

## Kansas highways good due to man's foresight

Kansas highways are in far better shape than they were 20 years ago, thanks to the far-sighted administration of Gov. Mike Hayden, who saw how bad our roads had become and set out to do something about it.

The result was two long-range road plans, an eight-year plan put together by Gov. Hayden and a 10-year package built under Gov. Bill Graves. They made Kansas highways among the best in the nation, and certainly better than any state in this region.

While the Department of Transportation actually rates Kansas highways as a little rougher than they were two years ago, they're topnotch today because a man from Atwood saw how bad they had become in the early 1980s.

The two highway plans helped Kansas craft a road system that's simple, lean and smooth. It's mostly two-lane, but adequate to serve the traffic, and the pavement is kept up.

Just look around. In our back yard, the Transportation Department has a dozen or more of sections this summer.

U.S. 36 between Norcatur and Norton has been completely rebuilt, with new pavement and grading. South of Oberlin, eight miles of U.S. 83 got a new surface this year. K-383 from Jennings to U.S. 83, and U.S. 83 from there to Rexford were repaved. U.S. 83 south of the U.S. 24 junction — the infamous "Nine-Mile" intersection — also got an overlay.

West on 36, the section from Atwood to the county line and the part from Wheeler to Rawlins County was sealed. The final stretch to the state line west of St. Francis got new asphalt.

K-25 south of Atwood got a new surface, as did K-117 near Herndon. Out south of Goodland, K-27 has been rebuilt all the way to the county line, with one small stretch of paving left to finish. And on I-70, the stretch west of Colby got a new driving surface.

There's more, but you get the idea. Good, wide, smooth roads kept in great shape. If you see a transportation department worker, tell 'em thanks.

That wasn't always the case, though, and it might not last.

The 10-year Comprehensive Transportation Plan is about done, with final contracts to be let next year. All the bond money has been spent. After that, the state won't have much money for rebuilding roads, let alone building new ones.

Just preserving the pavement and keeping the surface smooth will be a challenge without a new plan.

While the department is trying to put together a package for the next 10 to 20 years, it won't be as easy as the last two

For one thing, the state is out of money. After heavy increases in school budgets, Kansas will be living on its carryover the next two years, sort of like dipping into the family savings account.

Tax sources which pay for road work are declining as the price of fuel goes up. State projections show a decline in real dollars over the next few years, and the federal highway fund looks the same.

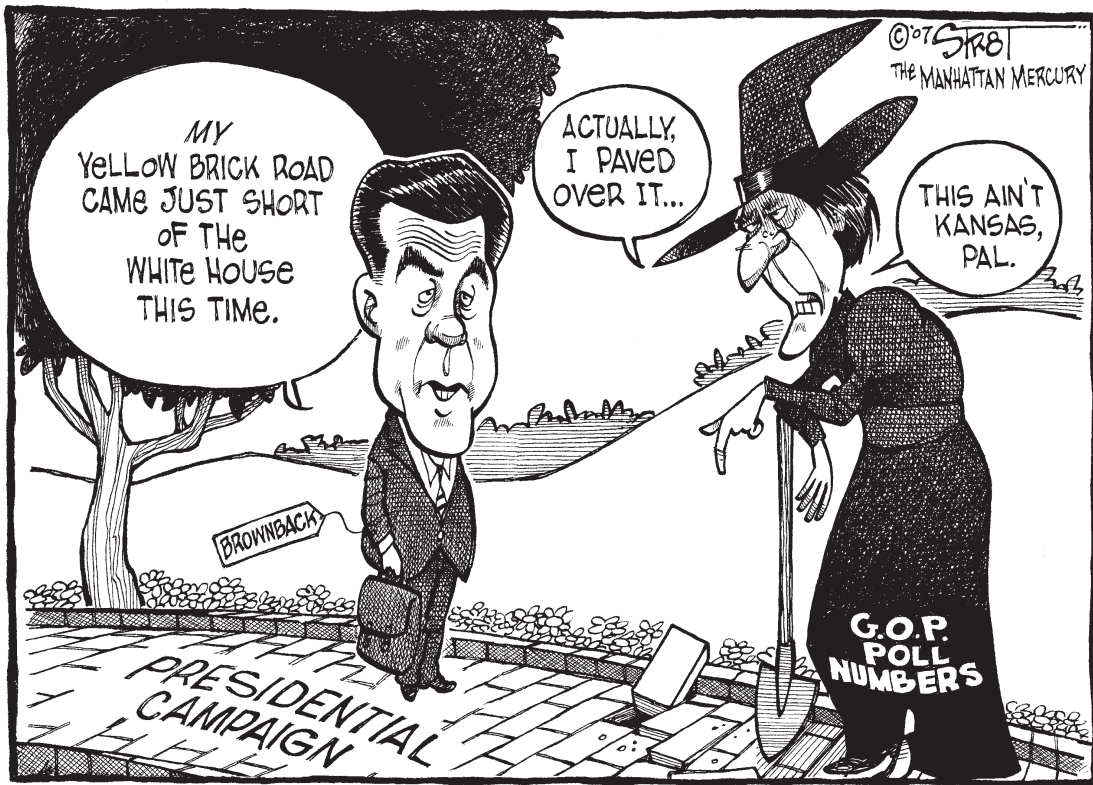
Smaller, more efficient cars mean more miles driven but less fuel bought. Heavy truck traffic could double in 20 years, tearing up the roads that much faster.

