

Open process needed to fill vacated city seat

One good idea, at least, came out of the deadlock this month over the mayor's appointment to the Oberlin City Council:

The suggestion that having an open and understood process for appointing a council member would make it easier for the mayor to appoint and the council to approve a new member.

First of all, let's say that there was nothing wrong with the way Mayor Joe Stanley went about appointing a member this time. He did as mayors before him had done. He asked for communication from those who were interested, talked to them, made his choice and gave it to the council.

Always before, in the memory of everyone involved, the council has gone along. There have been times, after all, when hardly anyone wished to serve on the council, even at election time.

In was, in our opinion, a good choice. Rusty Addleman is a long-time civic leader, a native of Oberlin with roots going back more than a century. He's shown many times that he has the town's best interest at heart. He loves Oberlin.

The appointment got caught, to some extent, in the politics of the hour on the council, which revolved around a recent attempt to remove the city administrator and support for the airport expansion project.

Councilman Bill Riedel questioned, not the appointment, but the process, or lack of one, leading up to it. He said he was upset that he had only rumors to go on as to who was in the picture.

Later, Mr. Addleman agreed it would have been better to have an open and structured process, which he thought would have taken some of the burden off the mayor.

And we agree.

In choosing and approving a new council member, the mayor and council sit in place of the city's voters. And while the voters elect council members, they will have no say on this one for three years. Even then, incumbents tend to be re-elected.

So it behooves all involved to be sure that this process is open and aboveboard, that everyone understands what is going on and why, and that the choice be one the voters would, if they had the chance, probably affirm.

A few simple steps could achieve this goal:

- Take written applications, on a form or by letter, from those interested in the position. Make these applications public for everyone to see. This is not, by law, a "personnel" decision.

- Give everyone who's interested a chance to apply. This establishes a public pool not only for the mayor's choice, but also for the next council opening or election.

- It's still the mayor's choice, by law and out of necessity. God be with him in making a selection.

- At the next opportunity, the council should change city ordinance so that an appointed member must stand for election on the next ballot, rather than serving out three or more years of an unexpired term.

Making the process open is the key. Then facts will govern rather than rumor gone wild.

And when choosing someone to represent all the voters, retaining their confidence and understanding, transparency counts.

Mr. Addleman is and remains a good candidate for this post. Only the process is flawed, and that is easy to fix. — Steve Haynes



Assume can be a dirty word



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

There's an old newspaper adage that goes, if your mother says she loves you, check it out.

I'm adding a corollary to that, if your husband says he knows his granddaughter's name, check it out.

I was telling everyone in three towns that our granddaughter was to be named Taylor Morgan Blake.

Her parents had started out with the normal 5,000 or so names, pared it down to only a couple of hundred and then worked their way carefully to Taylor Morgan for their daughter, who was supposed to be born on or about April 1.

Taylor had other ideas. She came March 7. Her Mom called to say she and hubby were on their way to the hospital, and her sister made the phone call to Mom and Dad announcing the birth.

It was Sunday and I was in a bit of a state of shock. The photo, sent from oldest daughter's cell phone of her new niece, was not good enough to use in the paper. So I put off doing the announcement for a week.

During that time Steve, who had taken the call that he was a grandfather, convinced me that I was wrong. The baby's name was Taylor Madison.

OK, I figured. That was an easy

mistake to make. Neither name is attached to any family name or anyone I know, so I probably just got it mixed up.

What I failed to do was call her mom and dad to check the story. I assumed my husband knew what he was talking about.

Assume is a dirty word in journalism.

Journalists take it apart and say that to assume is to make an ass out of u and me.

So true.

I put the birth announcement together and Steve checked it over, changing the city where the paternal grandparents live from Chicago to suburban Naperville. He even checked with the new parents to make sure that was correct.

He obviously did not check the rest of the story.

So a week after she was born, the story ran in both Oberlin and Colby that we had a new granddaughter,

Taylor Madison Blake. Oohs.

And you thought that we only misspelled your kid's name?

What worries me now is the problem that seems to hit now and then. It seems that sometimes when you make a mistake on someone, you can never get anything right about them again.

There are some very nice people around here whom, every time we put them in the paper, I cringe. No matter how hard we try, we never seem to be able to get it right. Names are misspelled, ages come out wrong, pictures are misidentified, they are said to play baseball instead of basketball. You name it,

So, I guess that there's only one thing to do. Make Steve write the social notes about our amazing and talented grandchild for ever after.

They may not be right, but at least I'll have someone to blame.

In sickness and in health

We've been home from Texas for a week, now, and I am just starting to feel up to walking across the room.

My lower back is my "achilles heel," and the Friday before we left Texas I either turned wrong or lifted wrong. I've been "crippled" ever since. The 24 hours spent behind the wheel probably didn't help it much, either. We've been home a week and I've been chair-bound the entire time. Finally, though, I think I've turned the corner and am not experiencing pain with every step. Getting up and down out of a chair is still a little tricky.

Jim has taken good care of me. He's not afraid to do a load of laundry. Although, I'm a little fearful of the results. He's taken care of meals if I didn't think I could manage and he's gone to work every day, too. This must be part of that "in sickness and in health" fine print.

