

Don't let government get into religion business

Two Florida school administrators face possible jail time for a prayer over lunch at a boosters meeting held to dedicate a new fieldhouse.

While religious-right groups claim the administrators, Principal Frank Lay of Pace High School and Athletic Director Robert Freeman, could be jailed for praying, that's not exactly the case.

The men face contempt-of-court citations for breaking a judge's order to avoid pushing religion at school. The American Civil Liberties Union, which filed the original suit asking for the order, says it did not ask for the contempt charges and did not suggest that anyone go to jail. It's the judge who's angry.

The civil liberties group, which has at times defended everyone from Communists protestors to neo-Nazis, says it just wants to keep religion out of schools.

"The ACLU is trying to keep us from praying again," someone will say. "Aren't we a Christian nation? Weren't the Founding Fathers all Christians?"

But the union would be as apt to defend people's right to pray as it is to stick up for individual children's rights not to be forced to pray.

And, no, we are not a Christian nation. By law, under the Constitution, we are a secular democracy. No law makes us a Christian nation in the sense that England is officially Christian or Iran officially Muslim.

It's true that many groups came to the New World so they could practice religion the way they wanted to. It's also true that most of these same groups had no plan to let anyone else practice religion the way they wanted to.

While much of New England was settled by rather severe Protestant groups, the forerunners of our Congregationalists, the south was settled by orthodox Church of England followers, Anglicans with a mix of Protestant and Catholic

leanings. The free-thinking brothers Wesley had to flee colonial Savannah, Ga., amid legal troubles and the threat of jail.

Maryland was founded as a haven for Catholic colonists, who at times were unwelcome elsewhere—Georgia included. But few colonial cities were exclusively Christian. Jews were represented in America from the first days.

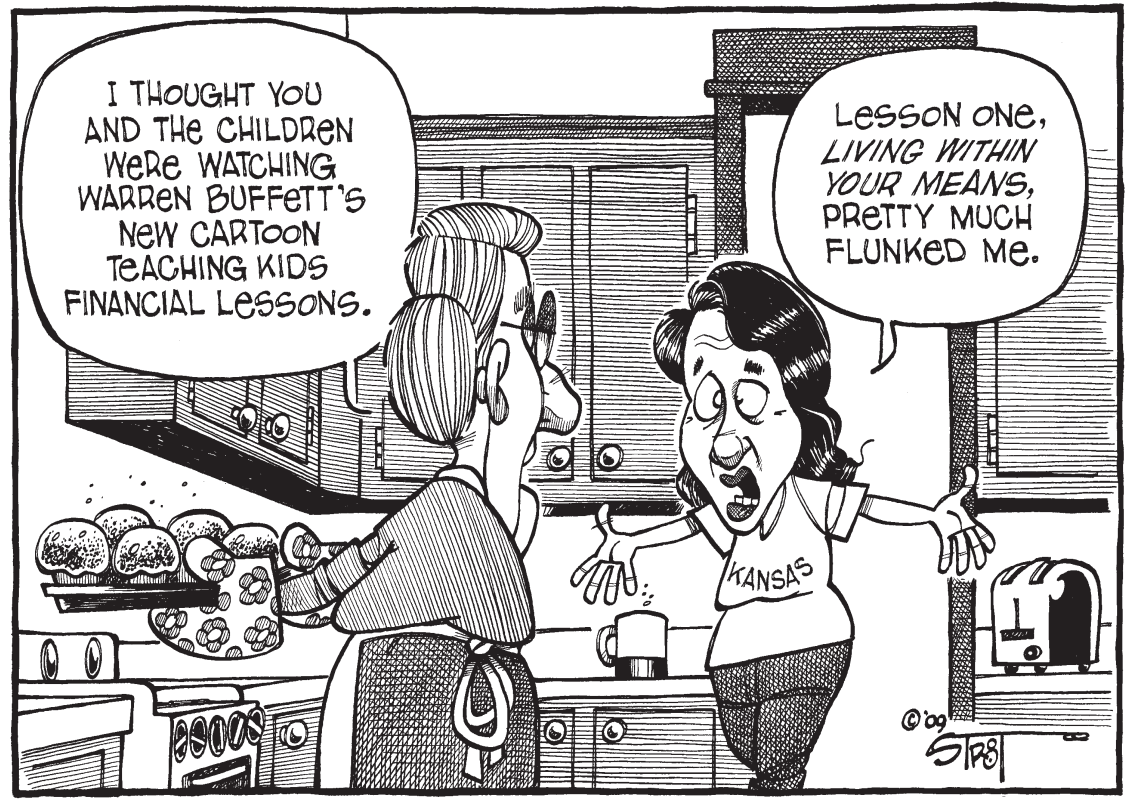
The Founding Fathers, led by Jefferson and Madison and a few others, saw the need to guarantee our rights, something the Constitution itself was mostly silent on. They recognized the most basic of our freedoms—religion, free speech and the press, assembly and political speech in the efficiently written First Amendment. The First not only guarantees our right to pray, but forbids the government from "respecting any establishment of religion."

