

Fancier medical service may be bitter pill out here

The next big thing you can't afford, but may get to pay for anyway, is city-style emergency medical service in rural Kansas.

The Kansas Medical Foundation and its Kansas Medical Institute appear to be renewing a push for state-set standards that would apply in both rural and urban areas.

Today, ambulance service is vastly different in bigger towns, where often a fire department runs the service, employing paramedics with advanced training, than in rural areas, where counties depend on volunteer emergency medical technicians with less training. Distances mean it can take an hour or more to get an accident or heart-attack victim to a hospital, not just minutes.

That's always been part of what we accept when we decide to live in the country. We know it might take longer to get an ambulance, and we know the crew will be volunteers from among our friends and neighbors. But we also know we're far less likely to have a wreck or be shot — even have a stress-induced heart attack — than if we lived in the city.

It's not that the care you get here will be poor — far from it. But it won't meet the city standard for training, speed or emergency-room trauma care.

Rural people have lived with the difference all their lives. But back east, people who may never have lived in a small town think it's terrible. They want to do something to help us by putting all the state under a one-size-fits-all set of standards.

The Kansas Medical Foundation, backed by tax-free money, apparently wants to push this issue again, though it's gone nowhere in 13 years since the group first turned a spotlight on the issue. The facts are outlined in two stories which appeared on Page 1 of *The Salina Journal* last week, written by employees of the Kansas Medical Institute.

The institute and its parent foundation are issue-oriented groups with a mission, but the

stories appeared identified as coming from something called the KHI News Service. It's unusual, to say the least, for a major newspaper to turn its news pages over to an outside pressure group.

It's not that the stories are not factual, but they have a slant designed to make the current rural medical service appear inadequate, though offering no real proof anyone is in danger. They argue for statewide standards without a thought to how counties might pay the cost, or even what that might be.

There's no thought that the current system, where counties set their own standards based on what they think they can and should provide, and what taxpayers can afford or want to pay for. People seem reasonably happy with that.

As with many issues, though, ranging from drinking water to voting, people in Topeka and Washington think they know what's best for all of us. They have no qualms about forcing standards on rural areas, then forcing those who live here to pay.

These standards have nearly put an end to voting in many small towns and made living in rural areas, once less expensive than city life, increasingly unaffordable. It'd be nice to have uranium-free drinking water, for instance, but there are few people in a small Kansas town to pay for a \$4 million water treatment plant.

Anyone who worries about uranium, or fluoride, for that matter, in their water can buy a \$200 filter system for the kitchen sink to remove it. That's not an option to those who know what's best, however.

So, get ready to pay for more expensive ambulance service. Add the bill to those for voting machines, unneeded water and sewer plants, emergency management, new addresses and a hundred other so-called "mandates."

And if you can afford it, pay up. Hey, if we wanted city life, we'd move to the city. — *Steve Haynes*

Memory just went bye, bye

There's a joke about people thinking more about "the hereafter" as they get older.

The punch line is we go somewhere and then wonder what we're here after.

This is no joke. I just went down the basement three times to get an empty box.

The first time, I decided to start another load of laundry while I was there. I started the laundry, emptied the dryer, put the wet clothes in and took the clean laundry upstairs.

Ten minutes later I remembered I needed that box, so back I went — a 10-second walk. At the bottom of the stairs, I looked right, and left, up and down. Nothing. I just couldn't remember why I had come down.

After about five minutes of pondering, I retraced my steps and found the soup mix on the kitchen table I was planning to send to my daughters in Georgia. A box! I needed a box.

I got it on the third try. No wonder it takes me so long to get anything done.

Actually, you don't have to be very old to have poor memory. We just don't practice memorizing any more.

When I was in grade school, we



Open Season

By *Cynthia Haynes*
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had to memorize the preamble to the Constitution, the Gettysburg Address and about two dozen prayers. (Hey, I went to a Catholic School.)

But I haven't practiced and I couldn't recite those patriotic text or most of the religious tracts anymore without some sort of aid.

The same applies to telephone numbers. I still remember that my aunt's number was Delmar 3-7282. She lived in Kansas City and that was the first "dial" number I learned. We didn't get a dial plant in Concordia until I was a freshman in high school. I had a hard time remembering my own phone number, since I didn't call home as often as I should have. I know this for a fact, because I still remember DE3-7282 although my aunt has been dead for 30 years, but I can't remember my parents' old dial number.

When I became publisher of *The*

Norton Telegram a few years ago, I discovered that the newspaper has rotary dial phones. With no push buttons, there is no speed dial. With no speed dial, you have to remember phone numbers.

I had to resort to cue cards to dial phone numbers for the newspapers and the press. And after two years of doing that, I still had trouble.

I can't even tell you my children's phone numbers, since they are stored in my cell phone.

In ancient days, people had good memories. Otherwise we wouldn't have the Bible or the vast amount of oral history, which eventually were recorded.

It's a good thing they didn't have me to depend upon for those things:

"Oh gee, the 10 commandments, I can remember four of them. Will that do?"



New cat takes over household

We didn't stay a one-cat family very long. And Sammy the Siamese isn't too crazy about our decision.

In my last installment, I noted that we had been offered another cat. We accepted the offer and brought her home.

She is a beauty — long, sleek black hair with a white bib, paws and whiskers. Her name had been Gertie, but we didn't think that fit her personality.

Jim initially suggested "Sylvia" because he said she looked like a female version of Sylvester the Cat.

