

## Draft apparatus too rusty to ever do us much good

Raise your hands. How many of you knew the U.S. still has a military draft?

No, you're not being called up. The draft is inactive. Real inactive. But the government still spends about \$24 million each year to keep it up. And, apparently, that's not enough.

Nearly 13.5 million men age 18 to 25 are registered with the moribund Selective Service system, though no one has been drafted since the Vietnam War.

To activate the draft, Congress would have to pass a law and the president would have to sign it. Chances of that happening are minimal in this day and age.

Once on duty, the system would have to deliver its first draftees in 193 days, a little less than seven months. No one believes that will or can happen, and no one, apparently, is going to find out.

Last week, the system ditched plans to test the draft machinery for the first time in 10 years. The agency said it lacked the staff or the money to finish the test, which would have included a mock draft and a mock appeals board to handle conscientious objectors.

In its goals for this year, the agency said the test would be "a total mobilization exercise that will be tailored to evaluate the Selective Service System's mandates for a mobilization of any kind. The sheer size and detail of the exercise will take approximately 18 months to produce."

Last week, a spokesman admitted nothing had been done to prepare for the test.

While one official likened the exercise to a fire extinguisher, which has to be tested every so often, even if not used, there appears to be no commitment to test this turkey.

In the nearly 35 years since the end of the old draft, registration was suspended for five years from 1975 to 1980. Then President Jimmy Carter ordered it activated when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Young men are told to register when they turn 18, and find they can't get federal aid for college tuition unless they do.

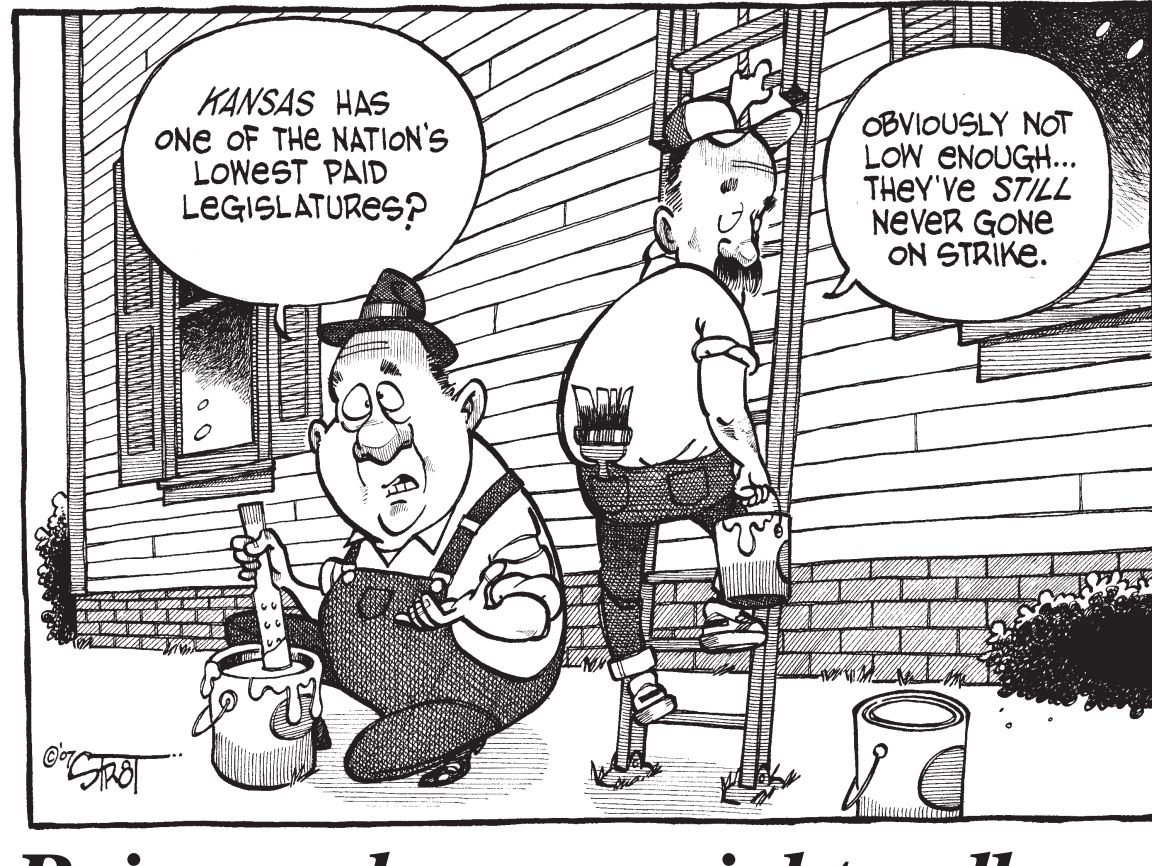
Oddly enough, in this age of the all-volunteer, coed military, women are not required to register and wouldn't be drafted.

All in all, this draft is a nonstarter, so why are we spending money on it?

