

Maybe Huckabee represents change

Hope, Arkansas was home to Gov. Bill Clinton, who eventually became President of the United States. Hope, Arkansas is home to former Gov. Mike Huckabee, who, polls are beginning to show, could become President of the United States.

Huckabee is not only leading in the Iowa, but new polling out within the past day or two, shows he has surpassed Rudy Giuliani nationally. Additionally, Arkansas voters say they would vote Huckabee, not Hillary Clinton if it came down to a face-off for the presidency in November 2008.

What is so remarkable with the Huckabee surge is the fact he hasn't been able to raise funds that are anywhere close to what all the frontrunners — both Republican and Democratic — have raised.

Is it the Hope, Arkansas water?

Or maybe it's because we are all starting to pay closer attention to the 2008 race and voters like the honesty with which Huckabee campaigns. Voters asked for a change at the polls in 2006 when the Democrats gained control — a razor thin control in both the House and the Senate — but no real change occurred. Huckabee might be the candidate that best represents change.

Hillary Clinton has lost her so-called unbeatable lead to Sen. Barack Obama in Iowa. She's getting down and dirty and the folks in that state don't like down and dirty. But when you see your lead slipping, as she is witnessing, you revert to whatever tactic best serves your cause. Even husband Bill has mounted his horse and is raging war on the media. After all, if you listen to him, we are the cause of Hillary's decline in the polls.

Maybe Obama represents change on the Democratic side of the ledger, and Huckabee represents change on the Republican side. Both of these guys have taken the high road — of course in politics *high road* is cause for debate.

The Iowa caucus is Jan. 3 and the New Hampshire primary is Jan. 8. And things are beginning to take strange twists and turns. The sure-bet candidates aren't quite as sure as they once were. This is healthy news because it means we all are taking a closer look, taking more interest in who we would like to see in the White House when President Bush turns the keys over in January 2009.

-Tom Dreiling

Shovel and sand next for your kit

This is the third in a four-part mini-series on preparing a Winter Weather Car Survival Kit. The first appeared in the Nov. 30 *Telegram* and the second in the Dec. 4 paper.

Today (Dec. 7) brings these suggestions from David Floyd, Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the Goodland National Weather Service office:

- An old shovel. Chances are a shovel you use for gardening won't really be needed until spring and can serve you well in your vehicle. A shovel can make the difference between remaining stranded for hours, or being able to continue on a journey if your vehicle becomes high-centered on snow or stuck in a drift. Often times a little effort clearing snow from around the tires or underneath the vehicle will help free the car from a snowdrift. Some department stores even carry shovels where the handle can be collapsed to make for easier storage.

- Sand or cat litter for traction. Use a couple of one gallon milk cartons filled with sand from a sandbox. Cat litter also works great. Place sand or litter under the wheels and the additional friction may be enough to help free your vehicle.

The final items for your kit will appear in this space on Tuesday, Dec. 11.

-Tom Dreiling

Placement of stories brings chuckle

To the Editor,

I got a bit of a chuckle from the arrangement of articles on page 2 in Tuesday's *Telegram*.

I always enjoy Liza Denies' column and Tuesday's with its recipes was delicious. I read through the recipe for the 'Carmel Nut Pound Cake' and it's frosting, thinking back on holidays where this kind of cooking was normal.

Then the title of the article just below Liza's column was 'Counting calories part of diet secrets.' Talk about splashing ice water on a warm thought! To begin with, how do you calculate the calories in a slice of that kind of cake? Then how do you figure out how big (or small) to cut a

piece to fit in with your calorie limits? I figure most of us would have to be happy with a slice thin enough to read through. 'Calorie county' and 'diet' become dirty words at this time of year. Therefore, pass us a nice sized piece of cake and let us enjoy each rich, delicious, decadent mouthful as we bask in warm thoughts and maybe a few memories.

