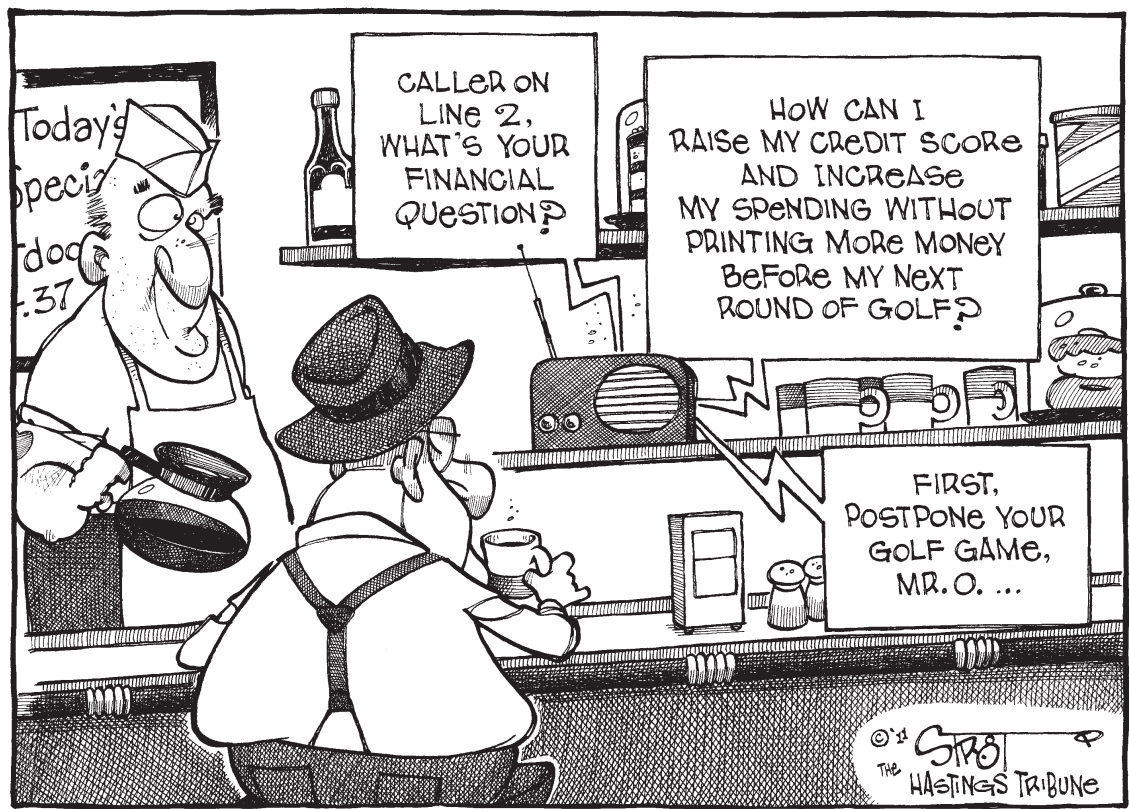


A whole lot of good ideas can threaten our liberty

Bit by bit, America drifts and slides toward becoming a high-tech police state. Bit by bit, freedoms slip away. And it always sounds like a good idea. There is no enemy on the left — or on the right. The threat comes from the bureaucracy, the security apparatus, from authoritarian thinkers on either side of the aisle. Think this is silly? Then why are all the conservative Republicans in Topeka patting themselves on the back for passing a law forcing all Kansans to show a photo ID before they can vote? Election fraud's never been a problem here. What's next? Roving checkpoints where police ask for our citizenship papers, as in some third-rate communist dictatorship from the Cold War era? Oh, we call those drunk-driver checkpoints. Hunting license checkpoints. Drug interdiction lanes. If you think our liberties are not fading, try to get on an airplane without your ID. If you're stopped for some traffic infraction, notice that the officer is likely to chat you up. He may ask you where you've been or where you're going. If your answer is a little hesitant, he might ask if you'd mind him searching the car. It's loads of fun, having your car unpacked and dismantled while you sit beside the road. The other day, Homeland Security agents swept in and took over the train depot in Savannah, Ga. They stopped and searched anyone who entered, whether they intended to board a train or not. Who knows if the Transportation Security Administration even has that kind of authority. But rail security sounds like a good idea. Government computers track your movements, your bank accounts, much of your life. And the government can access private computers — at the phone company or the

