

## Senator's endorsement can't save a bad idea

It's disappointing to see Sen. Sam Brownback, the Republican candidate for governor, jump in and endorse calls for a "voter ID" law in Kansas.

The senator, in a press release Monday with the party's candidate for secretary of state, Kris Kobach, pledged they would work together to pass such a law.

And while this newspaper generally leans Republican, we see this as foolish. There is no evidence Kansas has a vote fraud problem. Under long-time Republican Secretary of State Ron Thornburg, Kansas has had clean elections for years. That has not changed.

Kobach, a law professor and anti-immigration activist, is way out in right field on this issue. He tries to scare voters with the specter of illegal immigrants somehow tainting Kansas elections.

But this is a solution looking for a problem. With no evidence of voter fraud or of illegals trying to vote, we think Kobach is just trying to scare us. That's wrong, and it's wrong for Sen. Brownback to get involved.

We know the senator, as leader of the Republican ticket and an apparent shoo-in candidate, needs to do what he can for the entire ticket. But Kobach is a one-issue candidate — illegal immigration — running for an office that has nothing to do with immigration.

Kansas has plenty of problems, starting with

a budget that has ballooned under the influence of government "mandates" and pressure from schools and public employees. We can't pay for the demands of schools, prisons, roads and other programs. Taxes are high and rising; the property tax is out of control.

All these are things we will look to Gov. Brownback to find solutions for. The state needs leadership that will bring big government under control and provide a fertile climate for small business and job growth.

We need lower spending, a lid on taxes and leaders who will interpret the role of government as something less than all-encompassing. We have not had that for the last seven years.

Instead, we've seen the budget grow, taxes increased at the city, county, school district and state level. We've seen nothing to indicate that the governor's office even cared about those issues.

Here, however, we have two Republicans pushing a big-government bill to tighten the noose of security-apparatus control around all Kansans' necks. That's not something that those who love freedom should applaud.

It's not something Mr. Brownback should give credence to.

And it's not something Kansas needs.

Give it a rest, gentlemen. — Steve Haynes



## June was a tough act to follow

June Cleaver died earlier this week at the age of 94.

To be more correct, Barbara Billingsley, the actress who played the perfect television mother on *Leave it to Beaver*, died following a long illness.

Which is sad, of course, but she made many women ill long ago.

She was so perfect. Her hair was always perfect. Her clothes were never torn, dirty or unironed. She always seemed to have a vacuum cleaner or dust rag close at hand. And, she always said and did the right thing.

What was not to hate when you're a working mother who's torn between house, husband, kids and work, and feeling like you're on the edge of failing at something almost all the time.

I remember as a child back in the late '50s and early '60s wondering why my mother didn't keep a perfect house, why we had to do all those chores and why Mom seemed so tired at night.

Well, of course, my mother was a teacher. She got up, fixed breakfast, got my sister, Dad and I off to school and work, then headed for a classroom that in those days could



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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include eight grades and 30 or more students.

And I couldn't figure out why she seemed so tired every night when it was time to make supper, see that we did our homework and deal with grading papers.

Geez, June Cleaver never seemed so out of sorts.

My mother didn't do the vacuuming and dusting every day. On Saturdays, the whole family pitched in, some of us less willing than others, and cleaned house.

Mother made breakfast and supper every day, but it was up to the kids to do the dishes. I thought we should get a dishwasher like my cousins in Kansas City had. Dad said that he had a dishwasher. In fact, he and Mom had two of them, and we'd better get started 'cause we had homework to do, too.

And then I turned into a working mother trying to juggle work, house, husband and children, and I became my mother. The children did the dishes and laundry and we all pitched in, some of us less willing than others, to clean house on Saturdays.

So while I'm sorry that Ms. Billingsley is gone — I'm sure she was a lovely person — she sure was a tough act to follow.

### From the Bible

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.  
*Psalms 65:11*

## Trip tests their endurance

We've put many miles under the tires of our little red van in the last 12 days: From Kansas to Mexico to Louisiana to Texas and in a few days, God willing, we'll be back in our own Kansas bed.

