

Highway Patrol needs cars to be more visible

The Kansas Highway Patrol tapped into nostalgia for its last 20 full-sized cars, Ford Crown Victorias dressed in the traditional blue and grey from half a century ago.

They are only a drop in the bucket compared to the 400-some cars and sport utilities the agency fields, however, and your chances of seeing one driving down the road are slim. This area has one, posted in Oakley, among a sea of multihued patrol cars.

The patrol started buying cars in random colors years ago when someone figured out that the resale value of these vehicles was much higher than cars painted to look like a police car. Instead of driving the blue-and-greys until they were worn out, troopers started getting a new car every year or two. The used vehicles are sold while they still have good value.

Usually, only white cars get roof-mounted lights. Most of these are sold to city and county police agencies that don't mind the holes drilled in the roof. Colored cars get lights mounted inside or behind the grill, then are sold on the open market.

Because this program so reduces costs, it's not likely we'll ever see more grey-and-blue cars. However, another change may be putting troopers at risk on the road, especially at night.

Seems the cost of the huge "state trooper" screen print shot up this year, so the patrol decided to go without it. Some cars came out with only a small shield on the door and much

smaller reflective lettering. Lately, the patrol has gone to larger shields, still reflective, but the cars don't show up as well at night or look as good on the road.

The bigger decals turned the cars into beacons at night, ensuring that people would see a parked patrol car beside, or blocking, the road. For cars without roof-mounted lights, that could be vital. Their lights don't show much to the sides, but the stickers sure do.

With the new, small lettering and just a reflective shield on the door, a car's visibility from the side might be as low as 10 percent of what it has been. It could make a lot of difference to a trooper out on the pavement at night.

If we had our way, and we suspect a lot of troopers would agree, we'd paint all the cars blue and grey. They look sharp. But we understand just duplicating the single-light red flasher of the old cars in electronic form costs upwards of \$1,000 each. Then there's the money saved by the early trade-in program, and in tight budget times, that counts.

However, we think the patrol should consider safety first and find a way to get more reflective material on the sides of the cars, either with a return to the big screen-print "state trooper" or something else.

The safety of the public, and the troopers themselves, is too important to compromise.

— Steve Haynes

Shed fills up with 'good stuff'

During these last few weeks before we leave for Mexico, the intensity and anticipation start to build. When someone says they have some extra (whatever), and do I want to take it, my instinctive reply is, "Sure."

That also explains why I spot "good stuff" sitting on the curb. And why I'm not too ashamed to stop and ask if it would be OK for me to sort through it. That's how I found some perfectly good bedding. I'm always surprised at what people here will throw away instead of give away.

We have a storage shed dedicated to storing "stuff to take to Mexico." It's to the point where you better stand back if you open the door. It's about to explode.

Finally, Jim said, "Carolyn. Stop! We can't take anymore!"

Room. Schroom. What we can't take this trip will just be seed to grow "stuff" for the next trip.

-ob-

My tactics to integrate Henny Penny, our half-grown hen, into the adult flock seem to be working. Every day after feeding, I open her cage and the chicken coop door and let them all out into the yard. They were a little timid at first, not venturing far from the door. Soon, though, rooster, hens and Henny Penny were scratching away. They seem to love the grass and weeds and especially the bugs.

The flock mostly ignores Henny. They're too busy feeding themselves. Except for one old hen. She seems to be Henny Penny's nemesis, the only one that still goes out of her way to harass and peck Henny.

I did tell Jim that we need to put



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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an ID band on Henny's leg. As she gets bigger, I won't be able to tell her from the others. I sure don't want to wring the wrong neck.

-ob-

Jim and I went to a fancy schmancy party Saturday night, the Firemen's Ball in Oberlin, and we got all "gussied up" for a night on the town. It's been a long time since we've been to that formal of an affair, and I wanted to do it up right.

Don't ask me why, but I had a pair of false eyelashes in my vanity drawer and thought this might be the right occasion to bring them out. Years ago, I didn't have any trouble putting on false eyelashes, but something's changed. Either my sight isn't as good as it used to be or my hands are shaking.

Bottom line: after several failed attempts, I gave up. But not before my own eyelashes were glued together and the false ones were stuck to my fingers. Guess my vamp days are over.

The party itself was great fun. We ate great food. Had great table conversation with some old and some new friends. Danced to some great old music. Helped raise some money for a great cause. It was a totally great evening all the way around. I think a great tradition has

been born.

