



THE PRESS OFFICER at the U.S. Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua, Kristen Stewart, listened as her boss, Ambassador Paul Trivelli, talked to American editors touring the country earlier this year. — Herald staff photo by Steve Haynes

Visit from home cheers a State Dept. spokesman

By KRISTIN STEWART
U.S. Embassy, Managua

Last month, I was visited by folks from "my part" of the world.

This might not sound like such a feat, given today's interconnected world, but given that I'm a graduate of Elizabeth High School in Colorado, currently working at the U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua, over 2,200 miles away, I assure you it is rare to have the pleasure of speaking with folks who actually know where Elbert County is!

This visit from two dozen U.S. citizen newspaper publishers and Denver-area business leaders to Managua, Nicaragua's capital, was arranged by the National Newspaper Association. In the group were association President Steve Haynes, publisher of *The Oberlin Herald* in northwest Kansas, and past President Bob Sweeney, publisher of *The Villager* newspapers in Colorado.

Since I spent almost every summer of my childhood on family farms in Prairie View and Long Island, Kan., just east of Oberlin, it was even more amazing to speak to someone who knew where Phillips County is!

My job as press officer in the U.S. Embassy was to arrange a briefing session for the group with Ambassador Paul Trivelli. As the group exchanged comments on everything from politics to the weather (which was a typically Nicaraguan, sunny, 90 degrees), I was reminded of just why I had joined the Foreign Service in 2002.

Every time people have the chance to sit down and learn about cultural "differences," they end up finding similarities. I am proud to be part of promoting that greater mutual understanding between countries. Each day, I speak to Nicaraguans not just about official U.S. government policy, but about who we are as Americans — what our common values of

Opinion

democracy, freedom of expression and volunteerism mean to us. And when I have time, the difference between Colorado and Kansas. (No, all those "square" states in the middle are not the same.)

My parents have since moved from Elizabeth to Aurora, so obtaining a copy of a Villager newspaper is now a bit easier. When I was growing up (a.k.a. pre-Internet), some older kid with gas money and a car that could make it (versus the old farm trucks most of us drove) had to get one on an infrequent trip to the "big city."

This was our lifeline to know what cool bands were playing when and where, even if we didn't always get permission to drive in to Denver to see them. I'm glad that the NNA was able to visit and close the distance between Colorado and Nicaragua for a few days.

I hope that more U.S.-based professional, trade and volunteer organizations will consider study trips to developing countries. It helps build international goodwill in a personal way, and showcases just how wonderful folks from "my part" of the world are.

Kristin Stewart has a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University and a Master of Public Policy from the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. She speaks Spanish and French and has served in Bogota, Colombia, where she married her husband Carlos, and Mexico City where their daughter Anna was born. She is serving a three year assignment as press officer at the U.S. Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua.

Driver pulls down two poles, keeps right on truckin' south

A trucker who pulled down two utility poles in Oberlin on Friday, but just kept going, left police shaking their heads.

"It the guys hadn't caught up with him, I think they were just going to go on," said Officer Troy Haas. "The driver in the follow car saw everything, but he didn't stop."

Mr. Haas said the Canadian semi-trailer rig, hauling an oversize industrial fan, was southbound on U.S. 83 near Elm Street about 1:32 p.m. when it struck a low-hanging power line over the road and broke two poles, one on either side of the highway.

The load had a flag car ahead and a follow car behind, he said, but no clearance sticks to check whether it would fit under a line.

"Gene Morford saw the guy hit the lines," Mr. Haas said. "He flagged down (City Foreman) Dan Castle and told him they just broke

his lines."

Officer Haas said the truck was out of sight by the time he got out to the intersection. He asked for help from the sheriff's department, and two deputies who were on duty, Jay Tate and Undersheriff Randy McHugh, started south to find the truck.

They finally caught up with it at Selden, he said. Because the load was so big, they left the semi there and brought the drivers back to town.

Officer Haas said the driver of the rear flag car, Steven Jackson, 47, Great Falls, Mont., told him he had tried to call the semi driver on the Citizen Band radio, but he didn't reply. He will have to answer to the municipal judge, however; Officer Haas said he gave the trucker, Roger McMahon, 30, Lundbreck, Alberta, a ticket for failure to report an accident.

The semi, a 2004 Peterbilt hauling a flatbed trailer, was owned by C.D. Randel Holdings of Spruce Grove, Alberta, he said.

Mr. Castle said the line pulled down a city pole holding a street light on the east side of the highway and an AT&T pole holding up the power line and a telephone cable on the west side. The power line just fed the light he said, so there was no outage. The telephone cable apparently didn't break when it fell.

A television line belonging to Eagle Cable is still down, he said, although a temporary line has been put in to restore service to customers in the area.

Don Brown, with AT&T, said the pole does belong to the phone company. AT&T sent a technician out to look at the pole, he said, and will have engineers work up a plan to replace it.

Congress must stop spending over budget

All parents work to instill in their children wisdom, values and manners. We tell kids to eat their vegetables and treat others as they wish to be treated.

Sadly, for future generations, parents will now have to add one more to the list — save every penny you can because the government will need it to get out of debt. This new lesson comes as a result of the federal government amassing debt at an alarming rate with no end in sight. The latest evidence of this out-of-control spending by Congress is the recent passage of a \$168 billion measure will force the government to borrow money from other countries in an attempt to stimulate the American economy.

