

Libyan terrorist release raises anger and anguish

The release of a Libyan terrorist convicted of downing Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, killing all 259 people on board and 11 on the ground, raised a groundswell of anger and anguish around the world.

Well it should. Families of the Lockerbie victims, American officials who prosecuted the case and put Abdelbeset Ali Mohamed al Megrahi behind bars, the British foreign ministry, FBI director Robert Muller, President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton all raised a howl of protest.

This cry could not be drowned out by the cheers of the Libyan crowd which welcomed al Megrahi home as a hero in Tripoli. It should not be allowed to die.

The release of an unrepentant mass murderer is appalling, even if, as some of the Scottish doctors who examined him say, he has terminal cancer and will be dead in three months. He should have been allowed to die alone, near his victims, and his corpse shipped back home.

That may seem harsh. It is no harsher a judgement than al Megrahi and his Libyan secret service bosses passed on those 270 innocents who died that day, just before Christmas.

In an apparent political act, the Libyan government agent put a suitcase on a plane in Malta which, in those days before computers counted and matched every bag on aboard an airliner, went on the doomed Pan Am jet on its way to London and the U.S.

Evidence showed the bomber, who worked at the airport on Malta, had been seen buying the clothes that filled the bag carrying the bomb. While he has always maintained his innocence, al Megrahi was convicted by a

Scottish court that released another defendant. There was little doubt of his guilt.

The Libyan government turned the men over for prosecution in a deal that included \$270 million in reparations for families of the victims. The government implicitly admitted its part in the affair in return for lifting of western sanctions against it as a terrorist regime.

That was 2001. In 2009, Scottish Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill ruled that the bomber, despite the short time he has served in 270 murders, deserved a "compassionate release" so he could see his family before he dies.

That might have washed, had the Libyans had the good sense not to put on a televised hero's welcome. He could have landed in anonymity and been whisked off to see his wife and children.

Allegations of oil-for-prisoner deals likely are not true. Despite what some victims families have said, the West already has access to Libyan oil. That's what the 2001 deal was all about, restoring trade with a supposedly repentant rouge nation.

Only time will tell if there is anything in the Scottish decision besides an overdose of compassion, but there's no doubt it stinks.

Secretary MacAskill says he did it because it was the right thing to do. He did not invite comment from the victims' families, from the U.S. or the world at large before he made his decision, however.

The world cannot countenance mass murder. To do so makes a mockery of all our efforts to address the terrorists and their kind. The release was a mistake, plain and simple.

The world owed this murderer justice, fairness, humane treatment, but no more compassion than he showed his victims. — *Steve Haynes*



Editor diagnosed with disease

I have been diagnosed with Huntington's disease.

At age 76, I have been really fortunate to live a busy life in many great places, capped by more than 34 years in this county and community we have loved from the git-go.

Sharon and I have been blessed with continued close ties with children and grandchildren, mostly close by.

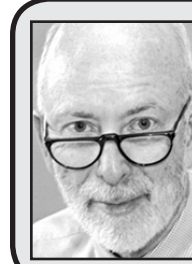
The real bummer to this news is that our children have a 50-50 chance of having the disease, which has no cure.

I am sending copies of the Huntington's disease family guide to nieces and nephews, to make them aware of this family history.

A nice note from old friends Tom and Jeannie Eblen, Lawrence, suggested that I write about my experiences with HD, and I plan to do so.

In early August, I will return to the Landon Center on Aging at the University of Kansas Medical Center to participate in two or more clinical trials and studies.

Symptoms of the disease, which



Marysville Advocate

By Howard Kessinger

causes progressive death of nerve cells, appear gradually and vary widely, even within families. I am doing follow-up weight work at Marysville Health and Fitness suggested by Community Memorial Healthcare's physical therapy department.

We're fortunate to have a fitness center here in Marysville that rivals those in much larger towns and has a professionally trained co-owner in Pam Schroller. She and Jeff toil continuously to keep people of all ages fit and doing what works best for them.

I am among those who appreciate their good work.

I promised my good friend, Dr. Ken Bickford of Oberlin, years ago

that I'd keep in shape and be more ready for whatever came my way.

Doctors at the med center say Huntington's patients who are in good shape physically have a leg up on the disease. I plan to give it my best shot.

Howard and Sharon Kessinger of Marysville owned The Oberlin Herald from 1961 to 1975, when they bought The Advocate and moved to Marysville. Mr. Kessinger is a past president of the Kansas Press Association.

Mr. Kessinger is one of the state's foremost newspaper editors; his legacy in Oberlin includes leadership in planning and building the downtown canopies.

Woman upset by county health cuts

To the Editor:

With the health care reform debate engaged across this nation, and many people very upset about proposals made by President Obama and Congress, I want to address the county commissioners proposed 2010 budget for Decatur County.

In my opinion, we the citizens of Decatur County need to be very concerned, if not outraged, at the huge cut in the proposed 2010 budget to Public Health, which is a line item labeled "County Health Nurse" in the budget. (*Oberlin Herald*, Aug. 12, page 3A) The 2008 tax rate was 1.097 mills, the 2009 tax rate was 0.914 mills and the 2010 proposed tax rate is 0.307 mills. Hello, commissioners, is this a typo?? I certainly hope so!

We have a strong possibility that two pandemics could affect us here in Decatur County this year: the H1N1 "Swine" flu targets the young. "Ordinary" influenza strikes the aged. We need to be assured that public health will be there to provide education, vaccinations, and support during this time of uncertainty.

