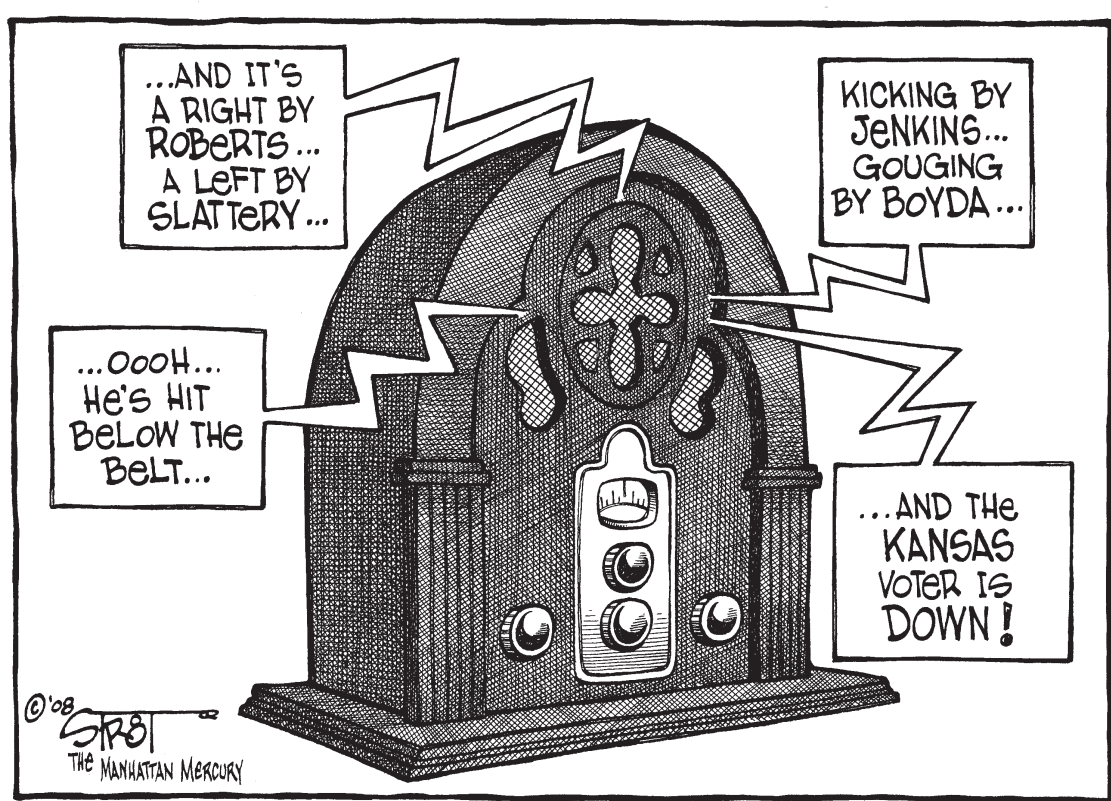


System may be faulty, but it's still best around

With the election just a few days away, this is a good time to think about what we have in this country, and why it's important to stay involved in the democratic process. It's fashionable at election time to criticize our government, our process, the state of our society. Candidates, whoever they are, whatever they believe, cry for change. That's how they get attention. Many times, they are right. Our system could stand a good overhaul. Our government has its faults. Our nation is far from perfect. For more than 230 years, we've been searching for the American ideal. We haven't reached that state of perfection yet. But this is a nation founded on principles and ideas that transcend their imperfect implementation. America is more than the sum of its flaws. It is, first of all, the best and brightest place to live and think and be free in the history of man. And while that's not a modest claim, it's not that hard to back up. Other nations may have better health care or better schools or a better bureaucracy. It's easy to find those that excel at one thing or another, and sometimes, these can be a shining example for us to measure up to. But no other nation cherishes quite so much the traditions of free speech, free thought, religious liberty, equality, diversity and economic freedom embodied in the words of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Mason and a few other forward thinkers of that era in the 18th century. The ideals that formed the American nation, enshrined in the Constitution and especially in the Bill of Rights, set us apart. Nowhere

