

Crews work long hours so we can be safe, warm

In Oberlin, we've been lucky. Essential services continued through two storms. For most of us, the power stayed on.

We've been warm and snug in our homes, even if we can't get out much. There've been no disasters, no major emergencies, no big glitches.

We owe a lot to those who go out in the night. The rest of the world doesn't pay much attention, but they keep things running.

The state highway crews have put in a lot of overtime, working 12 hours on and 12 off during the worst of the storms. Even at that, they couldn't keep the roads north or west of town open at the height of the storm.

Teams of plows running in sequence could only move the drifting snow and scrape away at the ice below. As far as we're concerned, those guys are tops.

The city and rural electric line crews were out in all kinds of weather. In town, there have been remarkably few power outages, mostly houses where the line in from the pole went down. Rural electric crews will be restoring service for weeks.

A lot of the credit for the good experience in town goes to the city's foresight in mounting a major tree trimming effort the last couple of years. It more than paid off during the last two storms.

The line, street and even water crews have been out working. They opened all the streets after the two-foot snowfall this week, and kept traffic moving in town. If you could get your car out, you could drive. Tuesday they started hauling the snow piles.

Police officers, sheriff's deputies, dispatchers, emergency medical technicians, state

troopers all worked day and night, as they do in fair weather and foul. They went when someone needed help, but around here at least, the calls were relatively minor.

County road crews went out on the holiday and started opening rural roads. They had a waiting list of farmers who needed to get to their stock, or just to town. By 1:30 Monday, they'd opened all the county roads and turned their attention to main township roads. They'd already plowed out the airport and hospital.

Throughout it all, nurses and others went to work at the hospital and the nursing homes.

People went to work at restaurants, stores and filling stations. Groceries were available, if newspapers were not. (*The Salina Journal* for Saturday, Sunday and Monday arrived Tuesday morning in a bundle but, inexplicably, without the Tuesday paper!) At least one edition of the *Colby Free Press* was printed Friday, but not delivered until today, because I-70 was closed and old U.S. 24 proved impassable.

In Oberlin this week, those of us who can get to the office — and right now, that's about half the staff — will get out the paper on schedule, a day late because of the holiday. We expect it to be delivered as the sun shines on the roads today.

It hasn't been much of a sacrifice for us, safe and warm in our homes and offices, but our hat is off to those who were out in the storm. Few see their work, fewer still stop to say thanks.

If we left anyone off this list, it's only because so many made the effort. So to all of you, here's one big THANKS. — *Steve Haynes*

FIRST CAME THE WINDS,
THEN FREEZING RAIN.
SNOW BROKE THE TREE LIMBS
AND DARKNESS REMAINED.

OUR ELECTRICITY WAS DOWN,
THE KANSAS LANDSCAPE WAS DARK,
WHEN THE KIDS STARTED SHOUTING
AND THE DOG GAVE A BARK.

THERE, DOWN THE ROAD,
FOR NEARLY AN HOUR,
ON A POLE STOOD A LINEMAN
RESTORING OUR POWER.

HE REACHED UP WITH HIS HOTSTICK,
A SWITCH WAS HIS MARK,
AND SLAMMED CLOSE THE FUSE
WITH A SMALL, BRIGHT SPARK.

GOD SAID "LET THERE BE LIGHT."
OF THIS THERE'S NO DOUBT.
BUT THEN, HE SURELY CREATED LINEMEN
TO TURN ON WHAT GOES OUT.

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THE MANHATTAN MERCURY



Former chief was good man

We watched the funeral of former President Gerald Ford on Tuesday.

He struck me as an unassuming man and, by all reports, as a genuinely nice man. The measure of a man can be found, largely, in the character of his children. President Ford would have been proud of the dignity, composure and kindness his children showed at his funeral. They were not there to remember the president of the country, but rather, to remember their father.

Jim and I began to count all the state funerals of presidents we have witnessed in our lifetimes. It's getting to be a pretty long list.

Neither of us can remember Truman's funeral, but I remember living in Topeka and watching the televised funeral of President Eisenhower.

Whether you agree or disagree with the political views of a president, you must still respect the office.



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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The big news here is the weather. This could have been a deadly storm. It was that cold and that dangerous.

Thankfully, authorities closed roads and kept travellers from getting stranded. We were out in it more than we should have been, perhaps.