June Prout Norton

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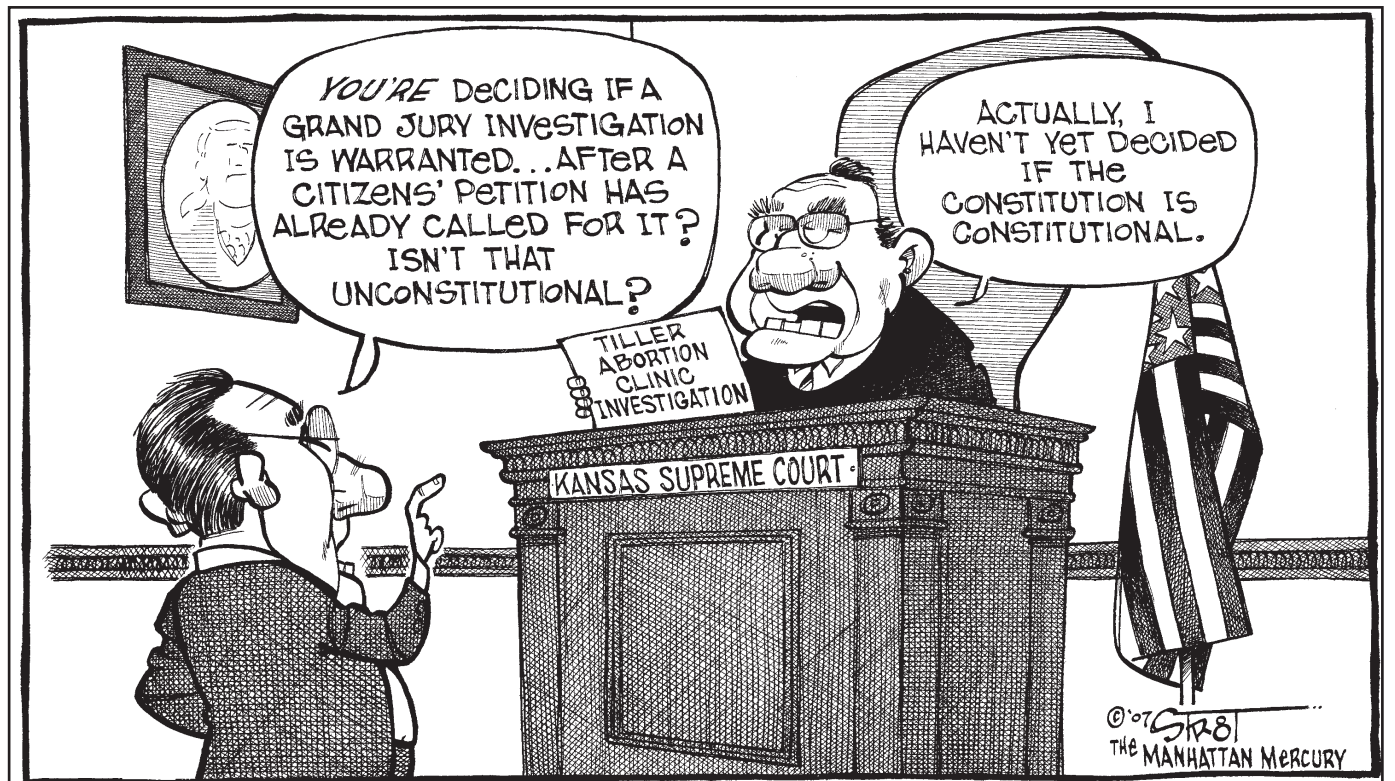
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LETTER

And as shocking and sickening, as both



Don't forget to remember Pearl Harbor

December 7, 1941 was a day we will never forget. Sixty-six years ago today, at dawn, Japanese planes took aim from the air on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in hopes of crippling the fleet and hindering U.S. intervention in other Japanese actions in the South Pacific. The attack mobilized the United States and initiated its entry into World War II.

Radios were informing a stunned America of the surprise attack that morning and how it was going to change our way of life. And it did. Many, many thousands of young Americans traded their civilian clothes for military uniforms. The *draft* was the key word.

At Pearl Harbor on that fateful day, two U.S. battleships — the Utah and the Arizona — were completely destroyed. Seven others were severely damaged. The Oklahoma, although salvaged, was deemed obsolete and designated for scrap.

The 16-inch shell that hit and blew up the battleship Arizona, sent it to the bottom of the harbor in just minutes, claiming the lives of more than 1,100 crew members. The Arizona continues to be preserved as a tomb for its crew and as a memorial to what transpired that day. It is just minutes by boat from the naval base at Pearl Harbor. And countless numbers of tourists continue to visit the memorial.

Most of the young people today know nothing of Pearl Harbor. They relate, instead, to the events of Sept. 11, 2001, when another enemy — terrorists — flew two American passenger jets into the Twin Towers in New York City, another into the Pentagon and another crashed in an open field in Pennsylvania. Thousands of American lives were lost that morning.

