

Senator's friend causes stir with remark about rats

One of his friends came to Topeka to give Sen. Tim Huelskamp an award last week.

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, named Sen. Huelskamp, a Fowler Republican, as a "Hero of the Taxpayer."

Though it sounds like something out of the old Soviet Union, it's really a nice honor for a conservative legislator. While on the podium, though, he made some comments about Republicans and tax increases that drew a reporter's attention, and the result was not so good.

"Republicans who vote for tax increases are like rat head in Coke bottles," Mr. Norquist said. "They don't just hurt themselves; they damage the brand."

Of course the reporters had a field day. Sen. Steve Morris, who has the next district over, allowed as how he had voted for a couple of tax increases over the years. Morris, a conservative of sorts, is president of the Senate, and a man of some influence.

Rep. Bill Light of Rolla said he had voted for tax increases for highways and schools over the years. He thought they were good.

Nothing like offending potential allies to get a session rolling. Sen. Huelskamp has been a leader of conservatives in the Senate, especially since the untimely death of Sen. Stan

Clark. He has been leading the anti tax forces, and he deserved the award.

He didn't deserve the notoriety that went along with Mr. Norquist's remarks. What an ugly phrase. Graphic and to the point, but tasteless.

And, whatever true believers say, there are times a tax increase is appropriate. Not many perhaps, but they exist.

Kansas spending has grown, in real dollars, more than four times in 40 years, though. We've had quite enough tax increases over that time, thank you very much.

And while his heart was in the right place, Mr. Norquist wasn't doing his friend or the antitax movement much of a favor talking like that.

Call a spade a spade if you must, Mr. Norquist, but leave the rats out of it.

The effort to control state spending and end the constant stream of tax increases is too important to be left to the careless and the loud-mouthed.

With the state Supreme Court trying to establish a right of unlimited school funding, the entire state budget is in peril. We need all the help we can get here.

Memo to Sen. Huelskamp:
Find some new friends.

— Steve Haynes

Three days away a nice break

"We're on vacation," I said. "I'll do it. I'll do it. Don't bug me."

This was my reply to Jim's insistence that I "better get my column" written Sunday. He knew we had plans for early Monday morning (my usual day to write this) and there would be no time then.

After my third or fourth delay tactic, he said, "I'm going to start calling you Procrasta."

"Who's Procrasta?" I innocently asked.

"Carrie Nation's first cousin," he shot back. "You know, Procrasta Nation."

If he weren't so darned funny, he'd really tick me off. But when he pulls stuff like that, all I can do is laugh.

We're spending three of the loveliest, laziest days we've ever had in a house in the San Luis Valley in the mountains of southern Colorado.

When my editor and her husband moved from Creede, Colo., to Kansas, they kept their house here. They retreat to it several times a year and make it available to friends who want to make the nine-hour drive.

This year it worked out that we could take advantage of their generous offer. We arrived late Friday afternoon and found everything just as promised. A diagram of the circuit breaker soon had power to all appliances and the hot tub. We even had tickets to the local theater,



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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where we saw a very professional stage play.

This is no rustic little cabin in the woods. This is a lovely log house with all the conveniences and accoutrements of home. We brought our own groceries and had some lovely meals dining *al fresco* on the front porch. Jim fixes breakfast and we eat that at the dining room table looking out a large picture window at the mountains surrounding this little town that was once a bustling mining camp.

Easy chairs in the living room have their own picture window strategically placed, I'm sure, to watch the antics of hummingbirds as they jostle for position at the sugar water feeder hung outside the window.

There is a little mountain church just down the road. We went to Sunday school and church this morning, stayed for a potluck dinner, came "home" for a nap and went back for evening services. It was a good day.

Tomorrow, we plan to ride a nar-

row-gauge steam train on an all-day excursion.

The next day it's back home. Back to the routine, our jobs, our friends, our family. This was our first real vacation to somewhere other than Mexico to build a house, to somewhere for a business meeting, or to visit one of our kids.

I think three days is probably the maximum amount of time we could "do nothing." But, oh my, it's been great while it lasted.

From the Bible

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13: 17

Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers to *The Oberlin Herald*:

California: Donald Feely, Hemet; Eleanor Matal, Woodland; Norman Tally, Ventura; E.K. Van

Vleet, San Diego;
Colorado: D.R. Railsback, Lakewood; Bonnie D. Sexson, Nione Rhodin, Loveland; Dixie Hofmann Ruland, Littleton; Wayne Vernon, Clarence Ames, Pueblo; Donna

Norman, Aurora; Twila Crist, Peyton; Chris and Janice Corcoran, Fort Collins; Larry Guinn, Deer Trail;

Nebraska: Kari Husted, Hastings.



Harry Potter spurs kids to read

As I sat down at the beauty shop to wait my turn for a haircut last week, I noticed the library cards on the table next to me. They were lying next to a Nancy Drew novel.

