

## County should return extra money to taxpayers

When Decatur County commissioners meet to finish their budget, they'll have a potential windfall of nearly \$113,000 from new oil production in the county to deal with.

If they do the right thing, they will reduce the burden of county government on taxpayers, and return most of this money to the people.

It'd be easy to spend this money. County government is expensive, especially when it grows relentlessly in terms of employees and equipment. New programs demand new employees, who require new equipment, who drive around and burn up expensive fuel.

Often the goal with growth is to get a grant or spend some "free" federal money. Other expenses come because someone claims that someday, there'll be a "federal mandate."

It's not that these things aren't good ideas. It's that the people who pay the bill aren't making any more than they did 15 or 20 years ago. Many, in real terms, are making less. Most years, farmers have been making a lot less.

But over that time, taxes on the average house in town have nearly doubled. Not all of that went to the county, to be sure. But the homeowner had to pay all of that.

Because of federal regulations, bills for city services have nearly doubled as well. People living on a fixed income face huge increases for basics: housing (via taxes), water, sewer, power and so on.

No one gives the average worker a raise to pay all these increases. But public workers continue to get raises, financed with tax money.

We are not saying that government isn't

worth paying for. Just that a lot of people can't afford the tab.

This year, the county has a clear choice. There's been a lot of oil drilling the last few years, a lot of new wells brought on line. The value of oil from existing wells has jumped with the international price. And the county taxes oil production based on its value. This combined to make the county's assessed valuation jump \$5 million this year, despite a drop in other valuations of \$1.5 million.

With this windfall, the commissioners can reduce the tax burden on people here, or they can keep taxes the same and increase spending. A spending increase is not a good idea. The oil bubble could burst, leaving the county holding the bag.

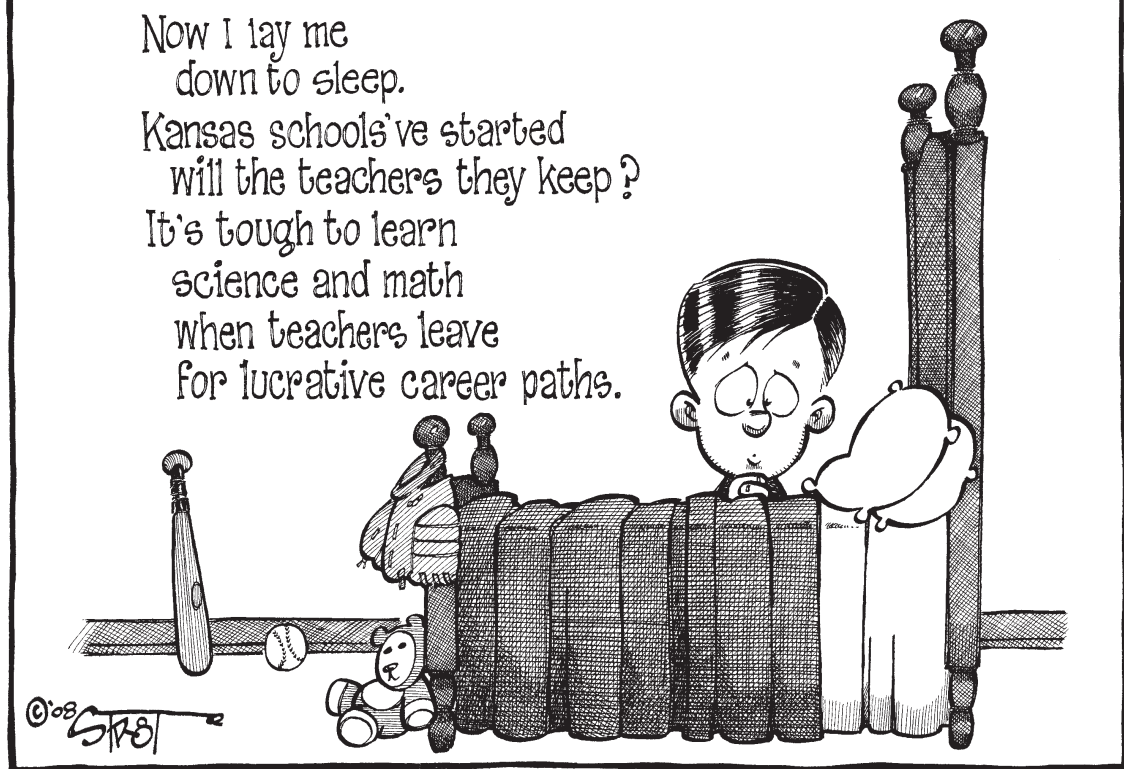
Well, you know where the bag would land. At the taxpayers' feet.

