

## Poor, needy, addicted would finance gambling

As the pressure mounts in Topeka to scrape up more money for schools, the vultures are circling.

Gambling supporters, backed by big casino operators, want to open up state-owned operations in Kansas City and southeast Kansas. Slot machines would be allowed at dog tracks in Wyandotte, Sedgwick and Crawford counties, plus Dodge City if anyone wants to build a track there.

This is a bad idea and a poor way to finance schools, for a lot of reasons:

- Gambling turns out to be a tax on people who can least afford it. It's not rich folks pulling the levers at prairie casinos. The high rollers are in Las Vegas, where the glitz is.

No, it'll be the poor, the needy and the addicted who finance Kansas gambling.

- Gambling sets a poor example for our kids. How can we tell them it's bad to gamble to excess, then — with a straight face — use gambling money to pay for their schools?

Maybe we should tax drug sales to support schools. There's more money in drugs, and the dealers would like an "in" with the kids.

- Gambling would set our squeaky-clean state government up for major corruption.

Under the plan about to surface, a casino operator would pay \$35 million up front and at least \$200 million to develop the resort. A quarter of the state's take goes into a fund for property tax relief. The state's 75 percent — estimated at \$300 million — would go into the

general fund for schools.

Tracks would pay the state \$15,000 per machine up front for 7,000 slots, but owners could deduct that from future taxes.

State officials would have to decide which companies get these lucrative contracts. If the casinos can afford this kind of taxation, there will be millions bet and millions lost.

And those millions make for a shaky situation when a few officials make the decisions. The potential for corruption is great; operators in this industry have a long history of mob ties and shaky dealings.

- Someone has to lose half a billion to a billion dollars a year to make this scheme work. It won't, for the most part, be tourists.

It'll be us losing that money. Most likely, it'll be a disproportionate share of those Kansans who can least afford it who pay this tax.

This is, as one legislator described it, "a lose-lose" deal for our state. It benefits a few people owning the casinos, but not the bulk of the population.

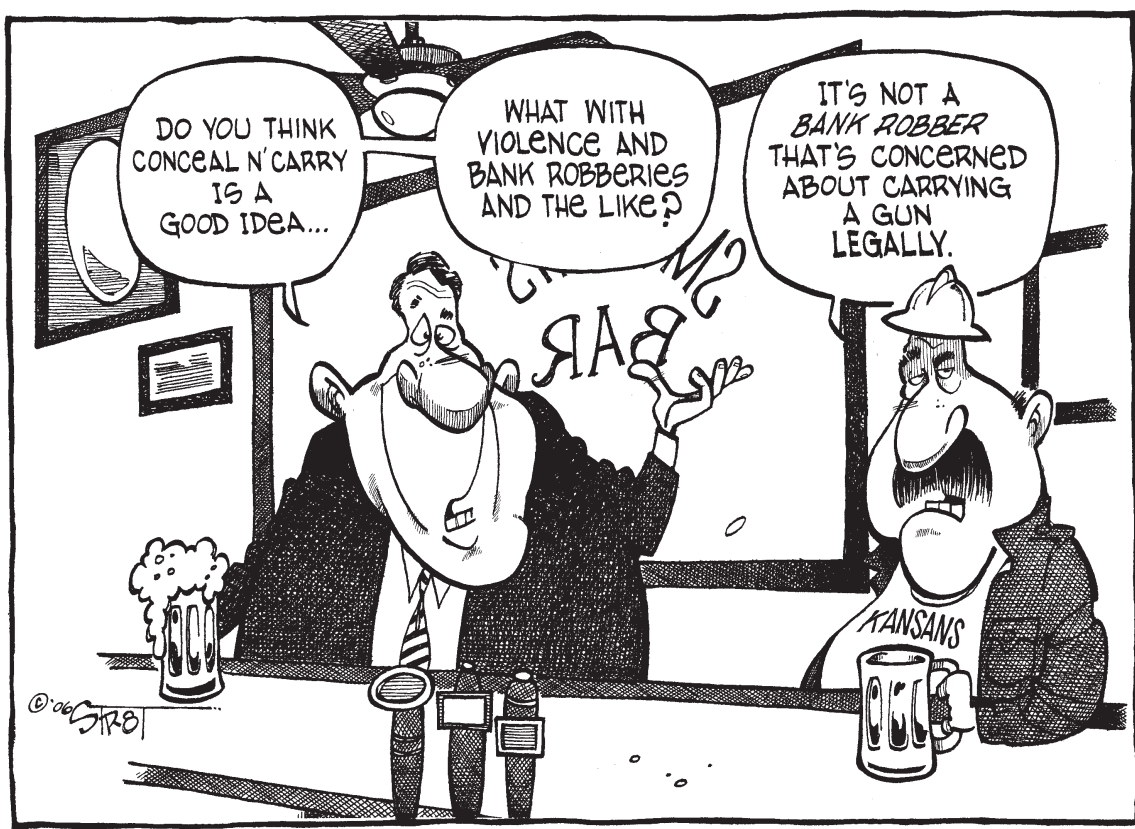
Well, maybe we could give school kids free field trips to the casinos.

