

Who'll start planning to build swimming pool?

Anyone who believes Oberlin kids should have a new swimming pool needs to make it their New Year's resolution to see that happen.

The city got through last summer with its antiquated pool, built in 1956, but everyone knows that can't last. Sooner or later, we'll face another summer without swimming — as soon as the boiler fails or another crack opens up in the concrete.

Some might differ, but we believe a good pool is something a Kansas town simply must have. For their own good, kids need to know how to swim, but it goes beyond that. In long, hot summers, a pool is the best place for our kids, who otherwise might spend their days indoors, glued to a video game.

Kids need outdoor life and sunshine. Walking to the pool in flip-flops, towel over the shoulders, is a Kansas tradition. And if we want to preserve that for future generations, we need to build our children and grandchildren a pool.

It will take several things to get a pool built. One is careful planning. The city's pool commission left a legacy there. That group scoped out the cost and benefits of a new pool, had the planners pare the cost down, and left a set of preliminary plans that could be updated and used. This is a great legacy.

More important, perhaps, is planning how to pay for a pool and how to get voters to approve that plan. Over the last four or five years, that's not really been possible, but the time approaches when it can be done.

Just a guess, but we think it might take two years to plan and win a bond or sales tax election for a pool. The benefits will be countywide, and the entire county ought to be counted on to help pay for a pool.

With farm prices high and farm taxes relatively low, this should be a good time to get support. We think farmers care as much about our kids as anyone else. The estimated cost — \$1.5 million in 2006 — surely has gone up, but will go up even more if we don't build the pool soon.

What's really required here is leadership, people to adopt this task and move forward with planning, convincing and campaigning.

It won't be an easy job. The requirements are mostly hard work and dedication. The rewards will be known only when a new pool opens, filled with squealing children.

Other area towns, including Colby, Goodland, Oakley and Atwood, have met this challenge. Oberlin should not be left behind.

Who will step forward for our kids?
— Steve Haynes

2012 looks pretty good so far

So here I sit on the first day of the new year, contemplating what was, what is and what is yet to be.

There may have been some bad times in 2011, but I can't seem to think of any right now. All our needs and many of our wants were met; we never bounced a check; and our health (barring injuries) has been excellent. We've been blessed with wonderful friends, loving children, fulfilling work and a purpose for our lives. Life is good.

Looking ahead, I expect more of the same.

Our lives are not very complicated, although sometimes we make them so. If there is anything Jim and I both want to do in the near future it's to "simplify." That is an overused word, but to me it means to pare down, get rid of stuff, eliminate the clutter in our lives. And I don't mean just the pile of last year's magazines. I mean find new homes for many of the things we don't use, but hang on to "just in case."

Perhaps I'm in this "get rid of it all mood" because 24 hours ago we were still on a mission trip in Mexico. The family we built a house for had next to nothing. Mother and father both were mentally challenged and the mother was physically challenged as well.

The house the family lived in was little more than a cardboard shack. Cracks all around let in the cold



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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wind and rain. And yes, it gets cold in Mexico. Every year, hundreds of poor people die from exposure and hypothermia.

Still, this family always had smiles on their faces. They were obviously proud of their children and welcomed us into their lives with no reservations.

I am always humbled by people who have so little, but are so willing to share. Everyone could learn from the world's poor. We would learn what is really important: Our faith, our family and our friends.

My kids think I should start the de-cluttering by burning some of my mission trip work clothes. I have certain garments that I only wear in Mexico. Kind of a tradition.

We spent two nights in Dallas and my oldest daughter, Halley, drove me to a store with one of those do-it-yourself photo printing kiosks to print the trip pictures. As we were walking through the parking lot, I

said, "I hope these clothes are all right. Everything else I had was dirty and in the wash."

Halley replied, "Mom, you look like a homeless person. I can't believe you were giving them clothes. It looks like they gave you clothes."

Perhaps it's time to retire the work wardrobe. Goodbye, old friends.

From the Bible

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
— Philipians 2:9-11

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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pertain to our area.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.



LES ANDERSON
WORLDCLASS JOURNALIST, TEACHER, MENTOR AND HUMAN BEING
CROWSON 11-13-11
FOR KANUW

Friends felt he was important

Les Anderson must have been important, his son Spike speculated, looking out at a sea of faces that nearly filled a vast suburban auditorium owned by Wichita State University.

He seemed a little surprised at that, and seemed somehow to doubt that his dad had thought of himself that way, yet here were all those people.

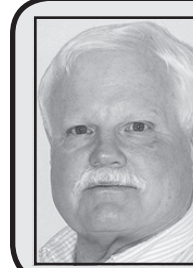
I'm not sure I ever thought of Les as important. I thought of him first as a friend, as a damn fine editor, a good writer, as a teacher of journalism.

How he wound up drawing all those people together does make quite a story. He was born in tiny Viola, southwest of Wichita, and moved to his long-time "hometown" of Valley Center, north of the city, only when he was 14.

After graduating from high school there, he went to Fort Hays State College, then to the University of Missouri for a master's degree in journalism. He came home to work for the *Wichita Eagle* in 1971.

By 1975, Les left a startup weekly in Wichita to found the *Ark Valley News* in Valley Center, and in 1977 he started teaching at Wichita State. Both are both full-time jobs, but if they wore Les down, he never complained.

