

'Acting' president played major role in last century

The passing of former President Ronald Reagan marks the end of an era as surely as did the fall of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Reagan came to prominence with "The Speech," an accounting of the rise of communism and the threat it posed to freedom.

The Speech catapulted the ex-actor into prominence in Republican party circles and among conservatives around the nation.

That notoriety in turn led him to run for governor of California, where despite cries that he had no political experience, he won the race against a legendary veteran pol, Assembly Speaker Pat Brown.

Amassing a credible record as governor, Mr. Reagan became in turn a viable candidate on the national scene. He eventually won the Republican nomination and went on to win the presidency.

A creature of the Cold War, he was at home pushing a huge defense budget and at the same time talking with Soviet leaders. While some were surprised at the fall of communism, the end of the Soviet empire and the demise of the Berlin Wall, perhaps Mr. Reagan was not.

His detractors said he was too old, too slow-witted and too conservative. Though he campaigned for a balanced budget, he ran up some huge deficits.

But on his watch, the free nations did prevail and the Dark Empire faded away.

His contemporary, Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of Britain and a fellow conservative, said of him, that Mr. Reagan has a better claim than anyone of having led the Free World to victory in the Cold War.

The Iron Maiden was one of his chief allies in that struggle, which she noted, ended in victory without a shot being fired.

Some said Mr. Reagan simply spent the Russians into bankruptcy. Others implied that the communist system, which once seemed so formidable, had rotted from within and would have fallen no matter who had been president.

He was the only union president — he led the Screen Actors Guild — ever to occupy the White House, though the AFL-CIO may not have supported him much.

In later years, the ex-president lived in increasing obscurity as his Alzheimer's grew steadily worse.

From the vantage point of the next century, his name harkens to a simpler time when Americans knew who the enemy was and who the good guys were, a time when Republicans stood for strong defense and smaller government and movie heroes could realize the American dream.

For a "B" list actor, Ronald Reagan played pretty well. Few on the stage today could match his stature.

— Steve Haynes

It's 99 out: must be summer

It's official! Summer is here. No matter that the calendar may say the 20th of this month. It's summer when I say it's summer.

Saturday, I sweltered and sweated while cleaning out the freezer. But Sunday, I gave in and cranked up the air conditioning.

Speaking of cleaning out the deep-freeze: why do I have nine packages of hot dogs? Am I planning a county-wide wiener roast? They were probably on sale. I know they've been there at least a year, so they're more than likely freezer-burned and will taste like cardboard. Then, of course, they'll have to be thrown out, so how much did I really save?

I have given Jim strict orders to not bring home any more nonperishable food. He's worse than I am about buying in bulk just because it's a good bargain. I would venture to guess that, at this moment, I have seven German chocolate cake mixes in the pantry and 11 cans of ready-made frosting. I don't even LIKE German chocolate cake. But it was a good buy.

We have so much food in stock, we should be ashamed. In case of famine, come to our place. We could feed a small third world country out of our cache.

—ob—

Recently I talked with the local pool manager about Red Cross swimming lessons. That reminded me of childhood memories of learning to swim.

The farm tank, pond or creek was where most country kids learned to swim, and I was no exception. We lived too far from the creek, so it was the tank for me. I looked forward to the annual ritual at the beginning of summer when my dad would roll the big water tank out to his shop to spot



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
cplotts@nwkans.com

weld any holes that had appeared over the winter. Then the tank would be rolled back to its place at the end of the water pipe, lowered into position and the pump turned on.

I could hardly wait until it filled. My mother always warned me, "Better wait until tomorrow when it's had a chance to warm up a little."

Wait? Are you kidding? As soon as the water reached the bottoming on the tank, I jumped in.

Are you familiar with the Polar Bear Club? Those crazy people who hack a hole in the ice on the first day of the new year and jump in the icy water? I could qualify for membership, because that's about how cold the water was in that tank after being pumped up from who knows how many feet down in the depths of the earth. But numbness set in fast and you couldn't give up after so much anticipation. It's a wonder I didn't die from hypothermia.

My dad's one rule was when you were done swimming, you had to walk round and round the edge of the tank, to put the water into a whirlpool so the dirt you dragged into the tank would settle in the middle. He didn't want the water all muddied up for the cows.

Swimming was freestyle, to be sure. More of a dog paddle, or floating. That's where our 4-H club came in when I was about 9. As a club safety project, it was decided that the

entire club would take Red Cross swimming lessons.

I think our club originated the "carpool" concept, although it should have been "truckpool." All 50 members of our club met at a central point. One of the fathers drove his cattle truck, complete with stock racks, to the meeting point, put down a ramp and loaded us up like calves going to market.

