

## Innocents of Gaza, Iraq pay for will of the mighty

However you look at it, the situation in Gaza is crazy.

Opposing tribes are killing each other, as they have since the dawn of time in the Middle East, only now these "nations" have rockets, drone aircraft, tanks and high explosives.

Crazy. The militant Hamas group took over the Gaza strip last year, shooting, torturing and tossing from the roofs of high-rise buildings their more moderate opponents and former partners from the once-militant Fatah movement.

So much for brotherly love. Since then, the militants have aimed a steady rocket barrage at Israel, press reports show, while quelling crime and unrest with killing and torture. Terrorists bomb the only border crossing into Israel even as people demonstrate to have it open, and the Israeli army comes across the border to hunt militants, warning the natives to stay inside.

Sometimes, the troops and the villagers know each other by name, the Israelis say.

The U.S. looks askance at the Hamas regime, which we officially brand as a terrorist movement.

The militants say they'd like to return to power sharing with Fatah, but that could cost the West Bank government western support.

And the Bush administration sees violence in Gaza as interfering with its last-minute peace initiative.

No one is very happy, least of all the people of Gaza, who live under a Taliban-style regime and suffer from constant Israeli bombardment

and incursion.

The blockade means there's little trade and no way to make money. Gasoline is scarce (people use vegetable oil to fuel their cars, when they can get it) and for lack of maintenance, failed sewage treatment plants spill tons of pollution into the Mediterranean.

Gaza is but a symbol for the failure of peace in the Mideast, where the history of war and death goes back beyond Genesis. Every recent U.S. president has attempted to broker peace at least twice, at the start of his administration, when hopes are high, and at the end, when legacy seems important.

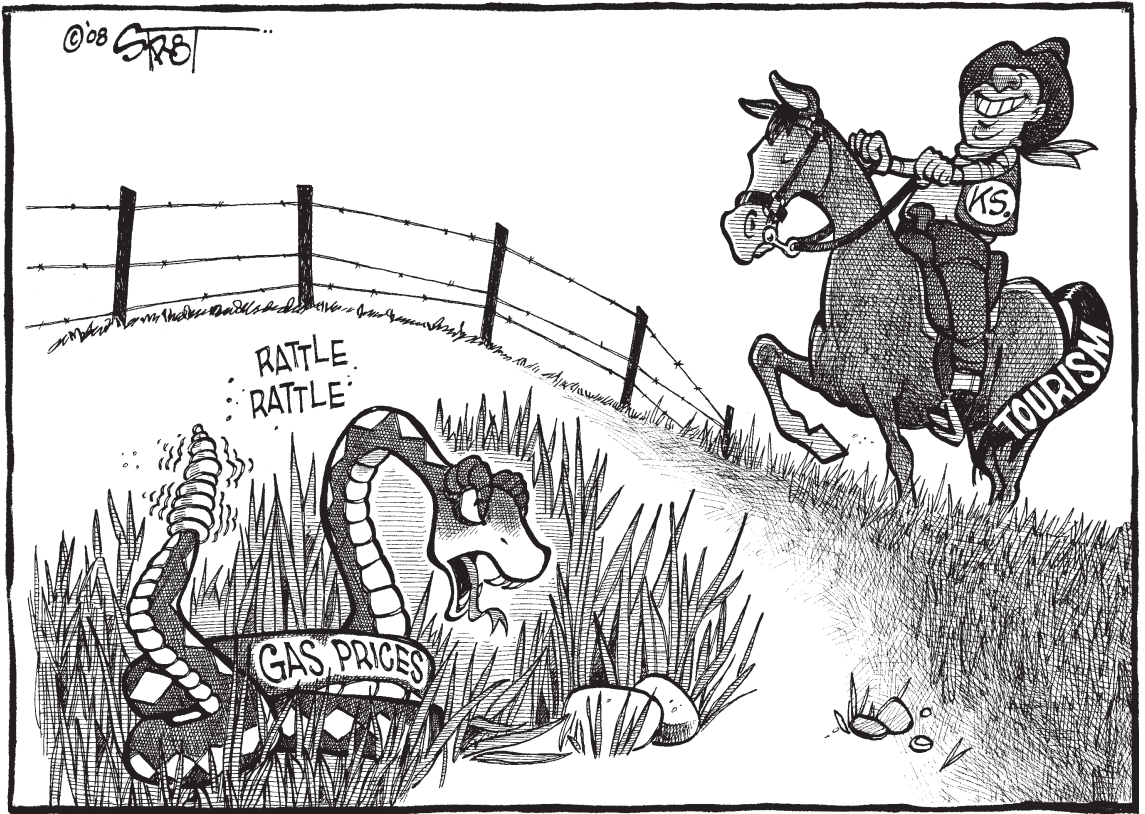
Mr. Bush has done no better, but no worse, than anyone else, but progress had been made over the years. Fighting seems to be down on the borders other than Gaza.

