

Not everyone celebrating Interstate highway 50th

You'll read a lot this week about celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Interstate highway system, but some of us are not celebrating.

The Interstate system, if anything, is a mixed bag. Only about 2 percent of the nation's road system, it carries fully 25 percent of the traffic.

Being on that 2 percent can be great for a town's economy, but the Interstates have meant slow death for towns that aren't on (or even close to) a freeway.

U.S. 36 across northern Kansas is a good example. Until the 1960s, there was plenty of through traffic headed for Denver on U.S. 36. I-70 changed all that.

Since the opening of I-70, through traffic has fallen to a fraction of what it once was. Except in towns with other business — Marysville with its railroad center, Belleville with U.S. 81 — hardly a hotel has been built since the 1960s.

Don't talk to people in southeast Kansas about Interstates. They've waited 40 years for good roads since I-35 went to Wichita rather than Tulsa. They haven't got them yet.

With the coming of the Interstates, railroads lost much valuable traffic. They had to close many branches, forcing heavy grain trucks onto the state highways. Passenger trains dried up as mail and people shifted to the roads.

Even along the freeway, prosperity is uneven. In Salina or Russell or Goodland, old motels sit in decay and service stations in town are abandoned, even as new business centers spring up along the freeways.

Crime, violence, drugs and decay ride the freeways. Drug busts, seizures of cash, hold-ups and thefts come to town on the Interstate. Other towns seldom see such action, so it seems, there are benefits to being off the beaten path.

Economic growth is not one of them. Slow times are common along the two-lane roads. Businesses don't want to locate off a freeway. With an Interstate, the rich towns along the freeway get richer and the poor towns off the road just get poorer.

No one planned it that way. President Eisenhower and his giddy allies doubtless saw a vision of fast, efficient roads moving people from city to city.

No one saw the negatives. No one saw the shift of business, the decline of railroads and the change in economic patterns.

No one much cared, either. Progress is progress. New is new.

There is no way the state can build a freeway to every town. There's not enough tax money to build them, not enough trucks to fill them if they were built. But there ought to be something the state and federal governments can do for the communities that were collateral damage to this progress.

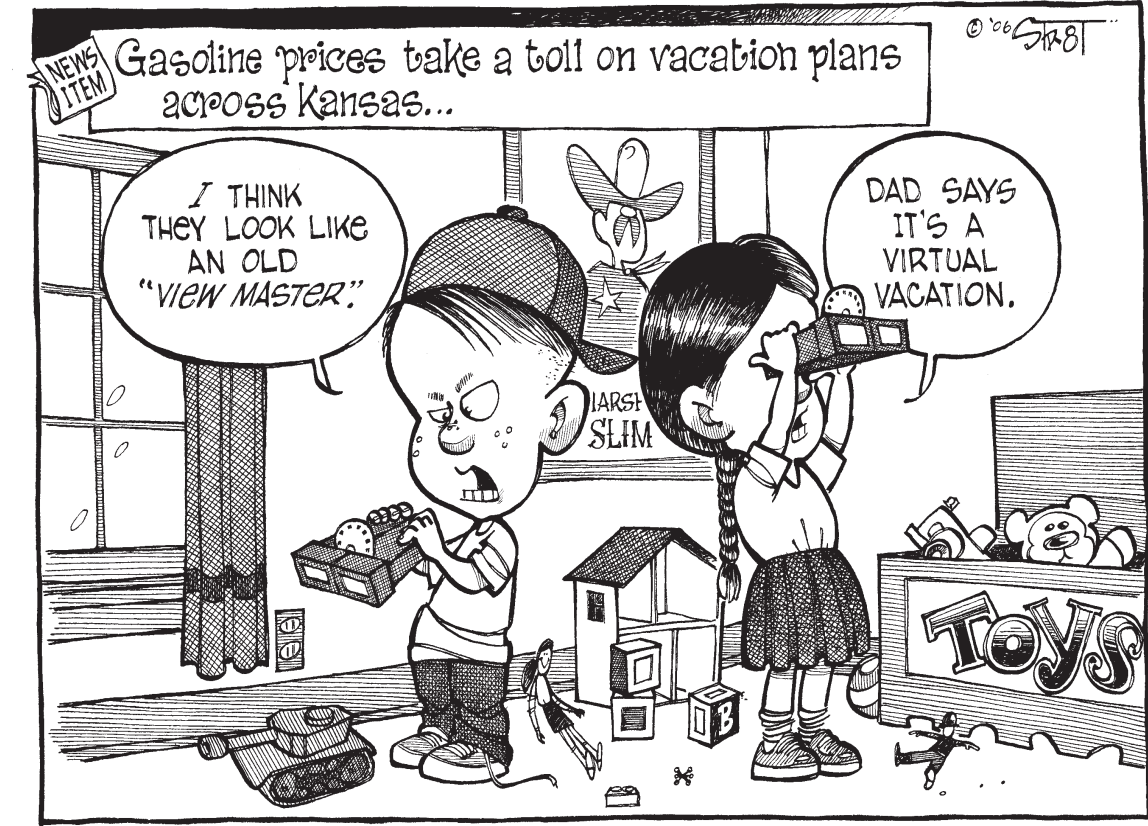
Kansas, slowly, is pushing better roads into the southeast. The southwest still lacks even four-lane expressways on U.S. 50 and U.S. 54. Northern Kansas has no four-lanes at all.

