

Why shouldn't council always be on television?

The Oberlin City Council's decision to stop televising its second meeting of the month seems a step away from open government, which is too bad.

Councilman Ray Ward, in proposing the move, claimed that many people won't come talk to the council because its meetings are on television. They're afraid, apparently, of appearing before the entire town.

That may be. We're sympathetic to a point. But whatever people want to talk about is the whole town's business, and it seems a shame to keep them from seeing and hearing everything.

No one should have to be afraid to appear before the council. People have a right to talk about city business.

But the entire town does have a right to know what goes on at council meetings.

It's not that big a deal whether any one meeting is on television, of course.

The newspaper reporter will still be there to write everything down, maybe take pictures of those who speak if the issue warrants. People who are interested can come and watch.

It's not like the audience on cable channel 7 is huge. Maybe half the town gets cable at best, and we suspect a lot of those sets are tuned to something more entertaining on Thursday nights.

Still, there is a loyal corps of viewers who do watch city meetings on channel 7. Some of them can't get to meetings easily, and this is the only way they can "attend."

We suspect Mr. Ward's argument about

cameras scaring people off is not that crucial. If people care about what the council is doing, they'll show up. Fear of the cameras may be an excuse.

The same argument often is made to justify closed sessions: People will be more free to "say what is on their mind" behind closed doors.

That may be true, but in an open society, a democracy, you just can't do public business in closed session. Council members shouldn't want to, and to be fair, no one has proposed that.

Still, it's hard to argue that the system will be more open if the television camera is turned off.

Or that, if a television news crew showed up, the council could or should exclude them.

One thing we do find curious: In recent months, the council seldom has had any business for its second meeting of the month.

A few years ago, the council met just once a month. Then a group of councilmen came on board with an agenda to micro manage city departments. They set up the second meeting.

The group is long gone, the city administrator is doing his job and the second meeting often has little purpose.

Instead of taking it off the tube, why not cancel the second meeting and call a special meeting or a work session if there really is something to talk about?

That would make more sense, and save a lot of people the trouble of going to The Gateway to do very little once a month.

— Steve Haynes



Final disaster just wasn't there

"So what's the disaster of the day?" Steve asked the office manager at Goodland.

It was Friday morning, and she couldn't think of anything that had gone wrong.

Little did either of them know — the disaster had already happened and we just hadn't discovered it yet.

Monday it was a color ad that wasn't put together right. *The Advocate* was on the press and the full-color, full-page ad didn't have all its pieces.

The pressman called us at home. He'd waited as long as he could. It was 6:15 a.m.

I rolled out of bed and went to the office, where I and the long-suffering office manager tried to figure out how to fix the problem. Finally, I called the ad makeup person and she ran down to fix the ad.

Tuesday morning, the phone rang again in what seemed like the middle of the night. (When you finish the paper at midnight, 6:15 a.m. is not an hour you like to see.)

The press crew was missing Page 8A of *The Oberlin Herald*.

I hadn't handled 8A but I knew from listening that it had been accidentally sent to Goodland three times and then sent twice on purpose.

How could they be missing five copies of one page? So far, no one has been able to answer that question, but I was able to send copy No 6 without any trouble.

However, I was grouchy the rest of the day.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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On Wednesday, a print server went to sleep and refused to spit out *The St. Francis Herald*. The computer gurus finally slapped it awake in time to get the paper to the press.

They blamed Tom, the editor, and he had to get up at 6:15 a.m. to fix the server. Not us.

Later that day, the press crew reported that a Miller's insert for Goodland had been put in the Norton paper in place of another Miller's (different company) for Norton. Nobody's been able to explain that one yet.

Thursday we left for Iowa hoping we were leaving our troubles behind.

We weren't — but, things went better at the papers for the rest of the week.

I was driving when we went through York, Neb. There are so many twists and turns to the highway through that town that I think they're trying to lose tourists there.

Then it was Steve's turn to drive. He took us to Columbus, Neb.

We took a little detour to check out an old building and were headed down a quiet street when we realized

that the oncoming traffic was in both lanes. Steve made a quick right-hand turn into a side street and we looked back at a one-way sign headed the opposite way we were going.