-ob-

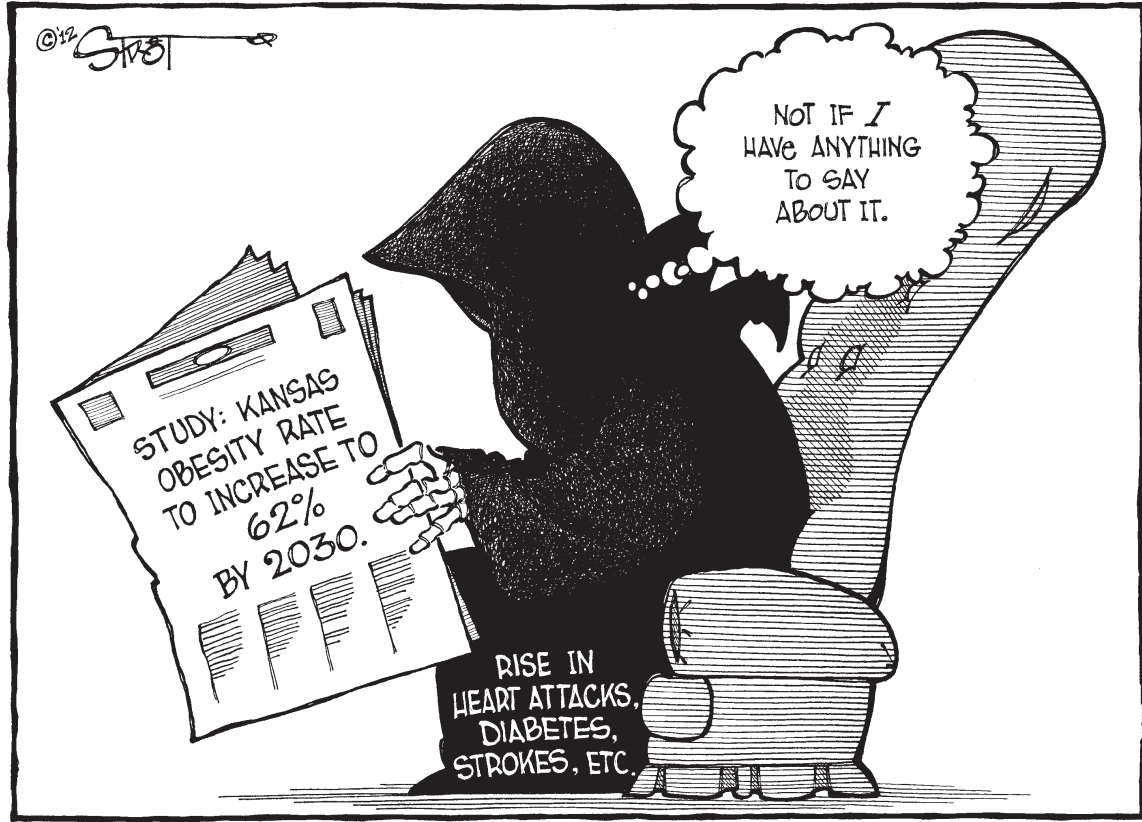
Do you feel that snap in the air? It's fall, my favorite time of year.

This is a good time to do some tree work, not just trimming and transplanting, but eliminating. Jim is committed to cutting down a locust tree in front of our house. Its nasty thorns have always been a nuisance. We'll replace it with something nicer, but I will sure miss its shade next summer; and for several summers after that.

From the Bible

And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me."

—Mark 8: 35-37



Color show outshines silver

The hills were ablaze with color. Actually, these babies weren't hills; they were part of the Rocky Mountains.

We were in Creede, Colo., in the southern Rockies. On all sides are mountains—the La Garitas, the San Juans, the Sangre de Cristos. As you might guess, the Spanish got the naming rights for the area. About the only places around here that don't have Spanish names are Creede and its silver mines. The Last Chance, Holy Moses and Kentucky Belle produced thousands of ounces of silver in their day, and with mineral prices on the upswing, modern miners are climbing all over these ancient cliffs.

But we weren't here for the mines. We were here for rest, relaxation and maybe a play at the repertory theater.

We got all three. We each finished a book and started another, browsed through several magazines, saw two plays, listened to the Rockies lose some baseball games and played with our new iPhones.

We also did a little work, but we tried to keep that to a minimum.