Let them celebrate down on I-70.

We've got our peace and quiet.

But it would be nice to have some jobs, too.

— Steve Haynes



Evicted cat leaves open invitation

Frank is a housecat. He's just sure he's a housecat, not a garage cat.

That's why he's almost impossible to keep out of the house.

With four cats in the house, though, the last thing we needed is another cat. However, when we got the plaintive call from our son, we couldn't say no.

Frank was being evicted and needed a home.

Frank is our son's cat, roommate and friend. When he comes home to visit, so does Frank.

However, Frank has developed some bad habits over the past six months and son's landlord has decreed him to be felinis non gratis — he's being kicked out of the apartment.

So, where do all my children turn when they need to park a cat or cats? Mom and Dad's house, of course.

Steve agreed to take Frank for a couple of months since our son will be moving soon and the new landlord doesn't know about Frank's poor bathroom habits — yet.

However, since we already have a cat overpopulation problem with our two cats and his sisters' pair, and because of Frank's spraying prob-



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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lem, Frank would have to live in the garage.

This isn't exactly a death sentence. The garage is roomy with lots of lounging and hiding spots. It has a nice cat door, we keep the window open and it can be equipped with a litter box and food and water dishes.

Frank knows about the garage. He had to stay there at Thanksgiving when all the cats were banned from the house because daughter's boyfriend, who allergic to cats, was visiting. (The boyfriend is the main reason we have so dang many cats right now.)

The garage would not do, Frank decided. He is a housecat. He would stay in the house.

It's hard to keep a determined cat out. He's strong, fast and he looks just like his mother, April Alice, a

pretty yellow tabby who is allowed in the house.

Still we tried. We tossed him out several times on Sunday when he darted in past our legs.

Monday morning, I found two yellow cats lounging in my kitchen. I tossed the one that hissed at me. April Alice never hisses.

Ten minutes later, as I was sitting at the kitchen table, I reached down to pet the yellow cat passing my chair. He hissed at me!

It seems that Frank had found an open basement window and had forced the screen, creating an instant cat door.

Steve got the basement window closed. Now all we have to do is pick up yellow cats until one hisses.

This could be a long, catful couple of months.

Driving hard in blinding rain

As my mother used to say, it was raining "pitch forks and hammer handles."

I work late Thursday evenings. It was about 10:30 p.m. when I was driving home last week in a pouring rain.

The lightning was so sharp, so close and so frequent that I was almost blinded. Coupled with the heavy rain, I couldn't see the road. Even on high speed, the wipers couldn't keep up. I was driving by watching the white line on the opposite side of the road. In a situation like that, you can't stop on the highway. You're in worse danger of being rear-ended.

As I crept along, something didn't look quite right. I saw the dim glow of a light on the left side of the road. I knew that from the railroad tracks east of our town to the turnoff into our little village there are no farmsteads on the left side. I had overshot the road into town!

There's only one thing dumber than stopping on the highway in a blinding rainstorm, and that's backing up on the highway. What's that old saying? Something about God



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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protecting children and fools. Anyway, that's what I counted on as I put the car in reverse.

I found the road and slid to a stop in front of our house. By the time I ran the distance from the car to the house, I was soaked.

My husband looked up from the television and said, "Glad you're home. I was just about ready to come looking for you."

Well, he wouldn't have found me. Because I wasn't where I was supposed to be.

