

## We need to change way we deal with immigrants

Is illegal immigration really a problem? What do we do to fix the situation?

The 12 million illegal immigrants estimated to be in the country should be evidence enough that the system is broke. How to fix it is a little harder to figure out.

Illegals come here for a lot of reasons, but mostly it's jobs. Reports show a little more than half are Mexican nationals and a quarter come from other Latin American nations. Almost a million came from Asian countries.

Some entered the country illegally, though the majority sneaked across the border somehow, infiltrating through the desert, hiding in trucks and railroad cars, even coming ashore from boats.

Many want to work, send money home to their families and eventually return. Today, with border crossing becoming more difficult — and dangerous — many choose just to stay once they're here.

The government has no way to track or catch them, let alone the means to deport 12 million people. The U.S. economy would be in a bind without their work.

Politicians like to scare people with talk of terrorist and criminals sneaking over the mountains, but there's little or no evidence that happens. Most terrorists, in fact, came into the country legally as tourists or students.

The real issues are jobs, race and the way immigrants are changing the country. As Americans always have, people tend to see newcomers as different. Even those whose parents came through Ellis Island less than a century ago can be found protesting the new immigrants.

People didn't treat the Italian, Irish or Croatian immigrants of a century ago very well, either. But they stayed, prospered and became Americans. There's every indication that most modern immigrants will do the

same.

What can we do?

First things first. Being here illegally is wrong. Having 12 million illegal immigrants — maybe more, no one counts them — shows our system is horribly flawed.

We need to crack down on illegal immigration, but to do that, we have to make legal immigration possible, civilized and humane. Today, a Mexican citizen who wants to come here to work might have to wait years for a permit. People won't do that when a few hundred dollars will get them across the border to a better life.

And these people are desperate enough to face the dangers of dying in the desert, or in a sealed boxcar, to get here. You can't stop a flow like that, but you can and should control and monitor it.

Next, we should offer no state benefits to immigrants. Workers who pay taxes should be able to get a driver's license, send their kids to school and, should they retire here, collect benefits they paid for.

There is just no obligation to give illegal immigrants welfare or other benefits they have not paid for. If they are not working and can't support themselves, they should go home.

Finally, we should be suspicious of government officials who want tight border controls. There's an element in government that wants to know everything — who does what, goes where, has how much — but that information can be used for a lot of reasons.

We need to ask ourselves if we are ready to deal with a government with that kind of power, or if government can be trusted that much.

The bottom line is, immigration reform, badly as it's needed, isn't likely to happen any time soon. It makes too much sense.

— Steve Haynes

## Don't cut and run from Iraq

Just as the Democrats try to set a timetable for cutting and running from Iraq comes news that Sunni leaders have begun to band together to help Americans and their government end the violence.

About time someone came to their senses. Even John McCain says he sees the difference.

Meantime, back home in the U.S. of A., the new Democrat majority seems bent on pulling out of Iraq, no matter what is happening. A timetable can only be a scheduled defeat, though.

And unlike in Vietnam, America is not losing this war. We can only give it away.

We do need to get out of Iraq. Even President Bush admits that.

But after a quick and decisive victory on the battlefield, the administration seems to have lost its way. Commanders have changed. Strategy switched. That era is over.

With the president's "surge" of troops, violence is down, cooperation is up and better days might just be in sight. Can we believe that?

A prominent Sunni sheik told reporters this week he's building an alliance with the Americans and the government to end the violence in this providence of Anbar, a hotbed of



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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sectarian battles.

If his movement gathers steam, it just might work. Surely the people of Iraq are tired of bombings, beheadings and rape.

War is reprehensible, something to be avoided. As a nation we should avoid them, limit them, end them.

But what happens if we just pull out of Iraq on a timetable?

Who wins then?

Not America.

Not the Shiite majority. Not the Sunni minority.

If what we have seen is a civil war, will it end before every last Iraqi is dead or wounded, once American troops are gone?

Will al Qaida wind up running the Middle East? Or will peace prevail?

