

Oberlin needs clear signs to keep visitors satisfied

If Oberlin wants more people to come here, we need better signs.

Visitor-friendly towns have “go-to” signs that direct anyone arriving on the highways to major destinations.

Oberlin has a hodgepodge of little signs that don’t work very well. Things are better than they used to be — there are small signs on U.S. 36 today pointing to The Gateway — but not nearly what they could be.

“Go-to” signs are plain, clear, use large lettering and guide a visitor to his destination. They mimic the style and form of highway directional signs, eschewing frou-frou booster sales pitches.

They’re different, then, than the signs advertising downtown Oberlin. Those signs are selling the town with 20-30 words. A “go-to” sign just says “downtown” with an arrow.

Go-to signs aren’t about advertising; they’re about finding what you need.

Colby, Oakley and Goodland have them. St. Francis tried, but theirs are neither clear nor easy to read. That’s a mistake.

Simple white-on-green or white-on-brown signs, reflectorized for night viewing, do this job. Short, clear messages win the day.

These signs should point to places where visitors go: the high school, downtown, courthouse, hospital, Gateway, grade school, Sappa Park, the museum, maybe a few others. One word or two will do.

If there’s a turn, post more signs. They need to work from any entrance to town. Another

set would be posted at the two traffic lights downtown.

It’s not about advertising. It’s about being sure that visitors have a good experience when they’re here, find their way and don’t get lost.

That way, they’ll have good memories of our town. And want to come back.

Embellishment gets in the way. Clarity is paramount.

Signs have to be big enough to read at 30-40 mph.

Churches and businesses might want to join in and post their own go-to signs in the same style. Nothing wrong with that.

This is something every town needs, if it wants visitors to return and shop.

It’s something Oberlin can’t afford not to do

— Steve Haynes

A postscript: The Gateway is still the most under-signed building in town. The new sign on U.S. 83 helps a lot, but from U.S. 36, where half the visitors will be, the civic center could be a high school or a hospital.

The back of the building is unmarked, but it’s a blank canvas. Now that the lighted sign is up out front, how about large lettering on the north side: “The Gateway” with “civic center” in smaller letters below. With lighting, of course.

Clear and classy.

If there’s space, the city could add: “Welcome to Oberlin!”



On her meds, cat travels better

Cats.

I haven’t given any updates in quite a while, so all you feline fanciers gather ’round. The rest of you go read the sports section.

As most of you know, we have been taking two out of the four resident cats to Colorado with us.

April Alice sits quietly in her kennel for the nine to 10 hours it takes and only starts to get fidgety if nature is calling and we’re still dawdling.

Molly Monster fights the whole process. She growls. She yowls. She meows quietly to herself after having a tranquilizer forced down her throat.

The other two — Rupert and Jezebel, youngest daughter’s cats — are just happy to have the house to themselves while our two are gone.

Jezebel doesn’t take any guff off of any of the others, and only Molly ever tries to cause her grief.

Rupert, however, is at the bottom of the scratching order. Everyone but Jezebel makes her hide under the furniture. She misses us when we’re gone, but she sure doesn’t miss the other cats.

Down in South Carolina, youngest daughter is now catless, having given away her last feline so that her boyfriend can visit her without resorting to innumerable allergy pills.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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He never complained to her, but her sister, with whom he works, said that he always felt like he had a hangover on Monday after visiting his girlfriend and her three cats.

He did have to put up with one visitor this last week, however.

Oldest daughter and her husband, also the owners of three cats, went to Europe for two weeks.

Two of their cats they left at home with a friend to come in to check on them.

The third, however, had gotten into a fight a week before they were to leave. Louie ended up with an infection that required both oral and topical (on the skin) antibiotics.

Oldest daughter was not willing to leave a cat that required medicating with a friend.

She was also unwilling to spend \$10 a day for two weeks to keep the cat at the vet.

She compromised with her

sister’s help. She left the cat at the vet for a week and her sister took it for a week.

Youngest daughter has spent plenty of time medicating her own cats, so she knows the drill — grab cat, force mouth open, shove pill or dropperful of medicine down throat, get bandages for scratches on hands, arms and torso.

And then you have to deal with the topical cream....

Son and his two felines are still hanging out in Lawrence with no particular ups and downs except that Frank doesn’t seem to know he’s neutered and still sprays occasionally. Better in son’s apartment than my house, I think.

Daughter called yesterday and said she and hubby were home from Turkey and that she had gotten me pictures of cats in three out of the four countries they visited.

Gee, how did she know I like cats?

Phone captures perfect plan

Since I bought my digital camera a year ago, I’ve become a hazard at home and on the highway.

My eyes are always scanning for a “photo opportunity.” You never know when I might spot something I think is worthy of being captured in time.

A few weeks ago, that was me parked on the shoulder of the highway. I was standing on the trunk of my car trying to get a picture of water standing in terraces.

Birds are great subjects, but I’m probably not patient enough. I always want to be closer, but as soon as you move, they’re gone. Thank goodness for zoom lenses.

People are still my favorite subjects. Little kids are the best. They are so uninhibited. If I can capture them unaware, it’s perfect.