else would all religions and sects be tolerated. Nowhere else would the idea of the "Melting Pot" mean that anyone who came could become "an American." It's true, we've seldom lived up to these ideals. The founders tolerated slavery, subjugated women and minorities, looked the other way at many sins. That does not taint their ideals. Over the centuries, we've welcomed immigrants and then treated them poorly, from the Irish and the Italians and Poles to the current crop of Hispanics. We gave slaves their freedom, then levied a poll tax and built separate and unequal schools. The unique thing about America is we keep reinventing our democracy. We change and grow, admit our mistakes and move on. We'll never reach perfection, but what nation has? Where, if you sought a better place, would you go? Where would it be possible to demand change — and get it — as it is here? And now, your country is calling you to help. Your vote is needed next week. The presidential race is important as any we've seen. In state and county elections, voters face decisions that will affect many lives for many years. If you choose not to vote, others will make your decisions for you. But that's not what America is about. We all have our duty. If you want change, or you don't, you have to go to the polls on Tuesday and mark your ballot. That's how each of us plays our part in this great tradition of striving for a more perfect American. It really works. See you at the polls. — *Steve Haynes*



Traffic comes with car trip



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

I spent the weekend driving across a good section of two states, and getting in more traffic than I normally see in a year. The two-day trek started out fairly easily, with a three-hour drive Friday morning to see my mother in Concordia. Mom was doing fine, and we had lunch and did a little shopping before I headed out about 3 p.m. for my next appointment in Lincoln, Neb. A couple of months previously, I had signed up to attend the Nebraska Press Association's Hall of Fame dinner. Steve and I are friends with one of the inductees, so I thought, it would be nice to go to the banquet in his honor. At the time I signed up, I was working under two misconceptions. The first was that Steve would be out of the country on a National Newspaper Association trip, and the second was that our oldest daughter would be in Topeka. She was to go to a meeting and hoped to visit with me, her brother in Lawrence and her grandmother in Concordia. Steve's trip fell through and so did my daughter's, but I had signed up for the dinner and didn't want to disappoint either my mother, my friends in Nebraska or my son, who was also expecting me. I had no problem getting to Lincoln. I stopped just outside of town at a gas station and changed from my jeans to a dress and applied my makeup in the car before following the directions I had to the Nebraska

Club on 13th street. Dinner was nice, but I needed to get down the road if I was to have lunch in Lawrence the next day. Besides, Lincoln was packed. The Huskers were at home, and every Nebraska fan from several states around was there — really. I ran into a couple on the street from Louisville, Ky., who were there for the game. I was lucky to get into town fairly early and get a spot in the parking garage. Now all I had to do is get out of town. The guard at the garage gave me directions. As I stammered right, left, left, left, uhh, he smiled and wrote them down: Turn right out of garage onto 12th. Go to 14th and take a left. Go to Q Street and take a left. Follow 9th, which turns into Highway 2, to 14th. Take a right at 14th-Highway 2. Go to Old Cheney, veer right onto Warwick Blvd. Take Warwick to Highway 77. Rather unbelievably, and with only one wrong turn, I made it. I was out of all that traffic in Lincoln and headed for Beatrice, Neb., where I spent the night.

The next morning, I followed Steve's directions to get to Lawrence. Luckily, I arrived after the game had started — yep, KU had a home game, too. Lacy and I had lunch, and I waited until the game had been over about an hour before leaving town. There was still a lot of traffic, but I figured most of it would disappear as the Turnpike turned south in a run for Wichita at Topeka. I was right. Most of the people were headed south or stopping in the capital city. Soon, though, I noticed a lot of people coming toward me on the other side of I-70. Oh no, I thought, I bet K-State had a home game. Right again. The traffic was horrific on the other side of the freeway until I passed Manhattan. Then it was bad on my side. I can't figure out how in one weekend I was able to get into not one but three game traffic patterns. I don't need a global positioning system. I can find my way, with a little help. I just need a slap up the side of the head next time I decide to go on a two-state road trip.

Goodbye to great leading man

Women under the age of 60 may not understand this, but the rest of us shed a little tear when we heard about the death of Paul Newman. He was one of the last of Hollywood's gorgeous leading men. His incredible baby blue eyes mesmerized women for decades. True or not, there is a story making its way through the internet that exemplifies the impact he had on women. Mr. Newman and his family spent a lot of time in a little New England town where they could be "regular folk." A female newcomer to town had stopped at the town's ice cream/bakery shop for a double-dip, chocolate ice cream cone. Seated at the counter with a doughnut and a cup of coffee was Paul Newman. She instantly recognized him, but didn't want to act star-struck. After all, she told herself, she was a happily married woman with three children. She nodded to him as she placed her order and took her change. She left the store, but when she got into her car she realized she had her change in her hand but she did not have her ice-cream cone. Going back into the store, she expected to see the clerk holding her cone. But, he did not have it. She looked around feeling very flustered.



