

President may be down, but whom do we vote for?

The president seems to be down and nearly out, as much of a one-hit wonder as Jimmy Carter three decades ago or George H.W. Bush in the '90s.

But can the Republicans nominate a candidate who will unite the nation and attract enough support from independent voters — who hold the balance in any national election — to make a change in Washington?

And then, with majorities in both houses of Congress and a new person (man or woman) in the White House, can the GOP lead the nation to solving some of our most pressing problems?

All that remains to be seen. In politics as in weather, things can change overnight.

The president clearly is in danger. No one has been re-elected to his office with unemployment over 7 percent since the Great Depression. His administration seems to have stalled and even his vaunted health-care plan seems to be on the rocks.

Republicans don't like his policies, and Democrats increasingly seem to think he's strayed from the true course of liberalism.

Yet all that just amounts to wishful thinking if the opposition can't rally around an electable candidate. And remember, it's not the party hard-core or the "tea party" on the far right that will make the decision. It's those Americans in the vast middle who swing one way or another.

The same people opted for change four years ago and voted for Mr. Obama as George W. Bush wound up a tumultuous eight years. Hardly anyone wanted more of the same.

Now, the economy is in tatters, worse possibly than when the president took office. The "recovery" is as slow as the recession was deep. Unemployment remains above 9 percent. Business coughs and sputters as it tries to get geared up. And after four years, it's hard to keep "blaming Bush."

Then, one of the big credit-rating agencies downgrades the government's standing, something that's never happened. The stock market behaves like a yo-yo, and people are scared.

And scared people don't invest. They don't create jobs and they don't spend money.

By all rights, Mr. Obama should be done.

But so far, the GOP has no one who can stand up and lead the party to victory. Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney comes off as competent but uninspiring. Tea party favorite Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota, like her backers, may be too strident to attract independents. And former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin seems to wander without purpose.

It's not that the tea party is wrong, by the way. We owe the movement a great debt for focusing debate on the federal deficit and the national debt. But the voters who swing elections are not that devoted to principle.

What the Republicans need is a leader, a problem solver, someone the nation can believe in, yes, but someone who can knock heads and get things done, dealing with both sides of the aisle.

And so far, we haven't seen him — or her — on the campaign trail.

— Steve Haynes



Kitchen light, airy and empty

We bought our home in Oberlin because of the kitchen, but now we'd like to change it.

I guess it's sort of like the play, "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change."

Our kitchen is big and airy, with lots of windows. It's wonderful.

It's also more than 20 years old. It has a low grade of very pretty linoleum and cabinets that have seen better days.

We've had the worst wears and tears on the linoleum patched, but they show up as shiny spots on the floor.

The cabinets are another problem. The fronts are sagging and the wonderful turntable in the bottom of the corner unit broke the second year we lived here. Since then, our conditions have lived first in a cardboard box and, more recently, on a small bakers' rack that was made for plants but was on sale at the end of the summer a few years ago.

So we decided that while mortgage rates are down, we should try to refinance the house and see if we could get enough money to remodel the kitchen.

We're looking at new cabinets, flooring and a bar instead of the glass-topped table we've had in there for many years.

To that end, we visited our friendly neighborhood banker.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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She worked with us and did a good job, but it took about six months to get everything together so that we could get enough money to do what we wanted.

As the loan process drew to a close, we moved the glass-topped table out of the house and four of its six chairs went with it. It seemed like a good idea to get rid of things when we had the chance and make room for the remodeling, but that was a couple of months ago.

Our spacious, airy kitchen has been especially spacious the last few weeks with a large hole in the middle and a pair of lonely kitchen chairs sitting naked, without any table over them.

We were bad about using the old kitchen table as a junk collector. Now the only things we have to put our bags and boxes on are the leftover chairs, and the cats seem to think that those were made especially for them to sleep on.

