

U.S. 36 Highway group raises money for study

The U.S. Highway 36 Association is coming down to the wire on its plan to have a corridor study done on the economic impact of widening and improving the road from St. Joseph to St. Francis.

The group hopes to raise \$50,000 to finance the study, similar to one done a couple of years ago by a group pushing improvements on U.S. 50. They expect to show a positive return to Kansas and to the 13 counties along the route. The association has asked counties along the highway, from Doniphan to Cheyenne, to ante up \$2,000 each for the study and hopes to get a grant for the rest.

So far, though, only Decatur County and a couple others have actually put up any money. Directors plan to revisit the rest this month as commissioners draw up their new budgets.

It is critical to get the study moving for several reasons.

One, the state already has begun studying a new transportation plan to replace the one that expires in 2010. While the Department of Transportation expects a gap between programs, as happened last time, it won't be long. The plan will be in place within a couple of years.

And any improvements to U.S. 36 need to be in the plan.

Besides, costs are rising and there's no certainty that, if the study doesn't begin next year, the counties or the association can afford it.

The U.S. 50 study showed the benefits of improving that route with four lanes west of Hutchinson. It concluded that economic growth would cease without a better highway.

Along the northern tier of Kansas, most counties have no idea what "economic growth" is. Populations and economies are

stagnant or declining. Schools have to merge or close as enrollment dwindles.

Backers see a great opportunity along the road, though. Illinois has improved about half its mileage to a freeway, known as Interstate 72. Across Missouri, the road now is a four-lane expressway with only a 52-mile gap at the east end.

And four counties there voted to tax themselves to help the state widen the road, with all the work now under contract. Missouri officials expect to have the four-lane road done by 2009, a year ahead of schedule.

Projections show significant truck traffic on the four-lane road within 10 years as drivers seek to bypass the hopelessly snarled highways around St. Louis. Much of that traffic will have to go south through Kansas City, though, unless Kansas takes up the standard and starts building a better road on U.S. 36.

A wider highway could serve as a bypass for both I-70 through Kansas City and I-80 through Omaha, backers believe, drawing traffic and business to a part of rural Kansas that could use both.

If the study is done, and if taxpayers and public officials all across the 13 counties get behind the effort.

It's a big job, one that requires the support of everyone along the road, but no other economic development initiative offers as much potential return to northern Kansas.

We hope the rest of the counties get on board, and soon.

— Steve Haynes

Editor's Note: Steve Haynes, publisher of *The Oberlin Herald*, also is president of the U.S. Highway 36 Association.

Tastebuds ready for tomatoes

Three-two-one ... tomato time! The countdown has begun. We have half a dozen tomatoes, of different varieties, ripening on the vine. I check them every day. We want to pick them at their peak of perfection. I can almost taste that bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwich now. I like them on whole wheat bread (lightly toasted), slathered with Miracle Whip. Because a sandwich isn't a sandwich without the tasty zip of Miracle Whip.

That's dangerously close to a commercial, but it's true. I've tried mayonnaise and store brands. They can't compare.

-ob-

Harvest is in the final stage. Most fields are cut, but there's still cleanup work to do. It seems like everyone is afraid to say it for fear of "jinxing" it — but this has been a good harvest. Yields have been excellent. Even hail-damaged fields came through pretty well.

Farmers are a strange breed, though. They never want to seem to brag. They may be cutting 75-bushel wheat and all they will say is, "It's doin' OK."

-ob-

Today is "salad day" at my office. We are trying to do this once a month — have a potluck food day. We have some good cooks and it's great eats for a couple of days on the leftovers.

Some people have told me their husbands won't eat leftovers. They



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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would get mighty hungry at my house. Jim wouldn't have much to eat. I plan for leftovers.

Every now and then, though, something is so good the first time it doesn't make it to the second day. Like the spare ribs we had for dinner Sunday night.

We got home about 4:30 p.m. I put two packages of ribs on low heat with a bay leaf to parboil while we took our nap.

I was awakened by the tangy aroma of barbecue sauce. Jim had finished the job and was in the kitchen dishing up a heapin' helpin' for both of us.

Those ribs were so tender and

juicy we couldn't stop.

But now, what am I going to do for dinner tonight?

Editor's Note: Carolyn, you know the only difference between mayo and Miracle Whip is sugar, right? That's tangy?

