

Kansas lacks expansion of a good freeway system

Kansas missed the boat when other states started expanding their freeways and expressways beyond the basic Interstate system.

Today, a lot the traffic goes through one neighboring state or another, and a lot of money flows with it.

The federal government and the states laid out the Interstate system in the 1950s. It's been both a curse and a blessing, but many states saw that it did not plug all the gaps in the road grid.

Nearly 30 years ago under Gov. Bob Bennett, Kansas drew a freeway system that connected the dots. It included four-lane roads south to Pittsburg and Tulsa from Kansas City, over to Paola, and west from St. Joseph along U.S. 36, among others. A few segments were built, but when times got tough in the 1980s, these were stranded, and remain today as two-lane, limited access curiosities.

The Kansas highway system nearly fell apart in those years. The Department of Transportation was occupied with patching potholes and just preserving what it had. It took the visionary Gov. Mike Hayden to raise the gas tax and save our roads — and it cost him his job.

But the Kansas freeway plan died then. Since those days, it's taken a Herculean effort to complete a few short stretches of four-lane road, including U.S. 81 north to Nebraska as an extension of I-135, and K-10 from Kansas City to Lawrence.

South out of Kansas City, Missouri completed an expressway along U.S. 71, and to-

day, the Tulsa traffic, along with much freight to the West Coast, flows south on the east side of the state line. Little thought is given to parallel U.S. 69, the shorter and more attractive route.

North, I-29 carries the load through Missouri and Iowa. Kansas still lacks a decent route to Omaha, and Nebraska has not seen the potential for an expressway along U.S. 75 north out of Topeka. Kansas has an expressway, but it stops at the door to a casino.

U.S. 54 west of Wichita and U.S. 50 west from Newton and Hutchinson have great potential, but there are no plans to widen either anytime soon. East-west traffic slips off to the south, through Oklahoma.

And there is U.S. 36 across northern Kansas, once part of the freeway plan as far west as Belleville. While I-80 through Nebraska runs near capacity, and I-70 is overcrowded in eastern Kansas, through traffic needs a bypass route.

Missouri has improved U.S. 36 across three-fourths of the state, but Kansas is barely starting.

Our highway engineers, burdened by the cost of an extensive, and expensive, road system, shudder to think about expansion. Their mantra is, "Wait until the traffic comes."

But sometimes, you have to build it, and they will come.

If you want to snare traffic and build business, it seems, you have to put the cart before the horse.

— Steve Haynes

Looking through my jungle

"Vel-ly in-te-rest-ing."

Remember the old Laugh-In show, where Artie Johnson, in his Gestapo uniform, would part the bushes, peer through, and utter those words that became a national catch phrase? That's about how I feel with the mini-jungle I have growing in my front room.

Several years ago, my brother Bob and his wife Bert brought me a little dieffenbachia plant. I watered it, it grew, I repotted it, it grew some more, I watered it, repotted again, it grew more, and so on, and so on, and so on. It grew to the ceiling and beyond. We cut the top off and stuck the trimmed part in the pot. And wouldn't you know it — that part grew, too.

Somewhere along the line, I sat a planter of philodendrons next to the pot of dieffenbachia and the vines started spreading. I kept twining the vines between the two planters. Now, they are so intermingled, it takes the two of us to turn the pots. And they have to be turned every month or so, because the dieffenbachia curves so much toward the window that it almost breaks. In order to keep it somewhat straight, we have to keep rotating it.

I have to give the silly thing credit just for being so tenacious, but I still can't decide if I like it because it is pretty or just because I can't seem to kill it.

We spent the day in Denver on Saturday, and while there visited a couple of hours with my Aunt Bernice. Aunt "B" is my mom's



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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youngest, and only living, sibling. She has decided to sell her home and move to a retirement center, so she is in the turmoil of sorting out her belongings. Her three daughters have been given equal shares of the family Christmas china, one daughter wanted the dining room set, another daughter something else. Aunt "B" was never the accumulator that Mom was, but still, it's hard to part with your "stuff".

On the trip home, I remembered there was to be a fellowship dinner the next day after church. Knowing it would be about 10 p.m. when we got home, I tried to think of something good and easy to make. Pecan pie was my answer. Jim tried to talk me into potato salad, but that is a process I didn't want to start at that time of night. He even tried to persuade me with promises of chopping the onions and boiling the potatoes. I stood firm and made the pie. Then, following the dinner, he was upset that he didn't get a piece of the pie, and I had to promise to make two more that night.

Again, it was late when I got started on the pies. My oven is not

large enough for two pies at one time. I got the first one done just fine. But the second pie didn't get into the oven until after 11 p.m. I punched 50 minutes into my digital timer and sat down to watch the news.

I must have been so dead tired that I slept through the timer's buzz. I awoke at 1 p.m. to the distinct aroma of a pie more than a little done.

It's very chewy, but still edible. And at the price of pecans, you can bet we will eat it. But considering the time and cost involved, I wish now I had just made the potato salad.

From the Bible

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Luke 11: 9, 10



Lost in country without compass

I've been doing a lot of driving on country roads lately — mostly around in circles.