When we come in the house loaded down with groceries, papers from the office or just plain junk from wherever, we have to fight the cats for space to put it down. Then when we need to take off our muddy shoes, we have nothing to sit on, and we don't bend in the middle quite as easily these days as we did when we moved in here 18 years ago.

Still, we have our loan — our payment even went down, would you believe it — and we've ordered the cabinets. We may have our kitchen ready to go sometime this year — or maybe next or next. (There was a fire at the cabinet shop, did you hear? And the floor guy is way behind.)

In the meantime, the floor is getting full of our stuff and the cats are still trying to maintain possession of the only two chairs in the room.

Oh, the joys of remodeling. But the kitchen is still light and airy — and right now, pretty spacious, too.

Bang! Big hail just explodes

I thought I had been shot!

When that baseball-size hailstone hit the windshield, it sounded like a rifle had gone off right beside my ear. When the next one hit, I was only slightly more prepared for it.

Our little town found itself in the middle of a devastating hail storm last week. The hail stripped leaves from trees, pounded flowers and gardens and stripped field crops.

The jury is still out on whether corn was far enough along to finish filling out or not. I guess the decision will have to be made soon whether to leave it in the field or cut it for ensilage.

I was on the highway just five miles from home when the first hailstone hit. By the time I pulled up in front of the house, the hailstones were pounding the car. I made a dash for the house, where Jim and I stood in the doorway and just watched. The sound was so deafening we had to yell at each other to be heard.

I watched as my petunias and moss roses were beaten up and holes punched in the siding of our rental house across the street. By the time it was over, we had drifts of hail up against the house and in the fence corners.

You feel pretty insignificant up against the forces of nature. You're powerless in the face of its wrath. But it is what it is, and if I would have had some cream in the house, I would have made ice cream.

-ob-

After looking at the leaves and debris in the yard, Saturday was



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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designated "Clean-Up Day." I hired a young man I know to help and expanded his duties to first clean out the chicken coop. That was a job I had been dreading and he tackled it with the gusto of someone who either (a) had never cleaned a chicken coop before or (b) wanted to earn extra money for school clothes in the worst way.

I'm sure it was the latter, because he worked like a man with years of experience. Chris is only 16, but he boosted my confidence in the upcoming generation. I told his mother what a good job she has done raising him. He was polite; he ate everything set before him for lunch and said it was good; he took his dishes to the sink after the meal; and, most importantly, he completed his jobs and kept asking for more to do.

He will definitely get more jobs at our house, and I'll give him good references anytime

-ob-

It's no secret that our daughter Jennifer is a strict disciplinarian. She's not a tyrant but, she does expect to be obeyed.

Actually, I wish more young

parents were like her. But, that's another column.

Jennifer and her two girls, Alexandria, 16, and Ani, 5, have quite a menagerie, including two pomeranians, a golden retriever and two cats. Everyone is involved with caring for the animals.

One day, Jennifer had put the little pomeranian, Pumpkin, in the back yard while she went back to work in her home office. Ani was ensconced on the living room sofa, watching cartoons when her mother heard the dog scratching at the door.

Jennifer called out, "Ani, could you let Pumpkin back in, please."

Without skipping a beat, Ani shot back, "You let him out ... you can let him back in."

Jennifer said she practically launched out of her chair to go set Ani straight, but by the time she got to Ani, her rage had blown over and she saw the humor in it.

Now, please don't think our little Ani was being sassy. She really wasn't. Jim thinks it's funny.

"Finally, Jennifer is getting what she deserves," he said, "after what she gave me."

Doctor search forum coming

To the Editor:

The Decatur Tomorrow "Positive Culture" Action Team has now had two meetings. The mission statement we have agreed on is "to create a process where all people in Decatur County unite to create a positive culture and attitude in our communities."

We have set several goals into place as to how we want to see this happen in Oberlin, Norcatur, Dresden, Cedar Bluffs, Jennings, Leoville and Traer.