bank or the credit-card company, the airlines, a hundred other firms — and track the rest of your ways. All of this is done, of course, for the best of reasons. For our own good. Airport security is vital in the age of terrorism. Transportation Security agents, someone points out, have never caught a terrorist. They have "caught" thousands of people for minor criminal offenses, however. Isn't election security "vital to democracy?" How did we ever get by without it for two centuries. Still, it sounds like "a good idea." Same for "enhanced" border security, with computers tracking not only the comings and goings of foreigners, but of Americans as well. Your bank is under orders to track your finances, especially any cash you might come across, and report you if you exceed certain limits. You might be a criminal, a drug dealer or a tax evader, after all. And we all want them caught, right? But when does "enhanced" security begin to impinge on our rights, especially the right to privacy? When is enough security way too much? Will we wake up one morning and find out that, instead of the government serving us, with all those computers, cameras, records and files, that we must serve the government? If that day comes, when it comes, it will be far too late to complain. Records will be made; action taken. No, the time to defend liberty, as always, is today. Each policy, from the grossly misnamed "Patriot Act," to the latest "voter security" laws, needs to be questioned. The best level of government involvement in our lives is the least possible. We need to avoid the point where ever-tighter security of all kinds becomes a straightjacket for America. Ask questions today, not tomorrow. — Steve Haynes



Everyone just calls it resume

I have discovered several things while going through dozens of resumes, attempting to fill a couple of reporting jobs. But the first thing I learned was that everyone has the same name for their resume. They call it "resume." All of them. Not "Bill's resume," or "Smith resume." Just resume. There's some variety. Some are "resume.pdf," others "resume.doc." People with a new computer will send "resume.docx," showing it came from the latest, supposedly greatest version of Microsoft Word. I've even seen "resume.ppt," which came in the form of a PowerPoint slide show. And all I wanted to know is where the candidate went to school and where he or she has been working and how long. I realize that when someone writes up a resume, it's probably the only file in their computer by that name. But most of the people I'm looking at are college graduates, or at least upperclassmen. Don't they know how many files by that name I'm going to get? With one national ad, I'll get 20 to 30 applications. Often the file "resume" is accompanied by one called "letter," or sometimes "cover letter." It's hard to sort those, too. The first thing I want to look at is a college education in journalism or something related, such as English. The first thing I have to do, however, is rename the darned resume.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
s.haynes@nwkans.com

Put your name in the file name, people! You're all individuals. Don't make me work. Next, I want to know where the candidate has worked — and how long. If he's changed jobs every nine months, I figure something is wrong, either with him or his choice of jobs. A candidate who stays at least two years looks a lot more stable, and it doesn't hurt to have four or five in at least one place. Ambition and a desire to move up are good, but beware the candidate who proposes moving down. They're seldom happy with the move. Salary expectations can be out of synch. The gal who wants \$35,000 to do a \$25,000 job won't be happy, even if the boss can pony up the big check. Yet people apply for any job sometimes, any job at all. The good news is, my slogging through this jungle tells me there are a lot of kids out there who want to be newspaper men and women. They burn with a passion for the job that's inspiring. The pay isn't what it should be, but it never has been. Our business, like many, calls people for reasons that transcend pay. And many of them can even write. There's another thing about resumes. Beware the fancy writer who uses a lot of adjectives to describe her abilities. They should be writing menus, not news stories. News stories depend on detail and tight writing, not \$10 adjectives and \$15 adverbs. They should teach that in college. Short is good. They should teach that, too. A page, maybe a page and a half for a resume. Half a page for the letter. And God help the applicant who misspells words in the resume. That's a deal breaker. Get someone to proof your stuff before you apply. Then, give the letter and the resume your name, not just something generic. Some poor sap is out there, sorting files in the e-mail bin. He needs to be able to tell yours from the rest of the stack. Give him a break. Show him you're a cut above the generic mob.

Carrots just don't give up

I planted some carrots last year. As the season progressed and the vegetables started rolling in, I got more and more behind on weeding and picking. It got so the garden was a time-consuming monster that spat vegetables at me every time I walked out the door. Don't get me wrong. We loved the vegetables. It's just that we suddenly had dozens of peppers, too many tomatoes and squash we couldn't even give away. Add to that the corn, green beans, broccoli and cucumbers and we had more than we could eat and almost more than we could give away. Now, remember, I don't can. I'll cut up some of the peppers to freeze and stuff others for later use. I dried a few of the cherry tomatoes but still haven't figured out what to do with them. I was just plain overwhelmed and it was time to dig the carrots. Steve suggested that I could just leave the ones I didn't need in the ground. He had read that you could leave some root vegetable like carrots in the ground until you were