Boy, did that bring back memories.

Summertime in the 1950s and '60s meant swimming and reading.

There were a few summer recreation programs for kids where I grew up: cutting construction paper and using glue at the city park shelterhouse on Saturday morning. But there was no swim club, no softball for young women and no air conditioning in the homes in our neighborhood.

Mornings were for chores — dusting, sweeping, laundry and gardening. Swimming lessons did take up mornings for two weeks during late June or early July, but the rest of the time was ours.

We lived a long way from the pool and the best way to get there was our bikes. We could walk, but we could never decide whether it was better to go with or without our shoes. If you wore your flip flops, you ended up with blisters between your toes and if you left them home, the hot tar on the streets burned your feet.

By 2 or 3 p.m., however, we were headed home. Polio was still a prob-



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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lem back then, and our mothers were sure that you got it at the pool on hot days.

The Carnegie Public Library was on the way home, and my library card got used almost every day. Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys were favorite fare. I was also partial to seafaring tales of youths who ran away and became cabin boys for Drake or Raleigh.

I would lie on my bed in my underwear with a fan running full blast and a lemonade at my elbow and delve into other worlds as the temperature climbed into the 90s and 100s.

These days, we're told, youngsters sit in air-conditioned comfort and play video games by the hour.

I'm sure that happens a lot. Still, I watch the kids heading for the pool on the other side of town and they don't look any different than we did.

Some are wearing flip flops and some are hopping along barefooted.

Then, there are the books. It's good to know that Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys are entertaining another generation of youngsters, even if the books are looking a little ragged.

As I traveled around the country a couple of weeks ago, I saw dozens of youngsters reading Harry Potter books. J.K. Rowling is a good writer, and her tales of mischief and mayhem at the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft have many a video-gamer with their nose in a book.

It reminds me of high school, when every boy had one of Ian Fleming's "James Bond" paperback books in his back pocket. I don't think those last couple of Harry Potter books are gonna fit in a pocket, but I bet a lot of them can be found in backpacks this fall.

Remember to shop at home

Someone at a county meeting made the suggestion that if one of the commissioners was going to Salina, maybe he could pick up some tables for the ambulance department at an unnamed membership store.

The commissioner never made the trip, the tables weren't bought and the county attorney pointed out that stores right here in Oberlin sell that sort of thing.

Good for him.

Buying tables at Sam's Club seemed like a sort of unusual slip for the county commissioners, who buy most of what they can here. A lot of people probably don't realize, though, that say Stanley Hardware has access to just about anything you might want in a lot of lines.

Other Oberlin businesses either carry goods we don't think of or can get what you need. Most of us could do a better job of shopping at home. And sometimes, it's the merchant who is to blame: Many never advertise their entire lines, and people just don't know what they have.

No one can buy everything they need here. There's no new-car dealership any more, for instance, and



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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only one used-car lot. The city has made every effort to work with the dealer here, though, and that's a good thing.

All of us should make an effort to shop at home. We need to support the businesses here for two reasons: They provide jobs and income in our hometown, and that's important.

And if we don't support them, they'll disappear and we'll wonder why we have to drive to Colby or McCook to buy thread.

That said, we know it does no good to preach to people used to driving 100 miles to buy a car. People shop where they will shop, and it's the merchants' job to get them through the door.

Some work harder at that than others.

But when it's tax money being spent, for food, equipment, supplies, whatever, then the city or county board really needs to make a commitment to shop at home.

For the most part, our schools, our city and our county have done that. There's the occasional lapse, but nobody's perfect. And there really are things you can't buy here.

Oberlin has a pretty nice way of life. One thing we all can do to preserve that is spend our dollars at home, where they help people in our town.

Think about that the next time you're tempted to run to Wall-Mart for groceries — or Sam's Club for tables.

Where do you want your dollars to go — Oberlin or Arkansas?

Reader tired of cats and vacations

To the Editor:

Everyone is presumably aware of the value of free advice — so here is a dose for the columnists of *The Oberlin Herald*.

Keep this in mind the next time you consider writing about cats, your children, or trips you have been on. No one cares!

The only time I want to see any mention of a feline is when one is seen reading aloud the Declaration of Independence, or barring that, seen cleaning its' own litter box.

Your children are only of interest

to us when they are noted in a police blotter. Our children look that much better by comparison.

We do not want to hear where you have been or what you saw, did, or ate while you were there. We consider ourselves lucky if we can afford an annual respite from the lovelessness that is northwest Kansas. We lodge with relatives or at Motel 6, eat

with our cousin or Ronald McBlotter. Our children look that much better by comparison. We do not want to hear where you have been or what you saw, did, or ate while you were there. We consider ourselves lucky if we can afford an annual respite from the lovelessness that is northwest Kansas. We lodge with relatives or at Motel 6, eat

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Thanking you in advance for your consideration,

Steve Stacy
Oberlin

Letters to the Editor

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