There seems to be increasing unrest and unhappiness in Oberlin about the absence of a physician. We recognize the strong need and sense of urgency in obtaining a physician we can be proud of to serve our medical needs. We also realize that in the past, some poor decisions have been made in this area which have affected people's level of trust.

We believe the current leadership has seen the consequences of these decisions, has learned from them and is determined to do everything possible to keep these in the past.

One of the reasons for writing today is to assure everyone that the leadership in the medical community is strong. This includes our hospital chief executive officer, Lynn Doeden, and the hospital board, Chairman Ron Jansonius, Pam Wilson, Gary Walter, Connie Grafel and Kathy Nauer.

The senior management team at the hospital includes Suzanne Ahlberg, chief nursing officer; Margee

Letters to the Editor

Wilson, chief nursing officer for Cedar Living Center; and Amanda Fortin, chief financial officer. The collective experience of our team, whose names are listed below, leads us to believe that these leaders are doing everything they can to secure a doctor. They are doing an excellent job compared with our knowledge of how these things are done elsewhere. We have much to be thankful for in the leaders we have here.

This said, we are asking the people of all of our communities to unite, support and trust the leadership we have. The selection of a physician is a process that requires a great deal of investigation and information. Unless our leaders follow the proper steps, the people of our communities cannot be properly protected. If we lose any of them, it will only make it harder to get a physician, and will take longer. A community that is truly united in reaching a common goal will be seen and felt by those who are looking to join us.

If you have a concern about how things are going, any of the members of our action team would be happy to meet with you. A county-wide open meeting Monday, Sept. 12, in Jennings will give everyone another opportunity to be heard. Any current issues in our towns may be discussed at this meeting. The Jennings American Legion plans to serve dinner before the

meeting itself.

For now, we'd like to express our personal gratitude to the leaders of this effort. They are investing enormous amounts of time and energy to find a physician. All of the details of their work cannot be shared in a public forum, but as decisions are made, they will be known to all.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Herald* concurs that the effort to hire doctors, though frustrating, is going as well as can be expected. This is not an easy job, but one candidate plans to start a trial period later this month.

The hospital's board and executives, led by Mrs. Doeden, have put in long hours and endured much stress to get this far, but it's a job well done to this point. We believe they will finish by hiring high-quality physicians to staff an efficient and dependable clinic, and support their effort. — Steve Haynes

Carnival volunteers win praise

To the Editor:

I want to thank all of the volunteers, past and present, who have helped our Homegrown Carnival continue these many years. It does

my heart good seeing all the buildings and rides shining brightly with a fresh coat of paint, noticing the grounds mowed and in good condition and hearing about all the

improvements. I commend each one of you for the dedication, the long hours away from your daily lives and all the "sweat and tears" needed to keep the carnival running.

Thank you for continuing to bring joy, laughter and squeals to the many children, young and old!

Floyd Lotker, past president
Decatur County
Amusement Authority

Honor Roll

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

Elsewhere: Sheila DeKnight, Stockton, Mo.; Kay Harold, Clinton, Iowa; Patty Savage, Loganville, Ga.; Lester Williams, Northglenn, Colo.; Janice Kurth, Imperial, Neb.; Miriam Tuller, Guthrie, Okla.; Shirley Frerichs Zana, San Antonio, Texas; Clayton Jording, Medford, Ore.; John Kump, Lake

Elmo, Minn.; Bob Hepner, Prescott, Ariz.; Dexter Arnold, Tucson, Ariz.; Thomas McCoy, Belle Fourche, S.D.; Karli Fredrickson, Tahlequah, Okla.; Mrs. Bob Scherzer, Rockport, Texas; Janet Zavesky, Huron, S.D.; Peggy Carlton, Bakersfield.

Colorado: Avis Davis, Englewood; Shawna Karl, Brighton; Mary Groneweg, Lakewood; Gary Vaughn, Henderson; Elton Gillespie, Littleton.

From the Bible

And He spake a parable unto them, "Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

— Luke 6:39

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