Mostly because some people who think we'll someday need a draft and because the government never really closes any program. Somewhere, deep in some agency of Agriculture or Commerce, there's probably still a subsidy for buggy-whip manufacturers.

But we think the time has come to cut this one loose. The nation banished the draft after the last unpopular war and we're unlikely to need it again any time soon. If the nation really needs to mobilize, the will to win should appear and there'll be plenty of time to create a draft — if we need it.

Today's phony preparedness is just a sham. Let's get rid of it. — *Steve Haynes*



## Rain sneaks up on night walkers

Steve and I got caught late Saturday night and had to make a run for it.

We've been taking our daily walk closer to midnight than noon lately — a lot closer, usually between 10 and 11:30 p.m.

Lately, even at 11 p.m. the air has been muggy and the temperature near 80 degrees. Still, it's better than the muggy 90s with sunshine that we were having most every day.

On Saturday, we started up the street and noted that the night was overcast and there was lightning streaking intermittently across the sky. Still, there was no thunder, not much wind and the evening looked pretty calm.

We walked up the hill to the water tower, then turned and crossed the highway by The Gateway, Oberlin's civic center. Now we were up top of the hill and the breeze felt wonderful.

There was a wedding dance going on and young folks were coming and going. Dressed in old white T-shirts and raggedy shorts, we weren't exactly dressed for a dance, but it was tempting. We love to dance and they all seemed to be having a great time.

We love these evening walks. The crickets chirp, the cicadas sing and



## Open Season

By *Cynthia Haynes*  
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sometimes we hear an owl far off in the trees.

The dog goes with us. She loves to run and chase rabbits, although we've been trying, without much success, to teach her that she's a bird dog — not a bunny hound. If it runs away, though, she'll try to chase it.

Luckily, most skunks don't run. They turn around and walk off, tail high and sprayer ready. So far, we've spotted them soon enough to alter our course, and the dog hasn't tried to chase any of them.

We didn't run across any skunks on Saturday. We didn't go dancing although in retrospect, maybe we should have crashed the party.

After we had gone about two blocks from The Gateway, it started to rain — gently at first.

It smelled wonderful on the hot pavement. Big fat drops gently pattered down on us and we smiled and

kept going. Then the big fat drops started falling faster and faster, and we started walking faster and faster.

Soon we were running through the rain, our clothes drenched and our hair dripping. The dog was in seventh heaven. She loves water almost as much as running, and running in the rain is great as far as she was concerned.

Just as we got to our back door, it started to thunder — talk about being late for the party!

Other than getting wet and getting our walk cut short, we decided the rain was great. The dog loved it. The garden and yard loved it. The weatherman loved it, since he was finally right.

After all, it was Saturday night and time for a bath.

## She gets roof rack she spoke of

Two weeks ago, in this space, I told you I thought the new van we bought was too nice for Jim to use as a work vehicle. I made the suggestion that he take the luggage rack off the van, put it on the car and he could use the Cadillac for work.



## Out Back

By *Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts*  
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Sure enough, there in the driveway was my old car with a luggage rack on top.

Oh, no, it wasn't permanent, he had just set one up there — but the effect was the same. I got a good laugh out of it.

-ob-

I like to paint. Call me weird, but I really do like to paint.

A fresh coat of paint makes things look fresh, new and clean. Like I said, I enjoy painting, but I do not enjoy repainting.

We are in "crunch mode" getting ready for my daughter Kara and granddaughter Taylor, who are coming next weekend in time for the county fair. The bedroom where Kara will sleep is painted but we had to put all the furniture (plus lots of junk) back into the room while we

finished the TV lounge room where Taylor will have a day bed.

Don't ask me why I painted the walls before I painted the ceiling, but I did, and that's where I got into trouble.

Of course, I got a few drips of ceiling paint on the walls, so I opened the can of wall paint to touch up. One problem: The paint had settled, or separated, or something, I still don't know what.

But the touch-up paint did not match the wall color and I ended up with lighter dabs of color all over the walls. Nothing to do but repaint.

-ob-

Which reminds me of the painting contractor hired to paint a church. He thought he would cut some corners and make more money by telling his crew to dilute the paint with

thinner, thereby saving some money.

The job was completed, but that evening it rained and washed all the paint off the church.

As the contractor and the preacher were standing looking at the mess, a voice from Heaven said, "Repaint you thinners, repaint."

-ob-

Besides getting the room repainted, we also have the central air conditioner hooked up. It must be working because I'm almost chilled — and that's hard to do. I keep it so cold in the car while I drive, my glasses fog up when I get out.

-ob-

None of our kids has been here since we moved into the house. And, I admit, I'm kind of nervous about Kara coming.

I have reminded her to focus on what is done, not on what isn't.

## Woman grieves for a friend

The computer repair men around here were always too busy to be of service. To my surprise, a young man by the name of Brady Koch came to be of service.

I will never forget Brady, as he was such a special young man. He was so easy to communicate with

and it seemed I had known him all of my life. His good personality showed with honesty and integrity.

