

## World must take action against crimes of pirates

The rescue Sunday of Capt. Richard Phillips from the hands of Somali pirates is but a small step toward a solution to the problem plaguing ocean transport off Arabia and the Horn of Africa.

Perhaps the pirate kingpins will think twice before sending their minions out to capture another American-flag transport, but it's not likely.

Already this year, more than 50 pirate attacks have been reported in the Indian Ocean. While last year, most attacks occurred close to shore, lately pirates have been reaching out hundreds of miles to find victims.

No one is immune. Pirates have taken yachts and sailboats, tankers and freighters registered around the world. This time, they went too far.

Faced with a U.S. Navy warship, and more on the way, they could not escape with their hostage. Nor could their masters rescue them.

Navy Seals took out three of the four pirates on a lifeboat bobbing in the sea — the fourth was in custody — and rescued Capt. Phillips.

While that was cause for celebration here and around the world, the sobering truth is that more than 200 people remain prisoner and hostage to Somali pirates.

The pirates, increasingly bold, have been using larger "mother ships" to get out farther from shore, expanding the area that world navies have to patrol against them. That makes the task of stopping these attacks almost impossible.

Last week, the pirates tried to send captured ships to the aid of their brothers caught in

the lifeboat. The attempt failed, but it was daring.

The solution will be the same that one of the nation's first naval heroes, Commodore Stephen Decatur, applied to the Barbary Pirates in 1815.

Today's pirate gangs are run by wealthy crime lords ashore in Somalia. Shooting or capturing their henchmen will not be enough. The world will have to take direct action against the bosses.

Negotiations will be a waste of time and effort. Force, they will understand.

All civilized nations should join together to pursue this end. We should sink the pirate ships, shoot or capture the crews and, if it comes to that, bomb or capture the leaders' headquarters.

An overwhelming show of force will be required. A huge area of the sea is at stake, and years of thin patrols by world navies have proven ineffective. Every trading nation — American, European, Asian or African, Christian or Muslim, has a stake in this battle.

These pirates are criminals, not warriors. They fight for booty, not religion.

Now that we know we are not immune, the United States will need to get involved. Command and coordination should be joint, and effective.

Nothing has changed in 200 years. Piracy cannot be allowed to interfere with maritime traffic, on which the world's economy depends. No group of criminals should be allowed to hold the world hostage.

Sunday was a good start. It's time to get this battle going.

— Steve Haynes



## Mega Budget decisions hard

The FY 2010 Mega Budget is one of the most difficult the state has had to face in decades. Difficult decisions must be made when state revenues drop as drastically as they have this year.

This is a compromise that accepts many of the governor's recommended cuts. There are spending cuts in this bill that no legislator likes, but we must do the responsible thing and reduce state spending.

According to the Legislative Research Department, March revenues are about \$57 million below projections. There is great concern among many legislators that the cuts we have made will not be enough to fix the current revenue shortfall and deeper cuts will have to be made in the Omnibus Budget Bill.

### Spending Levels

The FY 2010 State General Fund budget totals \$5.76 billion, a decrease of 6.8 percent below the revised FY 2009 budget.

The FY 2010 All Funds budget totals \$13 billion, a decrease of 3.8 percent below the revised FY 2009 budget.

### Mega Budget Bill Summary

This bill includes and uses all federal stimulus funding for Medicaid, public education and higher education. Here are some highlights:

- Public schools remain a top priority for the Legislature: School took the lowest percentage reduction of all state General Fund programs.
- Base state aid per pupil in FY 2010 is \$4,367 compared to \$4,374 in FY 2008.
- \$71 million in additional Title 1 money will put at least five school districts over their previous funding levels for the 2008-2009 school year.
- Higher education increases \$10.2 million with federal stimulus money included.
- A 1 percent base salary increases and longevity bonus payments to state employees, to be paid by agencies through existing funds.
- "Below-market" pay increase



### Letter from Topeka

By Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer  
ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov

for classified state employees fully funded at \$8.5 million.

- Transfers \$5 million to the Special City and County Highway Fund for repair of local roads and bridges. This means jobs for local economies.

- Second-half of FY 2009 "slider" payment still will be made on June 1. Funding for the FY 2010 Business and Machinery Tax Slider will be reconsidered during the Omnibus debate.

- Additional \$4 million to the Home and Community Based Services Physically Disabled waiver.

- \$1.2 million to from a KEY fund transfer to the General Fund to increase the State Children's Health Insurance Program qualifier to 250 percent above federal poverty guidelines.

- Additional \$328,465 from a KEY fund transfer to the General Fund for primary care/safety net clinics.

- Additional \$355,000 from the General Fund for Pregnancy Maintenance Initiative.

- Makes all federal money for family planning services subject to a competitive grant process.

- Agencies will decide how reductions to their budgets will be implemented. They are in the best position to decide what is best for the Kansans they serve.

- **Omnibus Budget Challenges** Legislative researchers estimate the state faces a nearly \$800 million budget shortfall below the November Consensus Revenue Estimates.