On New Year's Day we exerted no more energy than what it took to go from bed to recliner and back to bed again. We both slept the day away.

When we said good morning Tuesday, I told Jim, "I hope today

is more productive than yesterday was."

—ob—

Here we come, ready or not, into another year. We don't know what lies ahead. If we did, we might not have the strength to go on.

Today we have the benefit of being able to look back. There were some bad things that happened in 2006, and some wonderful things, too.

This next year will be the same. Good and bad. That's life.

Trip to game was crazy idea

Looking back on it, going to Lawrence on Saturday wasn't the smartest move we've made all year. Still, we had tickets to see the Kansas Jayhawks play the Rhode Island Rams in Allen Field House — and a cat to deliver.

I'm not sure which was the deciding factor. We looked outside at the snow and ice, checked the weather and road conditions on the Kansas Department of Transportation's website and decided that if we could get to Norcat, we could make it.

We decided to worry about getting back when the time came. As I said earlier, this wasn't our all-time bright idea of the year.

Frank, the cat, had come to stay with us when he was evicted from son's apartment in Lawrence for poor hygiene.

He mended his ways when he was let outdoors when he wanted to go.

Frank became a really great addition to our menagerie. His mother,

April Alice, liked to play with him, Mollie Monster fought with him and Jezebel hissed at him. Of course, Jez hisses at everyone and everything, so that's not surprising. Annie, the dog, just ignored him, the same as she ignores all the cats except Mollie, who thinks she's a dog and likes to hang out with her.

Now son has a new roommate and a new place to live. It was time for Frank to go home. We took him to Lawrence and left him with his favorite black blanket — all the bet-



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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ter to shed on.

We were right about the trip to Lawrence. Once we got out of Decatur County, the snow decreased and we could go a little faster, although the roads were icy through Norton County.

By Phillipsburg, it was just wet, and it stayed rainy the whole trip. Little did we know how much water was coming down as snow back home, or that our backyard was being buried under a drift.

The game was fun. We won, so what's not to like?

At the hotel, Steve spotted two bald eagles right outside, a mature bird and a young one. They winter on the river and the hotel doesn't allow anyone on the walkway near their trees during the winter and spring.

The mature eagle was across the river feasting on a dead fish while the young one — a huge bird but with splotchy brown and white feathers that will eventually mature into a beautiful white-headed specimen — was right next to our win-

dow on a tree branch. He was wonderful.

The drive back was mixed. The weather was good, the roads were mostly good until we got into the snow zone near Norton, but I missed Frank. Now we only have a dog and 2 1/2 cats. (I'm only counting Jez as half since we seldom see her.)

But thanks anyway, I don't need any donations.

From the Bible

"...behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt..."

Matthew 2: 13, 14

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Reader feels editor slammed vets

To the Editor:

How dare you impugn the integrity of the Vietnam veterans? I could not believe that after nearly 40 years there are still people around that like to disrespect our veterans.

I don't know what branch you served in or even if you did, but let me tell you about how it was with my unit.

We were both enlistees and draftees. We came from all walks of life and from all over the country. We were highly trained, highly motivated and equipped with the best that the country had to offer. Some of the equipment we used was only

Letters to the Editor

declassified 10 years ago.

All of us had to endure hardships that you cannot understand unless you were there. We adapted and overcame those problems.

The only thing we couldn't overcome was how the politicians hamstrung us, and the way we were looked at and scorned when we came home. We went there because our country asked us to. We did our jobs so others could protest and run

to Canada when they were drafted.

I realize that freedom of the press is one of our guaranteed rights, but freedom to ridicule veterans is not.

I am proud of my service record and the job that I did for my country. I would do it again in a heartbeat because I am an American and it's my duty.

John Stanley
Oberlin

Writer appreciates Norcat News

From the Dec. 12, 2006 issue of the Norcat News:

To the Editor:
It is great to have faithful, dedicated volunteers to keep the Norcat News active.

My thoughts go back to the won-

derful man, the Rev. Cecil Zeigler, the promoter of the Norcat News, who served his ministry in the community from 1967 to 1972. This is a period of over 30 years of enjoyment for many people for many years.

How very pleased Mr. Zeigler would be if he knew the Norcat News is still in motion. He is gone but not forgotten.

Thank you to the volunteers of today and yesteryear.

Vi Gallentine
Norton