

## Guantanamo detention will be difficult to close

The new administration may find closing the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, difficult, even with the best of intentions.

For one thing, no one wants most of the prisoners still on the island. It's not widely realized that the Bush administration already has released nearly two-thirds of the 800-some prisoners held at the Navy base over the last eight years.

Some of those determined to be more or less innocent were simply sent home, but that won't work for many.

No one wants the real bad guys, like the militants now on trial this week who not only admit their complicity with the 2001 attacks and the bombing of the USS Cole, but say they want Uncle Sam to provide a martyr's death for them.

Even if we wanted to release these guys, who'd take them?

Then there are more than a few prisoners who can't go home because their own countries won't take them back. Others can't be sent home because they'd likely face death, torture or worse.

This applies to a dozen or so Chinese Muslim militants captured in Afghanistan. They have asked to come to the U.S. for political asylum, but for diplomatic reasons the U.S. government is reluctant to do that. It would upset relations with the communist government.

Sending them home is likewise unacceptable. Their government might well put them on trial as traitors. Their lawyers say they have

no future there.

What will happen to them, no one knows. As members of an oppressed minority who admit having trained to take terrorist action at home, they're kind of a hot commodity. They claim only friendship for America and Americans, but it's hard to see even the new administration allowing them to come here.

Of the 275 remaining prisoners, many others will have trouble finding a place to rest. That's why many of them remain on the island.

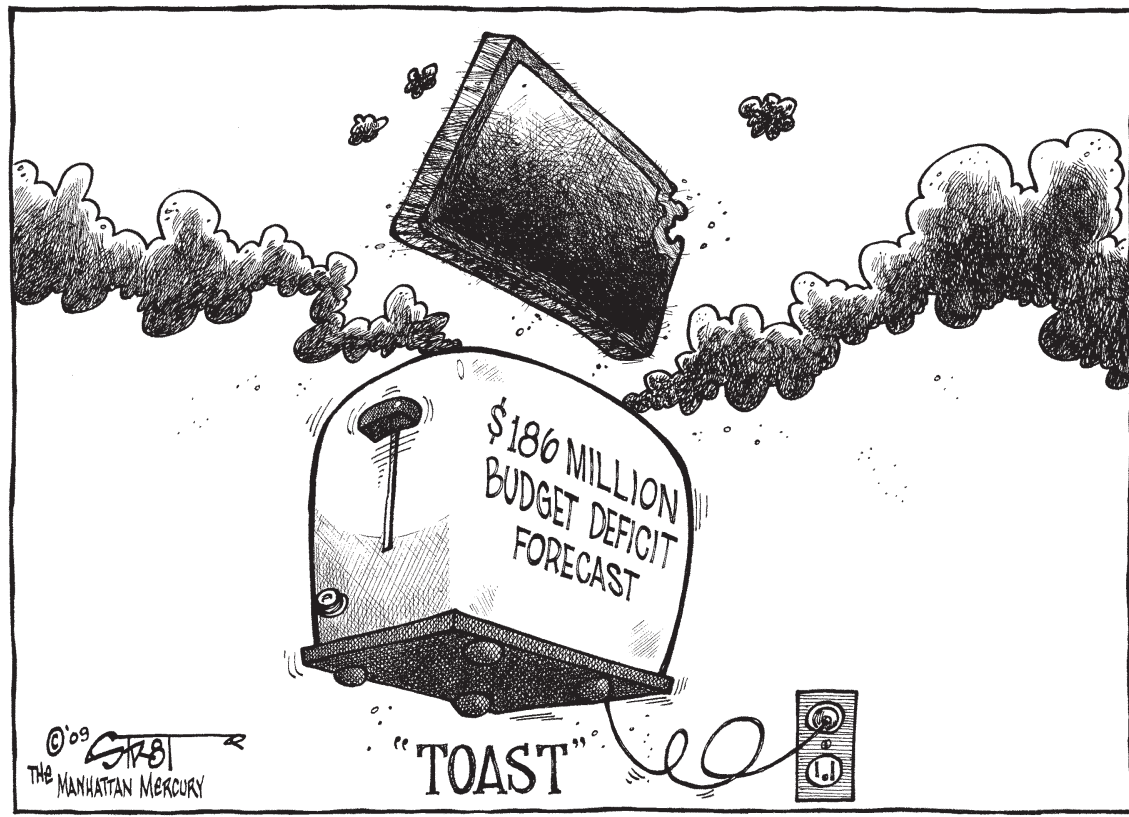
And if the administration has any thoughts about bringing them to the mainland, either for trial or to hold them after conviction, no one here wants them either. Both Kansas senators promised to fight any attempt to build a prison for them at Leavenworth, for instance. Economic development be damned.

