis, a handful of teachers are looking for jobs and down at the school house, class is in session.

What happens next? Why did the school tax election fail?

First and foremost, I think, the school board asked voters to buy a pig in a poke.

The board decided not to lay out its plans, not to reveal what teachers or programs would be cut if the proposal failed.

People apparently did not like being asked to vote for a tax increase in the blind. The board spent hours behind closed doors discussing scenarios, but said in public that it couldn't discuss programs without talking about individual teachers. That might violate their privacy.

So, what's worse? Losing your job, or having your name mentioned in a meeting as one who might be cut?

I think I could make that choice. But no one asked if it might be better to trust the voters.

Second, while there was a campaign against the tax increase, there really was no campaign FOR the schools. A little money and some time spent organizing might have



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
schaynes@nwkansan.com

turned the tide. It usually does.

This is politics, after all. It's a public school district run by an elected board. Yet board members appeared to be reluctant to speak out for their position. Teachers did little in an organized fashion before the election. And if teachers and school board members weren't strong for the tax, who was?

Superintendent Kelly Glodt spent a lot of time trying to explain the school district's problems and campaigning personally for the tax issue. He did a remarkable job, but he often was one man swimming against the tide.

A few yard signs, mostly left over from last year, appeared in the days before the election, but you could hardly call it a campaign. Many school supporters appeared to be resigned to whatever fate would be.

Not once did a school backer or

teacher ask the newspaper for support. There were few letters and almost no public comment. It's as if some didn't want to soil their hands.

Now the board has made its decisions. Some of the cuts were tough, especially if you are one of those cut to half time. They were not as deep as some had feared, but they may not be the last cuts the district has to make.

Don't expect the state to step in and save us. In any "reform" of school finance, rural districts are liable to come up short. Whatever "extra" money the state comes up with is likely to go to the mid-sized districts that are suing the state.

Schools in towns like Oberlin may have to fend for themselves. And voters may well have to ask themselves again, just what a good education for our children is worth.

Reader bugged by unwanted faxes

To the Editor: I guess there are always two sides to every story, and I was glad to hear the other side of the story regarding the new regulations for sending faxes.

I am the administrative assistant at a small tax-supported office. Almost every day, we receive several faxes advertising a variety of things. We receive many more on the week-ends. These are totally unsolicited and unwanted. Most are offers for vacation trips to the Caribbean Islands for \$199, offers to help collect outstanding accounts, or assistance in managing "staggering debts" without declaring bankruptcy.

Since my office is a tax-supported regulatory agency and not a private business, these offers do not apply in any way. I have thrown countless

Letter to the Editor

pages away before reading the entire fax and noticing at the very bottom, in much smaller print, the "fax removal" notice. I have called many of these numbers (if and when my call would go through), entered my fax telephone number and heard a recording telling me that my number has been removed. They didn't tell me that my number was only removed for one month! I've noticed that after 4 weeks, the faxes return and I have to call again to be removed from the call list.

While the faxes are annoying and unwanted, they also use a lot of paper and ink. The paper is a minimal expense, but the ink cartridges are

not. As with every tax-supported office these days, we are constantly trying to reduce costs — especially for office supplies.

We do use our fax machine a lot, usually to obtain and send information to other local and state offices. I can't imagine the new ruling will have a negative effect on us, but I'm sure many other businesses will have some difficulties.

I wish the government could write regulations so they weren't so restrictive and would cure the problem, not create dozens more.

Rita Wade Colby

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

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

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

E-mail: obherald@nwkansan.com

Nor'West Newspapers

STAFF

- Steve Haynes editor
- Kimberly Brandt managing editor
- Mary Lou Olson society editor
- Judy Jordan proofreader
- Carolyn Kelley-Plotts columnist
- Cynthia Haynes business manager
- David Bergling advertising manager
- Pat Cozad wantads/circulation
- Karla Jones, Doris Miller advertising production
- Joan Betts historian
- Marsha Morford mailing
- Whitney Beinke page makeup

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.)