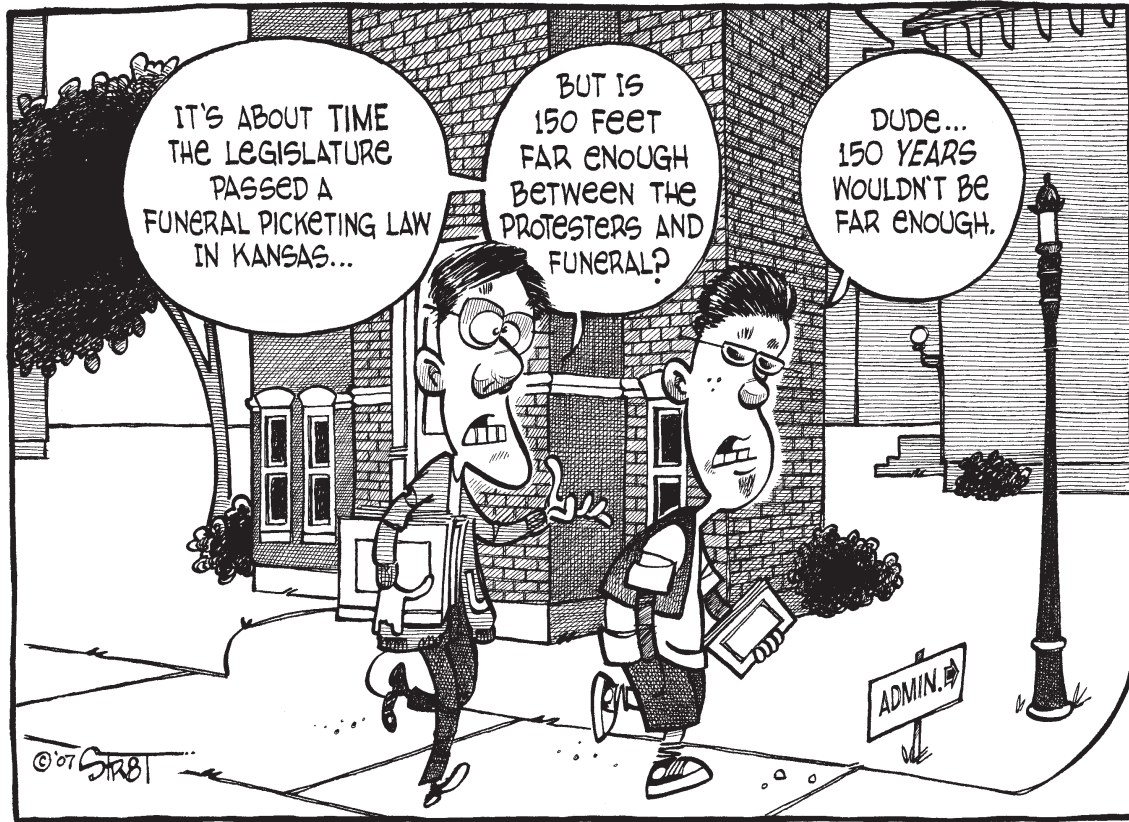
I don't have a crystal ball. I know that unlike the "big media" reporters, soldiers I talk to who've been there tell a far different story of

what's happening in Iraq and what will happen.

They don't think we're losing the war. They don't think things are that bad. Other editors, I've talked to, say the same thing about veterans they've interviewed.

Television only shows bombings, victims and violence, some of it by terrorists, some by American troops. The truth may lie somewhere in between. In the meantime, American losses are, in military terms, low, the picture is far from clear, but improving, and on American soil, there's been no terrorist action for more than five years.

Withdraw? Yes. But only as Iraqis take charge and the situation returns to normal. It's hard to set a timetable for that.



## Arab country shows its best side



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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One of the highlights of our yearly trips to Washington is a visit to an embassy.

Over the years, I've visited Chili, Greece, Costa Rica and Saudi Arabia.

Because of the visit to the Costa Rican embassy, I was able to be part of a delegation to that beautiful country about a year ago.

And while I've never visited Greece or Chili, the embassy staffs made me want to go.

I can't exactly say the same about the Saudi embassy. I'm sure it's an interesting country, but not exactly female friendly and many of the most interesting places are off limited to non-Moslems.

This year, I was slated to visit India but a friend asked Steve and I to accompany a group to the embassy of the United Arab Emirates.

We were greeted in a beautiful room, all polished marble with a stained-glass ceiling towering over full-grown palms. We trooped into a huge reception room with a table big enough to seat 15-20 people comfortably and sat down to chat with the ambassador, who spoke excellent English.

After visiting for about an hour and exchanging lapel pins — an American flag for him and crossed American and UAE flags for us — we thanked our host and said we needed to be going.

Oh no, he said, you have to have a bite to eat first. Arab hospitality and all that.