It's this provision Santa Rosa County school officials were accused of violating when a federal judge issued an order forbidding them to foster prayer in school. It's this judge the two must answer to.

Anyone who's actually gotten involved in school prayer disputes knows the divisions of colonial times have not left us. Baptists complain if Mormons are allowed to talk in school, and Catholic parents can be suspicious of Baptist theater groups. And Muslim and Jewish children often are left to fend for themselves.

The Fathers wisely put all that aside, banning organized religion from not just schools, but all public affairs. They did this for the protection of our religious rights, all of us, and not to harm or belittle religion.

We should thank them for their courage and foresight, not complain that we can't mount the 10 Commandments in school. For a government that can compel one prayer can just as easily ban the next. — *Steve Haynes*



Violence affects everyone

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett is out of the hospital after learning the hard way what any police officer can tell you — the most dangerous place in America is between a feuding couple.

The mayor heard a woman cry as he was leaving the Wisconsin State Fair the other day and went to investigate, then began to call 911 on his cell phone. For his trouble, he got a thrashing with a metal pipe that put him in the hospital.

Anthony Peters, 20, was arrested Sunday in the attack. Police say he was drunk and wanted to see his 1-year-old daughter. At that, the mayor may have been lucky; the man reportedly had threatened to shoot anyone who got in his way.

Domestics, as the cops call them, happen day and night, in every town, in every branch of the American culture. They know no boundaries: religion, income, education, job status. Whenever and wherever people join together, some of them will fight.

Tough times tend to create more problems for couples, though, so the recession may be bringing out more violence.

Sometimes one partner in a relationship dominates and abuses the other. Often, but now always, it's the man. Sometimes, it's the woman.



Along the Sappa

By *Steve Haynes*
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Sometimes, both.

Often, the victim will refuse to testify or press charges against a mate who's been hauled off by the police. Sometimes that's just a con; sometimes it's a weird kind of love. Or a little of both.

And sometimes, things go on so long that they get out of hand. Someone is seriously hurt, or killed.

It happens here. We could name names. It happens everywhere.

Often, society averts its eyes. Many cases of domestic abuse go unreported, even when witnesses could have done something. Even after the police have been called.

Why? Society used to just condone "wife abuse." It was considered some sort of right for a married person to strike his or her spouse. Nobody else's business.

Sometimes, society feels it's none of anyone else's business. Until a woman is murdered, an innocent

child dies, or a police officer answering a call for help is shot.

Then we all ask why nobody did anything.

Because we didn't care? Because it was "none of our business."

Domestic cases often go unreported in the press. Many, most perhaps, go unreported to law enforcement. Even of those that are reported, few actually go to court.

There are people out there getting away with rape, assault, even murder.

None of our business? I think not.

No problem can be solved by ignoring it. Society should shine the light of day on abusers. They should face, not just arrest, but public scorn, if guilty. Their crimes should never be a secret.

We — all of us — pay the price for domestic abuse. Isn't it about time we demanded an end to senseless violence?

Corn is looking mighty sweet

Who knew dryland corn could look so good?

The old saying about "corn as high as an elephant's eye" is true this year. With all the rain we've had, every field looks like it has been irrigated.

Sweet corn is still our all-time favorite, but Jim and I both remember eating field corn when we were kids. He came home with a sack of a dozen ears of field corn and we're going to try it.

I'm assuming cooking methods are the same.

Some cooks believe you should put the ears in a kettle of cold water and bring to a boil. Personally, I prefer putting the ears into boiling water and bringing back to a boil. Both methods, however, say to boil for 12 minutes.

Twelve, schmelve....I try to get close. Haven't had a bad batch yet.

— ob —
Hot on the heels of roasting-ear season is peach season. Jim stopped at the grocery and picked up a sack of fresh peaches. A few ended up with sugar and cream, but the rest went into my fresh peach pie. It's a recipe from my former mother-in-law and it always gets rave reviews.

A simple glaze is made with sugar, water and cornstarch. After it thickens, three tablespoons of orange gelatin is added. Don't use



Out Back

By *Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts*
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peach gelatin — it's too "peachy." The orange brings out the flavor. Pour into a baked crust, chill, top with whipped cream and enjoy.

The pie tasted great, but it wasn't much in the looks department. I have baked hundreds of pie shells and never had a flop. This time, however, I totally forgot to pierce the crust before baking, and you know what happened. The bottom bubbled up and the sides fell down. It was about halfway done baking when I discovered my error. I pulled it out of the oven and tried to re-position the collapsed sides and flatten the puffy bottom. It wasn't great, but it worked. Jim and son James didn't seem to notice. They polished it off in two meals and a couple of late-night snacks.

