

Home-owned carnival needs money for repairs

Oberlin has plenty of projects to build and pay for, plenty of needs to fill, as summer arrives. The latest is a plea for money to do \$21,000 in emergency repairs to equipment at the home-owned carnival in time for the August county fair.

Now that the problem is known, our guess is people will rally 'round the carnival and pony up money for the repairs. The Oberlin Rotary Club already has promised to pay \$1,000 for repairs to the Ferris wheel, which the club operates during the fair.

The swings and Octopus ride need new motors, with a total price tag at roughly \$21,000, to keep them going through the fair. The Twist-Over, which has problems with holes in the deck, among other things, likely will be closed until next year at least.

The carnival probably needs to raise at least \$100,000, with a new ride expected to cost more than \$80,000, but that won't happen this year. This year, it's mostly a matter of keeping most of what we have going.

The new Amusement Authority board has been struggling with these needs and others all spring, but you can't pin the blame on the volunteer board. Most are new members, elected at a Chamber of Commerce meeting this winter after most of the old board bailed out last fall.

The need for money may have been one reason so many long-time volunteers left the board — where they'd put in years of devoted service — but no one knows. The old board gave out little information, preferring apparently to let people think everything was fine.

But ignoring a problem seldom makes it go away, especially one that requires money to fix. Now that people understand the problem, it's likely that they'll help get the carnival going. Until the word gets out, though, nobody is going to give much.

Letting the public in on the problem really helps. It's worked for the Sunflower Cinema,

which has raised enough money to pay its tax debt since a series of stories this spring detailed how much the operation needed.

That doesn't mean the theater is out of the woods: it still needs our support — and especially our seats in its seats — to pay the bills.

Beyond that, Oberlin and Decatur County need to find money to pay for a new swimming pool — \$1.5 million to \$2 million; a new Golden Age Center, theater and bowling alley — as much as \$900,000; a longer runway at the airport for business jets — \$5 million to \$7 million; and continued street and highway improvements.

Then there's the possibility the state and federal government will order the city to build a water treatment plant — costing \$4 million or more — to remove uranium from city water, though we've been drinking the stuff for years and no one even knew. (And for that much money, the water would still carry all the rest of the gunk, and still taste awful.)

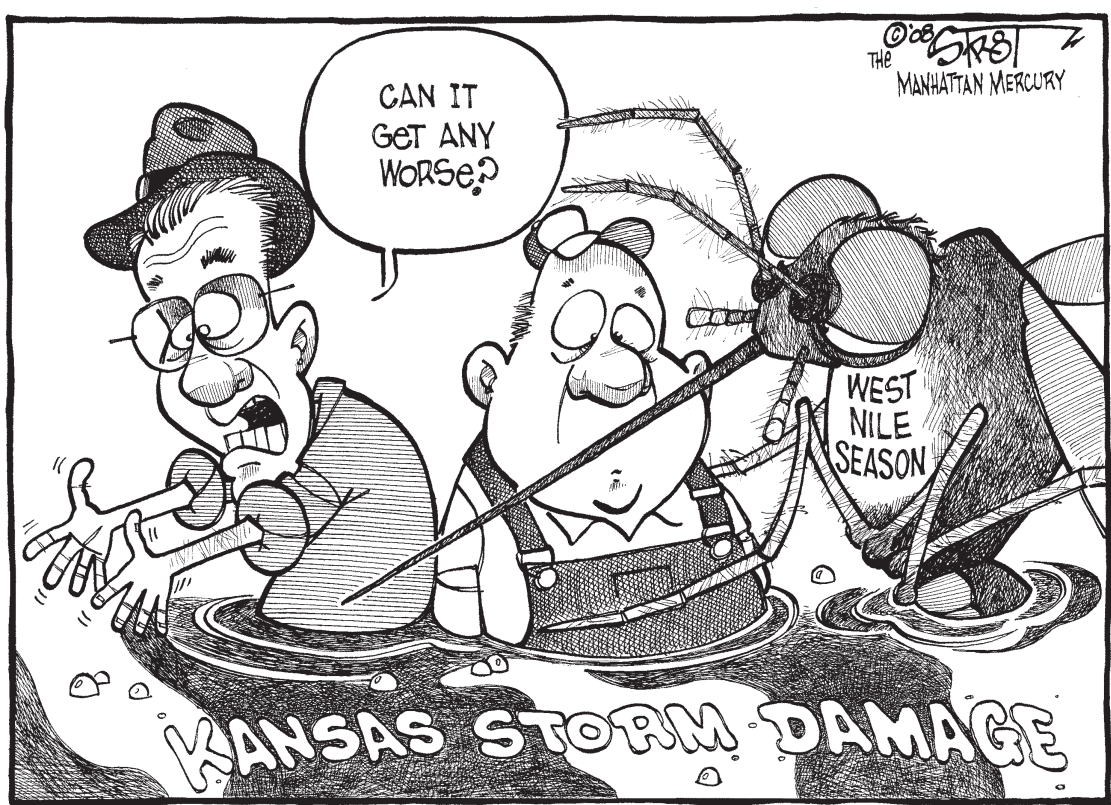
The city already has built a \$2 million sewage-treatment plant it probably didn't need, thanks to "federal mandates," taking on \$1.6 million in debt to pay for it. You have to ask yourself, just how much debt should one little town have?

