

## Spread-out district isn't good for any of us

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer is upset about the shape his district is in, or at least the shape it could be in if the latest map proposal for redistricting the state Senate becomes law.

The map, known as Ad Astra, would stretch the already huge 40th district into eastern Kansas and well into the southwest. It would be impossible to cover with a couple of days of town-hall meetings.

The 40th is already the largest in the state. Under the Ad Astra proposal, it would grow to 20 1/2 counties, adding Phillips, Smith and Jewell on the east, losing Trego and Ness and adding half of Hamilton.

But Jewell County is in the eastern half of the state; Hamilton is on the Arkansas River and two-thirds of the way to Oklahoma.

Sen. Ostmeyer jokes that maybe the leadership is mad at him. More likely, someone is trying to draw a map that will satisfy the most people, including legislators who don't want to have to run against each other.

But whatever the reason, the result would be a district that would be tough to represent. Covering all or part of 20 counties, it would force the senator to keep in touch with fully one-fifth of the county commissioners in the state.

Today, from his home in Grainfield, near the

center of the 18-county district, Sen. Ostmeyer can be in any town in the 40th in a couple of hours.

It'd be 325 miles from Syracuse in Hamilton County to St. Francis in Cheyenne to Mankato in Jewell, near three-fourths of the distance across the state. And it'd be a six-hour drive.

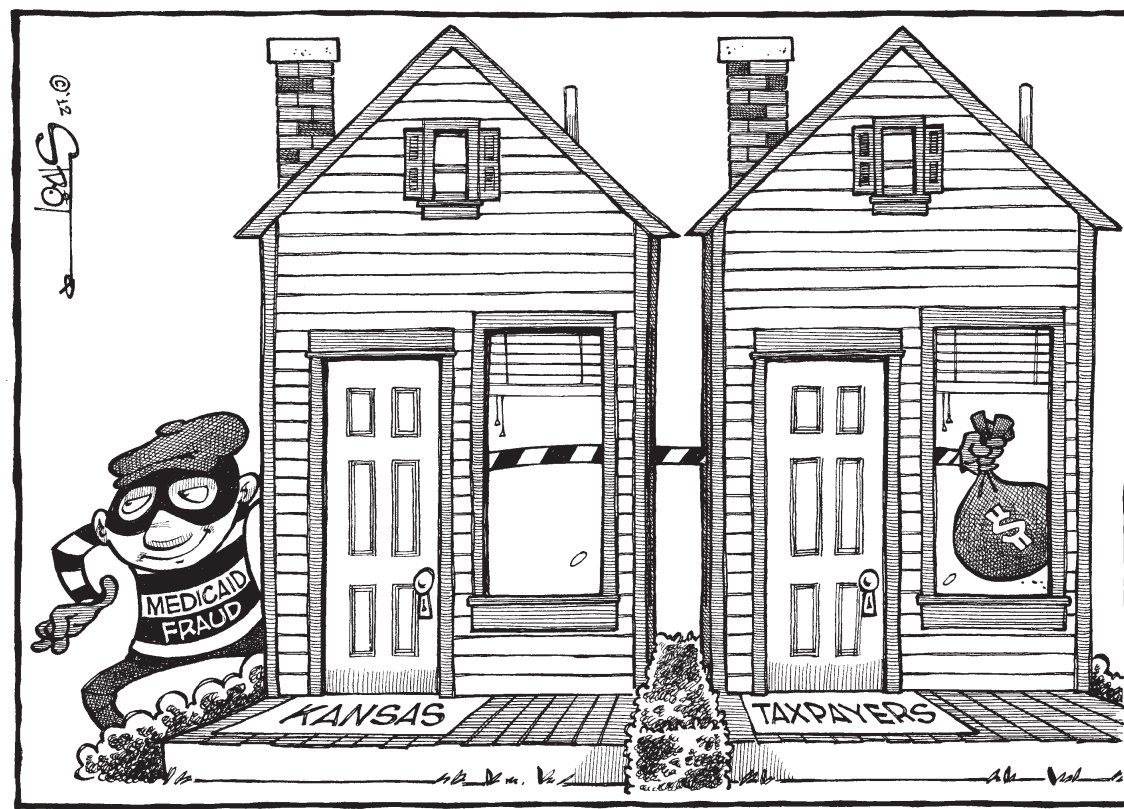
The district would be almost impossible to represent. It would be a burden for any candidate who wanted to run for the seat. In Johnson County, the "new" 37th District spans just a few miles.