We will receive an update on the state's financial picture in mid-April. We expect the state's finances

to worsen and the projected shortfall to grow. This will govern how the Legislature proceeds with the Omnibus Budget Bill.

We hope to be able to maintain the proposed level for public schools, but cuts may be necessary based on the April revenue estimates.

By trying to hold public school harmless, other state agencies and programs must carry more of the burden and absorb deeper cuts. While most must cut their budgets 6 percent to 9 percent, some agencies will be required to reduce their spending 10-20 percent.

Some have suggested tax increases are the answer to the state's tight budget. Now is not the time to raise taxes on Kansans and businesses struggling to make ends meet.

Instead of raising taxes, the state should set budget priorities — funding necessary programs and services and delaying or eliminating others. Agencies are reviewing what they do. Eliminating ineffective or outdated programs and services is a priority.

The Legislature will be in recess until April 29, when we return for the final "wrap up" session.

*Please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached when the Legislature is in session by writing to Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Street, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan., 66612 or call (785) 296-7399. My e-mail address is ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov. I will be working from home during the break. Please let me know if you would like to be on my mailing list.*

## Tea Parties protest borrowing

To the Editor:

Tea Parties are being held all over America to protest the huge increase in borrowing from China and taxing the American taxpayer this year and for generations to come.

Also, Glen Beck is hosting a tea party at the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas.

Several thousand truckers are descending on Washington D.C. on April 15 too.

One person may not make a difference, but a large group may be heard — it is worth a try!

### Letters to the Editor

Don't despair if the media doesn't cover it — it's for obvious reasons.

If you have concerns you wish to express, send a tea-bag wrapper (without the tea, because they may think it's anthrax), with an attached note expressing your concerns to the following address: The White House and Congress, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., 20500.

Mail as soon as possible so the "tea bags" will reach the White House and Congress within a week. Your support for democracy and freedom as we know it today is on the line.

A concerned American and grandparent.

Sharon Addleman,  
Oberlin

## We want our children to be safe

To the Editor:

We all want children to be safe and have healthy childhood experiences. However, an increasing number of children are exposed to intensive stress-like child abuse and neglect that can be devastating to child development and have lifelong consequences.

Programs and strategies like home visiting, parent education,

mental health services, adequate availability of affordable daycare and substance abuse treatment all aid in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

As our nation recognizes April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, our hope is to change the way our state thinks about prevention — focusing on community activities and public policies that prioritize

prevention right from the start. One simple, outward sign is to wear a blue ribbon. You can get your free ribbon, as well as learn more about prevention efforts by visiting the Oberlin City Library or calling Smart Start Northwest Kansas, (785) 465-9103.

Maureen Ostmeyer, director  
Smart Start Northwest Kansas  
Colby

## Honor Roll

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

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

E-mail: oberlin.herald@nwkansas.com

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## Rain does not dampen Easter

The little country church where Jim and I worship has always had a sunrise service on Easter morning.

It used to be held in a pasture that featured a natural stone grotto which made a perfect amphitheater. The sun would come up, illuminating a lone cross on the hill. It was an impressive sight.

One morning, a meadowlark perched on the crossbar. At precisely the right moment, it burst into its own song as the congregation sang "He Lives."

This year the rain forced us indoors, but the service was no less meaningful. Thirty brave souls traversed the muddy roads to form a sizable congregation. We sang "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Up From the Grave He Arose." Afterwards, we shared breakfast and fellowship. One thing is for sure. Country people never complain about rain, even on Easter morning.

-ob-

A job turned up last week for son James. Even though I'm happy he found work, I'm a little sad. Work on the house has taken on a much slower pace.

I do what I can during the day. James and his dad still work some at night, but it's nothing like it was. They both come home so tired. I hate to see them force themselves back to work.

They both say they don't mind but, I know it's hard. It will all get done as long as they don't weaken. Perhaps now is not the right time to mention that once the house is done, we'll start to landscape.

Last week, Jim and his friend Wayne drove to the farthest western reaches of Kansas to the farm of one



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
quality-pro@webtv.net

of Wayne's relatives. Their mission: tow home a vehicle to "cannibalize" for parts for Wayne's pickup, which is dead in the water. Wayne brought back more than he bargained for, a puppy whose mother is a border collie/blue heeler mix and the father was "from a good neighborhood."

No matter her lineage, she's a cutie. The first thing she did on arriving at her new home was stick her head through the center of a wheel. It went in OK, but wouldn't come back out. Jim and Wayne had to soap her up with detergent to slip her back out the hole. She raised an

objection but, it was the only thing that would work.

Now, Wayne is searching for the appropriate name. She had some prominent spots, so I suggested "Dorothy." He could call her "Dot-tie", for short. My friend Barbara put forth "Darlin'" and "Purty," a transliteration of "Pretty".

So far, Wayne hasn't put his stamp of approval on any of our suggestions. He's holding out for a name that reflects her first experience at his house. Something like, "Holy Moly"?

### From the Bible

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the tip to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Now when the centurion, and

they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the Son of God.

Matthew 27:50-54

