

## Sharp increase in postage could deepen postal woes

If you're still upset because the price of a stamp jumped from 37 to 39 cents this year, hold on to — OK, men don't wear hats anymore — just hang on.

Things are about to get a whole lot worse. The U.S. Postal Service has filed for another increase, one which will drive the price of mailing a letter to 42 cents by next year.

And the service says to expect increases every year for a while.

The Postal Service, which had been running a billion-dollar profit just a couple of years ago, now sees itself awash in a sea of red ink. The service sees sharp increases in postage as its salvation, but the truth is, they may only succeed in driving more business away.

E-mail and other electronic delivery have taken much of the service's once-lucrative first-class volume. Mailers faced with a 7.6 percent increase in costs on top of this year's 2-cent hike might start to bail out.

Utilities already offer bills by e-mail or a web site. Other firms will join in. Many offer electronic payment options, and the list will grow.

Most people don't bother to write friends anymore. They go the computer and send an electronic message, e-chat or even an e-greeting card.

As mailers jump ship, increasingly the postal system will be left only with advertising mail — what most of us refer to euphemistically as "junk mail."

And the Postal Service is getting ready for that future. It plans to consolidate mail sorting at a few large centers around the country that will be highly automated.

Postal carriers, who now spend part of their time sorting and organizing their mail, will just deliver packages to each home. Even a letter to your neighbor may travel hundreds of miles

to be sorted by machine.

Of course, the service says its delivery standards won't suffer. They've been saying that ever since they took the mail off trains and started to fly most of it.

"Improved" service will result in even less mail, and the death spiral will accelerate. Many mailers fear the Postal Service is a dying dinosaur, and you don't want to be around when a critter that big is thrashing about.

Newspapers are left with a real problem, and so are our readers.

Service has gotten so bad for cross-country delivery that many of readers have given up. Others are perpetually disgusted. The shift to central sorting could ruin the excellent service we get at local and regional offices in our area.

On top of that, the Postal Service wants a 24.2 percent increase in rates for newspapers delivered in the county where they are mailed. Never mind that publishers sort this mail in delivery order and take it right to the post office in most cases. The "economic model" says it's costly to deliver.

Out-of-county mail will see similar hikes, with already-poor service likely to suffer as sorting is centralized. Readers, we fear, will turn to Internet editions and publishers will be forced to hire carriers for in-town delivery.

It's a scary thought, but this could be the end of our two-century era of universal mail delivery, the end of getting your newspaper in the mail, the end for an American tradition.

As publishers, we hope not. Our national groups plan to put up a fight. We hope the Postal Service will come to its senses and try to keep newspapers in the mail.

But don't bet on it.

You can, sadly, bet on slower service, higher subscription prices and more expensive stamps. — *Steve Haynes*



## Remember Sept. 11 attack and support our troops

**Editor's Note:** The following essay was written by Jordan McHugh for her speech class at Decatur Community High School, taught by Leigh Davis. She read it at the Oberlin Memorial Day service on Monday.

The men and women on those planes were innocent civilians. They were murdered by terrorists. Terrorism is what we are fighting against, and freedom is what we are fighting for. We need to support the troops who are fighting for our rights like freedom of speech and just plain freedom. We have used freedom of speech against our men and women who are fighting for us to have it.

An example of this is when my dad was first activated. He is in the Army National Guard, and we were driving through a city and saw a man holding a sign that said the war was wrong. My dad hung his head and said, "That is what I am fighting for, so people can say things like that."

When you think about it, do you want the people who are protecting you to think you don't appreciate them?

You might think that we are killing too many innocent people, but you are wrong. Our troops aren't going over there and killing innocent Iraqis. In the time Saddam Hussein was in power, he killed over 300,000 of his own people, most of the time for no good reason. Those people were shot and killed or tortured to death.

Saddam didn't only kill his own people; he has attacked us, killed our people, and threatened our freedom. On 9/11 2,752 American people were murdered. Their lives were cut short, and our lives were changed. The terrorist attacks themselves were set up by Osama bin Laden, but when Saddam was told about the attacks, he raised his hands and said "Praise Allah!", and clapped his hands with joy.

For those of you who doubt this war, I have something for you to think about. My father hasn't been home on my birthday for about five years. My dad was activated to airport duty Oct. 2001 through March 2002; Fort Riley as an instructor, Oct. 2002 through Dec. 2002; in Germany as a transport director, Jan. 2003 through April 2003; in Kuwait, Jan. 12, 2004, through March 27, 2005; and New Orleans, Sept. 24, 2005 through Oct. 20, 2005. He is now getting ready to head to Iraq to serve us for another year.

I see it this way. What insight do you have on this war? What reasons do you have to hate it and not support it? I have plenty of reasons to hate this war, but I don't and never have; I believe with all my heart this is right. I have never doubted the reasons of this war because it has always been obvious. Do you not have the images of 9/11 burnt into your memory? Do you not have any feelings for the people who lost their lives? For the soldiers who are risking their lives so yours can be bet-

ter? Think of the reasons you have to not support the war and think of the reasons you have to support the war.