The thing is, Sen. Ostmeyer said, all his district needs to meet the guidelines laid down by federal courts to add Phillips County. That would retain the basic square shape, he said, and keep the district as compact as it could be.

Our view: it's tough enough to represent the huge 40th District without making it impossible. The Senate leadership needs to take practical considerations into account.

This district already represents nearly all the northwest quadrant of the state, with a slice of the southwest thrown in. Stretching it into a gerrymander won't make things any better.

Anyone who votes for the district as it stands in the Ad Astra map ought to be made to come out here and drive it. — Steve Haynes



## Small schools teach big skills

A seventh grader in Milton, Wash., a small town near Seattle, saved a busload of students when the driver had an apparent heart attack.

A surveillance camera caught the whole thing on tape and the young man was an instant hero.

He stopped the bus when he noticed that it was in the wrong lane and headed for a church and the driver was slumped over the wheel. He said he couldn't reach the brakes, so he just turned off the key and steered to the right.

He said he remembered reading about a super hero who saved a busload of people by doing this.

Hooray for super heroes and seventh-graders with good memories and quick minds, I say.

Hidden in the body of the story are a few more heroes. While the one young man was taking care of the bus and his fellow students, a second seventh grader was giving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to the driver.

Other students called 911. I'm thinking that these kids go to a small school. That's probably just my small-school bias talking, but I really think that you learn more about life and everyday living when you live in a small town and go to a small school.



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
c.haynes@nwkansas.com

Back when my girls were in junior high in Creede and Monte Vista, Colo., every seventh grader learned CPR. Seventh grade seemed to be the time that the youngsters got a chance to try a lot of new things. Everyone took shop for a semester and everyone took home economics for a semester. My daughters made coat racks and small bookcases and the boys learned to fry, saute, bake and take care of themselves. They also learned to sew on buttons and make small pillows.

It was a time to learn some of life's important skills.

I wish that they did those things here. My son took woodworking but he never had to take home ec. He can cook, but I don't think he can sew. He learned to cook at home but his mother doesn't sew. I know that he knows how to iron, because his sisters taught him that. It's another thing I don't do.

But cardiopulmonary resuscitation is a skill everyone should have. Every young person, every adult. You don't need to be an emergency worker. You just need to be around people.

A friend of mine is alive today because his son gave him cardiopulmonary resuscitation after he keeled over during a family Thanksgiving dinner.

It isn't a cure-all. Not everyone whose heart stops can be saved. But even one person saved — if it's your child, husband, wife, sister, brother, mother, father or friend — is enough to justify teaching this valuable skill.

Yes, I've taken the classes several times. I've done CPR when I worked on the ambulance. I could use a refresher course, but I know enough to try to save a life.

Do you?

## Tax time takes its annual toll

Call us procrastinators if you will. But when you owe taxes, you're not quite as eager to file your returns as you are when the government owes you money.

I did my part before we left for Mexico. I compiled all the information, day by day, month by month. I ran tapes on our monthly utilities, on our average dining-out expense, our total business expenses, how much tools cost and work-truck expenses. If it was in a deductible category, I calculated it.

This, however, is the point where I hand it all over to Jim. He fills in the blanks. Oh, I help a little. He will have me divide one number by .0296, then multiply by 1.035, add 3.147, carry the 6 and subtract 8. I'll call out the answer; he'll repeat it; I'll confirm it; and he will plug the answer into the appropriate slot.

The deadline to file taxes is April 15, but because it fell on a Sunday this year, we were automatically granted a one-day reprieve. Then I heard on the news that Monday is some kind of Internal Revenue Service holiday, and we actually have until Tuesday to send our taxes in. I'll share a little secret with you. I'm not telling Jim, and by our standards, we will file early.