They could see where the money comes to pay their teachers, put a few nickels into the slots and pull the lever.

The results should be a lesson to them — but we doubt it.

Let's not gamble with our state's future. Legislators, vote no.

— Steve Haynes



## Who's been sleeping in this bed?

Each morning, Steve makes our bed and I make Lindsay's, even though our daughter hasn't slept in that bed for several months.

Steve almost always goes to bed after I do and gets up after I do, so he's the one to make our bed each day and he's very faithful about doing it, even though he really hates making beds.

Then there's Lindsay's bed. I don't actually make it every day — usually just every two or three. It takes that long to get so messed up I feel compelled to do something about it.

I've known for a long time that its the cats messing that bed up.

I just assumed since the quilt is usually pushed back that the cats prefer to sleep on the soft, comfy pillows.

I also assumed that only Lindsay's two cats — Jez and Rupert — were sleeping there, since they are the only ones I had ever seen on that bed.

When Lindsay visits — which isn't very often now that she's moved to South Carolina — her cats sleep with her. The rest of the time,



## Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
cahaynes@nwkansas.com

they tend to sleep in a chair, but occasionally, I've found them curled up together on her bed.

It seemed to me that the covers were getting pushed farther and farther down, and after I had been gone for a week in January, the covers were practically pushed over the bottom of the bed.

This seemed to be a lot of work to sleep on a pillow or two, so I started watching that room more closely.

One day, I went in to straighten the bed and found a lump in it.

The lump turned out to be Rupert. Apparently sleeping on top of the bed was no longer her preference. She was snuggling under the covers.

Two days later, I found April Alice, our yellow cat, snuggled un-

der the covers. She must have seen Rupert get comfy and decided to try it herself.

I'm glad I finally figured out how and why the bed was unmaking itself. Even though I was fairly sure it involved a cat or two, the whole thing was a little unnerving when I could never catch them at it.

Since Rupert and April Alice tend to keep an armed truce, I'm thinking of changing the antique quilt on that bed for an old comforter.

It's weird to think that the quilt my grandmother made for me when I was 5 is more than 50 years old and a valuable antique now.

If the quilt is old and valuable, what does that make me? No, I don't even want to go there!

## Kansas needs to limit taxes

We may hear about whether Kansas needs something called TABOR this year, but it's unlikely that we'll get one unless people raise a clamor.

TABOR stands for the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, a constitutional amendment that limits government spending and tax rates and requires government — state, city, county and school — to rebate excess taxes back to the people who paid them.

So far, Colorado is the only state that has TABOR. Kansas is among the states where it's been proposed, but it's wildly unpopular with government officials and many legislators, who would rather spend money than save it.

The only way Colorado got its law was for voters to pass a ballot initiative, which is next to impossible in Kansas. The Legislature there would never have put such strict limits on its spending power.

It's likely that Kansas legislators won't do it either, unless we make them.

Do we need TABOR here? Here's an example.

Cynthia and I have a house in Kansas. It's valued at \$75,000, and the property taxes on it — state, county, city and school — are \$1,400 a year.

We also own a house in Colorado, valued at \$175,000. The taxes on it are about \$700 per year.

State sales and income taxes in both states are comparable.

You decide which tax system is best.

You will hear that Colorado's system was "strangling government" and "hasn't worked." That's a lie.



## Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
schaynes@nwkansas.com

Colorado voters decided this fall to let the state keep some of the "windfall" surplus revenue that is coming in to build things like highways, schools and prisons. They did not approve any tax increase, just to let the state and local governments keep some of the surplus produced by good times and a growing population.

Otherwise, that money would have been rebated to taxpayers. People decided the state had a good use for it.

That didn't mean TABOR had failed, just that it needed some adjustment, and voters agreed to do it.

Kansas backers say the changes they have proposed would avoid the problems Colorado got into.

Government officials, almost to a man, have been against strong tax limits. That should make us suspicious right there.

Of course, those who spend tax money don't want limits. Neither do the more liberal legislators in both parties.

Nothing is likely to happen unless we demand action.

The question is not, do we need TABOR?

The question is, do we want higher and higher taxes every year, or do we want to limit government growth?

