

## Priorities at Sappa Park still at top of voters' lists

Two good pieces of news from one meeting: Sappa Park supporters got together to trade plans and goals for the park.

And the Oberlin City Council once again hears that the park east of town is a top priority for voters.

Sappa Park is pretty much No. 1 in the minds of many Oberlin residents. It was the top issue to come out of the Decatur Tomorrow planning effort. It remains at the top of voters' minds.

That doesn't mean a lot of money will be spent at the park, which the city often ignored until it started to become more popular a decade or so ago.

The city has lots of needs: a new pool, street repairs, better water. There is a promise to assign a part-time caretaker to work at the park later this year. City maintenance for park areas would help keep use up.

But no one expects the city to invest millions. That's money the city doesn't have right now, especially with ridiculous federal demands to build unnecessary water and sewer plants when the old ones are just fine.

It is great to see everyone working on the park get together now and then. One problem from the park's increasing popularity is fragmentation of the responsibility for planning.

Pheasants Forever leased the farm ground at the park and plans improvements to plantings, feed plots and other wildlife-related features. Another group wants to build a wetlands in the old lake bed, while a trail committee plans and maintains a system of walking paths.

One unit of the Decatur Tomorrow initiative works on lake plans, but there is no single agency in charge of the park's future. The City Council has largely stepped aside to make way for the volunteer groups, seeing its plate as full with other challenges. That's wise, but some guidance is needed for the park.

The involvement of so many volunteers has been great. These groups have brought ideas and certified, on-the-ground progress: trails, new trees, better cover for game, more use at the park, cleanups, you name it.

But these groups may not always share the same goals and someone needs to stand ready to mediate and guide their efforts. That could be a city-appointed committee or the council itself, but the day may come that the city will have to make some decisions.

Meantime, it's encouraging to see everyone working together. Groups are asking for small improvements here and there, like the picnic tables promised by the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the water and lights asked from the city for the picnic area, new trails and the like.

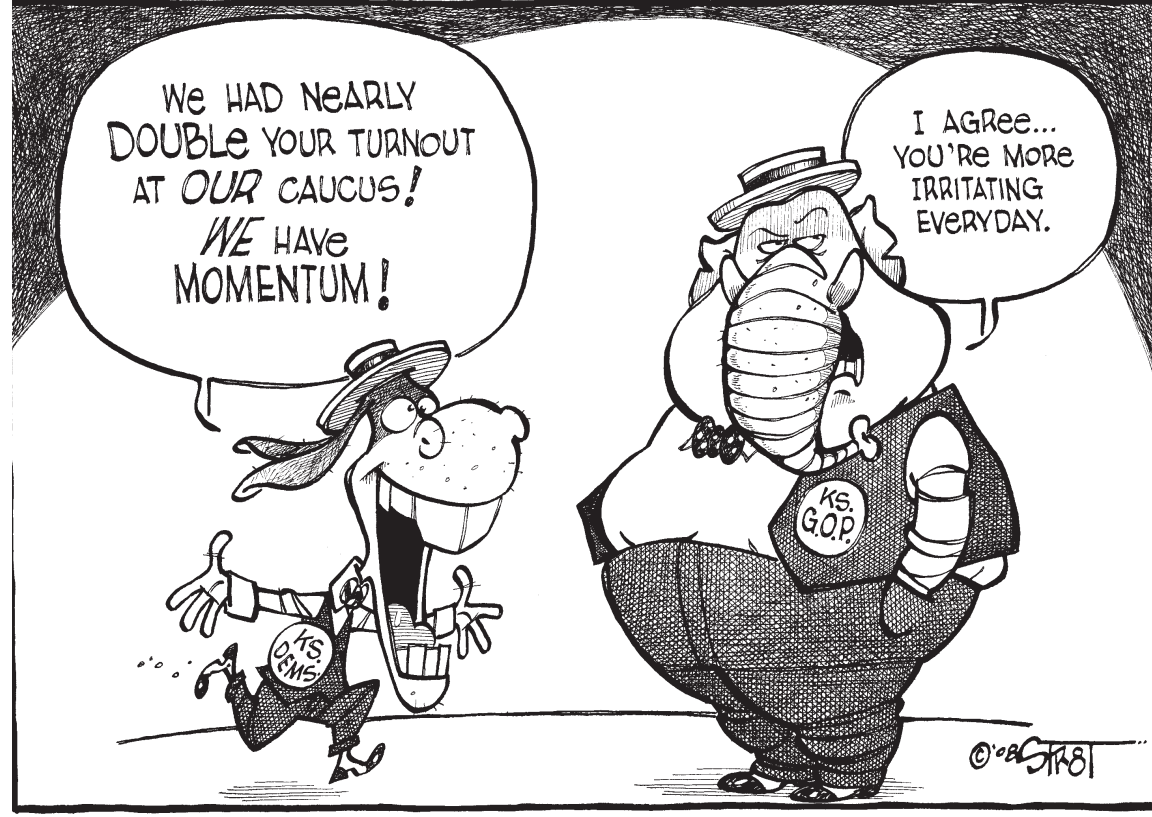
Parks can be a real asset for a city. Oberlin is lucky to have a couple of good ones.

With continued improvements, Sappa Park, once shoved aside by the state fish and game people, could be a major asset for this area for years to come.