— ob —
Last week I commented about not remembering my mother wearing overalls. I remember her in little print house dresses with an apron.

She always chastised me for not wearing an apron. She probably

had dozens of aprons: some fancy for serving cake at weddings, some nice ones for when it was her turn to have club and then the everyday ones she wore around the house. Those were the ones that carried hot pots from the stove, eggs to the house and "shooed" flies out of the kitchen.

From the Bible

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. *Deuteronomy 22:1-2*

Backing accident spoils day

It started out as such a nice day, too.

I had it all planned. I would have my coffee, take the dog to the vet for her annual checkup and shots, pick produce, dry the clothes, hang the shirts, get dressed and go to work at the pharmacy. A perfect Saturday morning.

Well, I got the coffee and I got the dog to the vet.

But, backing out of the parking lot my rear bumper came into contact with the side of a young man's car as he was headed to work at the vet's.

I never saw him until I stepped out of the truck to see what the heck I had hit.

The truck I was driving had a scrape on its bumper. His side panel on the passenger's side was pushed in and a tire rim trim was bent.

I felt terrible. He looked worse. It's an awful thing to be a young 20-something and have your car crunched.

I had to shake my head in disbelief. I had become a statistic. That wreck was the most common type of accident in Oberlin — some old lady backs into something.

Dang, I hate to do anything that



Open Season

By *Cynthia Haynes*
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common. But, there it is.

The sad thing is it was my second backing accident in two weeks.

The first wasn't so severe and I didn't have to wait for the sheriff's office to show up to take a report nor did I lose much time. However, my husband was not pleased.

We had picked all of our first batch of sweet corn and he had pulled all the stalks. I dutifully put them into three bundles ready to take to the office.

I loaded the bundles into the truck but they were so long they stuck out the back so I left the back end up, got in the truck and started to back out of the garage.

Did you know that with the back end up the truck won't clear the door?

I didn't but I found out really

quickly.

The truck suffered no injury at all but I broke some plastic trim on the edge of the raised garage door and raised my husband's blood pressure.

I dutifully put the back end of the truck down as far as it would go, carefully backed out and took my three stacks of stalks to the office for transport to hungry horses in St. Francis.

I got into more trouble there because I left dirt all over the floor in the back room and the driver is allergic to corn.

Next time, I'll sack the stalks and make Steve take them to the office.

Maybe I should make him take HIS dog to the vet, too.

Writer shares thoughts on sports

To the Editor:

This is just my thoughts on the Michael Vick and Pete Rose controversies that are making headlines in the news.

First Michael Vick — this is a young man who had his whole life in front of him and chose to give it up to enter into a business that is both cruel and illegal — raising dogs for fighting. He chose to be associated with people of ill repute and sanction the needless violence that causes the death and mutilation of dogs for the sport and profit of a barbaric industry. He chose to help others and to participate himself in the torture and murder of dogs that did not perform well enough. He allowed this crime to be carried out on his own property.

Now he is out of prison and trying to get back in the NFL so he can make the kind of money that many teams say he is worth. To think that NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell is actually going to allow this is going against everything that the courts sent him to prison for.

Some comments I have read say he has been punished enough. I

Letters to the Editor

personally don't believe this. He should not be allowed to return to the NFL ever. He lost that right when he killed dogs with his bare hands, and when he would bind female dogs in "rape cages" if they were not submissive to the males. Simply put, Michael Vick should not be allowed to enter the NFL for the rest of his life.

Now for Pete Rose. Mr. Rose has suffered long enough for his gambling convictions. He should be reinstated by Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig so he can reclaim his rightful place in baseball history as the greatest hitter to ever play the game.

Mr. Rose should be voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, as it is his due.

Pete Rose did no physical harm to anyone. His only harm was to himself and his name. He was the epitome of a baseball player who I had the pleasure to watch.

No one has played with that much

desire or tenacity since Ty Cobb. Mr. Rose was a full time player — not some Johnny-come-lately who hung on for a few seasons. He played with the desire and love of a sport that is considered "America's Game."

Now is the time to reinstate him so he can take the place in the Hall of Fame that he has earned.

John Stanley, Oberlin

Fair was great

To the Editor:

Hats off to the Decatur County Amusement Authority and the Fair Board for a job well done!

The hours spent repairing and painting everything created a great place to be proud of. And thank you to the many who volunteered their time to work night after night on some ride or in some game booth! We can't thank all of you enough for the time you so unselfishly gave.

Cheryl Metcalf, Oberlin

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

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Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers
Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcatur, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$38 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$42 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$48 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in U.S. dollars only) extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

Nor'West Newspapers

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