

## Kansas should be ready to build one power plant

Now that the legislative session is over, and Gov. Kathleen Sebelius apparently has made her vetoes stick, isn't it about time to get everyone together and come up with a compromise that would get at least one power plant built in Kansas?

The governor offered a one-plant compromise earlier this year, but proponents apparently thought they'd prevail either in the Legislature or in court. They claimed one plant couldn't be financed, that they had to have two.

So far, though, they have none.

Here's a plan: Take the governor up on her offer. Write a plan to build one plant at Holcomb, alongside Sunflower Electric Power Corp.'s existing station. Get a permit to build it, and then wait for the lawsuits that are sure to come. (Sunflower quietly announced a delay in building the second plant earlier this month anyway.)

That would get the process moving for at least one unit moving forward. Our betting is that financing would be there, because the Colorado, Texas and, yes, Kansas rural electric cooperatives backing the plant need the power. They say they need it pretty bad.

And in that case, half a loaf would be a whole lot more kilowatts than none.

Kansas, the rural West and the nation are going to need a lot of power in the next 10 years. Probably, the need is there for both Holcomb plants, maybe even a third one already dropped, but for sure, one plant will pay its bills.

And we should be prepared to build one plant, especially one that would be the cleanest coal-fired plant in the state.

Why coal?

Because coal switching to natural gas would drive up the cost of the power a lot faster than coal, for one thing. Because coal is available and the plant could be built far faster than a nuclear plant, even another coal plant.

While the governor wants to push wind power — and that is a good idea — wind can't be depended on to carry the "base load," the demand when the wind is not blowing and the sun isn't shining. Other technologies are years away.

Nuclear, though enjoying a revival in popularity, has the same problems it always had: risk, waste, permanent pollution of the earth's surface. Do we really want to go back to that?

No nuclear plant has been built in the U.S. in more than 25 years, and it'd take darn near that long to get one going and built. Prices could be \$6 billion to \$8 billion a plant.

So coal if what we're stuck with, the Holcomb plant is about the best choice we have. It'd create 100 or more jobs in western Kansas and ensure our power supply for years to come.

And by the time a single plant is built, it'll be time to ask for another. We'll bet on that.

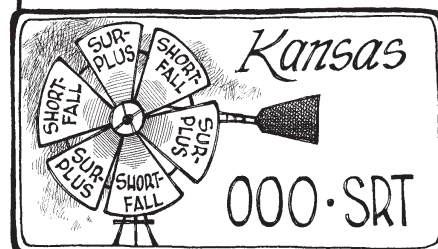
Sure, most of the power will be exported at first. So are the cars, grain and airplanes Kansas makes. This is about jobs as well as power, and the governor ought to recognize that.

Western Kansas needs those jobs.

Compromise may not be anyone's first choice, but it'd be a lot better than building no plants, wouldn't it? Sunflower ought to consider that, because the world will need the power.

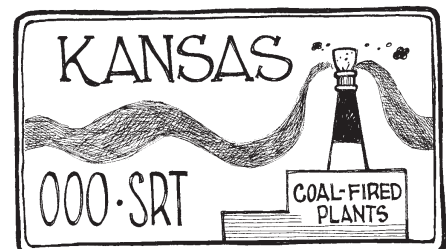
— Steve Haynes

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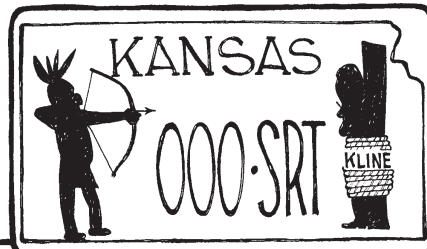


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## Spaghetti still her favorite

Uncle Lester, my mother's older brother, introduced me to spaghetti. He was quite a guy.

A retired insurance salesman, he spent many of his retirement years traveling around the country visiting his five surviving brothers and sisters. He was a handy guy to have around. He helped my dad build the bathroom addition on to our old farmhouse.

In hushed tones, my mom used to say the reason he spent so much time away from his own home in Joplin, Mo., was that he "annoyed" his wife, Adah Mae. She was a little bit of a fuss-budget — and Uncle Lester was more of a free spirit.

Back to spaghetti. I was about 15 during one of Uncle Lester's visits.

One day, he announced he was going to make spaghetti for supper. He started making his sauce early in the morning.