Mexico was great. We built a special little house for Erica, a single mom, and her two little girls, Abril (April), 4, and Emily, 18 months.

All the houses we build are special but we learned some new techniques on this one. A team member owns one of the largest cement companies in Amarillo, Texas, so he was the concrete man. Not only did he give us the best finish on a floor we've ever had, but he also provided a tint for the stucco and it turned out to be the most beautiful terra cotta color.

The Casas por Cristo staff also introduced a couple of new building techniques that we liked, so "old dogs" really can learn new tricks.

We never saw any violence and felt perfectly safe the entire time we were in Juarez. In fact, we took off by ourselves and drove to the homes of families we helped build in the past. What a joy to see how a simple little house could improve their lives so much. In the end, that's what it's all about.

A few days later and we were back in civilization (hot showers and flushing toilets with paper) at the home of one of our San Antonio daughters. It was a whirlwind of grandkids, shopping (a great Goodwill Store) and talking. Jim was able to fix an office chair for Jennifer and all the kids got a jar of my homemade peach or plum jam.

The great-grandson, Kaden, is even cuter than we expected him to be and little Ani, 4, was a pure delight. If something she ate was



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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good, it was "be-licious." I hated to leave, Jennifer took such good care of us. We slept late our first morning at her house, and when we woke up, our laundry from Mexico was done. Who knows, maybe it walked into the laundry room by itself. It certainly could have.

The next leg of our trip was to Houma, La., a sprawling city southwest of New Orleans in bayou country, to visit my old high school friend, Galene (Metz) Griffith.

This is where she would like me to mention that she is single and willing to travel. We have had a ball. When you reconnect with someone who shares some of your history, it's easy to pick up right where you left off. It's been non-stop eating, laughing and talking for two days.

Galene was a great tour guide and we saw most of downtown New Orleans (New Ah-lens) from a trolley car. Sunday afternoon, we drove to Grand Isle on the very tip of Louisiana, where we dipped our toes in the Gulf of Mexico.

We could see what looked to us like oil on the marshland grasses. The beach sand closest to the water looked darker than the sand farther inland. Galene pointed out "camps," houses built on stilts, where hundreds (maybe thousands) of workers lived who were hired to help with the oil spill clean-up.

We, of course, don't know what

it was like before, but it all looked pretty good. We saw people fishing, kids playing and birds flying. It looked pretty normal.

We walked down Bourbon Street just to say we had. And, of course, met interesting people everywhere we went.

Jim's goal was to eat some real Cajun food, and we had our chance. Not only is Galene a wonderful cook, but we sampled some good stuff at one of the local eateries.

While here, we've eaten red beans and rice, shrimp gumbo, etouffe, seafood casserole with shrimp and crawfish, bread pudding, jambalaya, pecan pralines and fried catfish. Between all the Mexican and Cajun food I've eaten these last two weeks, I've about tripled my antacid consumption. Heartburn has been my constant companion.

Gay and I are parting with promises to get together more often. She is even committing to visiting Kansas — just not in the winter.

We will be in Dallas with Halley, Kara, Adam and Taylor for a few days before pushing on home. This trip marks the longest we've ever been gone, and it's been a test of our endurance. Perhaps we try to pack too much into our trips, but we never know if we'll have the chance to do these things again. So, as they say in Louisiana, "Let the good times roll."

## Education needs higher standards

To the Editor:  
While the Constitution of the United States may make no mention of public education, as Duane Dorshorst states in his column, "Feds expand role in education" (*Wednesday, Oct. 6, Oberlin Herald*), it does empower Congress "to provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States, (Art. 1, 8, cl. 1).

The Supreme Court, including a more conservative-leaning Court led by current Chief Justice John Roberts, has repeatedly upheld this power. Social Security payments, medicare, farm subsidies and even the new-health care legislation are all based on the same clause in the Constitution. During the period 1999-2009, for example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture provided \$143.4 billion to Decatur County (www.farm.ewg.org).