From the Bible

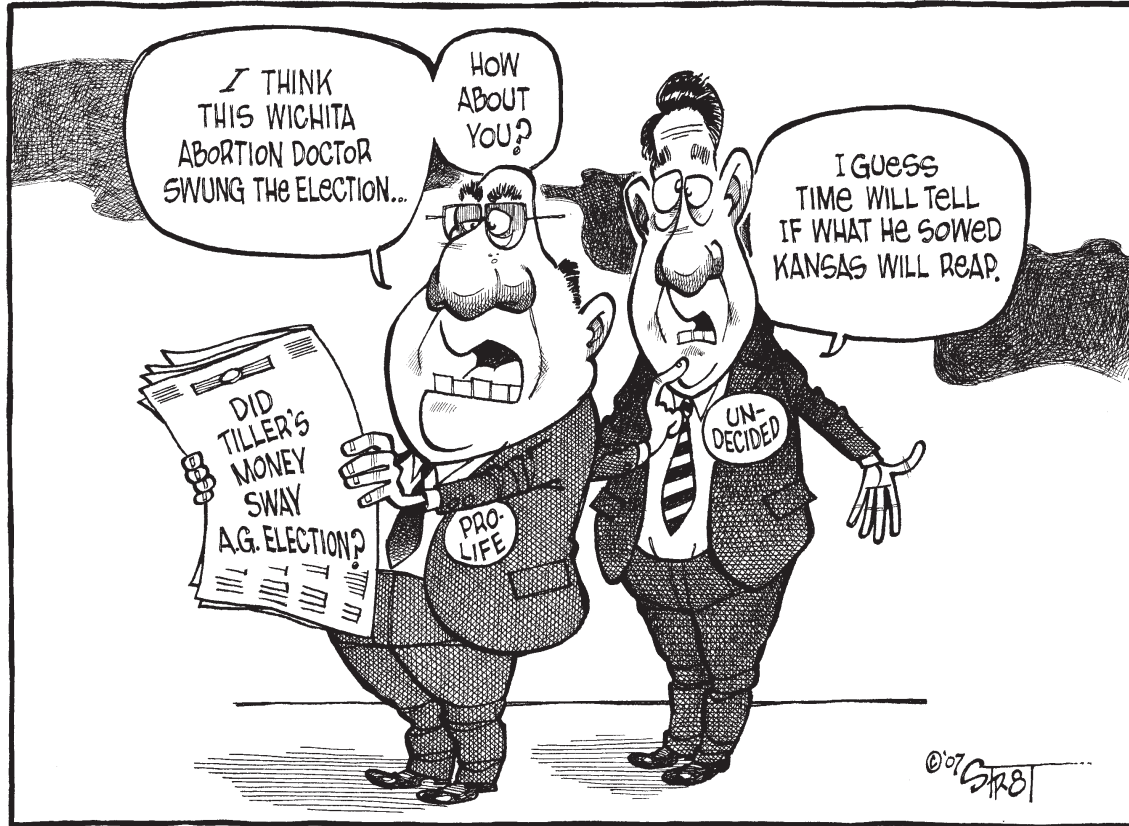
He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Proverbs 28:13

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address

and phone number of the author. Mail letters to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749, or by e-mail to oberlinherald@nwkans.com to the Want Ad desk.



Woman recycles unwanted junk

I've been pondering recycling and working to do more around the house and office.

Steve and I have recycled for most of our married life, even though we've never had curbside pickup for our unwanted junk and trash.

We moved into our first rental house in 1972. We immediately put in a garden and started putting the grass clippings on it. We've had some sort of garden almost every year since then and we've continued to recycle our excess grass into mulch to keep the weeds at bay and feed the soil.

We started recycling aluminum cans almost as soon as they started making them. Since we don't go through much pop or beer anymore, we donate our cans to whatever charity is collecting. We donated to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, fire department, nursing home and once to a little old man who swiped them each week out of the can we left in the alley.

Most towns have some sort of newspaper recycling and we make sure as many of our papers as possible get recycled. Obviously, we have more newspapers than the average household. Even leaving the offices out of the equation, we take *The Salina Journal* and both *Denver papers*; our own three weeklies, two twice weeklies and daily; two weeklies from former homes; and a whole slew of monthlies.

We store cardboard boxes and packing material at the office until someone needs them. Used office paper is made into note pads, good



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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side up. We send printer ribbons to be re-inked and toner cartridges to be refilled. Self-inking stamps get reinked and envelopes get reused when possible.

Now that Decatur County has a recycling trailer, I have plastic baskets in the garage for glass, No. 1 and No. 2 plastics and cardboard. Instead of tossing the oatmeal and soap boxes, I smash them and store them until the bins are full. Juice, barbecue sauce and salad dressing bottles are run through the dishwasher with the next load and put in the garage for recycling.