As part of this package, an estimated 131 million Americans will receive rebate checks varying from \$300 per individual to \$1,200 per couple, with an added \$300 per child. While I do feel it is important to return money to hard-working Americans, this is not good policy and the money is not ours. To pay for these rebates, the government is borrowing money from our friends in Asia. This is merely a note being taken out on the future earnings of our children and their children's children.



On the Potomac
By U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran
jerry.moran@mail.house.gov

The national debt is currently more than \$9 trillion, growing by \$1 million every minute. This means that every person in the United States would need to contribute more than \$30,000 to erase the current debt. Of that \$9 trillion, foreign governments and investors hold some \$2 trillion, or about 44 percent. Of that \$2 trillion, we owe Japan \$581 billion, China \$387 billion and the United Kingdom \$316 billion.

We need to start governing responsibly. I am a sponsor of legislation to amend the U.S. Constitution to require Congress and the president to balance the federal budget each year. Almost every state, including Kansas, is required to balance its books by year end, just as you and I do with our budgets at home. The federal government does not. I have also sponsored legislation

to place a hold on congressional earmarks until we can reform the system so that taxpayer dollars are allocated in an open and responsible manner. The American people deserve to know how their money is being spent and elected representatives deserve the opportunity to advocate for responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

Thomas Jefferson said it best when he said, "I place economy among the first and most important of republican virtues, and debt as the greatest of the dangers to be feared."

Our country is on an unsustainable path. Congress must become more responsible and set a better example for our future generations. Otherwise, eating vegetables and treating people kindly will be the least of our children's concerns.

County after grants for health

The Decatur County commissioners have approved three grant applications for the health department, seeking \$11,500 for three programs.

Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin said at the meeting Tuesday, March 11, that she filled out paperwork for the state formula, which is money the department receives from the state, for \$7,000; for a family planning grant for around \$2,500; and to pay the county for helping with state child care licensing for around \$2,000.

Every child care place in the county has to be surveyed each year, said Ms. Gamblin. The money in the grant will pay for a person to come from Colby to do the surveys.

Does the county have fewer day care agencies than before? asked

Commissioner Ralph Unger. Ms. Gamblin said that is true.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn asked, if she was retired and wanted to watch a few kids once in a while, would she need a license?

If the kids aren't related to you, said Ms. Gamblin, a person can watch two or more kids for no more than 20 hours once a week without a license. The person watching the kids has to keep track of the hours, she added.

There is a problem with day care, she said, because each provider can only take so many infants. There aren't enough day care centers, said Ms. Gamblin, and the county really needs some more.

In other business, the commissioners:

• Approved Ms. Gamblin's grand-

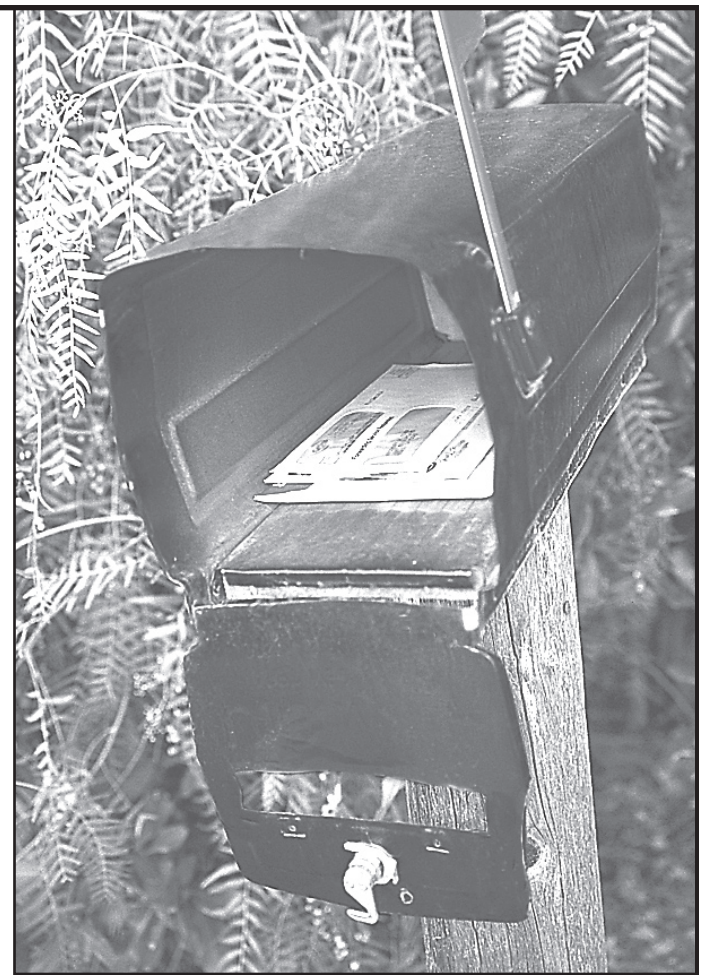
son riding in a county vehicle back from a meeting in Topeka.

• Approved closing the health department on Good Friday, with both workers taking a vacation day.

• Heard that Ms. Gamblin is having a problem scheduling the housekeeper for the department, which is Sarah Fredrickson, who was hired through the noxious weed department. Ms. Gamblin said it would be nice to have her come the same time and day each week. Commissioner Ralph Unger suggested she talk with Gaylen Huntley, noxious weed director, but she said she had.



Get all the news from Decatur County



Subscribe today!

Subscribers whose mailing address is in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties \$33
Elsewhere in Kansas \$38
Elsewhere in the United States \$42
To order your subscription, fill out the coupon below and send it with payment to:

THE OBERLIN HERALD
170 S. Penn Ave. Oberlin, Kan. 67749

Name
Address
City State Zip