Think this way: What would you do if you lost someone dear to you on Sept. 11, 2001? Would you have any doubt that this war is right? Those people's deaths have not been in vain. The soldiers who have died, they died for your freedom ... for you. So when you say you don't support the war, you might as well say you don't support your freedom, and you don't support people risking their lives for you.

Here is something more for you to think about: it's easiest not to get involved in a tough situation. It would have been easier for the emergency crews to watch the twin towers burn and to let the people die. It would have been easier for President Bush to have ignored the threats than to defend our rights and our freedom. It would be easier to sit back and ignore the fact that Saddam Hussein was murdering innocent people. I think it's obvious that it's easier to just ignore your problems and not do what you know is right.

Freedom has never come easy and probably never will. We should be thankful that we have people in the past and present who will lay their lives on the line for people they don't know and at times people who don't support what they are doing, even if they are fighting for them.

The people who are willing to pay the price for OUR freedom are people we need to thank and support, not criticize and shun. Do you think it would be easier for President Bush to just have said, "I am done with this" at the last election than to fight for his presidency so he could keep supporting his people? Do you think it is easy for the soldiers to leave their families to support US?

Now think about this: Is it easier for you to just say "I don't believe in this war?" or say "I support our troops" and fight for them like they fight for us?

*Jordan McHugh, the daughter of Randy and Kristin McHugh of Oberlin, was a freshman this year at Decatur Community High. Her father is Decatur County undersheriff and a sergeant first class in the Nebraska National Guard. He leaves this week for his second tour in the Middle East.*

### From the Bible

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. I Corinthians 15: 51, 52

## Government 'in action' slow

Memorial Day always fills me with a sense of pride.

When I hear "Taps," I have to swallow hard to hold back tears. When I see former military men still able to wear their uniforms, I see the handsome young men they were. And, when I see an Avenue of Flags, I remember that each one represents a fallen soldier. Perhaps they did not die in battle, but they served their country.

A news story this weekend reported the fact that the Tomb of the Unknowns has developed a crack. A businessman from Colorado has volunteered to replace the entire crypt, at a personal cost of almost \$60,000. Yet, the decision to accept this offer remains "in committee." And has been for almost six years. It shouldn't be that hard to donate something to this country.

The reporter pointed out how important the preservation of this national monument is. He said because of DNA testing, there will never again be an unknown soldier. Amazing, isn't it?

—ob—  
This weekend was Jim's 45th high school class reunion. By all appearances, he and his classmates had a great time. I know I had a good time watching them.

Everyone laments the disinterest



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
cplotts@nwkansas.com

of the younger classes. Perhaps when they have been out of school for 30 years, it will start to become important.

After the reunion and the class members had left to get ready for the evening banquet, I was helping clean up the kitchen and refreshment table. There was one lone piece of a huge sub sandwich left and I accepted the offer to take it home. I wrapped it up in the foil it came in and tucked it into a carry-home bag.

The next day, Jim was scavenging for something to eat and found the sandwich. As he unwrapped it, he said, "In memory of your mother, I am going to save this foil." There must have been a yard of tin foil covering that little sandwich.

Anyone who knew my Mom knows she would have been proud. A piece of foil was never thrown away with only one use. It had to

bake a potato (maybe two), cover a cup of milk or wrap a piece of cheese. By the time Mom threw away tin foil, it was wrinkled, cracked and brittle.

—ob—  
One more of our children has relocated herself to Texas. Oldest daughter Halley left the Washington area and moved to Dallas. She said she began to realize how much money she was spending to visit her Texas friends, so figured she might as well just move there.

Her resumé looks pretty good. Several years on the White House staff, a degree, experience as a consultant and the ability to tell a really funny story. Halley is the funniest person I know.

She can take the simplest situation and put such a spin on it that you wouldn't recognize it. That's why I was certain she had a future in politics.

# THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

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

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.

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

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800

E-mail: obherald@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



## Community Walk thanks hikers

To the Editor:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all who participated in the Community Walk sponsored by Decatur Health Systems.

The Sappa Park trails provided a nice change for the walk this year. Hats off to those who are working hard in order to restore the park.

Decatur Health Systems provided

hot dogs, water and tote bags for the 118 walkers. Special thanks go to the emergency medical technicians for cooking the hot dogs.

If you didn't make it out to the

park, find the time and see firsthand the wonderful job being done through volunteerism.

Deb Klima

Oberlin

### Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Thank you for the photo coverage of the Community Walk in the May 24 *Oberlin Herald*. There was an excellent turnout of Oberlin community members who took part. However, one very important fact

was omitted: The walk was organized and sponsored by Decatur Health Systems.

I'm sure if your newspaper sponsored a community event, you would want your name and organization recognized.

Othelia Vacura  
Public Relations  
Decatur Health Systems  
Oberlin

## Turnout 'excellent' for walk in park