Paying taxes is like dirty dishes. If you have dirty dishes, it means you have food to eat. If you have to pay taxes, it means you made enough money to be taxed.

I don't mind paying my fair share, but when I hear that only 20 percent of the population pays 80 percent of the taxes and that 47 percent of Americans don't pay any taxes at all, it makes me question how fair it really is.

There is a country-gospel song titled, "If 10 percent is good enough for Jesus, it ought to be good enough for Uncle Sam." I'm not kidding. It is a real song. It's starting to make



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
cplotts65@gmail.com

more sense.

-ob-

It's been a slow "news" week around our house. Eat, sleep, work; eat, sleep, work.

The only things new are the two heifer calves Jim bought at the sale barn. Let's just say there is no margin for error in raising these two. They will get the royal treatment until it's time for them to make that return trip to the sale barn. Unless I can sell them privately first. I'd put in a plug right now. If anyone is looking for fall replacement heifers, these two would be ideal.

We determined this spring we would get a little older calves. Ones that are already eating grass — no more midnight bottle feedings. I had no idea that he would bring home half-grown cows.

One is red with a white face and a round, red patch on the side of her head. I said it looked like she had a rosy cheek ... so she is Rosy. Her penmate is a black heifer that got an old-fashioned farm name ... Flossy.

They seem content inside their pen and have really "slicked" it up. Soon, we'll move them to the west pasture. That means we'll move them across the alley to our other pen.

This week we've been getting them used to us. We walk into their pen with feed, talk to them and let them get accustomed to our sound and smell. They are too big to hog-

tie and bulldog, so they need to be tame enough to follow us. Everyone's life will be a lot easier if we don't have a rodeo on our hands.

-ob-

We're waiting on prom pictures from Texas. One granddaughter, Chanelle, is a senior, and Alexandria is a junior. They go to different schools, but are both going to their school's prom.

A neighboring town held its prom Saturday night and I went to watch. A young friend of mine is new to the area, and she had never seen a prom like we have in Kansas, so I invited her along. We had fun admiring all the beautiful attire and hairdos. And that was just the boys!

The girls looked good, too. One thing I can say ... there was no trend. This year, anything goes. We saw full, "puffy" gowns, slinky gowns, satin gowns, sparkly gowns, psychedelic prints, long ones, short ones and one that was short in front and long in the back. We even saw a pair of hot pink tennis-shoe high heels.

One thing I did not see, and was glad of it: no one was chewing gum. Someone must have been listening to my complaints from years past.

I would cringe when I would see a beautifully coiffed girl or a "decked-out" boy walk into the limelight munching away on a wad of gum. Oh my.

Better quit. I'm starting to sound like my mother.

## Storm spotter classes pay off

I knew going to all those storm spotter classes would pay off some day.

No, I didn't see an EF5 tornado, call in an alert that saved a town or take any cool storm-spotter pictures.

I did see, for a minute or so before it dissipated, what I'm pretty sure was a tornado. At least it looked like a cloud-to-ground rotating column of cloud. Spotters north of us reported a confirmed tornado right before that.

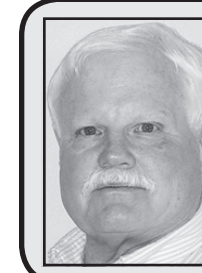
But let me back up a little. We'd been in Lincoln for the Nebraska Press convention, a meeting we make most years. Mostly, we go to see old friends, but since I'm still on the board, we help represent the National Newspaper Association.

We'd planned to stay until the pre-dinner reception, then take off for home. But the National Weather Service had issued one of the toughest tornado forecasts ever for Saturday afternoon and evening. Cynthia and I talked about it, and decided that if we had to dodge severe storms and even tornadoes on the way home, it's be easier to deal with them in the daylight.

At the same time, many of our friends and neighbors to the north were walking toward the football stadium for the spring game. That's where 70,000 people dressed in red sit together for a couple of hours and yell their heads off for their team, despite the fact that it's just playing itself.

No one ever said people in Nebraska were sane.