Or, the commissioners could pare spending and run the county as tightly as ever, and let the overall tax rate fall. Homeowners and hard-pressed businesspeople would get a break. Lower taxes might even make the county more attractive to business and people looking for a good place to retire.

We think we know what the right thing is. But don't take our word for it. Talk to your commissioners about it. Call them, or stop them on the street. Go to the budget hearing, which should be set soon. Express yourselves.

If you care about your taxes, this is the time to pay attention. Decatur County has a chance to change things. The commissioners ought to seize hold of it. — *Steve Haynes*

Now I lay me  
down to sleep.  
Kansas schools've started  
will the teachers they keep?  
It's tough to learn  
science and math  
when teachers leave  
for lucrative career paths.



## Cake recipe a real winner

The angel food cake took 12 egg whites, which is how the golden angel cake was born.

Rhonda said her mother was a thrifty farm wife with the usual barnyard fowl population. The family ate a lot of eggs, and Mom made a lot of cakes, including a nice angel food which required a dozen whites.

This left a dozen yolks, and it would have been a sin to throw out perfectly good food. So a second cake — the golden angel cake — always accompanied the angel food. The golden angel cake took its name from the yellow coloring brought on by the egg yolks and lemon flavoring.

Rhonda admitted she was never a big fan of the golden angel cake, not liking the lemon flavoring very much. But the cake was always a big hit at home, so when it came time for young Rhonda to make a cake for 4-H to take to the county fair, that's the one she chose. To her immense surprise, she got a purple ribbon and a trip to the state fair.

At state, she got another purple. The cake was a hit everywhere it went — except with one aunt, who said that when she tried the recipe, it flopped.

This information was conveyed to me in a whisper as we sat on the front row of the food auction at



## Open Season

By *Cynthia Haynes*  
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the fair.

The famous golden angel cake had won the grand champion prize and was being sold for more than I could afford to the very woman who invented the recipe.

*Note to self: never bid against a grandparent at any 4-H auction.*

Rhonda told me that her husband was going through some old recipes and came upon the golden angel cake just about the time their son needed to make something for 4-H to take to the fair.

Father and son put their heads together and decided that if the recipe was good for a visit to the state fair once, it was worth another try by another generation.

So while the family enjoyed an angel food cake — Rhonda's a lot like her mother — the golden angel cake was whipped up by the third generation. And, after winning the top prize, it's heading for the state fair again.

Rhonda and her mother were

good enough to share the recipe for this popular dessert, but I haven't had a chance to find an angel food cake recipe yet and it'll be a sin to waste those perfectly good egg whites.

Yep, I'm a lot like Rhonda and her mother.

### State Fair Golden Angel Cake

- 12 egg yolks
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups cake flour
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. lemon extract
- Beat egg yolks and sugar until light lemon color and fluffy. Sift flour and baking powder together three times. Add flour mixture, then add the boiling water a bit at a time while mixing. Add extract. Mix until the batter appears well combined. Push gently into an ungreased tube cake pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes.

## Coffee, chores keep her busy

I am probably typical of most stay-at-home wives.

