

Don't let employers eavesdrop on your life

So, you've just applied for a job at the XYZ Company. During the interview, the interviewer says that, as part of the background check, you are required to give them the passwords to your Facebook and Twitter accounts. Do you?

This is no hypothetical question. Employers around the country are beginning to demand exactly that of existing employees, job applicants and even students. And in the current economy, most are getting away with it.

But just because something isn't illegal doesn't make it moral or ethical. This is just plain wrong. In the same situation, would you give an employer the keys to your house so they could snoop through your drawers and computer? Let them eavesdrop on your personal phone conversations or read your diary?

Most of us would say not only no, but heck no. Even being asked by an employer to make them a Facebook friend, so someone can monitor your social activities, is no different from being asked to put a microphone in your home.

Some may say that your home is not private, since any number of friends and acquaintances may come and go, but the difference is huge. You invite and control who comes in — it's

not arbitrary.

Companies that make such a request of your electronic accounts apparently have no respect for personal privacy or personal freedoms, and are both morally and ethically bankrupt.

Some who have been asked for such access have simply said, "I won't work for a company that would make such a request." But these days, especially if you've been out of work for several months, you may not be able to afford the luxury of refusing.

The problem is significant enough that a bill being considered in the New York legislature (the Social Networking Online Protection Act, or SNOA (no, I'm not making that up!)) would make it illegal for employers to require social-account access as a condition of employment or application for a job. And it has teeth — a \$10,000 fine per incident. Maryland passed a similar law earlier this year.

Just because it is not illegal — yet — doesn't make it right, which is why Kansas should be at the forefront of such a movement and pass its own bill. Don't wait and be the 49th state.

We have little enough personal privacy these days. Let's try to keep what's left.

— Evan Barnum

'Reading Buddies' work wonders

To the Editor:

Once in awhile, someone does something so amazing that they should receive special recognition. That is the case of the Oberlin Elementary School second-grade class taught by Kathy Tacha, April Farr and Loretta Sullivan.

Twice a month, the teachers take these children to Cedar Living Center to be "Reading Buddies" to the residents. The kids' enthusiasm for this endeavor is matched only by that of the residents.

Letters to the Editor

It is a huge pleasure for me, personally, to see my mom so anxious to see her favorite students. Reading books to the residents is so much more than just reading. The kids are learning compassion and how to give back, and that everyone, no matter what age, has something important to offer.

Many residents live far away

from their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, so these students give something very important: real friendship and precious time.

Not only would I like to thank the teachers and each and every second grader; I hope if your readers know any of these kids, they, too, thank them for their efforts.

Tom Votapka, Jennings

Article brings back old memories

To the Editor:

I want to express appreciation to you and to Jody Betts for an item in the "75 Years Ago" piece in the April 25 *Oberlin Herald*.

The piece referenced the families of North Valley School surprising the students and their teacher, Miss Iris Moore.

Iris (Moore) Hefty is my mother. She was born in a sod house in Decatur County and grew up in the Oberlin area.

She lived there until 1938, when she moved to Bartlesville, Okla., and married my father, Paul Hefty. At almost 99, she still lives in Bar-

tlestable.

I was sent a copy of the article and this week took it to Bartlesville and read it to her.

Although her memories are sometimes dim these days, she really enjoyed the article and smiled broadly as she recalled that time 75 years past.

Thank you for maintaining this sense of history.

I am a retired Kansas teacher, and during my career I created a "first-person character" from history based on my grandmother, Almira Jeanette, Iris's mother.

School children were fascinated

every year when I assumed the character of Nettie and told them stories of living in a sod house in Decatur County in the early part of the century and through the Dust Bowl days.

These stories came from my first teacher, this same Iris Moore of North Valley School.

This piece of history reminded me of these stories, and I appreciate *The Herald's* dedication to the history of its community. Thanks again.

Rosalind (Hefty) Price, Olathe

Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but

we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like.