Steve looked at me and said, "You're not going to write about this, are you?"

I smiled and said, "Yep, unless you beat me to it."

(Guess what?) We drove on to Norfolk, Neb., on the right side of the highway, but when we left the hotel on Friday morning our clothes were still hanging in the closet.

The disaster of the day was in the back of the truck — or more accurately, wasn't in the back of the truck.

Editor's Note: On the way home, we checked in Columbus, and there was no one-way sign where we had turned onto the one-way street. There was a no-left-turn sign on the right side of the intersection, hard to see when you're turning left. Anyway, she gets to drive next time we're in Columbus. York, too.

Feeling like a real April Fool

Saturday evening dinner plans included joining 15 other couples for a party. It was to be a wonderful celebration and I was responsible for baking the crescent rolls.

Jim had to work that day in a neighboring town, and my last words to him before he left the house were, "Remember the party tonight. We're to be there at 6:30."

All day as I worked around the house, I had one eye on the clock. By back-timing, I knew when I had to have the bread ready for the oven, when I had to be in the shower, and when Jim had to be home.

About noon he called. "Sweetheart, I'm sorry. But, I don't think I'm going to get done with this job in time to go to the party." He went on to say how it turned out to be more complicated than he expected, but all I was hearing was, "Blah, blah, blah."

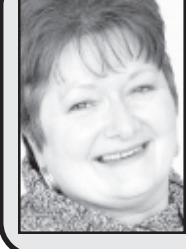
I started to get wound up. "What do you mean you aren't going to make it for the party? Do you realize I have the rolls for this? Don't you understand this-or-that? How dare you do whatever?"

I was just about at full-blast level when he interrupted me with three little words that completely defused the situation.

"Hey. April Fool's."

Oh, my. My emotions came in for a crash landing and I began to laugh.

Perhaps it was relief. Perhaps I was still a little "shocky." Don't know, but he assured me it was all a joke and he would be home in plenty of time to get ready.



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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Wait. That's not the end of the story. There's more.

About 4 p.m. Jim called again. "Hey, this isn't a joke. It's for real. My van won't start and I can't find anyone to help. You might have to bring the jumper cables and come get me."

Of course, he had no way of knowing I had four dozen crescent rolls, raised to perfection, waiting their turn in the oven. In fact, one dozen had just begun to bake. I was ready to take my shower and now my plans were ruined.

Anyway I figured it, if I left to go get him we would both only have

about two minutes to get ready and that didn't count baking the remaining rolls.

I have to admit, I did not handle the situation very well. Said some things I shouldn't have. Really behaved badly. But, I have since apologized to my husband and he forgave me.

What was so important about this dinner party? It was the culmination of a six-week course on marriage, relationships and how I can be a better wife.

Hm-m-m-m. Maybe I need to sign up for a refresher.

Honor Roll

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

Kansas: Dorothy Lawn, Ruby Strayer, Carl Neff, Mildred Schwab, Mrs. Daughn Avery, Betty Reid, Karen Carpenter, Ethel Miller, Weldon Brooks, Verl Crabill, Jane Kelling, Norton; Dr. and Mrs. Gary

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New residents thank hospital staff

To the Editor:

I would like to show my appreciation for all of the fine outstanding people who work at the Decatur County Hospital here in Oberlin.

My wife and I moved here a little over a year ago from Aurora, Colo. My wife had to undergo surgery here, and I would like to tell you, I have NEVER seen so many people with concern for her and for me.

I love this town and all of its people!

While she was hospitalized, the aides there always offered me coffee. The staff answered any questions my wife or I had, they were all very friendly, and the doctors just awesome. The nurses could not have been better. The care for my

Letter to the Editor

deserves a great deal of respect for the way they treat the patients and people at the hospital and clinic.

I simply do not think I could have had my wife, whom I love so dearly, in a better place anywhere.

The people we have met in this small Kansas town have got to be some of the best in this country.

Please join me in a hearty thanks to all of them and yourselves for making us feel so comfortable in your community, now ours also.

From the Bible

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121: 1, 2

Larry and Marilyn Mack

new Oberlin residents