

Good water should sell

It looks like the Oberlin City Council made a good choice when it decided to build a water-treatment plant that would provide enough water to avoid rationing in most years and actually improve the quality of drinking water for us taxpayers.

If we are going to spend \$4 million or more on a water treatment plant, at least we should get some good out of it. The first proposal by the engineers would have given taxpayers the benefit of paying \$10 more per month for water, but not much more.

The new proposal would remove much of the iron, manganese and other minerals from the water, now some of the worst in taste and chemical action in the nation. (It might not be wise to clean the water up too much, least it strip the pipes of a century of gunk and start eating away at the iron.)

Better water, more water, those are things most Oberlin citizens will be willing to pay something for. Removing traces of contamination that couldn't be measured just a few years ago, that is hard to justify. Give the

council credit: it stalled the government and looked for a way to get out of building a plant at all. The last thing a struggling community needs is a \$4 million debt put on just to satisfy a bunch of bureaucrats in Topeka and Washington. We can hardly afford to pay our taxes and utility bills as is.

There are other things, such as a better airport, that would help improve business and boost the economy here. Ditto for a new motel. But water cleaned up from contaminants we can't see and that likely can't hurt us? No.

This country, however, seems to follow blindly wherever bureaucrats invoke the name of science and tell us they are out "to protect the environment." Thus, Oberlin spent millions on a sewer plant it didn't really need, except to meet "new federal mandates," and stands to spend more on a water plant.

At least with this plan, we'll get something for our money.

Thanks, council, for trying to avoid this turkey. And thanks for doing something for us, not just to satisfy the feds. — *Steve Haynes*

City office ought to be open

It's hard to swallow the city's new policy of closing the office from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. for lunch.

This is not good customer service.

While everyone deserves a break, it doesn't seem like the city office staff of three to four people has to take theirs together every day.

The reason for the change, City Administrator Austin Gilley told the council last week, is because the place is "a zoo" at noontime, with unhappy utility customers trying to get answers when the person who can answer their questions is gone.

If the place is a zoo at lunchtime, we suggest that shows that a lot of people need to visit the office during that time. Lunchtime, after all, may be the only time a working person has to do his or her errands, including finding out

why their water or electric bill went up.

Anyone who works with the public can understand the problem faced by the city personnel.

However, anyone can take a message for the proper person and allow the customer a chance to have his or her say and go on their way. The schedule could, and should, be arranged to have that person present from noon to 1 p.m., at least when she is working.

We're going to ask the city to rethink this policy. Customer service is as important for utility companies as it is for Main Street businesses. It should be vital to a municipality, where the employees supposedly work for their customers — the taxpayers, residents and property owners of the city.

— *Cynthia Haynes*

Lights on, living room done!

We haven't been away from home for this many days since we've been married. It was almost two weeks, and I think Jim and I were both a little homesick.

But, we're home now, and what a nice surprise was waiting for us. Son James had been busy in our absence and completed countless little jobs, plus some big ones, too. The first one I noticed was the globe light in the front yard. He had finished wiring it to a switch on the porch, and I can now turn it on and off with the flip of a switch. Neat.

A light on the side porch also works. Inside, he did finish the dining room, right down to hanging the new shears I had purchased and painting the floor. All nice improvements.

— ob —

Our oldest daughter, Halley, rode home with us to spend a few days. For two days, straight, we sat three across on the bench seat of our pickup. It was a choreographed routine just to get our seat belts on.

I rode in the middle, so I had to get in first. I would lean to the left while Halley, who rode shotgun, would snap my buckle, which was buried between the seats. While I was still turned, she would get in,



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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then I would roll back to center and Jim could get in and buckle. Getting out played in reverse.

— ob —

Because of the way we split our visits with the kids, we were in Dallas with our daughter Kara, her husband Adam, and their daughter Taylor, on weekdays. One day, I heard 10-year old Taylor ask her mother, "How come we don't get 'em for a weekend?"

Next time we'll work out "custody of the grandparents" so she gets us, too.

— ob —

Even without all the improvements, the old place looked pretty good to us. My first morning home, I watered everything, whether it needed it or not. Jim was outside all day, cutting lumber for a new shed he's building. I had to lay down and take a nap about 10 a.m. but, he went

strong all day.

Halley had a friend in a neighboring town she had not seen in years, so she spent several hours with her and James had to work. Everything is back to normal.

— ob —

Like Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz" said, "It's good to be home." Or did she say, "There's no place like home. There's no place like home." Oh, well, they're both true.

