



## History has many lines that divide the country

The following column, which originally ran in The Oberlin Herald on June 1, 2011, won first place for humorous columns in the National Newspaper Association Better Newspapers Contest. It was written by Editor Steve Haynes

This column is about lines that divide the country.

Not the Mason-Dixon line, which divides North from South back east. It's kinda irrelevant out here, except that in an accident of history, it also serves as (approximately) the border between Kansas and Nebraska. It runs just 13 miles from my house.

That's because Kansas was to have come into the Union as a slave state, part of a long-time compromise that kept an uneasy balance in the U.S. Senate for the first half of the 19th century.

Abolitionists from the North colonized and eventually controlled Kansas, however, leading to a decade of border warfare and eventually, 150 years ago, the Civil War. After Kansas was admitted as a free state, you see, the South could see the handwriting on the wall.

But that is dry, historical stuff. Today, we're going to talk about the Sweet Tea Line and the Green Chili Line. And if there's time, maybe the Firefly Line.

In Yankee states, even the more northern border states such as Missouri or Kentucky, you can go into a restaurant and order iced tea and it will come unsweetened, maybe with some of those little sacks of sugar or sugar substitute.

In the South, diabetics fear ordering tea with lunch. In the South, they just assume you want sugar. My son-in-law, who lives in Georgia, likes "unsweet" tea, and he always orders it that way. He gets sweet tea half the time anyway.

The Sweet Tea Line, best I can figure out, is somewhere around the border between Tennessee and Kentucky, give or take a county or two. By

the time you get to Texas and the Gulf States, best taste your tea first.

Then there is the green chili line. It's been blurred a little in recent years, but generally it runs north and south through the High Plains. In New Mexico, Colorado, southern Wyoming, Arizona and west, no self-respecting Mexican restaurant would think of not serving green chili, that wonderful concoction of fresh chopped chilis, onion, garlic and (usually) pork, with (sometimes) potatoes or tomatoes thrown in.

Drive east from Colorado, and you'll have a hard time finding anything but red chili, made with ripe, dried chilis, beef or pork, with or without tomatoes, and (shudder) maybe even beans.

Out west, by the way, traditionally, in the Southwest, you get a choice. The server will ask, "red or green." Or you can order "Christmas," by which they mean one color on half the plate and the other on the other. Yum.

Growing up in Kansas, I was innocent of green chili until we moved to southern Colorado some 31 years ago. I grew to love the green, which can be mild or hot, with varied ingredients as noted. But nearly always good.

In New Mexico, it's pretty much the state food.

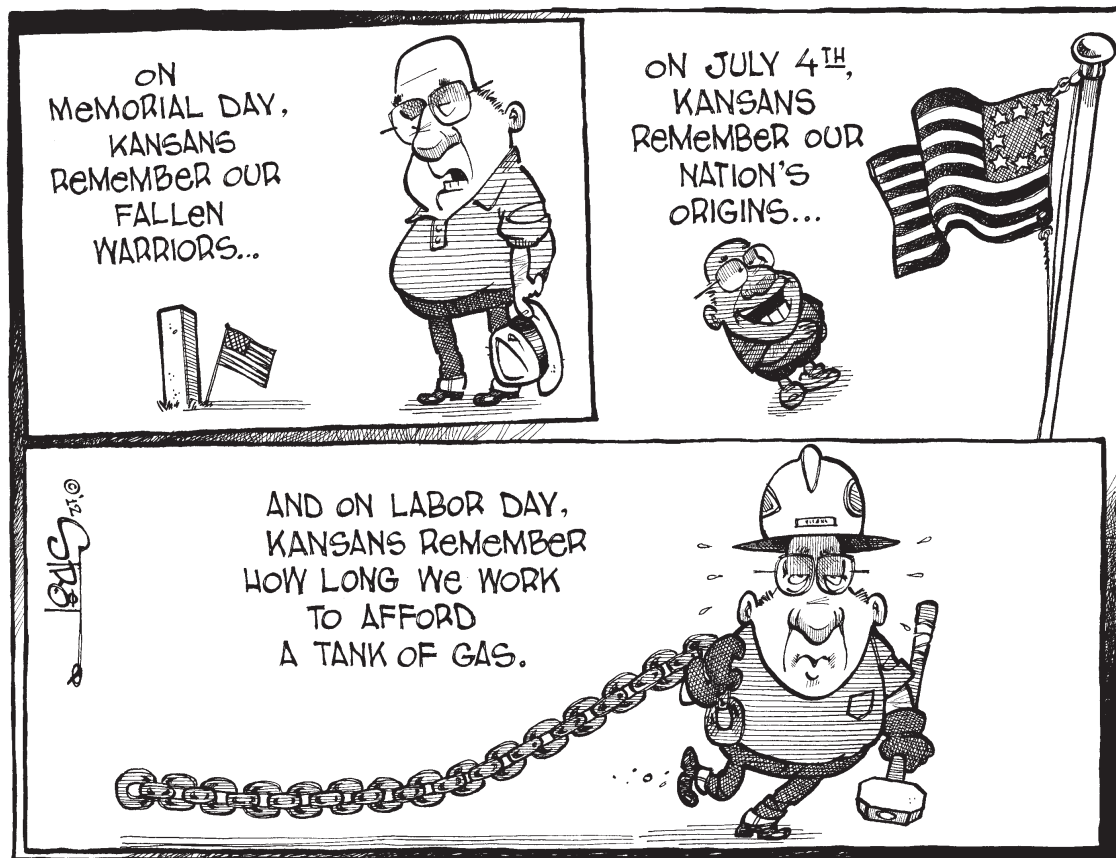
And the Firefly Line?

In most of Kansas, kids wait for warm summer nights when they can chase and capture those fascinating little glowing creatures. Not in Denver, or most of the mountain West.