Two fatal attacks, one on our soil, are more than just footnotes in history, they are stories embedded in our hearts and minds. They will be forever remembered. And as shocking and sickening, as both

questions at the debates!

Good Evening Norton
Tom Dreiling



questions at the debates!

-td-
Kennedy the Catholic. Romney the Mormon. When are we ever going to permit those seeking office to worship in their own way, under the freedoms we so religiously embrace?

-td-
The 5-year-old bowed his head and prayed: "Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen."

-td-

Will the weather ever settle down? What's with all the snow, the rain, the mudslides in the Pacific Northwest? At one time this week, they say the Seattle area had what could have been described as a hurricane — winds in excess of 100 miles per hour! Oregon had rainfalls over 6-7 inches. An interstate from Seattle to Portland was closed because part of the highway was under water. Here we are, weaving in and out of cold/warm temperatures. The warm was unusually warm for this time of year; the cold sort of fit into the season. There is something going on. Even the weather experts can't make sense of it. Not much we can do about it — except keep talking about it.

-td-

Grab a tissue before you read this. It's about a four-year-old boy, whose next door neighbor — an elderly gentleman — had just lost his wife. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap, and just sat there.

When he came home his mother, who saw him go over to see the elderly man, asked him what he had said to him. The little boy said, "Nothing, Mom. I just helped him cry."

-td-

Have a good evening. And this weekend when you are at the church of your choice, reflect on how that little boy handled such a delicate situation, and how you would react when confronted with something similar.

It's time to put the death tax to death

Insight
John Schlageck

Across this country, more than two million farms dot the rural landscape. Individuals, family partnerships or family corporations own 99 percent of them. These same family farms produce approximately 94 percent of U.S. agricultural products sold today.

Death (estate) taxes destroy family-owned farms and ranches when the tax, that can be as high as 47 percent, forces farmers and ranchers to sell land, buildings or equipment needed to operate their businesses. The average estate tax payment from 1999 to 2000 was the equivalent to one-and-a-half to two years of net farm income.

Farmers and ranchers in Kansas have long battled any form of death tax. Those same agricultural producers, many who belong to Farm Bureau, support the permanent repeal of death taxes.

Across our state, family farms/ranches and small businesses face the probability of a death tax that could undo a lifetime of hard work, careful planning and saving. By necessity, these farms, ranches and business continue to increase in size. By doing so, they provide opportunities for the next generation of Kansas agriculture.

However, these new, larger enterprises are more than ever, capital-intensive businesses and face increasing pressure when it comes to passing the family business to this next generation. Death taxes can damage and even destroy the

economic viability of farms, ranches and businesses.

As an example, the estate taxes due on a moderately sized farm could total around \$300,000, the equivalent of more than 2.5 years of farm returns from both income and asset appreciation. For a larger farm, the tax liability could be approximately \$1.5 million, the equivalent of six to seven years of income and asset appreciation. Further, average values of land — generally farmers' and ranchers' largest asset — appreciated by 70 percent nationwide from 2003 to 2007.

When farmers and ranchers disappear, the rural communities and businesses they support also suffer. Farmland located closer to urban centers is often lost forever to development when death taxes force farm families out of business.

Agricultural estates face heavier, potentially more disruptive death tax burdens than other estates. Approximately twice the number of farm estates paid federal death taxes in the late '90s compared to other estates. The average farm death tax is also larger than the tax paid by most other estates. While other small businesses and other sectors of the U.S. economy have similar objections to estate taxes, farmers and ranchers are particularly

ly sensitive to this tax for several reasons: First, farms typically require substantially more in capital assets to generate \$1 in income than other businesses; second, in addition to carrying a larger capital burden while operating and a high estate tax burden in death, the typical farm has more capital tied up in fixed assets that are difficult to liquidate. As a result, roughly twice the number of farm estates paid federal estate taxes compared to estates generally in the late 1990s; and third, the average farm estate tax is larger than the tax paid by most other estates.

Farmers, ranchers and businesses find it difficult to predict the future net worth of their operations, so they feel compelled to spend money for estate planning and life insurance. While estate planning is sometimes effective in protecting farm businesses from over-burdensome death taxes, estate planning tools are costly and can take funds that could be better used by farmers and ranchers to operate and expand their businesses.

Even with the best of plans, no attorney or accountant can guarantee that the plans farmers, ranchers and businesses pay for will save their enterprises. Only repeal can truly erase the burden and uncertainties of estate tax planning or the inexcusable levy associated with it.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He was born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas.