

Cooler weather indicates time to lift watering ban

With rainfall near normal and nothing but cool days expected for what's left of summer, you'd think the City Council might start relaxing its watering restrictions.

Water use the last couple of weeks has been way below the "trigger" level of 700,000 gallons a day, and the weather bureau doesn't expect temperatures to break 90 this month.

With mercury in the 70s and expected to be back there next week, why keep the restrictions? There won't be that many people watering, and there's really no need to inconvenience folks.

Not that the city should just cancel its water conservation program. Some parts of it ought to be made permanent.

There's no reason for people to be running a sprinkler at midday during the summer, for instance. All summer, there should be a ban on daytime watering, since half the water will evaporate on a hot day.

Wasting water — letting it run down the street — should be subject to a similar ban, day and night, year around.

There might be other issues. We need to encourage people to conserve water, because the city doesn't have enough and getting more will be expensive.

At the same time, when there's no real need for mandatory restrictions like the even-odd system the town has been on the last few years, they shouldn't be continued.

The city might try more comprehensive, but milder, rules, banning daytime watering and waste of water all year but letting people pick their own days.

Many towns encourage people to save water with financial incentives — rebates or lower rates — for using water-saving toilets, dry-season grasses and low-flow showers. Oberlin might consider some of those ideas.

Teaching people when and how to water for best effect might help save some. Many people want to water every day when experts say that just wastes water and teaches grass to depend on the sprinkler.

The even-odd plan is a proven winner when it's needed, in the dog days of summer, and the city certainly should be prepared to use it again.

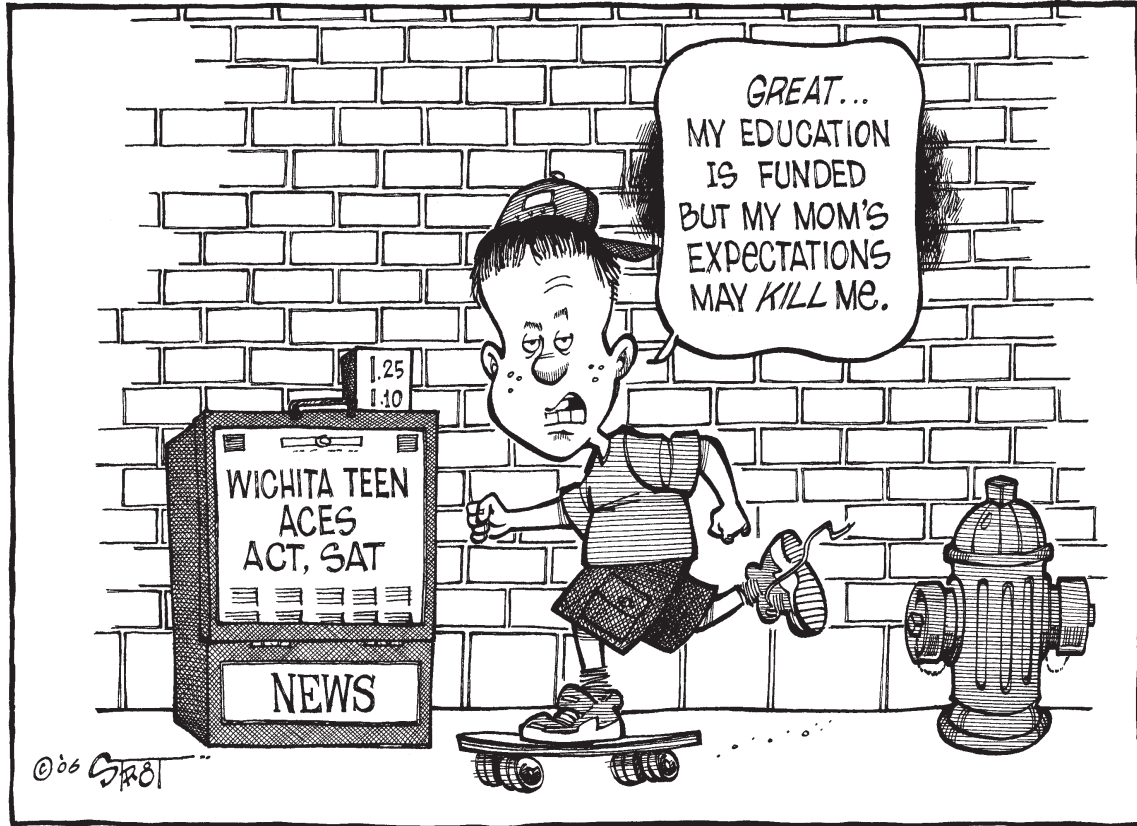
In the future, water will be more expensive. Under new federal rules, wells the city owns can be used to expand the system only if the water is treated.

It's doubtful the treatment is really necessary or cost-effective, but do you think the government cares? They measure things today we didn't even know were in water a few decades ago. People who have been drinking the stuff for decades in many towns now are being told it's poison.

But the rules are not going to change. If we want more water, we'll have to pay a seven-figure price for a treatment plant. No one in Washington cares what this costs small towns.

We can't afford to waste that water. So let's look to a two-track future, where the city educates and guides people about water use, encourages water conservation, and holds the big stick of even-odd watering in reserve for the really bad weather.

— Steve Haynes



Cats troublesome on daily walks

I love cats but I'm not fond of them trying to go for walks with me.

Mollie was the first cat we ever had that went for walks.

As soon as we got the dog out of her pen and started for the front of the house, Mollie was streaking ahead of us, trotting determinably down the street just behind the dog.

She was pretty good for the first six or seven blocks. However, as we neared the top of the hill there were more and more interesting things to take her mind off the walk and her feet into bushes, under cars, behind houses and out of sight.

At the top of the hill is a windbreak and that was a killer. There are birds in there and the cat inevitably disappeared into the thick trees and brush. We started grabbing her and carrying her past the windbreak, but she'd just get stubborn and turn around and head back toward it when released.

Now, I really didn't want to leave a small cat up at the top of the hill at night near the highway, in a wooded area where there could be coyotes, owls and skunks.

I also didn't want to spend the next half hour seaching and calling her.

Mollie finally figured out that if she took off and walked to the end of the first block, she could just wait for us at home, welcome us back when we returned. This makes her feel that she is going out with the people and the dog without actually



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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having to put out too much effort.

Soon after getting Frank from our son — we're just baby-sitting him — we found out that he doesn't like to be left behind. If we're walking, he'll walk.

Frank is a better walker than Mollie. He keeps up better and doesn't tend to stray as much. He's also impossible to keep in the house once we're ready to set out.

We have a cat door in the basement. If I toss Frank in the back door and hurry to the front sidewalk, he's usually able to get down the stairs and out the cat door before I can get to the front. He's fast and determined.

However, last week he also was lost.

We took off as usual and got about four blocks. I realized that there were only three of us — Steve, me and Annie, the dog. Frank wasn't trotting behind in his normal determinate fashion.

We backtracked and called both his name and, "here kitty, kitty, kitty."

Pretty soon a yellow streak came out from under a car and ran towards us.

Frank? Nope, not unless he'd grown long hair and lost his tail. A beautiful and very friendly Manx was purring and rubbing up against our legs.

He indicated that he'd go on the walk with us in Frank's place.

When dogs meet each other, they greet in the usual fashion with sniffing and, sometimes, growling. They then play or decide dominance with a short fight.

When cats meet, they immediately hate each other and start a staring standoff. Nothing will stop a cat from going down the street faster than another cat.

We found Frank near the end of the block and he chased his competitor back under a car. I'm sure the Manx lived near there, although I've never seen it before. Hopefully it will go back to being an inside cat and I can go back to trying to keep Frank from going for walks.

Like that was going to happen.

She's a big bawl bag after flick

I can hardly see to type through the tears. Crying. What a way to start the day.

No, no one died. I didn't get fired. I'm not chopping onions. I'm not even upset. It's all over a movie, probably the sweetest love story of all time, but a movie nonetheless.

This morning I awoke to sounds from the front room. It was very early (too early to be up) and Jim couldn't sleep. He had popped in a movie.

His selection, however, was "The Notebook."

I just heard a collective groan from all the men readers — and an understanding "ah-h-h-h" from the women readers.

The soul of the story is undying love and unselfish devotion. We all hope for such love. Few ever achieve it.

—ob—

It's been a long time between updates about the progress on our house.

But now, I feel I can safely say that the end is in sight. We have done a little on it all along, and now we are "down to the wire."

We aren't living in the house yet, but that will change in a month or so. Jim has all the hard stuff done, and now he's putting on the finishing touches. All except the floor coverings.

I said I could wait for carpeting until we save up for what we want. I would rather do without than settle or go in debt. I can live with painted



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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floors and scatter rugs until then.

Do you know how I know that we will be living in the other house soon?