The Health Department is supported by state dollars, private insurance payments, minimal fees collected from patients, donations, and most importantly, county tax

Letter to the Editor

dollars. If the proposed cuts are implemented, we may see services at our health department reduced or even stopped. People may have to travel to bordering counties for services. If county support isn't provided for health department budgets, state money will be cut also.

For some lower-income people in our community, the county health department is the first line in seeking health care. It is the sole provider of childhood and adult immunizations. It also provides a number of services, such as foot care at a reasonable cost, blood-pressure checks, a yearly health fair and educational programs.

Do we really want to see our health department no longer able to meet the needs of the citizens in Decatur County??

People complain, actually belly-ache, about taxes being too high, but tax dollars provide needed and valuable services in an industrialized nation. If you want fewer services, then a tax cut is in order, but do not demand or expect more services with lower taxes and thus less tax revenue. A fair and balanced budget would reflect an even cut across-the-

board in all departments and budget line items, rather than singling out public health to be slashed.

Charlotte Strecker-Baseler
Oberlin

From the Bible

And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Luke 5:18-20

The sunflowers never change

The sunflowers are just as I remembered them — tall and spiky.

They're one of the reasons I moved here in 1980.

Here is Creede, Colo., an old mining town turned to tourism to survive.

In 1980, however, Homestake's Bulldog Mine was going full blast. So was a big exploration project. Miners and drillers mingled with gift-shop owners and summer visitors.

It was August, and Steve, son and I flew to Denver, and then on to Alamosa, Colo., in a plane so small the pilots had to use oxygen. The girls stayed with grandma, but Lacy was just a month old, and where I went, he went.

We must have been totally crazy. The whole idea was absurd. Who would be stupid enough to buy a newspaper in an area that boasted a full-time population of less than 900 people, where it got to be 40 degrees below zero in the winter?

Yep, you guessed it.

The owners of *The Mineral County Miner* and *South Fork Times* (that's not a typo, it's a pun) picked us up at the Alamosa airport and drove us through the San Luis Valley to Creede. The highway was



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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lined with sunflowers. It was just like home, only 20 degrees cooler, and while the locals complained of the heat, 80 degrees felt pretty good to us.

Up from the Valley floor into the mountains we drove to Creede, which is built between cliffs.

The area was gorgeous, and our hosts showed us how they made a living in the tiny community with an economy split pretty much equally between mining and tourism. Tourism brought thousands of people to the area each summer, and mining provided a steady winter base.

We bit like trout on a dry fly. We were so ready to get out of the city and raise our three children in a small town.

So in the fall of 1980, we sold our beautiful home in Kansas City, Kansas, quit our jobs, packed up our three children — ages 6, 3 and 6

months — and headed west. As I sit in the house we built and look out over the Valley, I can't believe we were that brave or foolhardy or just plain ready for a challenge.

It was a great adventure, and turned into more of a challenge when the mine closed a few years later.

The mine is still closed, but tourism took off, and the children grew and worked beside us in the business. We may not have made a fortune in these silver-rich mountains, but we had some great adventures.

Our lives have changed places, and we enjoy the people and the golden plains of Kansas now. But, sometimes we look back and wonder if we would do it all over again.

Yep, because we're still crazy, and the sunflowers are still tall and beautiful here. Just like home.

Ready for a Texas vacation

By the time we are ready to leave for our trip to Texas I'm going to need a vacation. Getting ready to go is the hard part. Especially, during canning season. Every night I've been making peach jam, canning tomatoes and freezing produce. I love to do it and it's so nice to have a supply of home-grown veggies and fruits tucked away for the winter but, as any homemaker will tell you, it's hard work. My daughter, Halley, is coming home with us for a two-day visit and in the back of my mind I keep thinking, "How I leave it is how Halley will see it." Talk about pressure.

On top of that, Jim and I both have been pushing to complete the house project he's been working on the past several months. So, it's literally been "work all day, work all night." We are so ready for a break. We have enough kids in Texas that we can "spread the love" around so that no single one of them gets too tired of us. Wasn't it Mark Twain that said something about fish and family having a lot in common. They both begin to stink after three days.

— ob —

I don't believe in chance. I think everything happens for a reason. Things happen in my life, partly



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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because I'm not afraid to talk to strangers and because people are simply placed in my path.

I stopped by the bank Monday morning for a little "traveling money." As I was about to get into my vehicle a strange car pulled up. In this part of the country you know everyone's vehicle, so I knew it was strange.

The driver rolled down his window and looked like he was needing directions. I walked over to the car and he asked, "Is there a library or a community center in this town?"

I told him our library was located in the old grade school building where he would also find the city offices. Our city clerk is also the librarian.

He went on to say, "I'm an author and I've just finished a book that mentions your town."

Well, that interested me. "Really?"

What kind of a book is it? Are you selling any copies?"

"Sure," he said as he went around to open the trunk.

Gary Kraisinger and his wife, Margaret, have produced a beautiful book called, "The Western, The Greatest Texas Cattle Trail 1874-1886." It contains tales and true accounts about cowboys, cattle, saloons and watering holes on the trail north as related by cowboys and homesteaders. The book focuses on The Western from Dodge City to Ogallala, Neb.

A quick leaf through the pages and I knew I had to have a copy. It contains lots of pictures and maps. It looked like the perfect companion for our road trip south.

The author even signed it for me with the note, "Happy Trails." I can't wait to get into it.

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