Much later, he sold the paper — twice — and finally "retired" to just teaching. In 2009, he was honored by the university, which promoted him to the rank full professor. He



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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was the first to be elevated to that rank with only a master's degree in many years, it's said. That is a measure of what his bosses and colleagues thought of him as a teacher, in a world where schools are graded down for faculty lacking a doctoral "meal ticket."

Spike professed inadequacy when he talked about his dad — "Unfortunately, he wasn't here to edit this," he said. "I'm sure he'd of had plenty of comments." — but he spoke eloquently about a man who didn't seem to know "how important he was."

He was a man, his son said, who volunteered to sleep in a cardboard box outside his church to raise money for the homeless, and who left baskets of fresh tomatoes from his garden for a new neighbor.

"If you die young," a fellow editor intoned, "I guess you can have a big funeral."

At 62, nearly 63, he was younger than a lot of us in the press gallery. But I think it was more than that.

Les won a lot of awards, served

on the board and as president of the state Press Association, influenced thousands of students, fought in his stories and columns for what he thought was right. But perhaps his biggest impact was summed up by a former student:

"Your dad changed my life," she told Spike.

That, and he was a heck of a good guy.

A cartoon image from 1971 shows Les with curly red hair, but most of that was gone by the time we met him. Another, by long-time Eagle cartoonist Richard Crowson, shows him as a somewhat-intimidated angel arriving in Heaven to tutor William Allen White.

Forgive me for writing about someone most of you didn't know, but there are days when, as my old boss in Kansas City once told me, "news is something that happens close to an editor."

A lot of people did know Les, and we are going to miss him.

Never time enough to finish

I love weekends, but I never seem to get everything done. Three-day weekends are just a little longer way to not get stuff finished.

I suppose most people have the same weekend.

Every weekend is like New Year's Eve for me. I make all these resolutions, and most of them never get done.

I'm a list maker. I have a book that I write down what I want to do each day. That way, if I have a task that has to be done at a certain time, hopefully I won't miss it.

I even separate the work and home stuff.

This is a good thing. But I always have more lines in my little book than time in my schedule.

My list looks a little like this:

- Home**
- 1. Nap.
- 2. Walk.
- 3. Fold laundry.
- 4. Clean cat boxes.
- 5. Clean dog pen.
- 6. Bake zucchini bread.
- 7. Get groceries.
- 8. Put away Christmas decorations.
- 9. Put out trash.
- 10. Clean out hall closet.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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- Office**
- 1. Write basketball story.
- 2. Write wrestling story.
- 3. Write column.
- 4. Take pictures at soup luncheon.
- 5. Finish payroll report.
- 6. File stuff on chair.
- 7. Enter postal reports in computer.

While a good half of this stuff won't get done, the first two items under home will. These are high-priority items that always get done. Sometimes in reverse order. Sometimes early. Sometimes late. But I get really cranky if I don't get my nap, and Steve gets out of sorts if we don't get a walk.

The pictures will be taken and the stories get written before the paper is finished Monday night. The cat boxes and dog pen will get cleaned

and the trash put out before the trash man comes on Monday morning.

The zucchini may have to sit in the refrigerator for another day or week, but those Christmas decorations will get taken to the garage before Lent. I just know they will.

As for the hall closet and the pile on the chair in my office. They'll still be on my to-do list for the next several months. Hey, they haven't been cleaned up or filed in a couple of years, so what's the hurry.

Besides, if I get those tasks done, I'll just have to add something else tough to the list, and I really don't want to have to deal with the basement at home or the back room at the office. They've been ignored since before some of our employees were born, and would take up way too much time — and space on the list.

We all need to work together

To the Editor:
Many individuals have been called and sent to the city of Oberlin to rouse, encourage, and assist the city of Oberlin to sow a new Field of Dreams.

There are great possibilities, because there is a tremendous network of capable people who volunteer through organizations, committees, clubs and religious clusters. Many are employed within the city to serve in each sector of commerce, but work beyond their allotted time. All are giving their time, talent and treasure in working together for the common good of the city.

Unfortunately, one extreme, uncompromising difficulty exists. The city of Oberlin has no money! This word, causes a suppressed and negative attitude to be conveyed to the folks of Oberlin, no matter how true it may be. We need to dream and initiate a new word of hope! Isaiah 55:10-11 speaks a new word to us

Letter to the Editor

today that is very good:

"For as the rain and the snow comes down from heaven, and return no thither but water the earth. Making it bring forth and sprout giving seed to the sower and bread to the Eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and prosper in the thing for which I sent it." The word of the Lord.

Yes, I believe this word is meant at this time for the folks and citizens in Oberlin. There may not be enough money, but together we can accomplish our goals and dreams.

and functions could be held there, providing more income, also allowing longer stays for those who come to the park.

Money is needed to rejuvenate the house/office at the old youth ranch for a caretaker to live in. Eventually, the four multipurpose buildings will be restored by the helping hands of the people of Oberlin. Family camps, retreats, lodging for hunting groups and various other activities could be offered. All that is needed is a small amount of "mustard seed" money to realize a greater harvest for the city of Oberlin.

Let all of us go into the Field of Dreams and sow the seed that will come at the right time, surely producing a bountiful harvest. We will, we can, together!

Susan Rynearson, Oberlin

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