The Firefly Line runs somewhere between Atwood and St. Francis, it seems. West of there, they are rare or wholly absent. Oberlin and Hoxie seem to have plenty, while Colby and Atwood have a few.

'Tis a pity children of the West are deprived of this simple pleasure, but they seem to find other things to do.

Like eat green chili and drink unsweet tea.



## Woman shares her political view

### —Letters to the Editor—

To the Editor,

I think the Romney/Ryan ticket is very exciting for America! Mitt Romney is a good businessman who knows how to create jobs and put Americans back to work. Paul Ryan is a man of vision and works on solutions to our nation's problems and wants to put America in the right direction. They want to push development of our energy sources, which would create jobs and make us more independent.

It is so refreshing to have a politician that tells the truth, means what he says. Ryan's plan for health care doesn't affect people 55 and older, but saves Medicare for the younger generation. President Obama has had nearly four years to tackle our problems. Now, we have found out he took 716 billion dollars out of Medicare to support Obama care—that's our money!! How does he get

by doing that without the consent of Congress? The majority of Americans want Obama care repealed; they think it's unconstitutional. The tea party, after studying the 2000+ page Obama care plan, finds that it contains 500 billion dollars of new taxes, the biggest tax increase in America's history. Maybe its President Obama that wants to push us all over the cliff, including Medicare!

Paul Ryan worked on a budget with some democrats' help, along with fellow republicans that passed the house, but was dead on arrival at the senate, controlled by Harry Reid. Obama's budget didn't get one vote in Congress.

President Obama has never gotten out of the campaign mode. He is more worried about his job, not the 23 million people who are out of

work in America. Americans have believed in the "American Dream" and have worked hard with determination to create businesses and create jobs. President Obama said, "You didn't build that." Yes, we did, in spite of all the government regulations that cripple growth in this country. We have a president out of touch with America.

Our only hope is to get out and vote in large numbers. Back door amnesty and Acorn will do anything for votes. In a close election, voter fraud could steal the election. Is it surprising that Obama's administration is fighting against photo I.D.? Texas is taking photo I.D. to the Supreme Court—lots of luck!

Pray for our nation, Marilyn Frisbie

## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



mccormickcasey@rocketmail.com

I'm the champion! Well, not quite yet. My fantasy baseball team has made it to the championship game for the first time. So my Red Stockings of the BFBBL league have won their first pennant.

My wife asked me what I get for winning in fantasy sports.

There is no money involved. And I imagine that the other team owners other than the one opposing me in the last game of the season aren't paying attention any more. So it won't make ESPN for sure.

I guess it is the satisfaction of knowing that each move of placing real players in our imaginary field of play has payed off with a better winning record than the competition.

Fantasy sports, I have two baseball teams and a couple football squads, is a hobby that allows me to interact with my step sons, friends, neighbors and even some folks in other states. Thanks to our local commissioner all activities are done through the Internet other than one league's football draft,

trades and the yearly picnic. In all it's a social activity.

And did I mention that it's free? Not that I know from experience but in the past for a fellow to enjoy the action of a sporting event without actually playing, the services of the local bookmaker was often needed. So I can win without physical and financial risk with fantasy sports.

## Citizen agrees with the voter ID

Letter to the Editor:

Concerning Steve Haynes' recent column about VOTER ID, maybe we don't need this in Kansas, especially in these smaller towns where those people who man the sign-in tables, knows most everyone who comes to the polls. BUT what about the 'big' cities where some don't even know their neighbors.

It is the duty of citizens to vote, but I would prefer that we know that person is a citizen, and a live one at that, not the pet dog or cat or a long-dead neighbor.

### —Letter to the Editor—

The current administration in Washington seems to be doing everything in their power to hinder VOTER ID. WHY? Is it that ACORN and other groups doing the same thing to get out the vote regardless of citizenship so that

they can stuff the ballot boxes for the powers that be in Washington. LET'S HAVE MORE VOTER ID, for an honest vote so that my vote counts.

Rowland Roelfs St. Francis



GOD SAYS My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Proverbs 3:1, 2

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## Reader recognizes grandparents

Letter to the Editor:

Happy Grandparents' Day! It's coming up this Sunday for those of you who don't keep close track of such events. A president declared it to be the first Sunday after Labor Day - Always.

Since it's not on the Lions Club calendar, many are unaware. Grandkids don't read calendars anyway. And, parents are too busy to care.

So much for grandparent awareness!

Because life is important from cradle to grave, let's talk about grandparents. There are basically two groups of people: those who have grandparents and those who wish they still did.

Let's consider some special things about grandparents.

When we go to a sporting event, football, basketball, volleyball,

wrestling - no matter what - about half of the fans are grandparents. They usually are the ones who are positive in their responses. After all, their grandkids are super.

If there are any faults or mistakes, the grandparents more easily overlook them. They also are the ones who may be paying extreme attention to minute details.

My boy's granddad once was gazing at the practice session of a basketball game. When asked what caught his attention, he replied that he had never seen so many balls! He related that when he was a kid, the team owned one basketball and each team took its own ball to a competition. Now we have carts full.

We find these grandparents at our school programs, church functions, our weddings, and every other aspect of life. They always care.

Grandparents really have so much to share about life. They may relate how bad things used to be, but are still happy their kids and grandkids have life much easier.

So, this Sunday, Grandparents' Day, take a little extra time to show love and appreciation to these special people. This writer spent quite a bit of time in the nursing home these past few years. He could be with his dad every day, and even several times a day. Yet, nothing could bring a smile on the face and joy to the heart like the visit of a grandchild.

Let's do everything we can do to give them dignity in life. With any luck at all, we will all be there someday.

I'm Norman Morrow, speaking as a proponent of life from the beginning to the end.

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