The Supreme Court also has permitted Congress to set mandates or attach strings to federal money. For example, universities accepting certain federal money must grant equal access to military recruiters. So, it's no surprise that, with the near doubling of federal dollars to Decatur County for education in the past two years (to \$414,970, according

### Letter to the Editor

to the state Department of Education), the Obama Administration is pushing for higher standards, just as the Bush Administration did before it. While Mr. Dorshorst states that federal intervention has reached a "new level," he fails to mention that the state decides whether to accept the money, and, in turn, passes along Decatur County's share.  
So, I ask, what is so bad about that money going into the education system of the Oberlin School District, and why wouldn't there be some intervention or accountability?

Some of my earliest memories are those summers spent on my great-grandparent's farm outside Oberlin; at their dinner table, I was constantly reminded about the importance of "getting my education" and that it "was something that no one could take away from me." There were many stories and examples about the Decatur Community High graduates who had become successful in politics, in the law, in business and in medicine.

It was through a federally subsidized (and mom-subsidized) edu-

ational system that I learned about Horace Mann, a state legislator from Massachusetts from 1827-1837, who established the first state Board of Education. During his tenure, he transformed that state's school: 1) The school year was increased to six months; 2) 50 free high schools were established; 3) Religious education was kept out of the public schools; 4) Appropriation was more than doubled from 25 percent to 64 percent.

Mr. Mann's arguments for public education were impassioned, the same as those that I heard as a boy: "Education, then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men — the balance wheel of social machinery. It gives person the independence and the means by which the individual can resist the selfishness of others. It does better than to disarm the poor of their hostility toward the rich; it prevents being poor."

Ky Dehlinger, Portland, Ore.

## Seniors deserve more from Social Security

To the Editor:  
I would like to respond to the article that Steve Haynes wrote about it being just plain wrong to give people on Social Security a cost of living increase. His reason was that their cost of living has not gone up, and since we are in a recession, they do not deserve anything.

I beg to differ with him. The price of food, electricity, water and gas continue to go up. Even Congress gave themselves a big raise. Evidently, even your cost increased since you had to raise the cost of the paper to \$1.

Fox News just had a segment that said seniors are going to be hit the hardest on health care and taxes. Seniors have worked all their lives and paid into Social Security for their retirement, and for you to suggest that they are all a bunch of wailing, selfish, money-hungry people who do not live in the real world and clearly do not deserve anything is wrong.

I would like to see you try to live on \$1,000 or less per month. Many seniors pay \$100 to \$300 per month on just prescriptions and another \$250 or more for medical insurance

just to survive — and hope there is enough left for food.

I have been on Social Security for eight years and still have to get a job to help pay our bills. Your statement that we paid taxes in our time, but no longer, is wrong. If you are lucky enough to be able to work you will continue to pay into Social Security. Whether you can work or not, you will continue to pay taxes.

Everyone pays taxes, even on Social Security. Steve, I think what you said was just plain wrong, and you owe retirees an apology.  
Bob Chambers, Oberlin

## Family asks others to set aside differences

To the Editor:  
On Oct. 5, 2010, our best friend, Eric Farr, was taken from us. Trying to accept this and mourning in peace have been the hardest parts. Eric was an awesome father to his son, Justice, and he had a kind and giving heart. We are truly blessed to have all the beautiful memories that we have together.

We made and placed a cross on the road where he died for our dear friend, but this past weekend we found something we would have

never imagined: the cross had been shot through with a shot gun and broken in two. Our memorial had been turned into a trash pit filled with dirty napkins and empty beer cans.

Regardless of anyone's feelings towards Eric, we believe whoever did this should've learned to forgive and set aside their differences so Eric and his family can be in peace.

If these people had such a problem with Eric, then why didn't they

confront him while he was alive and able to defend himself? They are, obviously, inconsiderate of everyone else's feelings and now they get to live with the guilt of knowing how much pain they have inflicted on Eric's family for the rest of their lives.

Desiree Vilar, Oberlin  
Rodney Marshall, Oberlin

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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.

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