"Has to simmer all day," he said. I imagine my mother wouldn't have considered salad, spaghetti and garlic bread a "real man's meal." She probably had a couple of steaks on standby, just in case my dad didn't have enough to eat.

We didn't have a strainer big enough to handle the enormous pot of spaghetti noodles Uncle Lester proposed to cook, so he took a three-pound coffee can and punched holes in the bottom with an ice pick,



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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making his own sieve.

When everything was proclaimed "ready to eat," the whole family attacked it with anticipation. It must have been every bit as good as I thought it would be, because spaghetti is one of my favorite meals to prepare and eat even today.

I have to admit, I don't spend the whole day simmering a sauce like Uncle Lester did. Opening a jar of Ragu or Prego is acceptable to me. Oh, I'll brown some hamburger to add in, but I'm no purist.

When my girls were young, our family lived in Kansas City. Their father and I wanted to take them to an authentic Italian restaurant to sample the cuisine. Both girls ordered spaghetti but upon tasting it, they declared, "It's not as good as yours, Mom."

My youngest daughter almost choked to death on spaghetti when she was about 2. She had taken a mouthful about the same time her father made her laugh, and she inhaled the whole bite.

She was still in a high chair, and her dad tried to get her out but fumbled with the mechanism. She was not able to breathe and he began pounding on her back.

Somewhere in my memory bank was the Heimlich Maneuver. I positioned myself behind her high chair, put my arms around her and gave a quick push on her little abdomen. Out popped the blockage and she started crying.

From that moment on, she would not eat spaghetti unless it was cut up. In fact, she does not let her own daughter eat spaghetti unless it's cut up.

This week, I heard a news story about a little girl that was choking in her school's lunchroom. One of the dietary aids came to her rescue, gave her "the hug of life" and saved her.

When the news crew interviewed the little girl's friends about the episode, one said, "Suzie was choking and Mrs. Smith gave her the Heimlich Remover."

Works for me.

## Eliminate cats, move in rats

To the Editor:

I would like to address the cat problem in the City of Oberlin. I have lived throughout the United States. I have, first hand, seen the elimination by "poisoning, trapping and killing" of the feral populations.

They were, in a way, successful. It eliminated many cats, along with dogs, raccoons, skunks, rats, raptors (owls and hawks, etc.) and coyotes that chewed and played with the body of the poisoned animals.

There also was the death of a 4-year-old girl who found her kitten and was cuddling the dear pet and got potassium cyanide on herself.

The process was a great success, as I said; they eliminated many cats, feral and domestic. Cats are natural predators, though, and when they are gone, the rats and mice abound, and snakes, raccoons, other predators and scavengers moved in to fill the gap.

The planners did not also foresee the problems with poisoned, rotting, smelling, bodies being found everywhere, which amounted to poisoned bombs for whoever handled them, let alone with the poison seeping into the ground water in time.

So for a few years, we were faced with rats coming out in broad daylight, children getting bit during their sleep, and some predatory birds, lacking feral cats to eat, were looking at other eatable animals, such as small dogs.

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So, in eliminating the feral cats, we will have NEW predators moving in, filling the gap: skunks, rabbits, snakes, rats, mice, gophers. I would prefer to have a cat walking through my yard than an opossum, raccoon or skunk, or a nest of rats moving into one of my buildings. Do you realize the pest control that the cat does? They are natural hunters and will eliminate rodents. My one old tom has ridden many raccoons and skunks from my yard.

I can understand the feelings of others who do not like cats and are concerned with the "droppings," but can you, an untrained individual, tell the difference between a cat, skunk or opossum droppings? They are similar.

My cats are neutered or spayed. Since I have lived here, they have been in the usual scrapes with local dogs and other cats. But some small-minded individuals now have taken to shooting the cats with a pellet gun, and even a 22-caliber shot. There has been six "shooting wounds" to my cats within the last year.

Maybe if everyone would work together and allow others to enjoy their pets, we could get along better. Be responsible with your pets. Two of the cats around my house are ones that became homeless when their original owners passed on. One,

for the last five years, leaves every day to walk to his old master's home and sits and watches for his master to return. The other has just recently arrived for food since his master just passed on.

But on the other side, you have dog owners walking their dogs with leads longer than six foot in length and some without a leash and see a large yard and allow their dog(s) to eliminate on lawns and shrubs just because they themselves are much too lazy and inconsiderate to care about anyone but themselves. It has always been easier to leave the mess in the neighbor's yard than your own.

Whatever is decided on this situation should be put to a citywide vote, not left to a special few to decide. This issue affects the entire city population.