We "tried on" Sylvia but one night when she leaped right in the middle of my chest and got nose-to-nose with me, I blurted out, "Well, Missy!"

Jim said, "That's it! She's a Missy."

I think that will be the last name change, and we'll make it official with her first visit to the vet. She's had so many changes, I hope she doesn't suffer from an identity crisis.

Missy's first day in our house brought out the worst in Sammy's behavior. He hissed and puffed at her, even chasing her into the laundry room.

Two days later, the tables were turned as Missy became the dominant one. She crouches and stalks poor Sammy, leaping upon him when he least expects it. She chases him from one end of the house to the other.

Everyone assures me they will



Out Back

By *Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts*
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eventually become buddies, but I have my doubts.

—ob—

We had a very low-key Christmas Day. We spent the day at home, alone, just the two of us.

So low-key, in fact, that I served Jim leftover potato soup from the night before. The closest I got to cooking was to make a pot of coffee.

Jim is teaching the Book of Revelations in our adult Sunday School class and spends hours each week in preparation. So he spent the day on the computer, researching and compiling worksheets for the class.

My goals were not so lofty. I "vegged out" in my recliner and watched HGTV until my eyes about popped out of my head.

I helped house-hunters choose homes, I advised house flippers on granite countertops, and I put in my two cents on decorating tips. It was a beautiful thing.

We had intended to pay a Christmas Day call on my brother Dick and his wife, Donna. We got all dressed up in some of our new Christmas clothes, were in the car

and a mile away from home when we came to our senses.

It was freezing rain and starting to snow. We turned around, went home, put our sweats back on, and resumed our respective positions at the computer and in the recliner.

It was a good day. We had phone calls from all of our children and grandchildren. Probably the best presents we could hope for.

But Christmas vacation is over and it's back to the routine. With the new year looming, we're both committing to simplifying our lives.

Downsizing and reorganizing — easier said than done.

We want to get started on the house again. Still, lots to do.

Didn't I just say downsizing?

From the Bible

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
Psalm 91:2

He was there for the last one

I'll be watching in Oberlin when the KU Jayhawks play the Virginia Tech Hokies on Thursday, but I was in the stands the last time Kansas played in the Orange Bowl 39 years ago.

I wasn't there the first time KU played in Miami in 1948, but then I wasn't born until July. My dad was a law student, living in Lawrence and going to school on the GI Bill that momentous year.

You could say my life sort of encircles Jayhawks and the Orange Bowl, but I hope this is not the end of the line for either.

I was a sophomore at KU in the fall of 1968, when the 'Hawks had one of the greatest teams in their long and not-so-illustrious football history. Led by quarterback Bobby Douglas, who set records later with the NFL Chicago Bears, and running backs John and Junior Riggins, the team that year was spectacular.

If I can remember this right, they actually placed second in the Big 8, losing to hated Oklahoma that fall, but the conference contract with the Orange Bowl in that simpler time said that a team could not represent the league in two succeeding years. Otherwise, Oklahoma might have played every January.

That gave KU a trip south to face Penn State in what would become known as the "12-man" game. I always think of it as the 1968 season, though the game itself was played in 1969.

I was surprised my Dad let me go, and still am. I think it was a nostalgic thing for him, and it had been so long between bowls. I booked a flight out of Kansas City at bargain-basement rates, a charter on an old Lockheed Electra that flew straight from Kansas City out over the Gulf of Mexico. Growing up in Kansas, I'd never seen so much water.

For the price, it was a pretty good tour, and we had rooms right on Biscayne Boulevard in downtown Miami. We could look right out and watch the parade the day before the game, led by a Kansas Highway Patrol car with a single red "bubble-gum machine" light and a dozen Florida troopers with then-novel blue lights. I always wondered who got to drive that car to Florida.



Along the Sappa

By *Steve Haynes*
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I remember enjoying the weather, taking a real estate junket north to West Palm Beach (the salesman knew a bunch of college boys weren't buying one of his lots) and not being too impressed with the town of Miami, which seemed a bit faded.

The game was something else. Kansas had a one-touchdown lead going into the final moments. The Jayhawks had a chance to score a field goal, but Coach Pepper Rogers opted for a touchdown to put the game out of reach.

Riggins didn't make it, then Penn State got the ball and scored. A young Coach Joe Paterno did the "honorable" thing for those days and gambled on a two-point conversion for a win, rather than a kick for a sure tie.

Today, with overtime, the decision surely would have been different.

The KU defense held, and the Kansas section went nuts. Cheering wildly, we surged toward the field, aiming for the near goal post. No one noticed the zebra near the backfield, blowing his whistle and waving his arms. KU had 12 play-

ers on the field, and the team would admit later, apparently had for at least four plays.

The rest, as they say, is history. Penn State got another chance and won the game, 15-14. KU fans went home dejected.

To this day, Bobby Douglas, who calls Coach Rogers "an offensive genius," says he'd have kicked the field goal — or at least let him run a quarterback sneak. Rogers himself had won the 1952 Orange Bowl for Georgia Tech with a kick.

That didn't happen, of course. I don't remember much about the ride home, but it must have been quiet.

And I don't remember anything about the 1948 game, played by a great team which had a lot of great football players, many of who were turning grey after taking a break from college for war service. Kansas lost to Georgia Tech, 20-14, proving there are only a few degrees of separation here.

Anyway, I'll be watching. I know several people from Oberlin have tickets, but I won't be with them. Maybe it'll turn out better this time, but it can't be any more exciting.

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