As we had been talking, attendants had placed an array of Middle Eastern foods on three long tables behind us. The spread included rice,

grilled lamb, kabobs, hummus, pita bread, olives, fruits and many tasty but unidentifiable tidbits. Over to the side were sodas and fruit juice.

We ate too much, especially since we were heading for a banquet, but the food at the embassy was a lot better than the steaks at the National Press Club.

Before we left, the ambassador invited us to visit not just the embassy but the country.

The UAE, about the size of Maine, is a rough triangle on the Persian Gulf between Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Like the United States it's a collection of smaller units, but unlike the U.S., the central government has only limited powers and most decisions are made by the emirs. It's sort of what the Confederacy might have become.

But, unlike the Confederacy, the UAE is rich, very rich, in gas and oil.

It is estimated that 10 percent of the world's oil and huge gas reserves are contained within this tiny desert country.

"We take that as a responsibility to the world," said UAE ambassador Saqr Ghobash. The country, he said, has an "open sky" policy and with its strategic location between

east and west, and more than 100 airlines use its airports.

The country has a population of 4 million, but of those most are foreign nationals, including "guest workers" from India, Pakistan, Egypt, the Philippines and other Muslim countries. Only about 15-20 percent of the population are citizens.

There are no taxes. Oil money pays the bills.

The country has sea, desert, mountains, palm trees, camels, men in long white robes and Arab head-dresses, women in colorful outfits, beautiful architecture and lots of history. It's not a great place to visit in the summer, when the temperature can get to 118 degrees in July and August, but between November and March it's warm and comfortable.

While many women in the emirates wear some sort of head covering, the country gives them full citizenship and they take their place in both education and the government.

Would I like to visit? You bet.

Will I get a chance? Who knows. I'll keep my head scarf packed and my passport up to date, but I'm not planning to go any farther than Topeka for awhile. I wonder how the food will be?

## Snow slows spring's advance

For awhile there, I thought spring was on its way. Tulips blooming, sleeveless tops appearing, grass growing, flip-flops flapping, furnace not running except at night. Jim even brought home some tomato plants to set out.

It was all too good to be true. Snow flurries saw to that.

I can only remember one other Easter with snow on the ground. Chilly — yes. But snow — no.

No spring outfit for Easter Sunday this year. Had to keep winter stuff on the rack.

-ob-

I did try something new for Easter dinner. Actually, supper at our house. Corned beef and cabbage. The verdict is — we like it.

You can buy a nice-sized corned beef roast with the flavoring packet sealed inside. Cover with water, bring to a boil, then simmer over low heat for a couple of hours. I added a quartered head of cabbage at this point and cooked another hour. Perfect.



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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Corned beef has a unique flavor, and then there's the cabbage. Fortunately, we both love cooked cabbage.

Perhaps it's an acquired taste. Most people have a definite opinion about it. They either love it or hate it. No middle ground.

-ob-

One of the dangers of writing this column from the comfort of my recliner is the tendency to get too comfortable. I'm not sure, but I think I just took a little power nap.

Yup, it's 15 minutes later than the last time I checked the clock. I definitely dozed off. Could be part of the

reason it takes about three hours to write a piece that takes two minutes to read.

### From the Bible

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. I Thessalonians 5: 9, 10

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## Cross back up with fresh bulbs

To the Editor:

"Lift High the Cross" — that is what Gus Wolters was able to do, with the help of Kerry Green and a much-needed motor donated by Phil Lahman.

Gus had been climbing over 60 feet to change the bulbs on the lighted cross south of town. This became a lot of extra work, so he decided he would find a way to let the cross down to be able to change the light bulbs.

The cross was taken down for less than two weeks, but people missed it and would be lost without its bright beams, especially during Holy Week.

This cross is a beacon to all who pass along its way, a reminder of the sacrificial death of Jesus the Christ.

Through much work days and some nights, Gus was finally able to come up with a solution so he would be able to raise and lower the cross and insert the light bulbs.

## Letters to the Editor

Come Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter, the cross was once again "lifted on high" the full 60-some feet, with the lights all lit and in place.

When people work together, how much more positive results can be accomplished. Once again we give thanks and praise to our Lord and

Savior, Jesus the Christ. He gave us his life on the cross so we could have everlasting life with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Elsie Wolters Oberlin

## Couple reads Jennings news

To the Editor:

My wife, formerly Betty Heatherington, was born and raised in Jennings. Both of us taught in Jennings in the mid-1950s.

We enjoy Jennings News and scan the paper for familiar names from the past.

Karl Liechty, Murrieta, Calif.

