

## Council selection good; process could be better

Mayor Ken Shobe has named Rhonda May to fill a vacant seat on the City Council.

She replaces Patrick Pomeroy, the former county ambulance director, who left his job last week to take another in Coffeyville.

Mr. Pomeroy will be missed. He was a good ambulance director. He brought order out of an unorganized department, collected the bills and boosted training. His work on the city council showed a depth of community involvement that Oberlin needs.

Ms. May doubtless is a fine replacement for him on the council.

She is bright, well educated, personable and committed to this community. We look forward to her contributions.

This is a good appointment by the mayor. Still, we can't help but question the process which brought her to this appointment, if you can call it that.

Basically, as we understand it, the mayor looked around and made a choice.

There was no one who had just missed being elected to the commission in the last election. In fact, there were only two candidates for two seats, a sad circumstance.

There were no volunteers for the post that we know of, partly at least because no one had much chance to volunteer.

And that is too bad.

It seems only fair that the city should have a regular process for filling vacancies, from

zoning and other board positions, to replacing a council member.

Particularly with a council seat, since the person named to a post often winds up serving more than the unexpired term. An appointment short-circuits the election process, giving someone a near lock on a seat.

Decatur County commissioners have been rigorous in following their appointment rules in recent years. Everyone, even a long-term incumbent, has to apply for appointment to a county job.

Commissioners figure it's their duty to be fair to anyone who might be interested in a job. That's a good system.

The city would do well to have one of its own. The mayor would still make the choice. The end result might be no different.

Certainly, had she applied in a crowded field, Ms. May would have stood out as a good candidate for the council. There's nothing wrong with her appointment. The law allows the mayor to make the choice.

We'd just like to see a more organized process, with notice given to all eligible citizens, before the decision next time.

It's something the council certainly should consider, not just for council seats, but for all city appointments.

Who knows; the city might wind up with some volunteer help it hadn't expected.

— Steve Haynes



## Fun trip gets off to bloody start

The trip didn't have a very auspicious start. The train was late and I cut myself on the tickets.

We were headed for Milwaukee on Amtrak for a three-day trip with no committee meetings, no seminars and nobody but us.

It was no surprise that the train was late. The train's always late. It comes from Oakland and has lots of opportunities to lose time between California and McCook.

Steve asked to look at the tickets and as I pulled them out of the rubber-banded pack of important stuff, I gave myself a nasty paper cut.

I held it over my head, I applied pressure. It wouldn't quit bleeding. It was 2 a.m. and I was bleeding to death from a paper cut.

Luckily, the rest of the trip was better.

We had a nice trip to Chicago and although the connection was tight, we caught the local to Milwaukee.

In Milwaukee, we went out to an old German social hall and had sausage, potato pancakes and beer. Not dietetic, but authentic local fare.

As we ate, we watched the Brewers game on television. The poor Brewers aren't exactly in the basement, but they haven't won a whole lot of games this year. However, as we watched, the hometown boys beat the Atlanta Braves. The television announcer said that the next day's game would start at noon.



## Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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Our reason for being in town was an art show with watercolor paintings and photographs by a friend who died about three years ago.

The gallery opened at 10 a.m., so we walked over and spent a couple of hours looking and remembering. Then we headed for the ballpark.

Since we didn't have tickets, we bought a couple from an independent businessman (read scalper).

The seats were great, the day was sunny and the Brewers beat the Braves. What more could we ask?

Well, we could have remembered to bring hats and sunglasses, but it was supposed to be overcast. That's how Steve ended up with a Milwaukee Brewers hat.

We celebrated the victory by walking back to the hotel — about five miles. Well, that should have worked off some excess calories.

We grabbed the train home the next day and arrived back in McCook almost on time. The west-bound train seldom loses much time

between Illinois and Nebraska, so you can usually get off the train on time — at 3:53 a.m.

It was a good trip and a good time and it's a good thing we went to the game when we did because the Cubs came to town and the Brewers returned to their losing ways.

We were there for the celebration, though, since the Brewers had never, ever won a series at home against the hated Braves, who deserted Wisconsin for the South those many years ago.

## From the Bible

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge. An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity. Proverbs 19: 27, 28

## Grads get heartfelt send off

High school seniors everywhere are considering their futures. Sunday night, we were given an opportunity to deliver an address to three young people in a little Nebraska town just over the border from us.