Now the recycling bins also accept plastic grocery bags, which seem to pile up even when you use them to line the cat box and wastebaskets and carry them when you walk the dog.

We have several other neat recycling options here in Oberlin.

The library has a set of metal shelves right inside the front door. You can leave books, magazines, videos, CDs or audio tapes for the next person to take or find some stuff someone else has left.

Last week, one of the girls at the office brought us a great book on lit-

erary cats, complete with beautiful pictures. We're taking turns reading it. When we're all done, it'll probably return to the library for the next cat lover.

The Bargain Box Plus, 106 N. Beaver, takes clothes and almost anything else useful around the house, including toys and craft items. These items are resold to those who don't necessarily need a full set of markers or a brand new sweater. The money goes to support community projects.

The museum takes donations for its annual rummage sale and so do many churches.

The county accepts household hazardous materials, everything from paint to bug spray. You can also get stuff from them. For information on donating or getting something you need, call the Decatur County Road and Bridge Department at 475-8111 or 475-8112.

And, if you leave an item you no longer want on the curb over the weekend, you might be happily surprised to find that someone else decided they do. It's best to pick a nice day, though. Few people want your old couch if it's been rained on.

Iran funds continued warfare

It all adds up to Iran, at least if you listen to people on the northeast shore of the Arabian peninsula.

Palestine. Lebanon. Iraq. Afghanistan.

Increase fighting, more deaths, more trouble.

People here see a common thread: Hezbollah fighting a war against the government in Lebanon and in Palestine; a resurgent Taliban to the east in Afghanistan, coming back to face NATO forces; insurgents under a dozen names fighting both the U.S. and the Shiite-dominated government in Iraq.

All backed, financed and armed at least partly by fundamentalist Iran.

And Iran is winning. A U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, likely within a couple of years, would leave that war-torn nation exposed to the forces now tearing it apart.

The likely result of a precipitous withdrawal?

"Civil war," says Dr. Mustafa Alani at the Gulf Research Center, a think tank in Dubai. "In the south, a Sunni government. In the central area, around Baghdad, a Taliban-style government. In the north, a national Kurdish government."

"The Iranians have the upper hand in Iraq," he says. "It's a proxy war. They are very good at proxy war, especially with Hezbollah."

A U.S. pullout, while leaving Iraq exposed and Iraqis victims of an ugly scenario, will allow Iran to focus more on Afghanistan.

"NATO forces are in trouble in Afghanistan," Dr. Alani says. "Iran is supplying weapons. Iran has links to the political and religious leadership."

What really scares people here, with Iran just miles across the Persian Gulf, is the specter of an aggressive, dominant Iran with nuclear weapons and bent on regional hegemony.

The diplomats put in more politely.

While the region is not that stable today, says one expert in the United Arab Emirates, it faces a real possible threat from "another country with possible nuclear capability."

"The situation in the region is, in



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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my opinion, going from bad to worse," he says, while briefing a group of American journalists. "In all parts of the region, there are wars, Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel.

"Iraq is aspiring to hegemony in the region. The most devastating situation is in Iraq. Nobody knows how it can be resolved in the foreseeable future. Nobody has a plan.

"We don't want to see another war in the region."

Iran, he notes, is a top trade partner with the U.A.E. and the Iranian president visited recently. Still, no one wants to see Iran, with 65 million people and more than half a million men under arms, gain nuclear capacity. Iran seized islands claimed by this tiny Arab nation a few years ago, and still holds them. Iran is a threat.

"We agree that Iran should not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons," he said, adding that his nation favors diplomacy to block Iran's nuclear ambitions. "Iran feels threatened by the U.S., but that doesn't mean they don't have some plans (for regional domination)."

Dr. Alani is more blunt. He holds

out little hope for diplomacy and believes that, in the end, given the choice of a nuclear power to the north or a military attack, the nations of the region will push the U.S. — or Israel — to eliminate the threat.

He's not advocating an invasion, he makes clear, but feels bombing the Iranian plants would buy the region 10-12 years.

How to persuade an American nation tired of war in the Mideast, he's less certain.

Another government minister takes issue with his prediction, saying the U.S. and its allies need to put more pressure on Iran. He sees no need for an attack.

"The posture of a powerful nation is more important than the use of power," he says.

He also makes it clear his nation prefers the shelter of American power to the unpredictable and often hostile presence of its neighbor. Much of the Mideast still sees America as the bulwark against Iran and its allies.

"We are the allies of the U.S.," he said. "I think the future relations will be excellent. It all depends on how the U.S. will handle its policies."

Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but

we will try. Because space is so limited, we *cannot* run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us.

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

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