Mostly we enjoyed the fresh mountain air and walked in the woods. Steve did some fishing while I tried a couple of new recipes.

It was a great week, and we had



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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an added bonus. The aspen were early this year.

After a dry spring and summer and a damp August, the aspen in the high country were turning at a rapid rate.

Only a month ago, it was hard to tell the aspen from the spruce, fir and pine trees. Everywhere you looked, the mountainsides were a deep green.

Then a couple of weeks ago, we were out here and noticed that you could pick out the aspen groves on the mountainsides. They were turning a lighter shade of green.

Now, the mountainsides are a rainbow of light and dark green, yellows, gold and bright reds. The evergreens are still their dark green selves, but the aspen have gone into autumn splendor.

If you've never seen the mountain aspen, take a drive to Colorado and check them out. It's an amazing sight

and a lot easier and cheaper than going to see the beautiful hardwoods in New England, although they say that's a worthwhile trip, too.

Anyway, while we were up in the mountains I picked up leaves. I can't help myself. Everywhere I looked, the ground was covered with the beautiful leaves, each one more gorgeous than the last.

I brought my treasures back and arranged them in a candle holder my nephew made for us several years ago. I've done this before, and I know that the leaves will dry up, but keep their colors. They get brittle, but if you don't touch them or open a window near them—like someone did last spring—they'll be fine until next fall.

Remember that, Steve. Don't open any windows near my leaves like you did last year, or you get to sweep them up this time.

Fishing trip ends at bridge

I went fishing last week with my friend Harrison.

That's a bit like saying you went to church with the bishop. You're pretty sure the bishop is on a higher plane.

So you may be going to church, but the bishop is going to CHURCH.

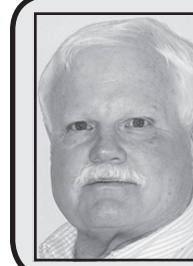
And Harrison, well, he's going FISHING. You might say he's into fishing.

All his gear is that light olive favored by tony fishing outfitters, whether it came from Cabela's or Bass Pro Shops or one of the big catalog outfits back east. His Subaru Outback is the same color, though he claims that's a coincidence. It's the L.L. Bean edition, though.

So, you might say Harrison likes fishing. He's been fishing all over, and I've been lucky enough to go with him a few places. The first place we fished together, in fact, was Lake Arenal in Costa Rica.

Lake Arenal is in the mountains in the central part of the country, about 15 miles long. Created by a hydroelectric dam, nestled into the rain forest, a towering volcano at either end, it may be one of the most beautiful places in the world. Especially when the water is glass-smooth at 6 a.m.

The jungle comes right down to the road, and the howler monkeys screaming in the trees take on an eerie tone. You almost have to see it to believe it, but the computer ate



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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all my pictures, I swear.

The lake was full of two kinds of fish, the machaca, a perch-like fish with a mouth full of teeth that look like a piranha's, and rainbow bass. These look like largemouth bass in our country, only green (males) or brown (females). The males have a rainbow stripe.

We caught some machaca, handling them carefully. With gloves. We finally caught some bass, too, and took a couple back to the lodge to eat. The cooks fried them for us and we ate them at 3 p.m. in the dining hall as all the nonfishermen came to oh and ah. They were delicious.

Our guide that time was one of the few people I've met who might like fishing more than Harrison. He showed up in a Toyota 4Runner, pulling a 24-foot bass boat. All his gear was from Bass Pro, and it filled the back end. He told us he had three boats, one for the lakes, one for the rivers and one for the ocean. And gear for each kind of fishing.

"You must like to fish," I said innocently enough.

"Señor," he said, "I live to fish."

But back to Colorado. My friend who's a river guide said the fishing has slowed down early, but any part of the Rio Grande in the area was as good as the next. State regulations are designed to produce big fish, but it's mostly catch and release.

The first day on the river, Harrison caught a couple of small ones and I practiced my long casting. We tried one of my favorite creeks, where I caught a few and he got one.

The next day, we tried the river right below our house. If one place was as good as the next, we figured, it was close. Harrison loaned me a wet fly and I caught a small brown trout. Later, I heard him shout, looked down the river and saw him trying to land a fish.

"How big?" I yelled.

"Looks about 21 inches," he replied.

I took pictures to prove it, with his camera.

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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.

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 will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. We need a clear, sharp picture, not dark or fuzzy.