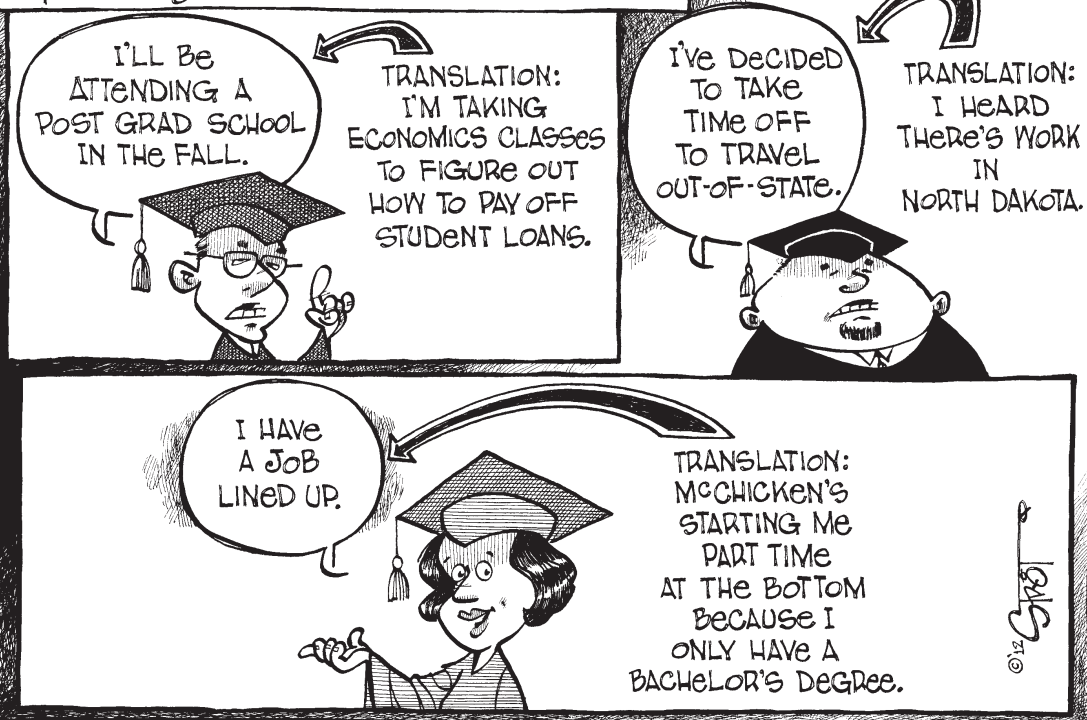
We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

From the Bible

And he said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

— Acts 1:7-8

Speaking Kansas Graduates



Baseball offers thrills, chills

We went to a baseball game Thursday.

It had all the stuff you could want in a nine-inning game: foul balls bouncing off the stadium, singles, doubles, home runs, foul balls off the roof, double plays, walks, a hit batsman, foul balls off the playground, clutch hits, great plays in the outfield, stupid blunders and foul balls off the parking lot.

We munched hot dogs, cold beer and pop and peanuts from great seats just two rows up from the visitors' dugout.

OK, this was low-A ball. Minor league.

The Augusta Greenjacks were playing the Greenville Drive, and oldest daughter and her husband have season tickets. Since they had missed a couple of earlier games, they were able to get us in on their tickets.

As season ticket holders, they each got a free blanket. It was warm at the beginning of the game, nice in the middle and cold at the end. Those blankets weren't very thick, but they were wonderful.

It was "Thirsty Thursday," and beer was just \$1 a cup, which always pulls in a good crowd.

The biggest crowd, however, stayed mainly in the concession area, mingling, drinking and preparing for a big night at the bars. The



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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stadium was only about half full.

The Greenjackets have the worst batting percentage in the South Atlantic League, according to the *Augusta Chronicle*, but on Thursday night, the boys were hot and balls were flying everywhere. Some of them even went into the outfield and a few, over the fence.

Mostly, it seemed, we ducked. Foul balls are common in baseball, but these guys fouled off enough to provide balls for all the baseball and T-ball teams Oberlin will field this year. Most of the balls went onto the roof and out onto the concourse. However, a few went into the street and one wayward bat flew into the seats to threaten the spectators.

