

Drainage problems need council action

The Oberlin City Council really should take a good, if long-range, look at solving the drainage problems around Oak and Marks.

A heavy rain can fill that intersection with up to five feet of water, threatening neighborhood basements. It's not the only drainage problem in town, though it's by far the worst.

City ordinances forbid driving through floodwater, a rule often ignored by a thoughtless few who get some kicks from driving fast through the standing water.

At Oak and Marks, the waves can wash right into a few basements, but in a form of frontier justice, the miscreants' cars often flood out and die right in the intersection. Those drivers can face a tow bill and a ticket.

A real solution, though, has escaped generations of city councils.

Why? Cost, and perhaps, lack of interest.

The storm sewer draining the area is thought to be way too small. Most likely, the solutions will involve laying a second pipe to double capacity, maybe more. The new line would have to go east to the ball fields or south to near the high school, and the expense would not be small.

Since the problem affects only a few people, you might ask, should the city spend thousands to fix it? But part of a city's obligation to provide things like water, sewer and storm drainage.

Either the original storm sewer was undersized, or more likely, the city overloaded it when new streets were paved to the north, an entire network draining in a crooked, convoluted path right to that intersection all the way from west of Penn Avenue and north of the highway.

And either way, the city really does owe it to the neighborhood to look for a solution. The city has a lot of needs with its "infrastructure,"

but that drainage problem ought to be near the top of the list.

Other candidates:

- Power-line renewal, needed in places all over town. If we ever get started on that, though, the city may have to give up on tapping the power fund for general use, as it does every year to pay for everything from Gateway operations to street repairs.

- Street repair and replacement. The city could spend millions, but will have trouble finding money for even the most desperately needed work until current bonds are paid off.

Many asphalt streets have thin pavement with little or no base under it. Some brick streets, including the storm-drain sections of Cass Avenue and the south end of Penn, need major work. And relatively new concrete on U.S. 83 is starting to fall apart south of U.S. 36.

- The city pool, built more than 50 years ago, needs to be replaced, and soon, before the heater fails again or a major leak develops. The pool is expensive to operate and inadequate by today's standards.

There are other needs, but the city is up to its eyebrows in debt to pay for unneeded work demanded after changes in federal environmental regulations. We have a new wastewater treatment system and soon will have a water treatment plant, plus a lot of debt, all ordered by state and federal environmental managers. Meantime, real needs of the city are ignored.

We suspect voters would not have done it that way, and neither would the City Council, but that's the way things are.

Anyway, Mayor Bill Riedel has acknowledged the drainage problem, and maybe something will be done when there is money. It's the right thing to do. — *Steve Haynes*

I like spiders and snakes, but ticks are for the birds

I like snakes and lizard, toads and frogs, turtles and most bugs.

In fact, I've collected or kept most of the above as pets at one time or another during my life.

I'm not crazy about spiders, but I've been known to nab a perambulating tarantula if the occasion warranted it. (Youngest daughter once requested one for her biology classes.)

But, there is one bug that I just cannot abide. It gives me the creeps, and when I find one, I go berserk.

I hate ticks. I hate them, loathe them, despise them and really am not at all fond to be on the same planet with them. When I find one on me, I scream like a little girl and throw and absolute fit until the insect is not only off me, but safely, securely and very truly dead.

When we returned from a hike one time to find 16 ticks on us and the dog, I refused to go on that trail again during tick season. In fact, the trail is now known in our family as Tick Creek.

Not everyone is so squeamish about the blood suckers, however.

One friend who calmly checks herself and her dog for ticks each



Open Season

By *Cynthia Haynes*
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day after walking in the high grass and just discards the little monsters.

I prefer to squash them and then run them down the toilet.

Another friend found some use for the tiny insects.

Her son collects bugs for his entomology exhibit at the fair each year. No bug is safe around this kid. He collects all year and has his mother keep the specimens in the freezer until its fair time.

When the dog came in with a huge, dark lump under her eye the other day, his mother calmly got a pair of tweezers to remove the little sucker.

After a quick check of his bug book, the son came dancing in with a baby food jar.

"Be careful, Mom," he insisted.

"Don't worry, dear," she said. "This won't hurt the dog at all."

"No," he insisted, "be careful of the tick. I want it for my collection. I'll get an engorged one and then one that hasn't eaten. Won't that be cool?"

Ticks, he then informed her, are a whole new class for his exhibit. Ticks and mites, he said, occupy a class together.