This week, Sen. Sam Brownback introduced a bill to require the administration to get permission from Congress before they move any prisoners anywhere in the U.S. It's likely that no state will want them, since they represent a potential target for al-Qaida or other terrorists.

We think Guantanamo Bay has outlived its usefulness and should be closed. It represents a symbol of ill treatment and playing fast and loose with human rights this country would be best to put behind it.

But solutions will be hard to come by. The administration may find that its ambitious one-year timeline is rather optimistic.

— Steve Haynes



## When America hit the road

"I remember my parents taking two vacations when I was young," Mae said. "We all went on vacation whether we needed it or not. Both times it was to California to visit relatives."

Oh, yes. We went to Arkansas to see Mom's family. It was a 12-hour drive and we went straight through, starting early in the morning and driving until we got there.

"Yep," she agreed. "My parents really didn't believe in spending any extra money on motels and such."

"Well, once we took my grandmother. There were my parents, four of us kids and grandmother in the station wagon. That year we stopped at a motor court. It was awful."

Trips back then were a real adventure. With the dawn of the Interstate, America took to the road. Where there had previously been two-lane tracks across the country, now there were paved two- and four-lane roads ready to take families anywhere their Chrysler, Dodge, Plymouth or Ford would go.

The ads of the day showed a carefree father driving with wife in the front and two well-dressed, perfectly behaved children in the rear of the family convertible.

Our parents bought station wagons and we took off for New York, California, Florida and everywhere



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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in between.

Rich people could afford to stay at motels. Our fathers were the core of the American working man — hers was a farmer, mine was a fireman and then worked for the electric company. We went by car as fast as the roads and the law would allow, with Dad driving most of the way.

And to be honest, the motels weren't exactly up to the standards of Mr. Hilton or even Mr. 6. They had tiny little rooms with a double bed. They were either too hot or too cold and there was little or no hot water in the bathroom, which contained a sink, toilet and bathtub, all a little bit the worse for wear.

Life on the road in the '60s and '70s wasn't exactly fancy.

But, that didn't keep us home. After all, we were going on vacation whether we needed it or not.

Probably, it was worth it. We both remembered playing with cousins we almost never got to see

and driving our parents half crazy as we whined for bathroom breaks and spilled food and drink all over the upholstery.

I remember taking my children back to see their grandparents one year when we lived in Colorado. We stopped at one of those motor courts in eastern Colorado. It seemed fine when we stopped at 10 p.m., but the next day, we discovered that the manager had sprayed for bugs that day. We found them all dying on the carpet in the morning. Let's just say we never stopped there again. In fact, I think we drove straight through from then on.

Maybe our parents knew more than we gave them credit for while we were sitting in the back seat seeing how much we could annoy each other, and them.

"Mom, she looked at me."  
Ah yes, I remember it well, from both front and back seats.

## Navigator corrects your turn

I sent Cynthia off to Colorado Springs alone the other day. I made her take the Garmin global positioning navigation thingy the girls sent.

They know how easily she gets lost. They've been threatening to give her one for a couple of years, and this Christmas, it came in the mail.

Technically, they gave the Garmin to both of us. That's because they knew somebody had to play with it and figure out how to make it work. Cynthia and electronics are not exactly bosom buddies.

To prepare for this day, I've been taking the Garmin to work all month. I'd punch in the address of whatever office I was going to, then tell the Garmin to go there. It'd respond with an accurate estimate of my arrival time.

Of course, I could drive to most of these places in the dark with the lights off, but that's not the point. I figured it was best to try finding places you knew how to get to before going someplace where you could get lost.