My heart aches and I feel so sad that Brady had to leave. I will always remember him for his kindness and his willingness to serve. It is not the quantity of life — but the quality.

Elsie Wolters, Oberlin

## From the Bible

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:10

## U.S. 36 edition draws praise

To the Editor:

I am writing to commend you on the "U.S. 36 Section" and the creation of United States 36 Highway Association. The section was very well done and provided a lot of useful information about Route 36 and the Kansas towns along the way.

I live in Champaign, Ill., which is on the "new" Route 36 (now Interstate 72) and ultimately connects with old 36 in Hannibal, Mo. I have traveled Route 36 from Champaign to Colorado on many occasions, as well as a number of trips to Colby.

I knew of some of the businesses and attractions along Route 36, but the section offered a wealth of information about venues and activities of which I was unaware. One example was the Allis-Chalmers Museum in Washington. This was of interest to me because I worked at the Allis Chalmers factory in Springfield, Illinois in the summers during my college years.

A colleague saw the section in my office and was immediately attracted to the article about the steam

## Letters to the Editor

locomotive in Marshall County. Later I noticed he was checking the Internet for directions and plotting out a trip to Kansas.

There are many treasures along U.S. 36 that are relatively unknown. In my opinion there is no other way to go, and driving Interstate 70 borders on total idiocy. My only fear is that your section and association will generate too much interest in Route 36 and it will become overly crowded.

For my money, you can't beat the beautiful vistas and topography of northern Kansas and the High Plains. There are times looking at the broad horizon of the High Plains is reminiscent of looking at the ocean. It is truly beautiful.

When I was a child, my family would travel Route 36 from Springfield, Illinois to Troy, Kansas and then veer south to my grandparents' farm in Doniphan County. The trip

across Missouri and the towns along the way — Hannibal, Monroe City, Macon, Brookfield, Cameron, and St. Joseph — each hold special memories of past trips and the anticipation of arriving at Grandma's farm.

Although U.S. 36 has been significantly changed in Illinois, the Missouri section of Route 36 is relatively the same as it was 50 years ago. There are still familiar landmarks which make me fantasize about time-warps and a desire to turn south for the farm when traveling through Troy. But those days are gone and only the memories are left, with Route 36 the tangible reminder of special times and wonderful people.

Thank you for taking the time to write about and preserve historic U.S. 36.

Peter Tracy

Champaign, Ill.

## Scouts combining their councils

To the Editor:

Girl Scouts in our community are about to gain thousands of new friends and just as many new opportunities. Starting Oct. 1, our Scouts will become part of the new Girl Scouts of Kansas Heartland Council, which will combine the strengths of our council with five others in the state to serve 15,000 girls and 5,000 adult volunteers.

What this means for our Scouts is that they will soon have even more places to go, things to do and people to meet. Our girls will still be served by a regional office in Hays where they can speak with Girl Scout staff to help them with purchases, ques-

tions and support.

Girl Scouts' local presence will be as strong as ever and girls will remain in their current troops. The only difference is that, as of Oct. 1, they will have access to all the Girl Scout programs and summer camps we have to offer in 80 counties.

"The changes that are taking place in Kansas are happening across the country, and it's all part of Girl Scouts' overall goal to redefine itself as the world's best leadership development program for girls," said Linda Mills, chief executive officer for Sunflower Council.

Headquarters for the combined council will be in Wichita, with re-

gional offices in Hays, Emporia, Garden City, Hutchinson and Salina. Shelly Chenoweth has been appointed as the first chief executive officer. A combined board of directors will be elected to include representatives from all regions.

Ms. Chenoweth comes to the Girl Scouts from the Youth Entrepreneurs of Kansas in Wichita

For details, visit [www.gogssc.org/links.asp](http://www.gogssc.org/links.asp) and click on the Realignment page or call the Hays office at (785) 625-5671.

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## Reader agrees town is getting more trashy

To the Editor:

A letter in the July 11, 2007, edition of *The Oberlin Herald*, written by former Oberlin residents Linda Marintzer and Debbie Scheufler, expressed concerns over areas of Oberlin filled with weeds and unkempt, clutter-filled yards. They questioned city maintenance and repair of streets in Oberlin and the general overall negative appearance of the "City of Pride" where they enjoyed their childhood and attended 12 years in school.

Their childhood memories were of Oberlin as a very special town of caring people that showed pride in their town by a constant maintenance of its homes, projects, streets and general appearance. I also say, "What has happened to Oberlin?"

Seventy years ago, my family moved to Oberlin. I spent my childhood in Oberlin, went to school there and married in the "City of Pride," also the hometown of my husband. We passed this legacy to our two children, who were born in

Oberlin. The past 40 years we continued to frequently visit in Oberlin with family and friends, however, during each visit we observed the slow, sad decline in this City of Pride.

Citizens of Oberlin and city and county government, please return our town to the "City of Pride" and search for remedies to, "What has happened to Oberlin?"

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