We were booked as a team. The organizer wanted Jim and I to sing some songs and say a few words to the graduating seniors from this farming community. When I agreed for us to do this, I was quite flattered, thinking someone, finally, realized how eloquent I could be. I visualized the audience hanging on every word.

As the night of our debut approached, I came to realize the awesome responsibility of what we were about to do. I kept bugging Jim, "What are you going to talk about? What are you going to say?"

A practiced public speaker, he would only say, "Calm down, Carolyn. I'm working on it. It's coming to me."

"Well, work out loud. I need to know what you're going to say, so I don't say the same thing," I told him.

He gave me a cockeyed look that I translated to mean, "There is no way you could begin to say the same thing I am going to say." Which was true, but I was beginning to get nervous.

I read somewhere public speaking is one of life's most stressful situations. I believe it. I have no problem with spontaneous conversation. I can make small talk with anyone.

Somehow, this seemed different. What I said was supposed to be profound. It might have an impact on these young people's lives.

Then, my husband gave me the best advice in the world: "Just speak from your heart."



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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So, I did. I told the kids I hoped their parents had let them make a few mistakes. That the best way to learn how to make good decisions was to make a few bad ones.

I told them they would have two important decisions to make in their lives and neither one had anything to do with where they went to school or what they would do for a living.

I said their first decision would be whether or not to make Christ the center of their life. The second most important decision would be who they would decide to marry.

Then I threw in one extra bit of advice for free. I told them to have a purpose in their lives, to be of ser-

vice to others.

Next, it was Jim's turn. In true Plotts style, he changed his message, on the spot. The message he delivered was not the message he had prepared. He said my comment about service inspired him and he presented what I thought was a fine message. The phrase he used was: "Only one life will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last."

It's true. If we can be servants of our fellow man in their time of need, we are fulfilling our purpose.

You don't have to look very far to find a need. Perhaps you're just the person to fill it.

## Thanks for health fair

To the Editor:

We'd like to thank all those who were involved in the Decatur County Health Fair. We appreciate the work and time that went into it.

We learned a lot of new things, like how to eat healthy. We learned how important water is for our bodies, and that fruits and vegetables contain water. We also learned to be careful because some common household items that are poisonous look-a-likes of things that we eat. We know how important labels are.

## Letter to the Editor

We especially thought it was great how there was something for everyone.

We also want to thank the Lions Club for bringing their bus.

Bethany Smith  
Oberlin Christian Academy

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## Writer feels paying for water wrong

To the Editor:

I'm writing in regard to the idiotic idea of paying farmers to stop irrigating crops. These irrigators are using up a natural resource, water, that belongs to everyone, not just the farmers.

The people who put down irrigation systems did this of their choosing. No one told them they had to do this. They did this out of greed to raise more grain to make more money, and to raise a commodity that we already have an excess of. This depresses the price further.

If we had plenty of water underground, it would be different, but the Ogallala Aquifer which lies under parts of Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Colorado has been dropping for quite a number of years. Some farmers' household water supply from the aquifer has gone dry and some have had to drill new wells because of the fall of the water level.

## Letter to the Editor

Many cities are having trouble with their drinking water supply.

This doesn't seem right, to let irrigators continue to pump out of the aquifer while this shortage of water is occurring, and piles of grain are stored on the ground. Human and animal consumption should have first priority to this natural resource.

To be paid to stop irrigating is about the biggest load of bull I've ever heard of. Why does our governor think they should be paid to stop irrigating? They made an investment in irrigation to make more money. There's nothing wrong with that at all, as long as there is plenty of water.

How about paying other businesses in town for not being able to

sell as much merchandise as normal because of the drought? That's just as big a load of bull as it is to pay the irrigators to stop pumping water to irrigate crops.

The people of Kansas and other states better sit up and take notice before we're out of water, or have nothing left but contaminated water. And that's not so far away. The last article I saw on that said there was only six-tenths of 1 percent of the water left in the U.S. that was not contaminated. Let your senators and representatives know how critical our water supply is.

The Ogallala Aquifer dropped 12 1/2 feet in 2003.

Walter A. Hein  
Grainfield