I quickly figured out what the various maps, buttons and the like do. I set waypoints and filed addresses. I tried to fool the Garmin by taking wrong turns. It just tells you to go around the block.

In that respect, the Garmin navigates a lot like Cynthia. She's always missing her turns and going around the block.

The Garmin can be pretty persistent when it thinks you're ignoring



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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it. First thing I did was turn off the annoying female voice that tells you when to turn. Not that I'm not used to ignoring instructions from a woman, but this one doesn't know when to give up.

For the most part, the little bugger picked direct, fast routes to wherever I wanted to go. A couple of times, I noticed that you can fool it. Sometimes it doesn't recognize locations in the middle of a block, and tries to place you on the nearest street. Other days, it'll plant the flag for a target squarely in the middle of a block and dare you to go there.

The mapping software is awesome. The database has nearly all the streets and roads in and around area towns, and for the most part it's accurate. It shows highways and county roads, and knows the speed limit by the mile on most state highways and major city streets. These are up to date; it shows a little speed-limit sign in the corner of the screen, and the limit will change as you pass a sign with a higher or lower speed.

Before Cynthia left home, we programmed in the address of her hotel in the Springs. It figured a

route around the northern fringe of town down to I-25 that I'd have trouble navigating with a map.

Cynthia said the only flaw in the route was a junction where the Garmin said to go left, but the intersection had been replaced with an interchange and a right-hand exit. Even Garmin can't keep up with the road crews, it appears.

Other than that, she said, it gave her all the necessary turns. Of course, she missed most of them in the city. She said by the time she realized she was actually at the turn, it would be too late to get into the left turn bay.

But, she added brightly, the Garmin told her exactly when she'd missed a turn — and how to go around the block.

### From the Bible

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.  
Psalm 100:5

## Dogs wish for the lives of cats

The cats and I have retreated to the upstairs. It's the warmest place in the house.

Since Monday is wash day, and I have stripped the sheets off our bed, the blankets are piled on the floor. The youngest of the three cats is buried in the blankets; the oldest keeps trying to jump on my lap; and the Alpha male found a sunny spot in the lounge for a nap. Dogs have nothing on the lives our cats lead. Eat, sleep and act indignant.

— ob —

Mother Nature gave us a harsh reminder that she is still in charge. Last week there were two days of shirt sleeve weather followed by a wintry blast that had us grabbing for mittens, mufflers and hot chocolate.

I've been helping Jim at the construction site. I am the unskilled laborer hired to hang the insulation and do clean-up. The house is progressing nicely, but there is



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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no heat other than a space heater. That means the inside is sometimes colder than the outside. Friday morning the wind chill was about nine degrees. Jim asked me if I wanted to go to work that day.

"Do I have a choice?" was my only question.

"No, you don't have to," he said.

Without hesitation, I said, "Well, then, I don't want to."

I couldn't believe it was that easy. I wonder if that tactic will work with laundry and meal prep. If I don't want to - I don't have to.

Probably not.

— ob —

We've had a week under the new president's administration and the world hasn't come to an end. Of course, I'm not an embryo whose mother might be considering abortion.

He has kept his campaign promises. And, that's what worries me. Now, whether you support abortion or not, your tax dollar will be helping to fund abortions not only in the country, but around the world.

That's one promise I wish he would have broken.

## Gateway theater under utilized?

To the Editor:

As I have brought this to the attention of several members of the city board, in hopes for an answer, and received no feedback, I truly hope this letter might do the "trick."

I would like to say first, it's awesome to see this town moving forward and achieving and going forth with something with the interests of the "younger" crowd in mind, in regards to the theater and the bowling alley, as well as the senior center amongst it all.

### Letter to the Editor

My question, though with this plan, considering the economy and the major expense for the inevitable repairs on the Gateway, why is the theater at the Gateway not being considered as the community theater. It is a very, very nice theater with good sound, clarity and picture. The seats are very comfortable and

the theater is very accommodating. I do not know how many times per month it might be used, nor do I know the capacity, but I would think it is spacious enough for what our community would demand.

Just a thought.

M. Uehlin  
Oberlin

### Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of

these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos un-

less you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in *The Herald* are available, first come, first served.

### Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

Mail letters to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749, or by e-mail to oberlinherald@nwkansas.com.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

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