

## Who will stand up for 838 denied a vote?

Our valiant secretary of state makes all kinds of excuses, but the fact remains, 838 Kansans were turned away at the polls last month simply because they did not have a current photo ID — or forgot to bring it.

Secretary of State Kris Kobach, who invented the “need” for voters to have identification with the fiction of possible voter fraud, sighs and points out that is something like .07 of 1 percent of the total vote.

So, it’s no big deal, right?

Unless you are one of the 838 people, whom we guess are mostly citizens who forgot their wallet or purse. No one has any evidence of anything else.

No one is claiming these were illegal aliens or other unqualified voters. The number represents far too small a percentage to indicate any problem with fraud or improper voting.

That threat is something Mr. Kobach, who apparently has no conscience, invented so he would be elected. It was practically his entire platform. Yet, neither the secretary nor anyone else has shown that any problem exists.

Kobach is a prime example of what’s wrong with the Republican party today. His entire existence is founded on fear of illegal immigration, an issue that’s all but over. Pity the state if the Legislature ever gives him police powers.

And while the flow of immigrants has stopped, our country’s immigration system still needs to be fixed, Mr. Kobach has no proposals. He’s still fighting the problems of the last decade.

But the Republican party cannot move forward with a base grounded in fear, catering

only to a small and ever-shrinking xenophobic minority.

21st century America is different. The Republicans will have to face facts and display their principles to all Americans if the party is to survive.

Secretary Kobach, whom we’re sure believes he is doing the right thing, is not the guy to lead us into this new century. He’s about 100 years out of date.

Republican principles — smaller government, less spending, more freedom — mean as much as they always have. The party needs to reject leaders, like Mr. Kobach, who want more, and more intrusive, government and get back to basics.

Fear and uncertainty do not make a platform. Principles and answers to real needs do. And Republican principles appeal to all groups.

And those 838 Kansans who were refused their right to vote for no good or sufficient cause, other than not having a big-government ID card on their person?

Who will stand up for them — both the inconvenienced 306 who later showed up at the courthouse with their ID, and the 532 who didn’t bother? What about their right to vote?

We are headed fast to a Kobach-induced police state where people can be stopped on Kansas roads for no particular reason and subject to search, even arrest, because they have no “papers,” just like in the communist societies of the last century.

That is not America, and that is not freedom. Wake up, Kansas, before it’s too late.

— Steve Haynes



## Always listen to your mother

My mother always told me that it’s as easy to drive on the top of the gas tank as the bottom. She always stopped and filled her car when it got near the half-empty mark.

My husband is more of a, “It’s still half full and I’ve got better things to do than stand around a gas station, anyway.” kind of person.

I remember driving with my mother to Texas after Daddy died. We would go down in her car and I would fly back each fall. She had a routine and seldom varied from it.

When she got older, Steve said that if I wanted to go with her, I’d do the driving. She’d get upset when the gauge went below half a tank and I didn’t stop to fill it up.

I thought she was just being silly.

Now, however, I realize, I should have listened to my mother.

Twice within the last six months, I’ve been in danger of running out of gas while on a fairly long trip.

The first was in Colorado. We were going to fill up in Monte Vista after having lunch at one of our favorite Mexican restaurants, which is about two miles out on the highway. But after lunch, we remembered that they were working on the streets in town, so we just decided to go on to Alamosa, about 25 miles away.

The fancy gauge on the truck said we could drive 30 miles before we ran out of gas. We were golden.

That is when we learned two important lessons:

1. It’s a lot farther than 25 miles from the restaurant to Alamosa by



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
c.haynes@nwkansan.com

the back roads than by the main highway through town.

2. That gauge lies.

Watching the gauge numbers drop like a stone while checking the roadway markers for how far we had to go was nerve wracking, and I was driving.

We coasted for about two miles into town and rolled into the gas station on 0. I expected the engine to cough and die at any time, but we made it.

Then, a couple of weeks ago, we went to Lawrence, each in our own vehicle. I was to return to Oberlin in Steve’s truck with the dog while he went to an Associated Press meeting in Kansas City with my car.

I got to Topeka and realized that he hadn’t filled up the truck when I filled my car in Emporia. I started looking for a gas station but, by that time I was pretty much through town and headed west toward Junction City. No way I could get there with the gas I had.

I called him. Where is there a gas station out here? He wasn’t sure. There might be one at the little towns off Interstate 70, but going

to one of those would use up all the gas I had, and I wasn’t sure I could make it back to Topeka. I finally just turned around and drove the 15 miles back to town, getting to the station with about 2 miles left on the gauge.

Well, that blew half an hour, but I was good to go. I got back to my turning point and two miles down the road was a big truck stop. Who would have known?

Next time, maybe I’ll remember to listen to my mother.

### In the U.S.A.

“There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America.”

William Jefferson Clinton  
42nd President 1993 - 2001  
Third Youngest President

## Never too late to start to shop

Have you seen that commercial where two women reassure each other they have plenty of time to do their Christmas shopping?

One says to the other, “We’ll start right after Halloween.” A Halloween scene flashes by.

They calmly say, “Right after Thanksgiving.” A glimpse of Thanksgiving is seen. Still calm.

Then they see a Christmas tree on top of a neighbor’s car pull into the driveway. They look at each other and begin to scream in panic.

That’s the stage I’m in right now. I’ve always been a procrastinator, but this year, I’ve taken it to a new level. No shopping is done (except for Jim’s overalls, so don’t tell him), the candies aren’t done, and as for the house being ready, forget about it.

I’m actually in a worse mess than usual. I don’t know why I thought two weeks before Christmas would

be a good time to rearrange my kitchen drawers. Several drawers in my kitchen don’t contain one thing used in the kitchen. They morphed into junk drawers. Granted, everyone needs a junk drawer in the kitchen, but who needs four?