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
c.haynes@nwkans.com

ready to use them. Sounded ideal to me. (It also sounded like he had been reading the helpful hints in my women's magazines, but I let that pass.) So I left them. And left them. Eventually, I ran out of carrots and decided to go dig a few up. By then, however, it had frozen and the ground was like iron. I tried a hand digger, a shovel and a potato fork. I finally pried some out of the ground using a screwdriver and a hammer. Talk about your hard-to-get produce. I figured that the carrots that I had were what I was going to get and the rest would freeze in the ground and be mulch for next year. Nope. When Steve tilling the back of the garden, orange lumps started appearing. Now, my carrots weren't what you find in the store. Most of them looked more like the "baby" variety. But the carrots that came up with the tiller were in good shape, except of course for the ones that got sliced and diced in the process. I went out and gathered up a basketful of carrots. They were tasty. Oh, about half had to be tossed out because they were too damaged to keep. The other half have gone into a couple of batches of homemade soup and some slaw. I'm not sure if this is really the best way to store carrots, but it worked for me. And this year, I'm sure I'll get to them before the freeze.

We don't mind the rain at all

You never hear anyone in this part of the country sing that childhood song, "Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day." Unless, of course, it's your daughter's wedding day, or a funeral or the day for that farm sale you've had circled on the calendar for two months. Then, you really wish the rain would come another day. Actually, a farmer getting buried on a rainy day probably wouldn't mind. If you're going to a sale, you would just slip the truck into four-wheel drive. And as for the wedding, well, they make white umbrellas. —ob— A long-standing tradition at the little country church where Jim preaches is the Easter Sunrise Services. When I was a child, they were held in Huff's pasture. This features a natural grotto on a hillside with a large stone shelf that made perfect seating. — provided you brought plenty of blankets to sit on. Local folklore held that, at one time, it had been an Indian campground. It'd be interesting to know if that's true. Anyway, the song leader and preacher, would stand at the bottom of the grotto and the congregation would assemble in a semi-circle above them. My memory bank recalls the music sounding especially nice, with nature's acoustics helping out. And then there was the morning a mockingbird perched himself on the bar of the rustic cross planted on top



Out Back

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

of the hillside. As the sun came up behind him, he sang his little heart out as the people sang, "Up From the Grave He Arose". In more recent years, the eastward-facing church steps have substituted for the stone seating and a cross on the edge of a field across the road has been as adequate as the hillside. The people gather; we remember; we sing; we eat. This year, a new friend of mine from the city was visiting family in a nearby town. The family member couldn't leave, but my friend wanted to attend worship services. I invited her to join us and gave her directions to the little church. I was watching for her to arrive. Because of the rain, the congregation decided to move the services inside to the Lyle Community Building, and she wouldn't have known where to go. Finally, here came a car over the hill. It was my friend and her daughter. They were so relieved to see us. "I drove and drove," my friends said. "I just knew I was lost." The country must look pretty desolate to someone used to non-stop traffic and block after block of people and businesses. After breakfast, as she was leaving, she said, "I'm so glad we came. This was nice." She said she thought I looked like Paula Dean. I wonder if anyone ever tells Paula Dean she looks like Carolyn Plotts? —ob— Memorial Day and alumni banquet time are fast approaching. This is Jim's 50th class reunion, and members of his class have planned at big blowout. There is something going on morning, noon and night for the entire weekend. It will be fun filled. Just hope we can live through it!

From the Bible

Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! Job 19: 23-24.

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

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STAFF

- Steve Haynes editor
- Kimberly Davis managing editor
- Mary Lou Olson society editor
- Nancy Robinson proofreader
- Carolyn Kelley-Plotts columnist
- Joan Betts historian
- Cynthia Haynes business manager
- Pat Cozad want ads/circulation
- Tim Davis advertising representative
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Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers
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Hospice volunteers help the dying

To the Editor: National Volunteer Week was observed by Hospice Services this month, when we honored volunteers who provide support, companionship and hope to those facing a life-limiting illness. Hospice volunteers play an indispensable role in enabling Hospice Services to offer the best care possible for patients living with life-limiting illness, their families and caregivers. In northwest and north central Kansas, more than 120 volunteers

Letter to the Editor

work more than 2,000 hours per year to help care for patients and families. Many more volunteers help Hospice Services through work on the board of directors, advisory boards, special events, office support and the like. The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization reports an estimated 468,000 hospice volunteers provide more than 22 million hours of service to hospice programs each year. Medicare rules require that 5 percent of all patient care hours be provided by trained volunteers. For information, go to www.hospicenwks.net or call (800) 315-5122. Julia Schemper, Phillipsburg Hospice Services Inc.