It helps that I have a press pass. People forgive you when you say, “I need up front. I’m with the newspaper.” And, I’m pushy enough to worm my way into the best spot for a shot.

Digital cameras are the cheapskate’s answer to photo processing. This morning, I took a dozen pictures of a beautiful rosebud Jim brought in to me. It is, literally, the last rose of summer.

If I had to pay for film processing, I might have snapped one, two at the



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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most.

With my digital camera, I “posed” the “posy” in front of different backgrounds. I used the flash in some, without in others. I tried to blur the background while focusing on the flower. I laid it down, I kept it in the vase. The variations were endless.

And now with on-line photo processing, it’s a simple matter of e-mailing your photo files. In a day or two, your prints are sent back to you, and you only buy the ones you want. The technological age is wonderful.

Two weeks ago, I bought a cell phone with a camera. My argument to get it was it would help me in my work. I could take a picture at a remote location, e-mail it to the office and it would be there before press time.

You know all the earthquakes, natural disasters and terrorist activities we have going on out here.

Wouldn’t want to miss a thing.

It worked. I have my new camera phone and Jim has a new power tool. Fair trade.

—ob—

Here’s a point to ponder: Can an atheist get insurance against “acts of God?”

From the Bible

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Romans 13: 1, 2

Church a monument to past

As the church was rising on the plains east of Denver, we started referring to it as “Our Lady of the Barren Plain.”

Obviously Catholic, it was nothing like the frou-frou modern architecture of suburban churches. Hard as I-70 at Watkins, it had no neighborhoods around it to feed a parish.

It has the form of a classic Roman church from a century ago, and it turns out, that’s pretty much what it is.

St. Isadore the Farmer is the home church now in Denver of the St. Pius X Society, that group of Catholics formed after the Vatican II conference of the 1960s to fight change and preserve the old ways.

It’s not fair to say the group split from the church; they would tell you the church split from them. But the names of the pope and the archbishop of Denver are chiseled indelibly into the cornerstone — in Latin.

We had been curious about the service at St. Isadore, but leaving Denver on a Sunday, we’re often not dressed the way this parish lives: Coat, tie, dress shoes for men; dresses and head covering for women.

We had the clothes last week, though, even if Cynthia did have to borrow a lace mantilla to cover her head.

It’s hasn’t been that long since these things were part of Catholic worship around the world, and not just in the Roman church. When I joined the Episcopal church in the 1960s, you wore a tie and ladies were expected to cover the heads. It



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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didn’t last long.

The reforms of that era swept traditions away from all the mainstream churches, but none changed more dramatically than the Catholics.

A lot of people didn’t like it. Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre of France led the Pius X movement, citing theological grounds to cling to the old ways, especially the “tridentine” Latin Mass. The protest not just about form, but substance.

So St. Isadore is a church frozen in time. The Mass book comes from the 1962 missal, the last one issued in Latin. It includes a good English translation for those who can’t follow the Latin, and these days, who can?

There is a school now, struggling, but teaching the old ways to new students. Bingo is the big fund-raiser, and please, Father says, the parish really needs the money from extra sessions to make budget.

For the 10 a.m. service, though, the pews are only half full. There are fewer old traditionalists than you might expect, but lots of young, conservative ex urban families.

There’s a scattering of Hispanics, many of them older couples. And a

few you wouldn’t expect — a biker in leathers, wearing a scarf for a tie; a guy in a mullet and leisure shirt, straight from the ’70s.

Except for a more modern Colorado-style roof, the church is finished not in the style of the last century, but the one before.

The kneelers are wood, the altar rail mounted on cold marble. Did you ever consider how much harder marble is than wood? Me neither, until then.

The ushers knelt flat on the marble floor for five minutes before communion. It’s a place, and a service, more about penance than celebration.

In his sermon, the priest talked about why it’s a sin to eat meat on Friday, even if you like fish better, and, I swear, pushed indulgences.

It’s impossible to know who’s right and who’s wrong in these arguments. I’m comfortable seeing those who cling to tradition have their time and place.

St. Paul said we won’t know these things until it’s time, and then we’ll understand. Meantime, the harm done is mostly in the animosity that develops when one group tries to force its ways on any other, in any church, in any time.

Honor Roll

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

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Tootsie Roll Drive helps with bills

To the Editor:

Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas would like to wish all of the area Knights of Columbus organizations in northwest Kansas the best of luck as they conduct their annual Tootsie Roll Drive.

For many years, people with developmental disabilities have benefited from the generosity and hard work of the Knights. We truly appreciate their kindness and support.

The Consumer Medical Fund of Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas was established due to the contributions made through the Tootsie Roll Drive. This fund helps people with disabilities with the cost

Letter to the Editor

of medical items and care that are not covered by Medicaid, such as dental expenses and adaptive equipment. We hope that everyone will take the time to donate through this great effort by your local Knights.

Once again, good luck and thank you for making the medical needs of

people with developmental disabilities one of your top priorities. You’re making a great difference in people’s lives.

Steve Keil
director of development
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of Northwest Kansas, Hays