Both the state and the federal government have to revamp their highway funds, changing the tax structure not to bring in more money, but just to keep up. Fuel taxes must be indexed to inflation somehow, and there has to be a way to tax vehicles that run on something other than scarce petroleum.

None of this will be easy, but if we want to keep our good roads — and improve them — in a new era, it's got to be done.

— Steve Haynes

*Steve Haynes, publisher of The Oberlin Herald and president of the U.S. Highway 36 Association, served on working groups for the Kansas Department of Transportation looking at a new Long-Range Transportation Plan.*



## Packing lighter and faster

Packing is a real trick. I'm traveling a lot more these days, and I'm learning to pack lighter and faster.

I remember when the children were young and we lived in the Colorado mountains, I would dream of our annual trip to Denver and start packing a month before we left. We'd travel by car and I'd take everything but the kitchen sink.

Then we started traveling by airplane to National Newspaper Association meetings, and I had to cut down on my baggage. Still you could take a lot in a couple of carry-ons and two checked bags.

By this time, I wasn't carting around stuff for babies and small children. Most of the time, it was just Steve and me.

Our annual Mexico vacation still required lots of luggage because there was no laundry facilities at the resort. I suppose I could wash our underwear out by hand in the sink and hung the pieces on the towel rack, but that seems tacky and besides, I'm on vacation.

A few years ago, a laundry opened a couple of blocks from the hotel. You just take whatever you want washed over there and the nice Mexican ladies run it through the washer and dryer and fold it for you. You smile. They smile. You pay and everyone is happy.

This allowed us to carry about half the clothes we normally took.



## Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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Still, we tended to be prepared for temperatures from 50 to 100 degrees and ready for the next hurricane.

In January, I was lucky enough to go to Tunisia with a group of journalists. I took my computer bag, a 21-inch carry-on and a large suitcase. Every inch was stuffed and the weight was at the maximum.

One of the journalists was a Turkish television reporter — a slim young woman who had her computer case and a single 21-inch carry-on bag. She looked neat and put together every day. She filed stories each night and appeared on camera several times.

How did she do it? We were on a 10-day trip. How did she bring enough stuff to look good for that long?

Her secret was simple. She said she carried two pair of black slacks and a long skirt, a blazer, several sleeveless shells, six long-sleeved blouses, underwear, an extra pair of shoes, some small pieces of jewelry and some shawl/scarves

for either warmth or to cover her head when going into a mosque. She used the hotel laundry to recycle her clothes.

She also didn't buy a lot of junk while on the trip, so she had little to take up space on the way home.

Now, I can almost do that, but not quite. I still take the same number of pieces of luggage, but they aren't usually full on the trip out.

I, however, seemed compelled to buy trinkets, gifts and junk. I need to take home every piece of literature I get from the ministries of Agriculture, Tourism and Foreign Affairs, and from hotels, vendors and street people.

On the way to someplace, my bags are light. I feel good about the way I have packed.

On the way home, I feel like a donkey with huge panniers. Someday, I'll learn to ship things home, but so far, I've been too cheap. After all, it's not that heavy. I can just put it in my carry on.

Right?

## Internal clock not adjusted

Dawn is breaking and I've already been awake an hour. Not really productive, but awake.

Since returning from Mexico Friday night my internal clock has not readjusted (remember the Mountain Time fiasco?) and I continue to wake up before 6 a.m. That's 5 a.m. in Mexico.

I was the cook, and needed to have myself ready for the work day before the team hit the kitchen for breakfast, so that's when I would get up.

It will probably take until the end of the week before I stop waking up at 5:30 a.m., just in time to set our clocks back an hour because of Daylight Savings Time. I might never readjust.

This was a wonderful trip in so many ways. First, we were able to better the life of a hard-working man named Ramiro. He was living in an 8x8-foot house. Originally built to be a little store, he lived there with only a bed and a chair.