If we want less government and lower taxes, TABOR — or something like it — is the way to go.

## Honor Roll

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

**California:** Eva Naatus, Oakdale; Peggy Carlton, Bakersfield; Cindy Connolly, Pacifica; Carl Liechty, Murrieta; Carol Bell, MiWuk Village; Glen Wilner, Banning; Charlene Hughes, Long Beach; John E. Love, LaVerne; Ri-

chard Barrett, Glendora; Susan Screen, San Carlos; Letha Ferguson, Valencia;

**Colorado:** Mildred Irwin, Arvada; Maxine Peebles, Kit Cushman, Stanley Deines, Denver; Fred Reichert, Ward Olson, Colorado Springs; Dale Morton, Grand Junction; Betsy Linton, Golden; and Marjorie Missing, Salida.

## Daughter puts on a good show

If this is global warming, bring it on.

As much as this part of the country needs moisture, the mild winter has been a blessing. Our first heating bill of the season covered that period during and after the late November blizzard. I feared we might need to get a second mortgage to pay it. Since then it's been bearable.

I've been checking our trees. Looks to me like they're thinking about budding. Oh please, hold off a little while.

Be assured, winter is not quite done with us yet.

—ob—

Our granddaughter Alexandria played in a basketball tournament Saturday. As much fun as it was to watch her, it was more fun to watch her mother.

Jennifer was a standout basketball player in high school. She was good enough that when she tried out as a walk-on for a college team, she made the starting lineup.

Now, she is helping coach a fifth- and sixth-grade girls team. She approaches coaching with the same intensity she does everything else. She was so focused during the game, I don't think she even knew we were there until half time.

Alex's team didn't win, but she said she had fun playing. I don't think her mother thought it was that much fun. She plays to win.

—ob—



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
cplotts@nwkansas.com

My husband is a prankster. He lives to "get me." I'm almost to the point of locking the bathroom door because I fear those hands coming around the shower curtain. When we get moved into the two-bathroom house, I'll have glass shower doors and that'll stop him.

One night last week, I thought it was my turn for revenge.

I was working late at my office when I heard his truck pull up out front. Yes, I can recognize the sound of his vehicle. Anyway, I said to one of my co-workers, "That's Jim. I'm gonna get him. Watch this."

Our office has a lobby with a glass divider wall. I hurried around the counter and "hid" to the side of the inner door, waiting to pounce on Jim when he entered.

Instead, it was his hands that sprang from around the doorjamb and "got" me.

"How did you know I was there?" I asked.

"Well, it's pretty hard to hide be-

hind a glass wall, don't you think?" he answered. "I saw your silhouette as soon as I walked in."

Rats. Foiled again. You, just wait, Jim Plotts. Somewhere, someday, somehow, when you least expect it, I'm going to get you.

Unless, of course, you get me first. Again.

## From the Bible

These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord. Zechariah 8: 16, 17

## Confidentiality important to group

To the Editor:

This is in response to the letter that appeared in the Feb. 22 *Oberlin Herald* written by Elsie Wolters.

We accepted her into the group with her agreement that what is done or said in the group stays in the group meeting. She came into the group and said that she was writing a book. While she was present, she took notes, which made the rest of the group uncomfortable. They said they would not return or talk if she was allowed to return. As there is no way to stop her from putting anything in her book, we could not just ask her to stop taking notes, for she could remember what was said and write it down later.

The decision to ask her not to return instead of letting others in the group leave was based on the fact that she was much more advanced in her grieving cycle than the rest of the group. This is clear to me because her ability to write a book about her crisis says she has progressed further in her grieving than the group members or me. If she wants more help, that is something

## Letter to the Editor

we cannot offer, for we are not professionals.

We have simple rules and do not tolerate any excuses for breaking them. The rule she broke was, what is said or done in the group stays in the group. She didn't leave her notes. Just as a professional counselor would, we strive for confidentiality.

In our group, compassion is not a one-way street for all members have lost a loved one. The loss of a child causes immeasurable pain. I sympathize for her and wish that we could help her. If we have offended her, we are sorry.

Heather Wessel, Selden  
Founder of the Compassionate Butterflies

## 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@nwkansas.com.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and

expect readers to do likewise.

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.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses.

# 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: oberald@nwkansas.com

## Nor'West Newspapers

### STAFF

Steve Haynes ..... editor  
Kimberly Davis ..... 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 ..... advertising production  
Joan Betts ..... historian  
Jim Merriott ..... sports reporter  
Whitney Beinke ..... page makeup



Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.  
(Also open most Saturdays when someone is in.)

Subscriptions: One year, \$30 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$34 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$37 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.

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, Norcatur, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.