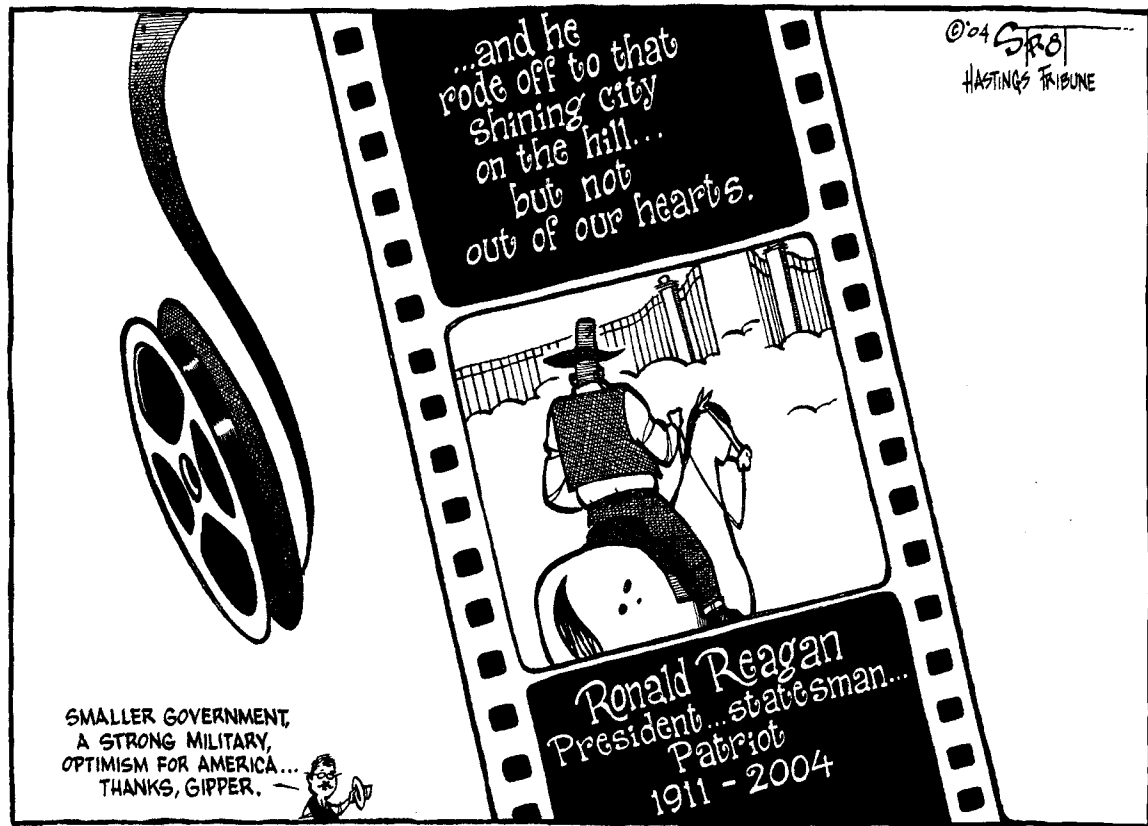
This was before the days when safety analysts took all the fun out of life. We stood up to let the wind blow in our faces or sat down on the splinter-filled wooden floor of the truck.

On arrival at the city pool, the ramp would be lowered, and we would disembark like wild monkeys let out of a cage. I can only imagine what the city kids thought of that whole scene.

Now you know where the term "country bumpkin" came from.

From the Bible

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. I Corinthians 15:58



Water always brings a surprise

Every year brings a fresh surprise. One year, the kitchen floor like ocean waves. Then the sewer backed up. Another year, there was a broken pipe on the hot water heater.

This year it was a broken pipe in the ceiling above the kitchen.

We love our home in Creede, high in the Colorado mountains. It's where we raised our children. It was home while we were putting out our first paper, *The Mineral County Miner*.

When we moved, we rented the house for a while, then we turned the renters out and refurbished it with this and that.

Now, we go back every time we have a chance.

Of course, you don't just run up to the cabin for the weekend when the cabin is 480 miles and nine hours away. You don't leave the heat on in the winter when the temperature gets to be 40 below, and that's before the wind chill is added.

So each fall, around the end of October, we close the house. We empty the hot water tank, turn off the water, unplug the dishwasher and washing machine and the line that runs the ice maker. The electricity and phone are turned off, the shades drawn and the house sits empty and



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
chaynes@nwkans.com

alone until we return in the spring, around Memorial Day.

That's when we find the surprises.

Last year, we had had the water line replaced. When we arrived, we found that the new line had frozen. The sewer had also frozen, so we were in a pickle on both ends. The city got both working, and we were in business for another summer.

Several years ago, we got a leak in the water line that feeds the ice maker in the refrigerator.

When we walked into the kitchen, the linoleum was in waves from where the flooring had swollen and buckled.

That was almost as much fun as the new water line.

This year, we hoped the new water line and cutoff would work like it was supposed to, and it did. Steve put the big iron key into the eight-foot hole to the water shutoff and

turned. We had water coming out of the faucets we had left open in the fall. I started turning off faucets, but there was still water running.

Then it started raining in the kitchen. Water was coming out of the top of my cabinets and through the ceiling around the light fixture.