All the projects mentioned above — a pool, senior center, theater and bowling alley, and a runway — are tangible things people can see and use. Most of us agree the town needs them. Even so, finding the money won't be easy, especially with those lovely mandates.

But fixing the carnival rides? That's a small bill. The fair is coming up in just over six weeks, and our home-owned carnival has been a source of pride for more than 30 years.

Get out your checkbooks and give. The address is, in care of the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce, 104 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

— Steve Haynes



Lake increases wildlife value

What is a lake, or "wetland," worth in terms of wildlife and recreation?

Hard to say, but if our walk in Texas last week is any indication, quite a bit.

Stiff from seminars and sore from handshaking, we ditched a morning session and headed out for a walk in the 91-degree morning cool.

Hey, this is Texas.

The hotel, hard against I-30, was just blocks from the Texas Rangers' new stadium. Between the two was a lake offering some relief from the concrete-lined floodway which passed as a creek.

Rounding the lake to rack up our 45 minutes of shoe time, we counted:

- One snowy egret, fishing.
- Dozens of turtles, both western painted and soft-shell, basking on rocks, logs, weeds and the concrete sides of the creek.
- Small herons of some type, blue, but not the great blues we see here.
- Ducks, mallards and other kinds, and one mallard duckling.
- About four dozen city kids, learning to fish.
- Squirrels.
- A bird chasing a squirrel that apparently got too close to its nest.
- Sunfish, tiny, squirming almost as much as the girls who caught them.
- And last, but not least, a kingfisher on the dam.

All that in a half hour in the middle of the city. Imagine what you could see around a pond at Sappa Park.

The kids were a hoot. They were attending a camp put on by the baseball team, their counselors



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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said. They'd seen the stadium and a game, met some of the team, and tried dance and art classes.

Many probably had never been fishing. A game warden and biologist came with poles, bobbers, line and bait. Counselors baited hooks with squirming worms. Kids squealed when they caught something.

The herons and egret were on the lookout for lunch, though we didn't see them catch anything. The kingfisher, black and blue and white, was another story. I almost didn't notice the small bird on the shoulder of the dam — until she dived right into the water and came up with a minnow. She landed on the opposite side of the dam, gulped her lunch and turned to watch for more.

Cool.

Cynthia brought a stale bagel and fed the ducks — and one brave turtle — below the dam. They seemed to appreciate the handout. That turtle had to swim quick to get any bread.

The only downside to the urban experience was that an inch of rain — the first in months, we're told — washed tons of trash down the creek for park workers to clean out. It's amazing how many bottles, cans and cups people throw out, even in

this "environmentally conscious" age.

We went back for more the next day. Though it was humid, it wasn't as sweaty as I imagined Texas would be in June. Then, this was Dallas, not Houston.

Sappa Park today is becoming a marvelous recreation place. The trails, picnic tables and camping grounds provide lots of opportunities to play in a beautiful and quiet place.

But water will add a lot to the experience. There'll be more wildlife to see. Kids can learn to fish, and it doesn't take big water or big fish for that.

A wetland or small pond will be a good start. Even a small pond on the creek, fed by flow from the sewer plant, would provide decent fishing.

There's plenty of wildlife now — deer of two species, pheasants, turkey, owls, quail, reptiles and amphibians, great blue herons, all kinds of birds — but wetlands will attract ducks and geese, shore birds, frogs, turtles and riparian creatures of all kinds. It'll just be more interesting.

And at Sappa Park, there won't be nearly as much trash as we saw in Texas.

Advice seemed appropriate

I never give unsolicited advice. OK, I might, OCCASIONALLY, make a suggestion or two. But, it's only because someone really needs my advice.

Today, there are three young men who might not appreciate my wisdom nor my willingness to share it.

I was scheduled to walk in Norton County's Relay for Life, a fund raiser for the American Cancer Society. The skies looked threatening and I assumed the Relay had been moved to the alternate site. We pulled into the Army's parking lot and though we didn't see many vehicles, we parked and headed to the front door. There were three young men standing outside smoking cigarettes.

