

We need a better pool to help our town survive

“We need more people. Our town is dying.”
“We need some younger people around here. Everyone is getting old.”
“We really need a new doctor, one who will stay around.”
“Who’d want to live in this town, anyway? There’s nothing to do here.”
“We need some new businesses here. There aren’t any decent jobs.”

In Oberlin, we hear that kind of thing all the time. One answer to all those problems is a new, modern and attractive swimming pool.

No one raising a family wants to move to a town without a decent pool. It’s that simple, a necessity of life on the plains. People making decisions about where to move, where to move a business, where to settle down for a lifetime, look at things like that.

Sure, we have small classes, clean streets, low crime, no traffic, nice people, a lot of things to recommend us. But a pool is a vital attraction. Ours is well past its prime.

It’s expensive to heat, wastes most of the water poured into it each summer, leaks and the kiddie pools are unsanitary because they have no recirculation or filter system.

The plan developed by the city’s Pool Committee would cost about \$2.1 million dollars, and while that’s a lot of money, it’s not much for a pool. Other area towns have spent more than twice that. We would not be getting some fancy water park, just a basic new pool with no leaks, an efficient heating system and a few attractive features.

We’d be able to attract families and young couples, have a shot at businesses and bring

some money to town during swim meets, which currently can’t be staged here.

The old pool isn’t going to last forever. The concrete is in bad shape, the heating system could fail again at any time and the problem with sanitation won’t go away. The design would be difficult, maybe impossible, to update. We’re going to build a new pool someday. It won’t get any cheaper, and the need won’t go away.

Opponents have claimed bonds for a pool would prevent the city from borrowing for an emergency, but because the pool bonds would go through a public building commission, that apparently is not true. Nor is it true that there’s a practical way to repair the existing pool, or that it can be modernized. We either build a new pool or we’re stuck with the old one.

Someone said the pool is only open a few months out of the year and isn’t used by many people. That’s true, but it is vital to people with kids, the ones we need to fill our schools.

Many of Oberlin’s problems are related, from an outdated pool to trashy, dangerous properties around town. A town has to decide one day whether it’s going to grow or die. There’s no middle ground.

If we want to attract the professionals and workers we need, if we want to keep the doors of downtown businesses open and grow others that will provide new jobs, if we want young people to move back here and raise their kids, if we want to have new doctors and be thought of as a place where people want to live, the answer is simple: We need a new pool.

Vote yes on the pool bond issue Nov. 6 if you care about Oberlin’s future. — *Steve Haynes*

‘Blip’ turns into forever man

Nineteen years ago, I had been single for almost 10 years and I would have told you I was never getting married again.

I lived alone and I liked it that way. My attitude was, “Men were just like the bus: there’ll be another one along in five minutes.” So when Jim Plotts strolled into my life, he was just another “blip” on my radar screen. Boy! Was I wrong.

I had agreed to go out to dinner with him, but in my mind, he was just going to be a sympathy date. When he came to the door, he was holding a guitar. He came in, sat down and proceeded to sing a Merle Haggard song. This was the first time a guy had ever serenaded me, and I admit, I kinda liked it. However, my defenses were still up, because all the way to dinner I kept saying stuff like, “I don’t make commitments. I don’t get involved. Just good friends.”

All that changed when we pulled into the parking lot at the restaurant and Jim just sat there, like he was in deep thought. I am one of those people who can’t stand awkward silence and after 10 seconds said, “What?” Still in a solemn attitude, he reached into the car’s console, drew out a small ring box, turned to me and very seriously said, “I know how you feel about commitments, but there’s something I need to ask you.”

My mind was racing as fast as my heart. “Oh, no,” I thought, “What have you gotten yourself into and



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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how are you going to get yourself out.”

If I could have found the door handle, I would have bolted. Did I mention our first date was on April 1? Yes, April Fool’s Day.

Jim opened the ring box to reveal a beautiful, marquis cut, genuine simulated diamond solitaire ring. He looked me square in the eye and said, “April Fool.”

I exhaled like a balloon stuck with a pin. I looked at him and as he looked at my ashen face, started laughing. We’ve been laughing ever since. Two weeks later, we decided to get married.

Don’t get me wrong. Our marriage isn’t perfect. We have some “humdinger” fights. I’ve never thrown a dish at him, but I have slammed quite a few doors. He can be frustrating; he can be stubborn; he can be unreasonable; he can be intolerable. And that’s on a good day.

Seriously, though. We’ve been through lots together. The death of my mom, both his parents, my brother, friends; weddings of our

children; births of grandchildren; financial ups and downs; a house remodeled into a home; all the things that weave the fabric of our lives.

Through it all we’ve come to rely on each other with a deep and abiding love and trust. We agreed, early on, that Christ would be the center of our lives and our marriage. That’s why we go to Mexico and go into the prison, for Him.

So for someone who was never going to re-marry, I’ve done a pretty good job of this one. We decided to try for another 18 years. It could happen.

From the Bible

For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

— *Hebrews 4:12*



Kitty gives blood twice daily

She sits stoically by as I lay out my instruments of torture.

There’s the machine, the strip and the needle, all placed on a fresh paper towel.

And there’s Molly, sitting on the counter, waiting.

Twice a day, we pick her up, lay out the equipment and try to get blood out of a cat’s ear.

The strip goes into the blood-testing machine and we grab an ear. Molly flinches, pulling her ears close to her head. She’s been here before, and she’s developed a profound dislike for this part.

Sometimes we can get a good drop of blood in one try. Sometimes, it takes two or even three pokes. Then there are the days when the needle goes all the way through and you get blood coming out the top and the bottom. Some days, she shakes her head and blood scatters on the wind.

After the ear starts to bleed, we put the metered strip up to the blood spot and hope that there’s enough for a successful test. If not, you have to do it all over again.

