Opinion Page

130th Year, Number 9

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Priorities at Sappa Park still at top of voters' lists

Two good pieces of news from one meet-

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 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 minds of many Oberlin residents. It was the 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

> 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?

"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 motherin-law turned 60, her husband took her to Europe

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

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, how-

Steve said he wanted to get me

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 like a grand old dame and is run hits year LX. my birthday. Not diamond earrings



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes c.haynes@nwkansas.com

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 but they are a gorgeous pair of blue 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 to remember come July, when he 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, 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

All in all, it was a good birthday, and Steve didn't even tell anyone how old I am — something I'll have

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 brule 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 something was burning! Egads! 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 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

We had finished our meal, complimented by bright, witty conversation, and I said, "I think we're ready As scripted, Jim excused himself

from the table. As he left the room he said, "What do you want the oven

"How thoughtful" I said to my-

I told him to turn it to "broil" as I kept up my end of the conversa-



Out Back By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts cplotts@nwkansas.com

It didn't register at first, but soon a smell permeated the room. A smell my watchful eye. Two minutes later, I couldn't place. Then it hit me —

directly into the oven.

brule, you know it has a brown sugar topping that is either melted with a torch or under the broiler. Jim had never made creme brule. 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 they were done and no worse for the wear. Everyone thought, or at least He had put the tray of desserts said, the desserts were fine.

One thing about dinner at our Now, if you've ever made creme house, it might not be appetizing, but it will always be entertaining.

From the Bible

Now the feast of unleaven 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

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

Space in the paper is limited and the staff small, so we may not be able to get to every event. We will try.

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Presidential race digs up dirt The presidential race has been the

most interesting in years, but now it's started to get downright dirty. I always thought that would

happen whenever Hillary Clinton felt threatened. With the string of victories rung up by challenger Barack Obama, she's as threatened So Hillary fires her campaign

managers, gears up the machine as "the status quo" because she was morality. she had her spokesman accuse Sen. Obama of running a negative

"(Obama) attacked her veracity, attacked her credibility, said that she would say or do anything to get elected, and the press has largely applauded him," Clinton communications director Henry Wolfson told reporters Monday. Aside from that fact that sounds

like a pretty good description of Sen. Clinton, it belies the fact that her campaign has slung as much mud as anyone. The candidate herself accused Sen. Obama of misrepresenting her position on the North American Free Trade Agreement and "taking a page right out of Karl Rove's playbook.

(She was referring to President George Bush's former chief political advisor. Many Democrats would love to get Mr. Rove's playbook, since his candidates usually win.)

"I think he has run against her as the status quo, he has essentially called her divisive, he has called her untruthful, he has questioned her credibility, he has said she will do and say anything to get elected," Wolfson was reported as saying in the same conference call to report-

If anyone should know Hillary, I'd guess, it'd be her spokesman. Sen. Obama has to run against her sully his image of open and honest



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes s.haynes@nwkansas.com

and goes on the attack. This week, the front runner by a mile when he

New York and a black senator from Illinois — is remarkable. It shows how much America has changed in the last half century, from the day when neither a black nor a woman could have run for president. From the time when John Kennedy had to battle slurs about his Catholic

Just to be sure all bases were covered, other Democrats were busy attacking any perceived threat. Sen. Obama had unkind words for the candidacy of erstwhile liberal legend Ralph Nader, who announced his fifth run for the White House

Mr. Nader never wins, or gets many votes, but he's popular with the far left and many say he drained off enough support to put and keep George Bush in office.

Is all this bickering on the left liable to leave Republican candidate John McCain in the driver's seat?

Not to worry. The New York Times dug up a hypothetical affair the Arizona senator might or could have had years ago. He, the woman and his own wife say there is nothing to it, but never mind. The *Times* claims McCain staffers worry that the implications alone could

Nothing like having your character challenged by Jayson Blair's old It's politics as usual, but the race paper. The story was almost as subitself — featuring a woman from stantial as some of Blair's reporting, spiced with photos of the senator's racy blonde "friend."

> And just in case, party chairman Howard Dean attacked Sen. Mc-Cain for trying to back out of taking federal money for his campaign, which could limit his spending this fall. Dean charged that McCain was trying to evade federal law, since he had used his coming federal payment as collateral for a loan.

> The party lapdog, having lost his place in the presidential sweepstakes months ago, apparently was just making sure someone was attacking McCain besides The

> Who'll be left standing in August?

Right now, it's anybody's guess. Sen. Obama has put on one heck of a race, but that just makes him a target. He's the best candidate the Democrats have. He's fresh and inspiring, and draws huge crowds.

Sen. McCain should run much better against the tired image of Hillary Clinton, but all the mudslinging and bitterness is bound to hurt both Democrats come fall.

Ah, this is what makes politics

State group supports 'No Child'

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

Our local board has not passed a resolution for or against the act, but individuals (like me) on the board, and weaknesses. Some are better and administrators in our system do academically, some athletically,

not support the law as it currently is some artistically, and some in the written. The concept of educating all students to their greatest potential is great, but the devil is in the

Letter to the Editor

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

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