

Government making our lives more expensive

If you've every wondered why it's so expensive to live in this country, just say the words "federal mandate."

Besides taking 15 to 30 percent of everything you earn, your government drives up the cost of living by passing endless and needless regulations that force everyone from businesses and banks to local government to raise the price of just about everything you buy.

It always sounds like a good idea when government passes a regulation, but at that point, nobody's counting up the costs.

You need look no farther than your courthouse and city hall to see how this works.

The Oberlin City Council put a hefty hike in water rates into the new budget to pay for a \$4.3 million water treatment plant. You don't need this plant, any more than you needed a new waste water treatment plant, but you're going to pay for it.

Why? To meet "new federal regulations." And that much is true. The feds, through the state Department of Health and Environment, have tightened regulations for both waste water treatment and for contaminant levels in drinking water.

That means that the old Oberlin sewer plant no longer met standards for discharge water. The city had to build a new plant. Otherwise, hypothetically, the state might shut the city's sewer system down, though Lord only knows what they'd do with the waste.

Some would argue that tighter regulations were necessary to protect the environment. They won't pay your sewer bill, however. Others would say the old standards had done a lot and were good enough. It's hard to tell.

On drinking water, it's a little easier to see the light.

People have been drinking the water out here for a century or more. Until the last few years, no one could tell you how much uranium was in it. No one cared.

With modern equipment, though, scientists

can find the uranium. They say it might be bad for you. New federal standards were written, and those pretty much force Oberlin to build the water treatment plant.

Otherwise, the city's water won't comply with federal standards and the state might sanction the city if it used the water, safe or not. You have no say in this; you just get to pay.

So after financing a \$3.5 million sewer plant, the city will go into debt to build a water treatment plant. So far, no one has said whether this will give the city enough wells to end lawn-watering restrictions, but that might influence some votes.

Then, there's the county, which by all appearances will cave in and institute a so-called "911" addressing system, which in reality has little to do with emergencies. The post office, phone company and United Parcel Service are the big pushers behind this scheme, which will require every county resident to change their mailing address from a route and box number to a street number.

The cost has been estimated at up to a quarter of a million dollars just for signs, not counting what it will cost people to change their addresses. No one in government ever counts those costs.

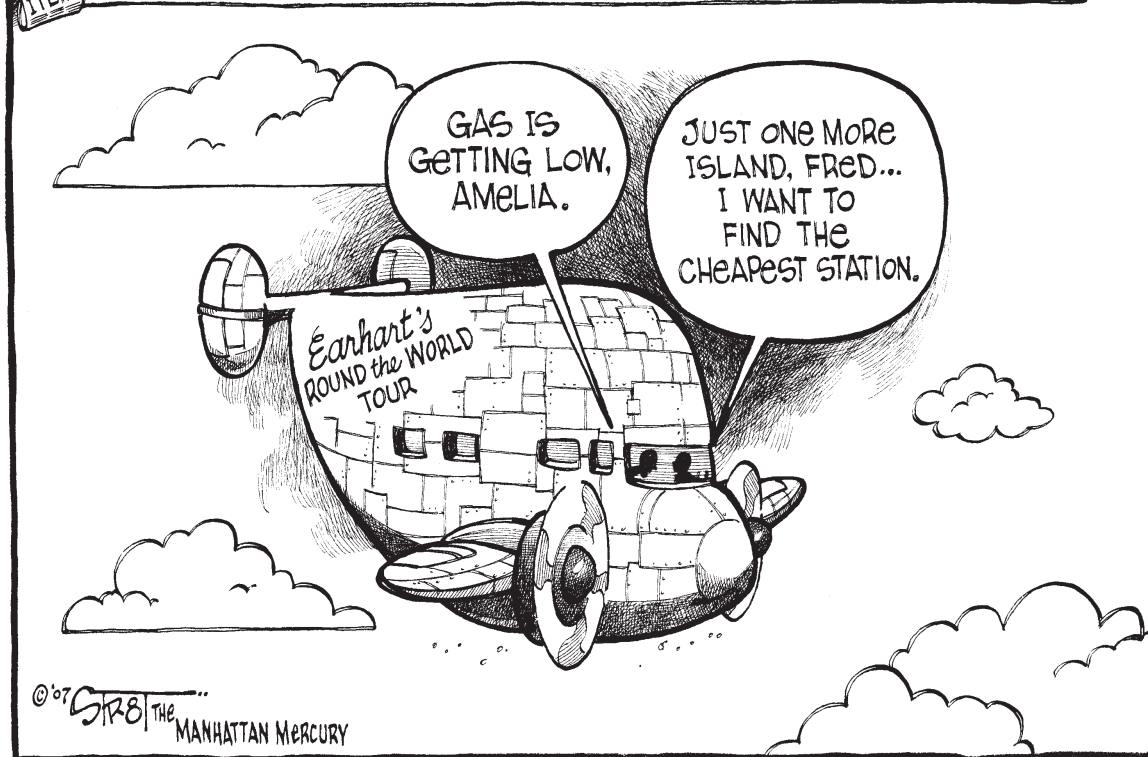
There's not even a federal rule that requires this change, though proponents often claim there will be someday. The power of the federal mandate is that strong.