I thought to myself, "This isn't right. This event is for cancer research."

As we approached them I said, "Don't you guys know that smoking is the No. 1 cause of cancer? I don't think you ought to be smoking out here."

They kind of stammered and stuttered, "Yes, ma'am," and stepped aside.

We went on into the Army and



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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were surprised to not find anyone there.

"Oh, no!" I thought. "Those guys aren't with the relay. I owe them an apology."

We exited the Army and as we walked past the three smokers I said, "I'm sorry, I thought you were with Relay for Life. Maybe I shouldn't have said anything but — you still shouldn't be smoking."

Well, it was sort of an apology.

—ob—
This weekend, Jim's dad received the news we had feared. He is going to lose his leg. The circulation was cut off for too long when he was caught in the fence.

But, with typical forthrightness, Dad has accepted the idea. He has decided he will get one of those electric mobility units. As he told

us about it he said, "There's no fool like an old fool. I never should have tried to climb that panel."

What happened to Dad is twosided: It would have killed a lesser man. But a lesser man would have never tried it in the first place.

From the Bible

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Proverbs 3:5-7

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Santa Fe focuses on its plaza

The City Different in the Land of Enchantment — We've just spent most of a week visiting Santa Fe in sunny New Mexico.

In Santa Fe, where the zoning code requires traditional adobe-type construction, limits the height of new buildings to the height of the cathedral spires. Where, while you can hear almost any language, Spanish is as common as English and has been for nearly 400 years.

The heart of the city is the Square, or Plaza, a large city park is surrounded by commercial and government buildings. On the east, west and south are shops and restaurants. On the north is the Palace of the Governors, the oldest continuously occupied public building in the county, dating back to 1610.

In front of the palace, now a museum, sit the Indian craftsmen and women with their wares spread out on blankets. There are 50 to 60 spaces and every morning, tribal members have a lottery to decide who gets the valuable spots. They say about twice as many vendors show up as there are places. Vendors must be Native Americans from New Mexico and they or their immediate family must have made all the items for sale.

Almost every weekend during the summer, there's some sort of festival or ceremony going on in the



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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square. This week, we were attending meetings and visiting the sights around town and the surrounding areas.

While Steve was in a meeting, I took a bus tour of the city, past the grand cathedral built by Bishop Lamy in 1869; the Chapel of Loretto with its "miraculous" staircase built of wood without nails or center support; Canyon Road, where art galleries sell paintings and sculpture worth more than I've ever made in my life; and through neighborhoods built at the same time the Pilgrims were trying to make a go of it in Plymouth.

The next day, we took a bus tour out to Abiquiu to see where painter Georgia O'Keefe spent the last four decades of her life painting the desert mountains and landscapes. We visited Taos Pueblo, where the Corn Dance ceremony was just about to start and where some of the buildings are almost as old as the dirt they're made from. The thousand-

year-old pueblo has no electricity or indoor plumbing — just gas lights and heat — but still about 100 people live there year around.

Back on the road, we stopped at the Santuario de Chimayo. The church, site of a statewide pilgrimage at Easter, and the surrounding area are considered sacred by many Hispanic Catholics, and people gather up the dirt to take home with them. I resisted the temptation to take home anymore dirt but a friend — he's a Polish Catholic — gathered up a bagful.

On the bus back to Santa Fe, I figured that after stops at the pueblo chapel and Chimayo, the others on the trip have probably learned more about Catholicism in four days than most Protestants get in a lifetime.

Protestant, Catholic or Jew, we all came away with a little bit more feeling for the spirit of God and an appreciation for this vast, sun-baked land.

Red Cross here needs more money

To the Editor,

Due to storms and house fires in May and June, the Phillips County Red Cross has provided several families with assistance for shelter, food, clothing and other needs.

This assistance is free and is provided only by the generous donations of time and money of the American public. Although some nonprofit organizations do, the Phillips County Red Cross does not and never has received reimbursement from any government agency.

Only three Red Cross branch offices exist in northwestern Kansas

Letter to the Editor

to provide services for 13 counties. Phillips County provides service for Phillips, Rooks, Graham, Norton and Decatur counties.

To continue these services, we need your help. You can help with these and any future disaster needs by sending your tax-deductible donation to the Phillips County Red Cross, Box 452, Phillipsburg, Kansas, 67661.

Please make your checks out to the "Phillips County Red Cross" and note in the memo "local disaster fund." Your donations will help assure that disaster services will be available immediately for everyone in these counties.

Thank you so much for your past and continuing support.

Diana Hanchett, manager
Phillips County Red Cross