I know because Jim, personally, told our old pheasant hunter friends that they will be able to stay at the Sunflower Inn this season. That is the first part of November, so I know it will be done by then.

I also know because Jim has not accepted any new jobs. Everything is scheduled to begin in November. He might do a little job here and there, but essentially until November he is mine. All mine.

I know we'll have things to finish even after we move in. But that's OK by me. We'll be in the house and working hard to make it a home.

When it's done, we are having a party. And you're all invited. I'll let you know.

—ob—

A letter from my brother Don's daughter, Pam, tells us that he is preparing for the final phase of his cancer treatment, the transplant portion.

Doctors have been harvesting his

stem cells. They need about 4 million.

Soon he will be "blasted" with a powerful chemo treatment to reduce his cell count even further. Then, he will receive his own stem cells back, which will regenerate and give him all the good cells he needs.

Sounds like science fiction, but I know several people who have successfully had this treatment. It's pretty tough, but so is Don.

From the Bible

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psalm 133: 1



Pale face makes it to the top

The guy driving the truck didn't look too happy. If anything, his wife looked less happy.

"Where does this road go?" he asked, trying not to sound desperate. "Does it go to Ouray?"

"We've been driving around up here for hours," she said.

I pointed down the canyon.

"It's six or seven miles to Silverton," I said. "You can get the highway to Ouray. It's only about 20 miles."

"Thanks," he said. "That's great." "We've been driving around all day," she said.

I smiled as they drove off.

I was about to get mine, though. I'd ignored the friend in Silverton who told me you take Stony Pass east and Engineer Pass west.

I'd never been over Engineer and I knew what the road on Stony was like. Thirty-five miles of stones.

And I was bored with driving the highway back through Pagosa Springs. Too much traffic, too little scenery.

Cynthia consented to the route, though she likes neither heights nor scenery.

These are the roads that ol' C.W. McCall, the country singer, used to write about. When he retired, he moved to Ouray and became mayor.

You could look it up.

The road out of Silverton wasn't too bad. We came to a fork and started up Engineer Pass. Pretty soon the truck was sideways on the



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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mountain as we bumped our way up.

Flatlanders in rented Jeeps were roaring down the road, totally out of control.

"Brakes? What brakes?"

Signs at the base clearly articulated state law that uphill traffic has the right of way, but I doubt that they were going slow enough to read them.

Then came the Jeeps with Texas tags, really dangerous.

I just got out of their way.

Bump. Bump. Bump. Bump.

I looked over, and Cynthia has a tight grip on the door handle. She smiled bravely. She's been driving mountain passes with me since our honeymoon. I don't think they've grown on her.

The road wasn't particularly steep or dangerous, just rocky. Then we came to a bare outcropping so steep and rough we had to shift into four-wheel low. Up we went, only to meet face to face with a big diesel pickup with Colorado tags.

He wasn't backing up. I didn't think I should back down the big rock. Finally Cynthia decided we

had room to back up a little.

"Aren't you supposed to do the backing," I asked as he went by.

"Not when you can," he snarled. "Why don't you go back to Kansas or wherever you came from?"

About two dozen rental Jeeps later, we made the summit. The scenery was spectacular, snow-capped peaks for miles around. I looked over; Cynthia has a tight grip on the overhead handle.

"Can we go down now?" she asked.

The east side was pretty simple, just your basic gravel mountain road. There was a new house, miles from any power line, with a suspension bridge over a chasm the only entry. Wow.

We wound our way down to Lake City, where we bought a pop and caught the highway for home.

"Next time, maybe we should take Cinnamon Pass," I said.

"Yeah," Cynthia said, glaring at me. "At my age, I'm losing my mind pretty fast. I'll probably have forgotten this and say yes."

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Another great accomplishment

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Now hear this! I have just been informed that Miss Allie B. Moore has been accepted into the University of Kansas Medical School program called Scholars in Rural Health.

The goal of this program provides assured admission for selected rural Kansas students who have participated in a premedical curriculum with supplementary experiences. Scholars completing this program will be admitted to the School of Medicine automatically.

The idea is to increase in the number of students from rural Kansas who return to practice in rural Kansas.

Allie, a May 2004 graduate of Decatur Community High School, was selected as a Townsend Scholarship recipient in March 2004 and just started her junior year at Kansas State University.

What a magnificent way to start

the school year. I will provide a couple of pages of the Web Site in a future message to key personnel.

Congratulations, Allie, for this magnificent accomplishment.

Del Townsend
Fort Washington, Md.