Every morning, it's up early to get my husband out the door and off to work. Recently, there's been no decision about what to make Jim for breakfast. With tomatoes rapidly ripening on the vine, he is hooked on bacon-tomato sandwiches. It's one for breakfast and another one packed in his lunch box.

After multiple cups of coffee and my morning "fix" of home-improvement television shows, I have chores to do. Perhaps it's not typical, nowadays, to have calves and chickens to water and feed, but in our little town it makes sense. We get fresh eggs every day, and once a year, homegrown hamburger or a check from the sale barn.

Watering the garden and flowers occupies quite a chunk of my mornings, but I always seem to get distracted by pulling weeds. They are the bane of my life. No sooner do I get one bed cleared than another has become overgrown. Again.

The only good thing about weeds is that the chickens love 'em. Every day, they look forward to their fresh tossed salad when I pitch the weeds over their fence.

I have to force myself to do housework. Sometimes I win the battle and get the bathroom cleaned, beds made and dishes done. Sometimes a good book wins. I have always said I'm a good housecleaner but a lousy housekeeper. Some homemakers seem to effortlessly keep a tidy home. I'm not one of them. But the door is always open and company



## Out Back

By *Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts*  
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is welcome.

Don't misunderstand. I am almost always busy. Last week, I baked whole-wheat dinner rolls, cinnamon rolls and a bread braid; made wild-plum jam and jelly; and tried a new recipe for chicken enchilada casserole. This week looks about the same, with two boxes of peaches waiting to become jam, a big bag of tame plums will also become jam and/or jelly, plus fresh beets to be pickled.

The best thing about being home is having the time to plan and pre-

pare our evening meal. Jim has always wanted dinner served at 6 p.m., but until I quit working outside the home, he never got it. I was lucky to get home by 6. Not that Jim couldn't feed himself if he had to. Like my dad, if he can fry it, he can cook it.

But, that's not what either of us wanted. We wanted a regular meal time and a calm evening. We wanted a home life. Now, we have it. It's not perfect 'cause I'm still working on my time management skills. But I'm getting the hang of it.

## From the Bible

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments

of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

*Psalm 19:7-11*

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## Charity poker games planned

To the Editor:

It is time for us to start our charity poker tournaments once again. The Oberlin Mavericks plan fall games for charity at the American Legion Hall on Sept. 20, Oct. 18 and Nov. 22, 2008.

We will break in December and then run the drive through 2009, posting those dates when decided. I plan to run the games through the summer and winter months, most likely on the third Saturday of each month. Please contact me by e-mail or regular mail with any questions you may have or to be placed on our mailing list for upcoming events.

Call 475-2495, e-mail admin@ljmack.com or write Larry Mack, 212 N York Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749.

As before, all prize pools will be at 50 percent of collected donations for that month or game. The other half of collected donations will go directly to our charity drive, and no one in our organization receives any funds for their services.

## Letter to the Editor

As president, I must say that I have heard rumors that our organization had a "money man" and this so-called "money man" was Bert Cool. This could not be further from the truth. While Mr. Cool had a vast amount of friends and knowledge that helped our organization, he was in no way a "money man."

The Oberlin Mavericks was started by five people. It took a total cost of \$1,500 to start this operation, and this money came from two donations. Mr. Cool gave \$750 and I also donated \$750.

So, let's lay the rumors to rest. Our books are always open, and we hide nothing. I ask everyone to please let my dear friend Bert Cool rest and be free from rumors. He was a very generous and caring man, and a good friend of mine. Anyone with interest may contact me; anyone wanting to join our group may also

contact me.

While the American Legion Auxiliary is only interested in serving food for the events if there are 50 or more attending, we are planning to do our own sandwiches and chips for our games until further notice. Our plan is to start at 7:30 p.m. on each night so those who wish to eat before may do so. I ask that everyone support the Legion with all their beverage needs. After all, it is their building and its use is donated to us. Please support the American Legion bar.

Larry Mack  
President of Mavericks Inc.  
Oberlin