—ob—

Since our return home, I've talked with my daughter, Halley, every day. She's the one that had the surgery and she says she is getting better and stronger. She also said she sure likes her naps every day. She's going to have a hard time going back to work.



Out Back

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

—ob—

We had a nice surprise waiting for us when we got home last week. Well, actually, I was the only one surprised because Jim and son, James, were in cahoots the whole time.

During our remodel, the front porch had become a "catch-all" for tools, supplies and building materials. It was an eyesore, but, one I accepted as part of the process. You can imagine my thrill when we pulled up in front of the house to see the entire porch, totally clean.

James had moved everything, with his dad's permission, to one of the sheds. When the weather warms up a little, I am looking forward to having my morning coffee on the front porch.

In addition, he finished the library room. He primed and painted the walls and painted the old floor. He

even decorated with an over-stuffed chair, a side table and lamp and an artfully placed throw blanket. I have my little reading nook. How perfect is that?

—ob—

We love to travel and see our kids. But, pulling into our little town is always a relief. Jim stood in the kitchen, clicked his heels together and said, "There's no place like home; there's no place like home; there's no place like home."

From the Bible

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.
Philippians 1:29

She's so tiny. Miniature fingers and toes, with sharp little nails.

Ahead you can hold in your palm, a rear that fits in the other, just made to be held.

I think I remember now, though it's been nearly 36 years, the evening after, when the nurse brought our daughter from the nursery to the room. It was the first time we'd had a chance to get to know her, even though Cynthia lay exhausted from 14 hours of labor.

She, too, was tiny, with lots of fine chestnut hair, but a perfectly formed head from what may have been the last natural breech birth in Kansas City.

We looked at her in wonder then, and got ready to take her home and get to know her. It was the start of that strange and wonderful trip we call parenting. I know I wouldn't trade it for anything, for over those 36 years, Cynthia and I have been blessed.

I'm sure many people feel the same. There's something special about those we bring into this world and attempt to guide through the signposts of life.

And parenting has never lost its luster. Family is still the source of much joy and wonder, along with some pain and now and then, sorrow.

Now, though, it's something new.

We're grandparents. That tiny bundle breathing and



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

stretching and making little noises, and OK, sometimes wailing her little head off — she's not ours to raise. We're just visitors, here to help out for a while until Brad's folks come for their turn.

We've been holding and watching and changing diapers, of course. And we've cooked dinner, done the dishes, cleaned up the house, weeded the garden and the lawn, planted hydrangea and blueberries, raked up gum-tree balls.

Her parents are the ones who have to change their entire lives and stay up all night and sleep when they can, get the blues (or console) and generally deal with a miniature hurricane bent on disrupting their days.

But she's special to us in a way that, I think, is hard for younger generations to understand. She's theirs, but in our hearts, just as they are ours, so is she. We waited for her and her future mates. Now is our time.

Parents may not understand this at first. I don't think I understood it at all when I first became a parent. You know your folks will love your kids, want to spoil them, disapprove

of your child rearing, and give you headway to make all the mistakes they made themselves.

It wasn't until my mother was gone that I really understood how special grandchildren can be. When we went that day to clean out her house, I started looking around. She had 10 grandchildren by the four of us, and they were on every square foot of every wall. She'd been widowed in her 50s, and in many ways, they were her life.

Those pictures had been collected and hung with care. Right then, I realized, I'd probably never sent enough. No one had.

Nor was she unique. Her sister's house, finally empty, held the same treasure — photo on photo of three grandsons and their six offspring.

It's nothing unusual. It's the way of the world. Maybe it's always been that way.

So now she's here, and now we can feel that in our hearts. Just looking at her, the cares of the world melt away for a while.

It's a good feeling. Well worth waiting for.

No health care system is perfect

To the Editor:

I read with interest Sen. Pat Roberts' letter in the March 10 issue of *The Oberlin Herald* concerning health care in England. I could easily compare their health care frustration with our present health care. No system is perfect.

Don't our insurance companies stipulate what drugs and treatments they will pay for? Don't these same

Letters to the Editor

companies base their treatments on what's the cheapest option, the most profitable for their shareholders? Don't you have to see a doctor on their approved list?

Hopefully our government will constantly look for ways to make

health care plans more consumer friendly and less costly while not trying to take health care away from people. It's about time for this process to begin.

Lyle E. Black, Los Angeles

Woman needs mother's recipe

To the Editor:

My name is Judy Reed and I am the daughter of Marilyn St. Clair. As many of you know, my mother passed away. I know she gave many of her friends in Oberlin copies of some of her favorite recipes,

and I need your help to find one in particular.

Mom had a recipe for corn-meal rolls that I have somehow lost and would really appreciate your help in finding it again. If you happen to have her recipe, would you please

contact me at (785) 460-8131 or 415 Lawrence Dr., Colby, Kan., 67701.

Thank you very much for your help.

Judy Reed, Colby

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600
170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800
E-mail: oberlin.herald@nwkansas.com

Nor'West Newspapers

STAFF

Steve Haynes editor
Kimberly Davis managing editor
Mary Lou Olson society editor
Leslie Nolette proofreader/copy editor
Carolyn Kelley-Plotts columnist
Joan Betts historian
Cynthia Haynes business manager
Pat Cozad want ads/circulation
Tim Davis advertising representative
Linda Bunney advertising makeup

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, Norcat, 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.