I learned to drive on country roads. That's where my Daddy took me to teach me. But, basically, I'm a town person. I like asphalt and concrete. Gravel and dust just don't appeal to me.

Still, when you need to get to something that is happening in the country, you use what God and the county have provided and hope it doesn't rain.

I suppose I should mention here that my sense of direction got left at the border. Steve says my parents ran me under a big magnet when I was little and that messed up my directional balance.

I don't know about magnets, but I do know I'm the only person I know who can get lost in a bathtub. While traveling by myself in Colorado one time, I ended up in Ouray instead of Gunnison. While those two towns aren't that far apart in miles, they are a long way from each other by highway. Ouray is in the mountains and Gunnison is more or less on the flat.

But that was a long time ago and far, far away. Today, I just get lost in my own backyard. If I try to drive from one end of the county to the other on the back roads, I will end up in Nebraska or Hoxie.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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A couple of weeks ago I was assigned the job of covering the 100th birthday celebration of a small country church.

Steve gave me directions — so it wasn't all my fault.

He said take the 4 East Road and go six and a half miles north then one and a half miles east.

Huh?

He tried again. Go to the cemetery. Turn left. After six and a half miles turn right and the church should be about one and a half miles down that road.

That I could and did do. But there was no road to go right on and I ended up going in circles for an hour.

Steve finally checked a map.

"Sorry," he said. "Go back to the highway and go to the 8 East Road and follow the same directions."

Huh?

"Go to the blue house with the red roof and turn left then go six and a half miles, turn right and the church

should be about one and a half miles down that road."

I got there in time for the cake and punch, so I was happy.

On Saturday, I was looking for a trail ride.

The caller said to go down the last road to the west before the bridge on the south side of town.

Huh?

"You know where the Matt-hewes live?"

"Nope."

"You know where the Whittakers live?"

"Nope, but I'll give it a try."

I only wandered around for half an hour this time before calling my tipster and asking her to show me the way.

I really do love that old John Denver song, "Country Roads," especially the line about take me home.

I would change it to, "Country Roads, Take me home, cause I'm lost again."

School traditions are changing

The school newsletter on a friend's kitchen table caught my eye.

"Room parties are scheduled to celebrate the fall season on October 29," it said.

Wouldn't that be, ah, Halloween? "Shush," she hissed. "We're not allowed to mention that word. Something about the ACLU."

There will be, the newsletter notes dryly, "no costumes or parades."

Nor, we suspect, will kids be allowed to have much fun. Blame the American Civil Liberties Union. Blame conservative Christians who see Halloween as devil worship. Blame our tradition of religious tolerance.

Halloween, the traditional eve of All Saints Day, does have a religious foundation. By legend, the forces of evil were bound to be out the night before Christians remember God's chosen.

That's how we get the images of the commercial Halloween of today — witches, black cats, wickedly leering jack-o-lanterns — all minions of the underworld, forces of Satan.

It's not that most of us believe that the witch down the block can change herself into a cat, or that somewhere, a coven meets this night to worship his evil name. It's that there's a religious connotation to the holiday at all.

There are people who believe in the forces of evil, and think we glorify them by having a holiday replete with Satanic signs.

The same school holds a "winter seasonal festival," where kids gather at the city auditorium and sing carols, but none too religious to



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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cause concern. It's a sort of sanitized Christmas show, minus "Oh, Holy Night."

At least the kids still get to show off for their grandparents.

So this is the impasse we have come to.

We are a country founded on the principle of religious tolerance, but we have come to the point where we can't tolerate religion in our public life. That's not what the founding fathers envisioned.

In their day, tolerance meant putting up with other Christian groups, so long as they weren't too weird. Colonists tended to cling together with others of like mind, and most did not admit any other church. New England was Protestant, the South mostly Church of England, and Maryland was founded as a haven for Catholics often shunned or persecuted elsewhere.

But the principle of tolerance took root, was enshrined in the Bill of Rights and today has grown into something far beyond what anyone 200 years ago could have envisioned.

As a young nation, we had no need to consider the views, let alone the rights, of Muslims or Jews, atheists or unbelievers.

Today, we take seriously everyone's rights, and we are in dan-

ger of losing the religious foundation of our heritage.

Neither Halloween, with its celebration of candy, gluttony and commercial decorations, nor the secular Christmas is worth fighting for.

We may not believe in witches, but we don't believe in Santa Claus, either. Right?

What we need to preserve, along with the right of each American to worship as he or she pleases, is our sense of morality and purpose as a nation. And that includes our religious heritage.

We don't need to go back to the days when an entire state could subscribe, legally at least, to one church, or a public school district could be run by one religion.

Most of us don't want to foist our idea of religion off on someone else's children. That's not such an easy thing to handle.

A proposal by state Board of Education member Bill Wagon that students should study history of religion along with science might be a place to start.

Nothing is more important to our history than God. Nothing could be harder to handle in public schools.

Meantime, though, couldn't seventh graders wear their costumes to the "fall seasonal party?"

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.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos

submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

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.

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