When Jim completed the library shelves and drawers, the plan was to transfer the contents to the library.

Of course, I also thought I’d finish the project the day I started. But you know how the “best laid plans” go. Consequently, on my counter top, I now have kitchen drawer “stuff” mixed in with regular



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
cplots65@gmail.com

kitchen “stuff.”

And I know what’s going to happen. Instead of the well-planned, methodical sorting of aforementioned “stuff” and its reassignment to new drawers, I’m going to panic because company is coming. In desperation, I’ll end up dumping everything into a box and taking it to the basement. Which, actually, may not be such a bad idea. It’s not “stuff” I need, anyway, and then I’ll have two sets of empty drawers.

-ob-

Went to an office party the other day where the host served homemade rum balls. Not sure I should have driven home. They should have checked our IDs before allowing us to eat one. In fact, I’m not sure I was old enough.

-ob-

This last week before Christmas, let’s try to slow it down, take a deep breath and remember why we do all this. Spend time with your family. If family isn’t close, spend time with someone else who is alone. Leave your waitress an extra-generous tip, visit someone in the hospital,

take a cup of hot chocolate to the trash men as they go by, pay for the meal of the car behind you at the drive-up window, write a nice note to your mailman. There are lots of ways we can “gift” without having to buy a thing.

So, from Jim and I to all of you, have a merry Christmas and remember: Jesus is the reason for the season!

### From the Bible

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.

— Luke 1:26-28

## Christmas joy covers it all

My house is awash in a sea of decorations. My wife has gone on a binge with the lights and garlands and little trees and whatnot. Every flat surface invites more.

And she’s not done yet.

We haven’t had this much Christmas fancy since the year our house was on the Holiday Homes Tour. And frankly, it’s getting so it has more decorations than most of the houses on the tour this year.

Cynthia started with the outside lights. I was gone that day. We’d gotten the boxes and bins down from the garage attic the day before.

By the time I got home that night, she had most of the bushes in the front yard covered. I pitched in to help fill some holes, but the job was pretty much done. Next day, she was out stringing more white lights on the corner bushes. You’d think three strings each would be enough, but they are big bushes.

Then she replaced the rope lights I’d put on the front walk with C7 lights. I’m not sure why, but they do look better. She even put lights on the dried-up mum plants.

The next time I came home, she was on a ladder, using a long pole and a hook to string lights on what we still call “the little cedar tree.” We discovered the tree 10, 12 years ago, growing at the corner of the old garage. The guy who tore the garage down saved her in a coffee can, and we planted her out back.

While she’s still our little cedar, she’s close to 20 feet today. Getting lights up there is a chore, and Cynthia was not having much luck. Most of them sorta fell into a clump. I promised to get out and help fix them, but we went to Lawrence to see our son’s new house instead.

Cynthia was not deterred, how-



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
s.haynes@nwkansan.com

ever. She just moved indoors. The next week, she started with the tree, then decorated the mantle. That involves moving all the hardback books stored there and replacing them with little trees. Then she puts all our Christmas cards among the little fake evergreens.

She cleared out the fireplace, hauling the logs we never burn and the heavy iron fire basket to the garage. Swept and cleaned, the fireplace is ready for the big ceramic Nativity set whenever she gets another day.

Then she turned her attention again to the tree, an artificial one my mom bought years ago. I thought it was looking a little peaked, but a friend came in and asked if it was a real tree. Go figure.

She festooned it with lights and ornaments and tinsel, then wrapped all the packages and put them under it, along with the three leather camels from Tunisia, including the big one named Sweeney, and the alligator she found in the tree. (See her column last week for an explanation.) For good measure, or to complete the tableau, Molly, the diabetic cat, took up residence under the tree, too.

Then Cynthia started looking for flat surfaces. She cleared off the top of her cedar chest and filled with my old oil lanterns, white fluff and

Christmas lights. I had to fix the string, but it was the least I could do. Then she covered the top of the old ice box that serves as our liquor cabinet and strung lights across it and three houseplants taking refuge in the dining room.

Not done yet, she moved to the kitchen, where I’d just completed the finish on the inside of the new bay window. She filled that in a flash with a little tree, a lantern, garland and lights.

Then she was on to the “TV” room upstairs, where I’d mostly cleared off the antique table by the windows. I’m not sure what happened to the pile of stuff I hadn’t figured out what to do with yet. Maybe it just got covered in fluff and lights. I’m sure I’ll find it come spring.

One good thing about all this: When I have to get up in the middle of the night, I can see what I’m going to trip over. Most of the rooms have lots of lights, and those that don’t bask in the glow from the bushes and the cedar tree outside. You could read a book in a couple of those rooms.

The scary part is, she’s not done. She’s still got to put out that Nativity set and probably string lights and fluff all around it. If we’re lucky, she’ll finish before Epiphany, when it’s time to put all the lights and wreaths away.

## 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

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

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

Nor’West Newspapers  
STAFF

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

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.



## Pool supporters going to meeting

To the Editor:

We would like to thank the citizens of Oberlin for voting YES for a new swimming pool. A special thanks to all the clubs and organizations that allowed us to present the pool project. We appreciate all of your support and hospitality.

Because the council has the option to not proceed with phase 2 of

### Letter to the Editor

the pool project, we are asking for everyone to join us at the Oberlin City Council meeting at 6 p.m., Thursday in The Gateway to show your support for the new pool. You voted with your ballots;

now vote with your presence at the council meeting.

Oberlin Pool Committee  
Shayla Williby, Valisha Raile,  
Sarah Howland, Rachel Johnson,  
Susan May, Erica Fortin