Most of the time, we’re successful and the meter registers her blood sugar, which can run anywhere from 57 to over 600. She’s supposed to be below 100, but that number is



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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seldom seen.

Next comes the shot. For sugar levels of 500 or more, she gets four to five units of Lantus insulin. If it’s in the 300 to 400 range, we go down to two to three units. Under 200 is a one-unit shot and that’s a tough one to pull up into the syringe. It’s sort of like putting 1/32nd of a teaspoon of something in the pot.

If the reading is less than 100, she doesn’t get a shot and we know that she will be high the next time around. But we know low blood sugar will kill her faster than high.

If the reading is less than 50, she gets a little honey.

While the insulin is supposed to be once-a-day, we’ve found that Molly needs two shots a day to keep her even halfway stable.

That means that in about 12 hours, we get to go through the whole rigmarole again. No wonder Molly is

getting a little tired of it all.

The shot is the easy part. She doesn’t mind it at all and probably doesn’t even feel it.

I’m told that you can do a blood test using a cat’s paw pads. Just don’t prick the largest one, I’m told.

That sounds so simple when I read the “how to test your pet’s blood glucose levels” on a web site.

However, no matter how much Molly puts her ears down it’s nothing compared to the fight I would have if I tried to get blood out of her paw.

I’m guessing that both of us would be a bloody mess if I tried that. As it is, Steve has a tendency to get both the cat’s ear and his finger when he does the check.

I suppose a two-for-one might be efficient, but I doubt that either his doctor or Molly’s is going to buy that.

Woman worries about debt

To the Editor:

I believe that when we go to the polls, we should be fully informed. The young women on the Oberlin Pool Committee have done a good job of promoting the sales-tax issue for the pool project. What you haven’t heard is the current debt of the city and what the new pool would cost the taxpayers by the time it is paid off. I feel obligated to share that information so everyone can make a decision with all the facts before them.

The City of Oberlin’s appraised valuation is about \$7 million. The current debt for the sewer and proposed water project is \$6 million. That does not include any problems or additional expenses that may come up with the water project. Utility improvements such as these do not go against the city’s debt limit as I understand it.

The current debt limit is \$2.1 million; that is the figure being used for the pool currently. The original design for the pool was \$2.3 million. If we choose to do this and build a new pool, the city will not be able to borrow any more money

Letters to the Editor

for projects in the form of general obligation bonds. If there is any form of emergency or other reason to need to borrow money, the city would be unable to do so. The only other option would be to form a public building commission.

The pool committee was appointed by the City Council. My personal opinion is that a public building commission is a loophole to get around the debt limit and should be used only in case of an emergency. Due to the fact that bonds issued by such a commission are a more risky form of debt, the interest rate and bond fees are higher with a public building commission borrowing the money. I know other towns around us are using this avenue, but don’t feel with our current debt and other needed city improvements, it would be wise for Oberlin.

If the city was to borrow \$2.1 million for the new pool and the interest rate was 3 percent, the total debt for

the 20 years would be \$3.79 million. I believe the 3 percent is the middle of the road, so you can figure from there. The interest rates can fluctuate depending on a lot of factors, especially the upcoming election. This debt would be paid with a 1.5 percent sales tax on purchases in the city of Oberlin. It would be a debt to the city, and if sales tax revenue doesn’t cover the debt payments, property taxes would have to be raised.

I ask that each of you put a lot of thought into your vote and decide if you and your neighbors can afford more taxes in any form. Ask yourself if this is necessary debt to pass on to the next generations as well. Is there a possibility that a filtration system can be put on the small pools and maybe new decking on the large pool at a manageable cost? Is a new pool truly a need, or a want?

Fonda Farr, Oberlin City Council member

Girls feel town needs new pool

To the Editor:

Who wants a new pool? We want a new pool! The City of Oberlin needs a new pool for a variety of reasons, from health to environmental. Oberlin needs a brand new aquatic center.

There are hazards at our old pool such as cracks on the floor of the pool, cracks in the sidewalk, ancient girls and boys bathrooms without lockers to put personal items in and not many places to sit outside of the pool except the hard and often blistering hot cement. The cracks in the bottom of the pool let out so much water we have to constantly keep filling it with cold water (which costs a lot of money), causing the city to turn the pool heater on to keep the water at an acceptable temperature (which costs more money). This makes people complain about the cost of the pool. Well, we’re given a chance to fix it, so, fix it!! Use opportunities given and take advantage of it.

Having a new aquatic center in Oberlin would affect not only Oberlin citizens, but also people around us. Herndon doesn’t have a pool; people in Norcat, Dresden and Jennings would love to have a place for their kids to hang out, and

so many places would be positively affected by this new pool.

Many people complain about the prices to get into the pool. If the pool was nicer and we raised the amount just a little, no one would mind because the facilities would be better.

We need a new pool; that’s all there is to it. We’ve got the volun-

Young sister gives reasons

To the Editor:

I’m Danielle Rouse. I am in sixth grade. I am writing a letter to you because we need a new pool.

The first reason we need a new pool is because then we could hold swim meets here and wouldn’t have to do fund raisers anymore. The second is our pool is old and disgusting. The third thing is, our pool is boring. We only have two things to do. There is only one diving board and one basketball hoop. Last, but not least, it is freezing! They never turn the heaters on, EVER! Therefore, we need a new pool.

Danielle J. Rouse, sixth grader
Oberlin Elementary School

teers, we’ve got the incentive and motive, now, let’s make it happen!

Promote
Oberlin
Outdoor
Living.

Darbi K. Rouse, senior
Decatur Community
High School.

In the U.S.A.

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

— *Martin Luther King
Civil Rights leader
Jan. 15, 1929 – April 4,*



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