Then there are federal regulations requiring expensive and unneeded voting machines in county elections, fancy checks with printing on the back, endless notices to the Internal Revenue Service, the list goes on and on.

Every one costs you money. Congress never hears how much that burden will be. Neither do we until it's too late.

But the costs are adding up and no one has the nerve to stand up and say ENOUGH. Like sheep, we just comply. How long can we afford that? — *Steve Haynes*

NEWS ITEM A 15 member expedition seeks facts of Earhart's disappearance...



It's not cats, just all the animals

Steve accuses me of being a cat lady, but that's not really true.

I'm an animal person. I like almost anything that walks, crawls, wiggles, squirms, swims, climbs or hops.

Yes, we have three cats, but only two are ours. The third belongs to youngest daughter, although she'll never reclaim that kitty because her fiancé is allergic to cats.

We also have a dog, a pet toad and half a dozen spiders.

Annie, the dog, belongs to Steve, but I help walk her and make sure her pen is clean and she has plenty of fresh water and food.

The toad is a fairly new addition. I spotted this little guy hopping in the street about a month ago and picked him up and brought him home. Now he lives in the garden and helps with pest elimination. We saw him last week, when he hopped out on the patio. He's obviously doing his job. He's really grown.

The spiders aren't really pets. They're just interesting ornaments for the back porch and garage. It's fun to watch them spin their webs and do their spidery things—a little gross perhaps, but nature isn't always neat and it's no worse than some of the dead things the cats bring home.

Boy, can they hop on a bug that lands in one of the webs. It's something to watch.

When I was young, we always had a dog and a cat or two around the



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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house. Over the years, we also had squirrels, a prairie dog, a raccoon (for a very short time) and an assortment of turtles, lizards and goldfish.

I once mousesat for a friend when she went on vacation.

When I was in college, one roommate had a collie and the other a pair of hamsters. My pet was a three-foot bull snake. I kept it for three years. The month before we got married, I took her out to a sand pit and released her in a nice big weed patch.

When my children were young, we had an assortment of cats but didn't have a dog until the oldest came home with a puppy under her coat one day and that "can I keep it?" look. So Rusty joined the family and a couple of years later Honey came to live with us when her owners couldn't find another home.

Now, I lie. We did have a wippet named Waldo for a short time. It was an unfortunate alliance and it's amazing we ever got another dog.

While the children were bringing home dogs and cats, I kept an aquarium in the living room with a

garter snake—actually several over the years. We also had a collection of lizards.

Bunsky was a stowaway in our barn, so we added a white rabbit to the cats, dogs, snakes, lizards and turtles living on the premises.

I've been known to smuggle a tarantula into a hotel room in Kansas City so youngest daughter, then a biology teacher, could take it to her science class.

I also hid a couple of my son's little lizards in a cubby in my office one year. We had exterminators at the house and I was afraid the chemicals would be bad for the little fellows. I believe in live and let live, but I'm not going to share quarters with either cockroaches or termites if I can help it.

I had to hide the lizards because Doris the proofreader was terrified of reptiles and I didn't want to distress her.

Mostly now I stick with cats and things that live outside. It's easier, since I really need a proofreader.

Kindness might change world

You know what RAOK stands for, right? It's "Random Acts of Kindness." Well, I saw one this morning on my way to work.

A "Good Samaritan" motorist stopped and removed the remains of a truck-tire blowout from the highway. He saw it could have been a hazard and, without being told, he did the right thing.

There is a television commercial running (for an insurance company, I think) that depicts people observing other people doing good deeds: helping a little old lady with her packages, stopping a pedestrian from being hit at an intersection or setting a barrier over a pothole. The premise is that our actions are always being observed by others, and, just like the chickenpox, we might "catch it" and pass it along.

Let's try it. Look for an opportunity to do something nice or kind for someone, without any expectation of a reward. Before you know it, peace and harmony might just be breaking out all over the world.

I had a good time at a horse show this weekend. It was my job to go and take pictures, but I managed to have fun, too. I spent some time with



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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a young couple we know and have been reassured that parents of today have their heads on straight.

Two of their children were in the riding competition. They also have a toddler who kept them busy "chasing," and then there was their 4- or 5-year-old son. He and a buddy were wallowing in the dirt by the stables when a passerby recommended he better "Go see your mother. You are going to be in big trouble."