So, keep it up, everyone. Your efforts are working, and they are appreciated. We need the park and we need your work.

And thanks.

— Steve Haynes



## LX, 60 or halfway to 120?

LX. "Well," my friend said, "I hear you're halfway to 120." I don't know. Does that sound better than 60?

When oldest daughter's mother-in-law turned 60, her husband took her to Europe.

This last weekend, when I hit that milestone, my husband took me to Oklahoma.

Let me think about this for a few minutes.

Not that we didn't have fun. We have many friends down in Oklahoma from our time in Colorado — we weren't the only ones to move — and our work in the National Newspaper Association.

Still Paris, Rome, London, Oklahoma City. It just doesn't have the same ring.

The presents were nice, however.

Steve said he wanted to get me diamond earrings.

However, two weeks before my birthday, the washer gave out, so I got a new front-loading, almost top-of-the-line washer and dryer for my birthday. Not diamond earrings



## Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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by a long shot, but better than dragging a bunch of dirty clothes to the laundromat every week, especially with the way we travel.

Over the years, my birthday has usually fallen during the Colorado Press Association meeting in Denver. And while the Brown Palace isn't the Ritz, it's better than your average Sheraton.

This year, Colorado's meeting is in early March and Oklahoma's was last weekend, so we drove the eight hours south and east into the land of red dirt.

Actually, the convention was held at an old hotel, similar to the Brown, which had just had a multi-million dollar makeover. It looked and felt like a grand old dame and is run by Hilton, so the service, food and

ambiance was great. We had a nice room with a view of the Capitol and there were flowers in the room when we arrived — a birthday present from my children.

The girls also got me a pair of earrings. They weren't diamonds, but they are a gorgeous pair of blue topaz studs that match a necklace Steve got me in the United Arab Emirates last year.

I also got a necklace and earrings and a Oklahoma centennial Christmas ornament from friends down there.

All in all, it was a good birthday, and Steve didn't even tell anyone how old I am — something I'll have to remember come July, when he hits year LX.

## Dessert catastrophe avoided

We almost had a catastrophe at our house last night. Our good friends Dave and Charla had been invited for dinner and, of course, I wanted to serve them a nice meal. Creme brulee was to be the featured dessert.

I need to take a little side trip here and tell you one of the good things about living in an unfinished house. (Betcha didn't think there was a good thing, did ya?) The good thing is (in the winter, at least) you have extra cold storage. What will some day be our dining room is, at the moment, Jim's wood shop. There are no heat ducts and it is as cold as a refrigerator. Now, you know why the tray of desserts was in there chilling.

Before our guests arrived, I had given Jim instructions on where the desserts were. I told him his cue would be, "I think we're ready for dessert." He was to retrieve the desserts with as little fanfare as possible (It might unnerve some people to see their dessert emerge from a wood shop), and I would take it from there.

We had finished our meal, complimented by bright, witty conversation, and I said, "I think we're ready for dessert."

As scripted, Jim excused himself from the table. As he left the room he said, "What do you want the oven set on?"

"How thoughtful" I said to myself.

I told him to turn it to "broil" as I kept up my end of the conversation.



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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It didn't register at first, but soon a smell permeated the room. A smell I couldn't place. Then it hit me — something was burning! Egads!

He had put the tray of desserts directly into the oven.

Now, if you've ever made creme brulee, you know it has a brown sugar topping that is either melted with a torch or under the broiler. Jim had never made creme brulee. He was just trying to be helpful.

When I rescued them, the tops were burnt and bubbling, just moments from igniting.

"Everything's fine, no problem," I called out from the kitchen as I carefully, scraped the blackened tops. Brown sugar sprinkled liberally on the desserts hid any charred particles I might have missed.

Back into the oven, this time under my watchful eye. Two minutes later, they were done and no worse for the wear. Everyone thought, or at least said, the desserts were fine.

One thing about dinner at our house, it might not be appetizing, but it will always be entertaining.

## From the Bible

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. — Luke 22, 1-2

## 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 the staff small, so we may not be able to get to every event. We will try.

# THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

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Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals mail postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$33 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$38 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$42 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in US dollars only) extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

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

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## State group supports 'No Child'

To the Editor: My thanks to *The Oberlin Herald* for an excellent article discussing the recent "town hall" meeting with Congressman Jerry Moran.

I would like to make one tiny point of clarification to the article. I did not say that the Oberlin School Board supports the No Child Left Behind Act; rather I said the Kansas Association of School Boards supports it. The association only supports this law because of the federal money provided to the state of Kansas.

Our local board has not passed a resolution for or against the act, but individuals (like me) on the board, and administrators in our system do

## Letter to the Editor

not support the law as it currently is written. The concept of educating all students to their greatest potential is great, but the devil is in the details, particularly in a school with a small population like Oberlin.

The current law requires constant testing (not teaching), and the comparing of academic development of grades rather than individuals. In our school system, with a very small population, we see that each class has its own strengths and weaknesses. Some are better academically, some athletically,

some artistically, and some in the practical application of shop, FFA and vocational education.

Today, though, we only measure and compare the academic strengths of this year's class against last year's class. If this year's class is not equal to or stronger academically, we are considered to be failing.

A truer measure of success would demonstrate the progressive development of each student in all aspects of their growth through our wonderful school system here in Oberlin.

Dan Nedland, Oberlin