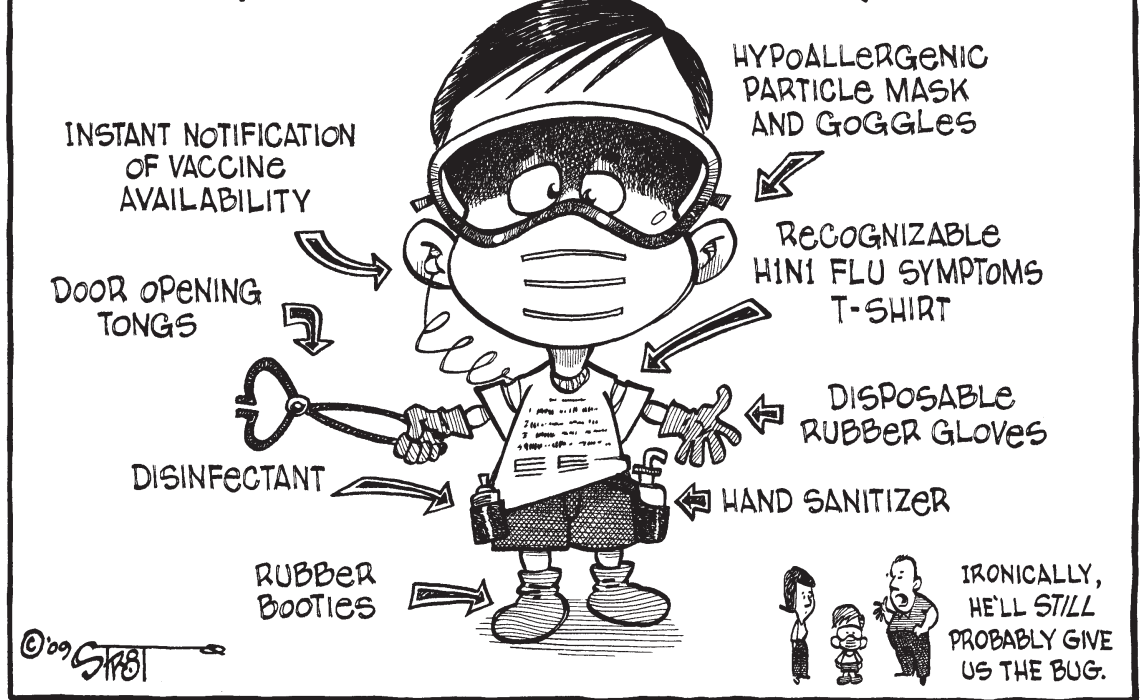
From the Bible

Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

For the Lord shall by thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

Proverbs 3:25-26

Kansas Back to School Checklist



Basement yields kitchen gear

My basement is the repository for almost 40 years worth of cooking stuff — some well used, some antique and some still in the original box.

While I've known about this for years, it didn't come to the top of my mind until I went looking for the beaters to an old upright mixer we got as a wedding present back in 1971.

I used that mixer for many years, then found an Oster mix-and-match set that sliced, diced, pureed, chopped and did everything but cook the food. The old mixer went into the basement and the beaters into a box.

It took me a couple of months of checking this cupboard and that box to find those beaters. I did find them, and am again using that old mixer along with the (somewhat) newer one.

In the search, I turned up a lot of memories, some real antiques and a few "why am I keeping this" items.

Under the memories category are the taco form. Its a little wire basket thingee that you put a tortilla in, dip it in hot oil and "viola," you have a hard taco shell. It was a cheap way to throw a taco party back when we were in our 20s and getting a few grease burns was preferable to spending the extra money on pre-make shells.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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The special little pan used to make poached eggs comes under that category, too. Back in our 30s, we took *Gourmet* magazine and made eggs benedict and other fancy dishes. The piles of *Gourmet* from 1966 to 1980 are also down there on a shelf.

Antiques include a meat grinder I can remember my mother using. She attached it to the kitchen table with the vice clamps on the bottom and made ham salad out of bologna and hash out of leftover corn beef.

There is also a potato ricer, a conical device similar to a sieve. You put cooked potatoes in it and use a conical wooden paddle to turn them into something that resembled rice. It made mashing potatoes easier.

In the why-am-I-keeping-this pile was the electric ice tea machine that made fast but cloudy tea, the electric steamer or rice cooker, a waffle iron, a Seal-a-Meal machine, a mini-slow cooker in a plastic bag, and assorted wooden spoons, tongs, trivets, tongs, bag clips, spatulas, plastic cups, mugs and vases.

The whole area looks like a yard sale in the making.