His mother obligingly put the full tick in the jar and found another couple on the dog that hadn't had a chance for a good meal and added them, too.

While she was happy to help with the project, she said, there are some things she wasn't going to do.

"I'm not going to pin that thing for him," she said.

Amen, sister.

Services impress mayor

I wrote my column on May 24, but I just got back home from the Memorial Day services at the cemetery and I feel as though I need to add this.

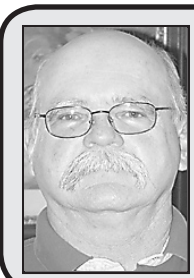
Standing in the wind with all of the folks who turned out to honor our fallen soldiers put some things back into perspective for me. The services showed me why Oberlin is such a wonderful place to live, as is this great country.

They also showed me how much we owe to the men and women who continue to sacrifice for us. I believe that everyone who was there will agree. I hope that everyone in town will come next year. There really is more to Memorial Day than a hot dog and a beer.

I would like to welcome our two new City Council members. Fonda Farr and Josh Williby have agreed to sit on the council, filling the seats left by the late Richard Kimble and myself. I believe that both will bring a great deal of depth as well as a different perspective to the council.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the others who showed an interest in being part of the Council, and hope they will continue to be involved.

I would also like to welcome Jeremy Tally to the city staff as cemetery sexton, Jeremy brings some great credentials with him and will be a real asset to the city crew.



Mayor's Minute

By *Bill Riedel*

I attended a Kansas Municipal Utilities conference in Wichita, and learned about several challenges that not only we, but small cities through out rural Kansas, are facing, many are driven by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, such as new regulations on coal-fired power plants and clean-air regulations that well might force us to install catalytic converters on the five generators that we have in our city power plant.

Preliminary estimates are from \$100,000 to \$300,000 to upgrade our plant to the new requirements. The city is working with several groups to try and find a solution that makes sense for small cities that have their own generating capabilities but do not run continuously such as ours. More to come.

The much-needed rain we received on the morning of May 24 sure woke the lawns and the gardens up, and should do wonders for the crops. Sappa Park looks great as

well; nice to see water looking out from the shelter house. Thanks to all the volunteers who have worked so hard at the park to make it enjoyable for so many.

Unfortunately, the rain brings problems for some as well. I had heard about the flooding between Oak and Maple on the east side of town, so I went and took a look at 6 a.m. during the rain. I had no idea that it was such a problem.

I understand that the storm sewer is undersized for the volume of water that migrates to the area. I have asked our city administrator to work with me to investigate any options that we might have to help this area. Perhaps there is some grant money out there or perhaps we can divert some of the runoff. We will work with the city staff, and if needed, with other resources to see what can be done.

In closing I would once again like to thank all of the volunteers and the volunteer groups, boards and organizations that do so much for our town. Some are visible but many others are not. We would not and cannot continue to be what we are without them and their organizations.

Mayor Bill Riedel

PS: Just a reminder: I am in my office on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons, on the first floor of the Gateway.

Honor Roll

Welcome and thanks to these recent subscribers of The Oberlin Herald:

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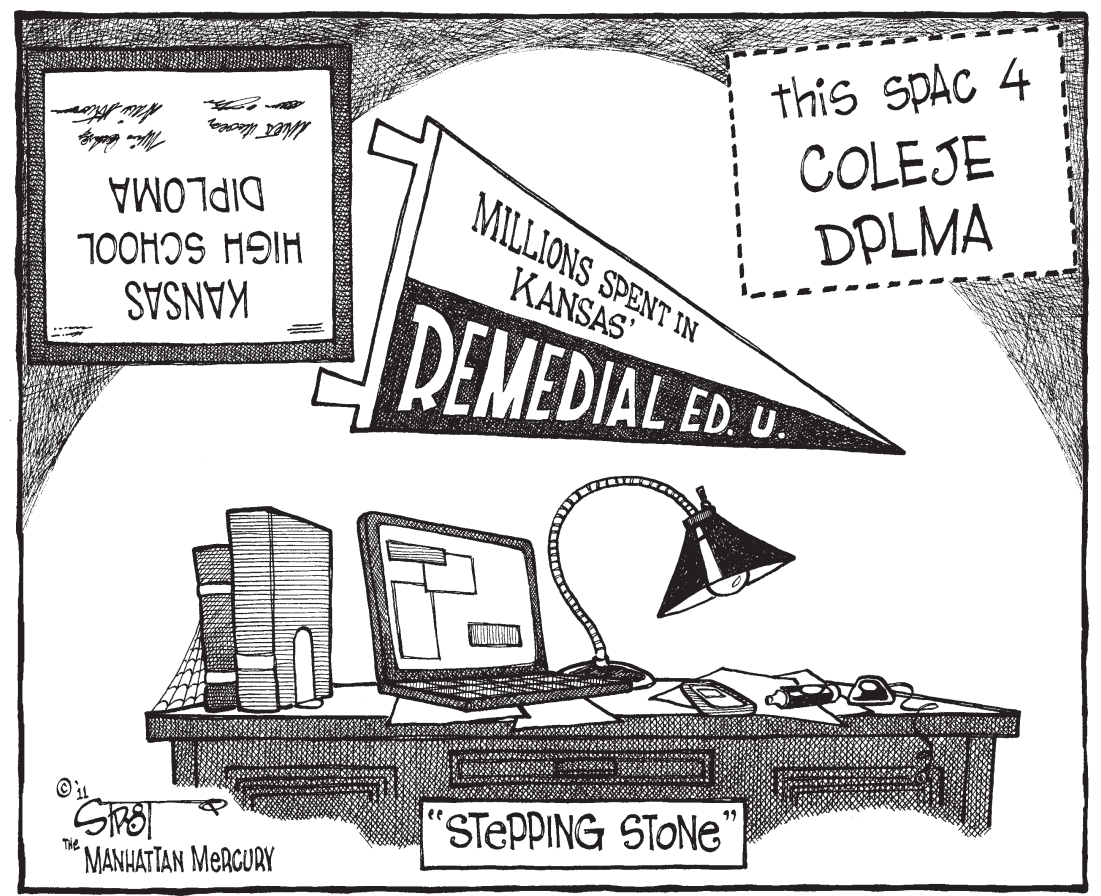
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From the Bible

Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in Heaven. Matthew 5:6



Goats replace lawn mower

Who knew I would have started a "goat revolution"? Like me, my friend, Babe, thought having a couple of portable, self-propelling, environmentally sustainable and economically feasible lawn mowers was a good idea. However, she did not want the full-sized models; she preferred the "compact" size.

I "just happen" to know a lady who raises pygmy goats. A phone call informed us she even had a couple to sell. A female that is "more than likely" pregnant and a young wether; both very tame. Three of Babe's grandchildren, Cateara, Tobias and Sasha, are visiting for two weeks, so the timing was perfect.

So, off we went on our goat-buying excursion; cat-carrier in hand. The goat lady's husband easily carried the female out of the pen and "folded" her up to fit in the carrier. However, when she stood up the carrier "exploded" and it took several pairs of hands to keep the lid on the carrier while wires were located and secured to hold the container closed.

There was no way the little male goat was going to ride in the carrier with his female companion. The only recourse was: one of the kids would have to hold the kid. (Get it?) Anyway, three hands shot up accompanied by voices begging, "Me, me, me. Pick me." Tobias was chosen because he seemed sturdy



Out Back

By *Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts*
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enough to hold on to a scared goat. But, not before I seriously cautioned him to hold on tight. The last thing I wanted was a terrified goat doing laps around the inside of the van while I was trying to drive. I needn't have worried. The goats were, indeed, tame and took their first ride in stride. Or, took it in leaps; or bounds; or in whatever goats take. When the pair was released inside their new fenced home they went right to work doing what they were "hired" to do: munching grass and leaving their little "calling cards" everywhere they went. Better there, than in the van.

I receive some interesting e-mail from friends. One was a link to a site, www.cohort11.americanobserver.net, that provided an animated map of the United States, broken down into counties. The animation illustrated the progression of unemployment during recent years. Kinda scary - except for one thing. There is little unemployment in the

Midwest, although, it appeared to be spreading into the metro areas. What does that mean? I think it means people in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and The Dakotas are not afraid to work and they will work. I don't think they expect a hand-out when Mother Nature deals them a bad hand. I think they never consider giving up or giving in. We come from good hardy stock out here. My mother used to say, "Hard work never killed anyone".

Jim was beaming after his first appointment with the occupational therapist. After taking measurements of his thumbs she announced, "You're the winner! I have never measured a thumb that big." She told him that if he did all his hand, finger and thumb exercises every day, like she showed him, he would only have to come once a week. He promised he would and I'm going to see to it that he does.

She is much too pretty for him to see three times a week.

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