—ob—

For the most part, my family is disgustingly healthy. But when something does show up, it's a doozy. In the span of one week, a brother and a nephew were both di-

agnosed with cancer. This is my brother Don's third go-round and my nephew Kevin's first experience. We pray that it will be the last for both.

However, if anyone needs a lesson in "positive attitude," they should sign up for a class with these two. They both have put all their confidence in their medical treatment and all their faith in God.

From the Bible

A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

Proverbs 29: 11

Jennings works together for sale

To the Editor:

Well done, Jennings! Once again the community of Jennings worked together. The sale of the Jennings School contents took all the help of dozens of residents, community and family members to get the job done. Jennings had a school from 1880

to 2006. Now that chapter has closed and a new one is opened with the bus company coming to Jennings. Thank you to all who have sup-

ported the school and the community for all these years.

Lila Jennings
Jennings

Letter to the Editor

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Where is school baseball team?

My question is, why there's no boys baseball or girl's fast-pitch softball at Decatur Community High School?

Why no American Legion Baseball here in the summer for the boys or girls' fast-pitch tournaments?

It is hard for a baseball fan to believe that the City of Oberlin does not have an American Legion team or a girls' fast-pitch team in today's age.

It has been over 140 years since baseball, "the American Pastime," was invented. This is America's sport, the "national pastime."

Ever since the migration westward after the American Civil War, baseball has helped identify towns and cities across the country. It's a tradition here; last year, the June 15 issue of *The Oberlin Herald* carried a picture of the 1911 Dresden "mighty nine."

We must unite as a community and bring back our summer identity.

The city is looking for ways to bring in revenue and boost the economy.

The "If you build it, they will come" philosophy has worked in Iowa.

If you ask me, what Oberlin needs to do is make the city a destination, not a place that people pass by on the way to St. Joe or Denver.

The city needs to build a good high school baseball field, for one.



The Jayhawker

By Jim Merriott
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Get the school district and the rest of the Northwest Kansas League together and start up league play.

It also needs a fourplex softball field. The city could then hold girls' fast-pitch softball tournaments in the summer.

The main reason my son came to Kansas in the first place was to play summer American Legion baseball, because the caliber of baseball in Kansas is a step higher than Colorado.

Kansas has the top Division I junior college baseball programs in the nation. All across Kansas, baseball flourishes except in the northwest.

Some of the best high school baseball in the state is within four hours of Oberlin.

Salina sponsors one of the biggest American Legion tournaments in the nation around the Fourth of July each year. Teams from Texas, Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Kansas compete every year at the Heart of America tournament.

Hutchinson, Dodge City, Garden City, Liberal, Newton, Great Bend, McPherson, Colby and Goodland put together teams. Why not Oberlin?

Girls' teams from Colorado, Nebraska and other areas are always looking for tournaments to play in during the summer.

If Oberlin can put on a car show and have 100 cars, there is no reason why the city can't at least get 16 teams to come and play a tournament a month during the summer.

Oberlin must re-evaluate what its youth needs. "The times they are a-changin'...", and Oberlin must step up or be left standing in other cities' dust.

We need to push other sports as we push wrestling. Look at Norton. They are pretty much good in every sport.

We have a Sons of the American Legion group. Other towns support American Legion baseball, so why can't we?

Care Van will be discontinued

To the Editor:

I have been informed that the Care Van that has been providing transportation from St. Francis to Hays is being discontinued as of July 1.

I have used it since I moved to Atwood and have so appreciated it. It has been so convenient being able to go to Hays without having to drive or have someone take me down and then pick me up again. If I have to stay overnight, which I did many times, I could go out of Atwood or Colby and return to either.

The convenience of being able to be picked up at the hospital, and returned either place, has been a godsend that I would have been willing to pay quite a price for. When I found out that it cost \$5 round trip

from Atwood and \$4.50 from Colby, I was in shock and really felt privileged to have such a service.

I was surprised that on many of my trips I was the only customer going or coming. Somehow the message isn't getting out to the public that it is available or people just haven't tried it.

With gas at over \$2.50 a gallon, and the bus running on diesel, it would be a very expensive trip. Why are there so few customers?

I feel this is something that has not been advertised and not gotten to the

many people that could make good use of this service. I do hope something can be done to save it.

You do need to call Care-Van a day or two in advance for pickup at (800) 227-3969.

To me it's a comfortable trip and I enjoy the view. Why not try it?

Elsie Bryan

Atwood

Editor's Note: We have been informed that the person to contact concerning this service is Ron Straight at (785) 621-2078.

Honor Roll

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

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