It's mostly the people who live there, natives and displaced Palestinians, who suffer the results of decisions made by the militants and the world's governments. The price they pay seems terrible, akin to that paid by innocent Iraqis.

We wish the administration had a handle on this situation, but it's not likely anything will change, this year or next year, when a new president and a new secretary of state will try their hand at the Mideast.

Perhaps it's not reasonable to expect this to end after only 10,000 years, but there's always hope.

The innocents who suffer, in the Mideast and around the world, deserve better, so we must try. — *Steve Haynes*



## Yes, she can bake a cherry pie

"Can she make a cherry pie, Billy Boy, Bill Boy."

Yep, but she cheats just a little.

When the woman from the church called, I surprised her by answering the phone. She was so used to leaving messages, she couldn't believe it was me, not the answering machine.

"Can you provide two pies for the church supper on Saturday," she stammered.

"Sure," I said. It was a rare week. I was going to be in town all seven days. And besides that, I like to cook.

Really. I enjoy cooking. I take two cooking magazines and have about a thousand cookbooks. Still, I had been gone a lot, and there were lots of things to catch up on. There were just more projects than time.

Now there was a time, back when my children were young, that I made apple pies all the time. Well, not all the time, but more often than just Thanksgiving and Christmas.

We'd go out and buy a bushel of apples in the fall and I would sit around at night, peeling and dicing them. When I had six cups ready, I would mix the apples with the sugar and spices, put the pie filling in a plastic bag, which I put in a loaf pan, and freeze the whole mess. By winter, I'd have a stack of apple pie



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
c.haynes@nwkansan.com

bricks just waiting for crusts.

Then when I got the urge or we had company, I'd get out "The Joy of Cooking" and make a double crust recipe. One crust was for the bottom and I'd slice the second into a lattice for the top. The excess dough got sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon for the kids to eat as pie-crust cookies. The shapes were funny, but they didn't seem to mind.

You'd think I would have more time now that the kids are grown but, it just doesn't seem to work that way.

That's why I sneaked into the grocery Friday and picked up some pre-made pie dough and four cans of cherry-pie filling.

The best way to make a pie look homemade is to make sure there are imperfections. It can't be a perfect balance of fruit and crust. It can't be perfectly browned on all sides. The rim of the crust can't have evenly spaced little indentations.

And my two pies looked homemade. The lattices were crooked and I had to piece parts of the rims together. As they baked, the edges started getting done too soon, so I had to haul them out of the oven and wrap them in foil. (That was a fun trick at 425 degrees.)

Still, my almost homemade pies came out pretty well and they were a hit at the church supper. I noticed that the pieces didn't exit the pie pans well, so they looked even more homemade than ever after they were placed on little paper plates in heaps of crust and cherries. Maybe I should have made them a little sooner and let them cool instead of moving them from oven to car to church basement in the span of 15 minutes.

Oh well, the neighbors have a cherry tree. Maybe next time.... Nah. It's not gonna happen.

## Small-town rumors vicious

Life in a small town can be great.

It's quiet, peaceful and, except for the occasional stray dog running loose, there's no crime. It's great that is, if you're a native to the area.