This was not good. I yelled at Steve, who turned the water off and called the plumber.

Ron, the plumber and general fix-it man, was on our doorstep in less than 30 minutes and spent the next hour finding the broken pipe and making emergency repairs.

We mopped up the mess, just glad nothing was ruined.

But, now the water is on and the hot water tank is full. Tomorrow, I can take a shower and tonight I can wash the dishes.

Life is good.

Help needed to save our pool

To the Editor:

As I am sure most of the Decatur community knows, the Oberlin pool has sprung a leak or leaks and is at the time of this writing ... empty.

The city crew has pulled up the cement near the diving boards and dug at least 10 feet down in order to find the broken pipes. After repairing the pipes, it was discovered that the pool still was not holding water and blueprints of the pool were rushed to an aquatics company in an attempt to discover the problem.

The aquatics company believes that the leak may be in the drains and various fix-it possibilities are being discussed to try to find a rapid solution.

Because of our empty pool, I am already seeing changes in our community. Usually at this time, I see kids carrying towels on their way to spend the afternoon at the pool, soaking in the sun, spending excess energy and then walking home again. Now I see kids walking around in little groups, looking for something to do, searching for something to use up their energy, some way to entertain themselves.

These are really good kids, some of the best in the world, but if they are left without a release for their energy, their boredom could turn into problems for this entire community. Even if our kids do not give in to undesirable forms of entertainment, they might be tempted to pile into a car to head for a muddy swimming hole. We all know that good times have been had at ponds and quarries, but many a drowning has occurred there as well.

Our young people might also find someone old enough to drive and head off in numbers to another town to swim. They say it takes a village to raise a child, but if our kids are always heading off to another village, who is going to inform the parents when those kids are not making wise decisions? Our kids are somewhat protected here; they are not protected in other towns.

Speaking of other towns, our Oberlin swim team has been forced to beg the McCook Swim Team to allow us to swim with them, but our team is only getting three days of practice a week instead of five. If our pool stays dry, our young mothers will be forced to take their kids to McCook for swimming lessons and for family time at the McCook pool. We all know what happens on outings to McCook — the lure of Wal-Mart, the lure of cheaper gas, the

Letter to the Editor

lure of eating out in McCook instead of in Oberlin, the lure of shopping for that birthday present for Grandma in McCook rather than in our hometown.

For a person who already has reasons to be in McCook, shopping temptations can become especially hard to ignore. If we do not have a pool in our town, we will lose even more of our economy to McCook or Norton. Our downtown already has too many empty windows the way it is.

Some of our college kids come back home in the summer to life-guard and manage the pool. With fewer jobs, the odds are that our youth will stay in their college towns and spend money there instead of here.

Kids that come from other towns to visit Grandma and Grandpa almost always spend a little time at the pool ... imagine their disappointment and boredom. Imagine the overtime our police (city and county) might have to put in corralling bored young people. Decatur County would like to lure young families to town. Without a pool that becomes next to impossible. The question is not can we afford a pool; it is, actually, can we afford to lose our pool?

A while back the city council formed a Pool Commission, of which I am a member. The commission's job is not for maintenance or management of the pool but to act as an advisory panel for making recommendations for the future of the Oberlin swimming pool. It is aware that the pool is post-World War II and that the pools of the same age in Atwood and McCook have serious problems, with McCook already replacing their pool and Atwood attempting to raise money in order to replace theirs after fixing many leaks.

The Oberlin Pool Commission had hoped that our pool would last three to 10 more years so we would have time to raise money for a new pool, but we are not sure that is going to happen. We are now at the stage of forming committees including public relations, fund-raising, volunteers, technical and graphic design, and we are asking for volunteers.

Due to the current situation, rais-

ing money is even more urgent than before. If you would like to volunteer to help, please call Teresa Shaughnessy at (785) 475-3032. The commission is now set up to accept donations to the pool fund at the Chamber office. The donations will be tax-deductible but must be earmarked for the Decatur County Pool Fund.

You've probably noticed that throughout this letter I have been saying, "Decatur County," rather than just "Oberlin". The state of our pool affects more than just the people living in town; it affects the entire county. City and county must work together on this one, any way we can, volunteering or donating. One way or another, we sink or swim together.

Anna Seeber Shaw

Oberlin
PS: When fall sports start, our coaches and physical education teachers usually schedule swimming. Our pool helps our kids stay in shape through the summer, bettering our fall sports teams. In a time of rising childhood obesity, our kids seem to be staying in shape. I believe that the swimming pool is a good part of our secret.

The swimming pool is not just for our kids, though. For years now, lap swimming and low-impact water aerobics have enhanced the quality of life for many adults. For quite a few who exercise faithfully at the pool each summer, jogging or bike riding just is not an option. Quality of life as we mature is important to all of us, economically as well as physically.

Please volunteer to save our pool.

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.

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

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.

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

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

E-mail: oberald@nwkans.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

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.)