The man sitting behind us said that at the last homestand, he and a buddy were in line for tickets outside the stadium. A foul ball hit his buddy directly on the top of the head. The poor man had to be taken to the emergency room and put in

intensive care after he developed swelling on his brain.

He was fine by Thursday, his buddy said, but he didn't want to go to the game.

The big play of the night was a two-out grand slam home run in the sixth inning by the home team. Going into the bottom of the sixth, the score had been tied at 2.

Augusta sent 10 batters to the plate that inning. One reached base on a throwing error and the next two walked. With the bases loaded, the pitcher hit the next man, forcing in a run and putting Augusta ahead 3-2.

With the bases still loaded, the next batter hit it out of the park for a grand slam. Augusta added two more runs to win 9-2 and we headed home, excited, fed and safe from the wildly flying foul balls.

It was fun, but next time, we hope we'll be watching the game at Coors Field in Denver.

Prom turns ducks into swans

Prom season is over for another year. But for that one night, the gangly girls and awkward boys morph into beautiful young men and women.

They were dressed up so that you almost had to be re-introduced to kids you've known all their lives. The hair, the make-up, the tuxedos. It's almost unbelievable. But then Sunday morning comes, and it's back to reality. It's back to their jobs at the hamburger joint or doing chores on the farm.

I e-mailed an acquaintance who is returning for his 50th high school reunion and asked him to share some of his memories. He was happy to comply, and our correspondence sparked a memory I had of him: He had a date to prom with one of the cutest girls in school and she wore (gasp) a short prom dress. He looked snazzy in a white sports jacket and black trousers. And he was grinning from ear to ear.

Why do I remember stuff like that?

—ob—

Back "in the day," we wore our prom dresses to the Alumni Banquet. It wasn't a matter of if we went or not... attendance was mandatory. Perhaps not required by the school administration, but by our parents. Nowadays, it's hard to get the most recent graduates to attend the banquet, let alone get dressed up.

Personally, I think you have to



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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be out of school at least 25 years before reconnecting with old friends becomes important. I have probably attended more alumni banquets than anyone else in my class, and I can tell you it took that long for me to appreciate it.

At our five-year reunion all we had to talk about was, "Are you still in college?" or, "Are you married yet? Any kids?" We had not lived long enough to have anything to really talk about.

By our 10-year reunion, we were into careers and kids. By 15 and 20 years, it was all about making an impression. At 25 years, we began to get real again and actually talked. And from 30 years on, it's been tons of fun. The pressure is off. We are what we are, and we're OK with that. Our kids are on their own and now we get to brag about our grandchildren.

—ob—

Just took a head-count. Six of the gladiola bulbs have sprouted and nine of the other bulbs have poked through. Jim's tomatoes look good,

and so does the broccoli.

I had a few potatoes that had sprouted in the bin. I cut the eyes out and had Jim plant them. They look good, too, and I can almost taste a batch of creamed peas with new baby potatoes. Probably only have enough to make one batch, but that will be enough.

Jim bought a zucchini plant. I'm not sure where he's going to plant it, but thank goodness it's only one. Don't think the garden spot is big enough for any more.

—ob—

Jim always asks me what I want for Mother's Day. I tell him, "I'm not your mother. You don't have to get me anything." But he never listens, and this year I got something I've really wanted... a small, electric weed eater. One I can handle.

Kara called to say she and her sister Halley, donated a flock of chickens to Heifer International in my honor. Love it.

So I had a fine Mother's Day. If you're a mom, or had one, I hope you did too.

Honor Roll

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

Elsewhere: Myra Canfield, Niles, Mich.; Mark Frickey, Copake, N.Y.; Fern Borsheim, Green Cove Springs, Fla.; Joe Boyles, Raytown, Mo.; Zola Branch, Enid, Okla.

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Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

Mail letters to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749, or by e-mail to oberlinherald@nwkans.com.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

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