If you're a newcomer, trying to fit in — trying to enjoy some of those amenities and leave behind the big city, you might find yourself on the opposite side of friendliness.

There is no rumor mill like a small-town rumor mill. A person's reputation can be destroyed before they even know people "are talking." And, of course, no one has ever stopped to ask if any of it is even true.

I know city folk gossip, too, but it seems like there is an intended maliciousness in small towns that I never saw in the city.

Thumper's advice still stands:



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
cplotts@nwkansan.com

"If you can't say something nice — don't say anything at all."

Jim has been having fun. His dad gave him a 1964 Cadillac hardtop that had been parked in his garage the last 34 years.

A little dusting, a little cleaning, a little tune-up and the old girl runs like a top. We've been "tooling" around town in it, trying to act cool. He's already driven it to two classic car shows.

Do you think in 40 years, the cars

we're driving now will be classics, with people clamoring to restore them?

Local swimming pools finally opened. Unseasonably cool weather kept the pools closed and the kids home.

Even with the temps barely making the required 65 degrees, youngsters flocked to the water. It didn't matter if their teeth were chattering or their skin was blue — they were going swimming.

The one thing that does mean is — summer is here.

## Senator champions rural life

It is my honor to serve the 40th District in the state Senate.

I treasure the rural way of life we have in northwest Kansas, and I work hard to protect that. Each legislative session presents new challenges. I accept each one, working to see that our strong family values are kept in place.

Here are some highlights from the 2008 session just ended:

**SB 23, Driver's License Fees**  
This bill increases the photo fees for a driver's license by the Department of Revenue from \$4 to not more than \$8 and requires payment of a photo fee for the cost of the photo to be placed on an identification card.

The bill allows money deposited in the Photo Fee Fund to be used for the administration and operation of offices, including equipment, associated with the issuance of licenses to carry concealed weapons as well as driver's licenses and ID cards. The effective date was Jan. 9.

**SB 2542, Vehicle Information Processing System**

This bill will finance the integration and modernization of the Vehicle Information Processing System, the Kansas Drivers' License System and the Kansas Vehicle Inventory System of the Division of Vehicles in the Department of Revenue. It creates a Division of Vehicles Modernization Fund that will be used for the creation and maintenance of the new system.

The bill authorizes a \$4 surcharge paid at the time of vehicle registration. Registration of fleet vehicles will be exempt from the surcharge. The fee increase will be effective on Jan. 1, and will expire on Jan. 1, 2013.

**SB 531, School Finance**

In an effort to provide budgeting certainty for school boards, the Senate passed and sent to the governor a school finance plan increasing base state aid by \$59 per pupil to \$4,492 for the 2009-2010 school year and beyond. Recognizing a one-time opportunity to create a rolling appropriation, the Senate took the lead to increase school funding by the rate of inflation. Additionally, the bill changes the law, allowing a school district desiring to consolidate with another district fewer than 150 pupils before July 1, 2011, a guaranteed combined general fund budget for years in which the consolidation takes place, plus two school years.



### Letter from Topeka

By Sen. Ralph Ostmeier  
ostmeier@senate.state.ks.us

**HB 2119, Micro Utility Trucks**  
This bill defines a micro utility truck as a motor vehicle with the following characteristics that is NOT a work-site utility vehicle:

1. Not less than 48 inches wide
2. With an overall length, including the bumper, of not more than 144 inches.
3. With an unloaded weight, including fuel and fluids, of more than 1,500 pounds.
4. Able to exceed 40 miles per hour as originally manufactured.
5. Manufactured with a metal cab.

The bill makes it illegal to operate a micro utility truck on any Interstate, federal or state highway (except to cross such a highway); within the corporate limits of any city unless authorized by such city; or on any public highway or street unless the vehicle complies with equipment requirements for lamps, brakes, and other equipment such as horns and mufflers. The bill includes micro utility trucks among nonhighway vehicles, and their owners will be required to obtain nonhighway titles. The bill provides for a fine of \$60 for unlawful operation of these trucks.