LaMoine Guinn  
Oberlin

### From the Bible

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.  
Ephesians 2:8

## Swamp exotic, but gators not

After earlier April visits to Abbeville, S.D.; Junction City; and Lincoln, Neb., we went exotic and toured Baton Rouge and Lafayette, La., deep in the heart of Dixie in the latter part of the month.

I had two wishes for my visit to Louisiana: I wanted to see a swamp, hopefully with alligators, and eat red beans and rice with sausage.

Steve wanted red snapper. A swamp tour near Baton Rouge I found online was out of the question. We only had Wednesday evening and Thursday morning and early afternoon. We had to be in Lafayette for dinner.

We used the time we had on Wednesday to find a nice restaurant that sold red snapper. It's kinda hard to find in Louisiana, where red fish is the local favorite.

We took a walk along the river dike and made plans for Thursday. It was great looking out over the Mississippi at flood stage by lamplight.

After breakfast, we walked down to the USS Kidd, a World War II destroyer tied up on the levee. This wasn't on Steve's original list, but what boy can resist a big boat?

I took a quick tour and hit the gift shop.

After the Kidd, we visited Louisiana's old statehouse. It looks like a medieval French castle with acres of stained glass — gorgeous, but more like a big courthouse than a capital, and way too small for modern government. It's where colorful, controversial Huey Long presided as governor in the early 1930s before he built the new 34-story statehouse north of downtown. He later ran for the U.S. Senate and was assassinated in 1935.

Our last stop on the way out of town was the Bluebonnet Swamp, created by road building in area almost 300 years ago by German settlers. The park features a series of nature trails over boggy land and water on a series of long wooden bridges.

The first wildlife we saw, though, was from the bridge at the entryway.

I spotted a turtle on a log about 100 feet away from us. Then we saw a half dozen heads swimming towards us. As they drew closer, we could tell they were turtles with their shells underwater. I got the



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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feeling that if we stayed, we might be mugged. They were in formation and they looked like they meant business. We moved on to the visitors center.

On the trail, we saw birds, including some baby owls just out of the nest hole, lots of bugs and a large snake, but no more turtles or any alligators until we returned to the nature center. There, giant snakes, poisonous spiders and baby 'gators are on display. We even got to watch the handlers feed crickets to small turtles. The ones outside probably thought that we had crickets on us, too.

OK, so it was time to leave for Lafayette, about an hour away in the heart of the French-speaking Cajun country, and we had accomplished Steve's dream and half of mine.

At the Louisiana Press Convention, the reason for the trip, we got

to try most of the local delicacies — crayfish, shrimp and rubber chicken (hey this was a convention, remember).

The programs ended early Friday night, so we escaped with several other convention goers to downtown and the Festival International de Louisiane, an extravaganza of food, music and arts. We listened to bands on four stages — they had acts in French and English, from as far away as Paris and Quebec — and bought a few small souvenirs and I got my red beans and rice with sausage and chicken. Steve had fried shrimp, but was tempted by the fried alligator chunks.

We left Louisiana on Saturday feeling like we had touched and tasted the state without ever going near New Orleans. And I still hadn't seen my alligator.

## All must report child abuse

To the Editor:

This is in response to the article written by Leslie Nolette, titled "Unthinkable can happen," in *The Oberlin Herald* on April 30.

My hat is off to Leslie to share her story and her pain. I would like to add that there are laws that require us, as citizens, to report any suspected child abuse.

Kansas law lists people such as any person providing medical care, doctors, nurses, certified nurse aides, psychologists, therapists, counselors; teachers, administrators, child-care providers, firemen and emergency medical technicians, among others. The list goes on.

Another section makes "willful and knowing" failure to make a report required by law a class B misdemeanor. It is not a defense that someone else made a report. Intentionally preventing or interfering with the making of a report required by law also is a misdemeanor.

The law says when reporting a

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suspicion that a child may be in need of care, the person may disclose protected health information freely and cooperate fully with state officials and law enforcement.

Too many people are willing to close their eyes and look the other way, thinking that someone else will take care of reporting abuse. That is illegal from how I read the law. It looks to me like this Kansas law overrides privacy laws.

Someone once said that it takes a community to raise a child. I agree that sometimes parents just need a break, or help in some way. If we, as a community, witness an injustice of one of our children, or elderly, for one, will not turn my head, no matter the cost.

Kellie Cooper, Oberlin

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