We learned his wife was ill and living with her family because there was no space for her and their three children still living at home. Now, with his new house that measures 11x22 feet, his family can be reunited.

Mexican men are very proud. But Ramiro humbled himself every day to work beside us, building his new home. On the last day, during the dedication, he dropped to his knees and with tears streaming down his weathered face, he thanked God and his new amigos (friends) from the United States.

I don't care how many times I am



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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part of building a house in Mexico, the dedication ceremony is always the highlight. It's hard to believe a house can be built in 2 1/2 days (18 1/2 working hours).

But with everyone on the team working hard—it happens. Then, the emotion comes pouring out, and you know why you're there.

The second reason this was a great trip was the team. You spend 24 hours a day for seven days together, and you get acquainted real quick.

I had known Von for years, yet we had never had a real conversation. She is so much fun; I had no idea.

And her best friend Sandy was, too.

Von also brought her 14-year-old grandson, Andrew. He worked like a man and wants to come back for another trip.

Ed was there for his third trip. Ed's grown son Jason came, and father and son had lots of good time together.

Jon is a member of a club I belong to, but now I can also say he's a friend.

Bill was an alumni, too. This was his third house and this trip I saw his funny side.

Karen made her second trip and proved, once again, she can work

just as hard as the men.

Finally, Phil and Jennifer and their three little children came. The kids had a blast and were magnets for the neighborhood children. It didn't matter to the children that neither spoke the other's language. Little boys can play in the dirt without words.

Phil worked like a trooper and Jennifer probably worked hardest of all trying to keep track of three children. By the end of the first day I think she realized "clean" was not going to be in her vocabulary.

And of course, my husband, Jim. He's fun to be with and I wouldn't ever want to go without him.

We're all tired, but give us a little rest and I bet we're ready to go again.

## From the Bible

Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

Proverbs 17:28

## What's the moral thing to do?

To the Editor:

I am responding to the Oct. 3, 2007 editorial requesting responses about the war in Iraq. My response is neither liberal nor conservative, but simply what's the moral thing to do.

There are many Americans who simply don't get it. Instead of asking ourselves if our government absolutely, positively knew that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, why didn't they tell the weapon inspectors who were already in Iraq?

Instead, we allowed our country to invade a country illegally under false pretenses, and continue to support a senseless war where human cost continues its deadly toll, the hatred of Americans continues to grow, and the chances for a lasting peace fades. Hopefully, the world will someday forgive us.

Now that we have armed the Sunni tribes, they have begun to turn against Al Qaeda. And if the Sunnis aren't able to eliminate the jihads, the Sunnis and the Kurds will, with the blessing if not the outright help

## Letter to the Editor

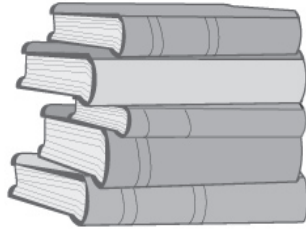
of neighboring countries like Syria, Turkey and Iran, which do not want Al Qaeda to gain a foothold in the area. Our continued occupation only inflames popular opinion against the United States in the Arab and Muslim worlds and is a boon to jihad recruitment.

To be sure, a U.S. withdrawal may lead to an intensification of the civil war, but much of this ethnic cleansing has already taken place on our watch. Only after we commit to a complete withdrawal will there be any hope of international mediation and a lasting settlement based on a balance of forces not subject to this administration's favoritism and power maneuvers. Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia have the greatest stake in keeping the Iraqi conflict contained and therefore can be counted on to control their allies once U.S. forces withdraw. How can we allow

ourselves to be misled again by believing the U.S. can win this war and that our continued occupation will defeat terrorism?

This administration and their supporters continue to stave off public pressure to withdraw, thus not having to admit failure. This irresponsibility — this morally indefensible sacrifice of American and Iraqi lives and the draining of our Treasury in pursuit of unachievable goals — must end.

Lyle Black  
Beverly Hills, Calif



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## Grateful to practice in town

To the Editor:

As parents of Creative Movements Gymnastics students, it is so exciting to find we have once again been able to keep our children involved in a sport they enjoy and also keep them here in Oberlin.

The City of Oberlin Council has given us the opportunity to use The Gateway for this and it is greatly appreciated. Some of us parents have traveled in the past to Atwood for these classes and some of us have just recently been able to appreciate this organization since it has become available in Oberlin several

## Letter to the Editor

years ago.

Either way, it is important that we express our appreciation for the opportunity to use such a wonderful facility and the consideration and time that went into making this decision. Thank you!

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