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

Mr. Newman caught the woman's eye and said, "It's in your purse." We'll miss you, Paul. — ob — Bad weather last week kept Jim home from work several days. We had fun playing house and spending some extra time together. I have found an apple cake recipe Jim loves and have already made it twice. His injured finger (remember the nail gun) was still hurting, so we went to see a bone specialist one of those rainy days. New x-rays revealed the nail did, indeed, chip one side of the finger's joint. So, for now and forever, he will have a bone fragment and a sliver of cartilage "floating" around in there. Nothing to do but "grin and bear it." Still, we realize it could have been much worse. — ob — A friend of ours is going through some rough times and had to give up his rented home. We are trying to help and have been packing up his things. We worked late one night loading boxes and moving furniture. After dragging ourselves home, Jim said, "Carolyn, we aren't as young as they were when they moved this stuff in."



From the Bible

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.
Revelations 1:18

Summer's song lingers on



Along the Sappa
 By Steve Haynes
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

It was amazing Sunday, after a frosty night that finally nipped the squash leaves and tomato vines, to hear a couple of anemic cicadas trying to sing out at the lake. It may have been their last cry, but on the 26th of October? That's carrying the summer symphony almost too far. Still, you could hear a frog or two, some crickets and a few other bugs making noise. The day before, though, when the mercury shot up into the 70s, the remaining cicadas were in full voice. You could hear their song, rising and falling, occasionally stopping to rest, pretty much everywhere, in Oberlin, out in the country, even up in Nebraska. A week ago, when it hit 84, there were even more songsters, a cicada in nearly every bush. Maybe I'm just forgetting other years, but can you remember this much noise at the end of October? This is the stuff of summer, crickets and frogs and cicadas and other things that hum and chur and buzz. In the fall, they're mostly confined to the daytime. These are all cold-blooded creatures, and they don't much move at night when it's cold. But they're supposed to fade away with the long days and warm nights of August. Maybe it's global warming.

Maybe it's just what happens when a warm September follows a cool end to summer. Maybe it'll never happen again. But for two glorious months, the sounds of summer have held on, right through the World Series. Or almost right through the series. Who knows what the weather will be like by the end of the week. Those summer sounds conjure up images of hot, dusty days and warm, mellow nights of long ago. They're pleasant enough, especially compared to the thought of the long nights and frigid winds of December. I'm not much on winter, when there are no bugs or amphibians around to live up the hours. I don't like cold and I don't like dark. And I'd rather not think about the months to come. Listening to those cicadas Saturday was like hanging onto summer. You had to know it wouldn't last, but pleasant none the less. By this weekend, you could tell the little guys were none too peppy. The few cicadas that dared to sound were giving mostly a single note. I could only pick out a couple of frogs, a few crickets. Some slow grasshoppers. And the forecast was for another frost. The rest of the nature we ran across was strictly fall stuff — a flock of hen pheasants, a whitetail doe startled to see us on her trail. Still, it's supposed to be warmer by the end of the week. Maybe a few noisemakers will survive. I can dream, can't I? That would allow us to enjoy a few more days of summer sounds. It'd be an illusion, I'm sure. If it is global warming, then this must be one of the benefits, one for which we surely will pay. Winter is still coming; it's still going to be cold. There'll be no sitting out on the deck in the evening this week. And by next week, it'll be sundown at 5:30. But for now, I'm hanging on as long as I can.

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Letter to the Editor

Courtesy is always in style To the Editor: Businesses do good—but could do better — if the manager and his associates were to show more respect and courtesy. It is always nice to hear the help tell their customer "thank you" and asks, as a courtesy, if there is anything else they might need. This brings back memories of many years ago, while still a high school student, I worked at the A.L. Duckwall's store. The manager was Mr. Golden. He told us girls loud and clear—"The customer is always right, even though you know them to be wrong!" This is a good philosophy, as you will have better sales in the long run. Elsie Wolters Oberlin

Write

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