The boy did as he was told and stood, sheepishly, before his parents. His mother looked at him then turned to her husband and said, "What do you think?"

Her husband replied, "He's not bothering us. I don't care."

Delighted, the little boy ran back to his serious business of play.

Don't misunderstand. His parents

were not unconcerned. They were just wise enough to know the difference between something harmful to him and good "clean" fun.

The next day at church, I asked his mother if they had to run him through the car wash to clean him up. She laughed and said, "No, we just stripped him off in the garage."

Smart parents know how to choose their battles.

Jim and I were on our way to church early Sunday morning when a flock of birds swooped and dove in front of the van. One cut it too close and ended up mashed into the front grill. I told Jim they must have been playing "cousin".

"What do you mean, cousin?" he asked.

"You know — 'chicken.'"

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To the Editor:

Creative Movements Gymnastics began 10 years ago in Atwood. The program drew students from other towns, including Oberlin.

Three years ago, parents were driving 17 students from Oberlin to Atwood to attend classes. We began a satellite program in Oberlin to better accommodate these students and make it available to all Oberlin children interested in gymnastics.

We approached individuals, clubs, organizations and businesses to help facilitate the program. Everyone was helpful and supportive and we raised nearly \$3,000 to buy equipment for the Oberlin students. The program now has 53 students, ranging from age 3 to 14, and continues to grow.

Our classes have been held at the Bohemian Hall at the museum. The museum had been very generous in giving us a favorable rental fee. A

Letters to the Editor

new floor surface was put on the Bohemian Hall floor and we were informed it is incompatible with the gymnastics mat material.

We have searched for other locations to hold classes, but so far have been unsuccessful in finding a suitable facility for all classes. A limiting factor is the ceiling height. We ideally need a minimum of 11 feet. The floor space needed is about 20 feet by 60 feet.

Mr. Dorshorst, principal at the grade school, graciously offered to let us hold our summer classes at the grade school gymnasium. It's been a wonderful facility, but is unavailable during the school year due to sports practices held there.

We have also approached the City Council about holding classes at

The Gateway, but do not have an answer yet.

We would appreciate anyone who might have a building available to consider our need for a facility for the students in Oberlin. Our classes normally begin the week after Labor Day.

This is a wonderful program for the children. We want to keep this vital program available for not only our children, but as a community asset to help draw families to Oberlin.

Robyn K. Rouse
board member, coach
Sarah Howland, coach
Stephanie Blau
board member, coach
Kasey May, coach
Valisha Raile, board member
Susan May, coach

Ex-resident appreciates volunteers

The following letter was taken from the *Norcatour News* dated July 17, 2007.

To the Editor:

I graduated in 1952 from Norcatour Rural High School. We (Jim and I) retired to Rapid City, S.D., 10 years ago.

We live in the Black Hills, and here we are in our sixth year of drought. It is hot and dry here this

summer, and we have terrible wild fires around. A fire south of Hot Springs burned up over 10,000 acres last week and this week, 30 homes lost, and one man lost his life. He went back for his dog.

This is a tourist area and we have lots of tourists even with the high price of gas. Next will be a motorcycle rally.

Here in our retirement commu-

nity, they use lots of volunteer help. Jim has done volunteering ever since we came. They gave a nice dinner for the volunteers to honor them and we attended.

Thanks to all the volunteers for their work. Our *Norcatour News* arrives usually on Friday.

Phyllene (Hansen) Weets
Rapid City, S.D.

War issue could put Dems in power for years

To the Editor:

Do the good citizens of our beloved U.S.A. wonder what lies ahead — politically speaking?

The answer is in *The Oberlin Herald's* July 18 issue, page 2B, 75 Years Ago items, dated Jennings: Wheat is making from 6 to 28 bushels an acre and is selling for 29 cents a bushel.

Who was to blame for that? Republican President Herbert Hoover. The public mind all said so.

History is going to repeat itself in the '08 election — presidential. In the 1932 election, FDR and the Democratic party came into power, which lasted until 1952 and Ike Eisenhower.

U.S. President Bush now is to blame for the Mideast debacle. It's evident the Democrats are the "in" party in '08. How long? Your guess is as good as mine.

Karl Wendelin
Herndon, a lifelong Republican

PS: As one who graduated from high school in 1931, the Great Economic Depression left a lifelong impression. One of mine I remember was I drove to the Standard Gas Station in Herndon with my brother's Model A Ford and its almost empty gas tank, filled 'er up for \$1.02. If that happened now in '08, our theme song would be, "Happy Days are Here Again." The above

incident happened when I had \$1.02 — most of the time I had only the .02. Everyone else was in the same boat, though.

From the Bible

And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.
Hosea 7: 2