When was the last time I used the vaporizer, electric juicer, apple peeler on a wooden base, old vacuum cleaner, Fry Baby, 10-cup coffee maker, melon baller, tea strainer or cast-iron roaster?

Of course, I may someday need the two four-cup glass coffee pots, all those accessories to the Oster machine — dough hooks, food grinder, food processor and blender — Salad Shooter, portable electric fan or Tupperware vegetable tray.

Oh, and there's my ladle. Darn, I just bought one of those since I couldn't find this one I knew I had. The same goes for the measuring spoons and plastic spatulas.

I think I'll just quietly go back upstairs before I get some wild idea about using the waffle iron, muffin tins or egg-poaching pan. And I'd better hurry, because I think those *Gourmets* are calling my name.

Smoke delivers golden days

What a glorious weekend. And while we had a lot to do, with three days, it seemed pretty relaxed, like the wonderful golden light that filtered down through the haze.

What more could we ask? Well, maybe a little heat. It was pretty cool. Cynthia complained, when it was 70 degrees Saturday night with a little breeze, that she was "freezing."

That girl is going to be in trouble when winter gets here.

She wasn't the only one, though. The city pool was open holiday hours, but there were few takers. Monday, there were no swimmers when the pool opened at 1, and by the time the temperature did warm up, the lifeguards had gone home.

Where were the kids? Who knows. When I was that age, I know we soaked up the pool water on the closing weekend, no matter what. Sometimes that means blue lips, but we were dedicated to our summers.

Still, we had sunny skies, at least after the morning clouds burned off, pleasant weather and the beautiful evening light. Even, it seemed, at noon.

The cicadas actually seemed to get louder each day. Maybe they sense the end is near. Crickets chirped. Frogs sang. By late afternoon, you could hardly hear



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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yourself think.

It was a perfect time to read a book, and though I needed to mow, I did. Time enough for work.

The dog and I went to look for trains, we walked in town and at the park, I worked on my signal-light collection. We did some actual work, though not much.

I admit to feeling a little guilty as I looked out over the blue haze in the valleys, knowing that thousands of trees had died in California to produce that view. The golden glow on the elevator, magnified by the haze, and the glowing red ball of the setting sun both testified to the size of those fires.

Cynthia wondered if anyone would complain that Mother Nature was putting all those particulates and greenhouse gases into the air. But I don't think the EPA can find her.

Maybe, if they ever find the arsonist, they'll make him buy some carbon offsets. A lot of carbon

offsets.

Strange world, where crime in California can enhance the light in Kansas. Or maybe not so strange. It makes you appreciate how small the globe really is.

We had nearly circled the old lake bed when one of us commented on the paucity of wildlife — other than the thousands and thousands of grasshoppers.

The dog loved the hoppers, by the way. She wanted to catch every one she saw, which led to a lot of dodging and darting and diving and hopping about. She even caught — and quickly ate — a few. But the chase was quite a show.

And about that time, up jumped a little whitetail buck, his spike horns barely showing above his ears as he bounded through the tall grass.

The setting sun turned his tail to gold, a fitting end to a relaxing and enjoyable holiday.

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Runway loss threatens air rescues

To the Editor:

Since a petition is being circulated in Oberlin concerning the airport expansion project, I thought I might review a little of the history of the airport.

When I returned to Oberlin from the Navy in 1947, I had the opportunity to talk to Arch Hamilton, Howard Banta, Walt Roshong, Al Dryden and other business leaders in Oberlin about the struggle to get the people of Oberlin to finance purchase of land to build an airport. The city did purchase the quarter of land on which the airport now stands.

All of us then pitched in to level, grade and plant grass for the runways. Grass runways worked fine for the small, light airplanes in use then but, as heavier airplanes came into use, the need for a hard-surface runway developed. There were many who argued that it was be-

Letter to the Editor

ing built only to serve the few who owned airplanes and flew locally. However, air ambulance flights were increasing about this time and we managed to get our surfaced runway.

Now, the Federal Aviation Administration has determined that our current runway is too close to the fairground and it is being shortened by 600 feet. We can get back about 300 feet at the other end, but due to the draw to the north, it is not feasible to go further.

The runway is already about 300 feet short of the length desired by operators of the Beech King Airs providing air ambulance service to Oberlin. If shortened by another 300

feet, we might lose a valuable service. The Kearney, Neb., and Hays helicopters are not always available, and we still get two or three trips each month by airplane.

We elect officials who study both sides of the city's needs. To harness them and all future councils with a petition such as is now being circulated is not wise. An adequate airport will benefit the community. An inadequate airport will be detrimental in many ways.

Bob Fraker, airport manager
Oberlin