About the time we had decided to leave, the people wearing red started walking back south, away from the stadium. Seems the officials and coaches had heard the forecast, too. At the same time, the first of several thunderstorms ripped



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

through town, scattering thunder, rain and lightning.

We said our goodbyes after a short tour of the press association office and started driving west. While the post-game traffic had thinned out — most of the cars from the stadium lots seemed to be turning left, into the "entertainment" district of downtown Lincoln — Interstate 80 in the rain proved to be more than we could take. While Cynthia napped, I cut over to U.S. 6 and fixed a course for McCook, one eye cocked for the clouds.

We passed through some storms on the way to Holdrege. There, we stopped to buy popcorn and Cynthia ran into a couple of friends from Oberlin. While she was talking, the dispatcher was sending storm spotters out west of town.

A few miles to the southwest, after leaving Atlanta, we saw the storm they were waiting for: big, ugly and black, and headed right across the line of U.S. 6 to Arapahoe.

In storm-spotter class, they tell you never to drive into the front of a storm. That's where you find the heavy rain, big hail, high winds and lightning. And driving my "new" truck, I wasn't too eager to jump into whatever might be there.

The other thing about going into the storm is you can't see whatever's coming through the rain. And if that's a tornado, you might not have time to get away.

We decided to detour south through Oxford, which was already past the south end of the storm. And lucky we did. While we were rounding the south end, spotters reported a tornado touching down near the highway we would have been on.

Looking north, we could see what appeared to be — it was hard to know for sure — a rope-like tornado hanging from the base of the storm. Then it was gone.

All kinds of looky-loos and amateur storm spotters were racing around, too late to do much but get in the way. You can really see the impact of all the storm-chaser shows on television.

Used to be, the wags said tornado sirens sounded out here so people knew when to stand on the porch and look for the twister. Now, I guess, they mean it's time to go tearing up and down rural roads.

Me, I'd just as soon stay out of the way. If I ever see a Big Tornado, I'm sure it'll be the experience of a lifetime. But I've lived in Kansas most of my life, and I haven't seen one yet. Saturday was as close as I've been — or need to be.

### From the Bible

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."  
— John 10:11

## Honor Roll

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

**Colorado:** Romajeane Hahn, Aurora; Aleta Phelps, Betty Rall, Robert Keefer, Colorado Springs; Jean Earlywine, Louisville; Jacqueline Mayberry, Grand Junction; Doris Runyan, Greeley; J.B. Hubbard, Lakewood; Charles Kelley, Lamar; Rita Ann Carey, Westminster.  
**Elsewhere:** Eileen Hazelbaker,

Grangeville, Idaho; Evan Shuler, Corpus Christi, Texas; Esther Ready, New York; Jim and Nadine Barker, Lebanon, Ore.; Richard Barrett, Glendora, Calif.

**Kansas:** Lloyd Wente, Quinter; Ryan and Leslie Nelson, Topeka; Tyler Roe, Overland Park; Jeanette Bosch, Beverly Delano, Wichita; Margery Adams, Olathe; Leona Kaspar, Hays; the Rev. and Mrs. Doug Hasty, Cheney; Alan Shuler,

Salina; Jack Kelley, Clay Center; Cecil Kimball, Lenora.

**Area:** Farm Credit of Western Kansas, Colby; Victor Ritter, Jennings; Janice Hayes, Atwood; Richard Colling, McCook.

**Norton:** Glenn Schulze, Allen Tacha, Mildred Schwab.

**Selden:** Earl Brown, James Carswell.

**Oberlin:** Don Fredrickson, Merlin Rippe, Lois Meitl, Jack E. Forti

# THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

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

Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

### Nor'West Newspapers

#### STAFF

Steve Haynes ..... editor  
Kimberly Davis ..... managing editor  
Mary Lou Olson ..... society editor  
Carolyn Kelley-Plotts ..... proofreader, columnist  
Joan Betts ..... historian  
Cynthia Haynes ..... business manager  
Pat Cozad ..... want ads/circulation  
Crista Sauvage ..... advertising makeup

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers  
Kimberly Davis, assistant publisher

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, 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.