**HB 2858, FHSU Kansas Academy for Math & Science**

This bill changes the name of Fort Hays State University Endowment Association to Fort Hays State University Foundation. The bill will appropriate money to the Board of Regents for the Kansas Academy for Math and Science for five years.

This is an accelerated residential program for Kansas high school juniors and seniors talented in science and mathematics. The idea is allow them to study and learn together, and to earn college credits and a high school diploma at a state educational institution. The regents designated Fort Hays State as the site, and will appropriate money on estimates provided by the university.

**Session disappointments**  
I am disappointed neither Chamber pushed out a bill on illegal

immigration. When push comes to shove, too many people view this as a federal issue. My fear is if we wait on Washington to enforce laws, it may never happen.

I believe individual states must take the lead and perhaps then the feds will follow. Several neighboring states are working to pass laws that will require illegal immigrants to follow procedures to become U.S. citizens, and my fear is that if Kansas does not act, we will become a safe harbor for illegal immigrants.

I was disappointed with the governor's veto of the Comprehensive Abortion Reform Act. The bill would not stop a legal abortion, it simply heightens the record keeping and reporting requirements for late-term abortions being performed in Kansas to make sure they are complying with a law that has been on the books for 10 years. The bill provides protection for young women and girls who may be pressured by family, friends, or even sexual predators to have an abortion. It baffles me who could be against enforcing current law and prohibiting coercion and exploitation of young women.

By far the biggest disappointment for me was the governor's continual veto of the Sunflower energy proposal. I am a huge proponent for our Rural Electric Cooperatives, run by local boards that keep the consumer's interest as their main focus. Wind energy proposals are exciting, but I feel we must back that up with energy that is reliable, cheaper, and more dependable, such as coal.

The proposed Holcomb plant is no doubt the cleanest and most modern, safe plant in the nation, if not the world. This affects five utility cooperatives in my district alone, and without compromise it will have a negative impact on the rising costs of western Kansas power.

If you have any questions or concerns reach me at Box 97, Grinnell, Kan. 67738 or e-mail [rostmey@ink.org](mailto:rostmey@ink.org).

### Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers to *The Oberlin Herald*:

Dale Dufrene, Harahan, La.; R. Dee Temple, Ingleside, Texas; Ralph Vernon, Corpus Christi, Texas; Mrs. Wayne Fisher, Albuquerque, N. M.; John Laidig, Holmdel, N.J.; Donald Wolfe, St. Charles, Mo.; A. C. Kleint, Dustin Nichols, LaQuinta, Calif.; Alvin Billodeaux, Oberlin, La.; Michael Tongish, Oakalla, Texas.

**Colorado:** Elwood Brock, Aurora; Peggy McGurran, Arvada; Arthur Harms, Gill; Mary Baylie, Broomfield; J.B. Hubbard, Lakewood; Don Guinn, Clois Fiala, Colorado Springs; Bill Robison, Littleton; Rita Miller, Byers; Chris Ertler, Wheat Ridge.

**Kansas:** Sue Hayes, Colby; Bill Sater, Holcomb; Agnes Wahlmeier, Karla Jones, Lenny Fleckenstein, Jennings; Earnest Huff, Rea Magers, Dwight Wentz, Norcatour.

### From the Bible

His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.  
*Psalms 72:17-18*

## THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800

E-mail: [oberlinherald@nwkansan.com](mailto:oberlinherald@nwkansan.com)

### Nor'West Newspapers

#### STAFF

Steve Haynes ..... editor  
Kimberly Davis ..... managing editor  
Mary Lou Olson ..... society editor  
Sarah Marcuson ..... sports reporter  
Leslie Nolette ..... proofreader/copy editor  
Carolyn Kelley-Plotts ..... columnist  
Cynthia Haynes ..... business manager  
David Bergling ..... advertising manager  
Pat Cozad ..... want ads/circulation  
Karla Jones ..... advertising production  
Joan Betts ..... historian



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.