

Opinion

Splitting farm bill in two may make passage hard

unholy alliance of Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, who came together every few years to pass a farm bill. This year, in the era of polarity, that system has broken down.

In years past, liberals on both sides of the aisle could vote for the farm bill because it contained authorization for Food Stamps, nutrition programs, school lunches and other "agriculture-related" assistance. Conservatives and farm-state legislators – often the same people – got what they wanted for farmers.

And if anyone objected to the "wasteful" spending on the other part of the bill, the deal implied by the big-tent farm bill kept them quiet.

This has been important for farmers, because their numbers and influence have been declining. They still rank among the stronger business lobbying forces because the Farm Bureau and other groups have them well organized. Farmers show up on Capitol Hill in numbers a farmstate senator or representative can't ignore. And nearly every state has its farm vote.

The numbers keep shifting in favor of the cities, however. Even in Kansas, each census brings news that there are fewer of us in rural areas and more of them in cities and suburbs.

And while a strong farm sector is in most

You have to hope the House Republicans everyone's best interest, a lot of people don't know what they are doing, splitting the Farm know that. Most Americans today have never Bill into separate agriculture and welfare seen where their food comes from and really don't have much idea who grows it. They think Farmers have gotten by for years with a sort of bread comes from Sarah Lee and steak from Omaha, hamburger from McDonalds and cotton from Walmart.

> Perhaps splitting the farm bill will allow all the programs to be judged on their own merits. The conservative House Republicans will certainly want to chop heck out of the everyburgeoning food-stamp program.

> But many city liberals have their sights on farm subsidies. They will be waiting in the Senate, where the Democrats are in charge and the rules are different.

In the end, the two houses will have to

compromise both bills, and perhaps the grand alliance can be put back together. Farmers can hope and work for some

kind of deal that keeps the most important programs going, particularly crop insurance and emergency relief. Liberals will vote for "environmental" parts of the bill, but programs like direct payments will be on the line for elimination or limitations.

And increasingly, farm groups may have to choose the parts of bill they need most.

This may not be what we want to see, but it looks like the future. Here's hoping the House strategy helps – and not hurts.

Steve Haynes



The Gardener

Ask just about anyone why they for the family. began planting a garden in their backyard and you'll probably get a blank stare. Either that, or they'll it be if "every" family planted, tell you "it's because I like fresh tended and harvested the bounty tomatoes." That, of course, is of their own backyard garden? reason enough.

There are approximately 50 million gardeners in the United States today. The average age of an American gardener is 50. That people figure only old blokes like me go outside and play in the dirt. true, but not anymore.

Young people are finding their way out the back door and into the backyard in increasing numbers these days. And it's not only because they're hankering for a fresh tomato. They're beginning to understand that homegrown fresh garden delicacies are paramount in their family's everyday diet. They little perspiration can actually be accomplishing something good or junior year.

It set me to thinking the other day. (Really!) How great would Probably not going to happen. And why is that? It's because the majority of the nation's young, school age people have never been exposed to the joys of gardening may surprise you because most by their parents and are not really aware of how to get started when they get out on their own. I think Fifty years ago, that was basically I have the answer to this problem.

Let's introduce a course in school pertaining to gardening. I propose that Gardening 101 be a semesterlong course, and be required study for all sophomore or junior students in high school for both boys and girls. It should be scheduled in the second semester when spring begins and students can get outside and get hands-on training as well also understand that working up a as in the classroom/high school students would be allowed to take satisfying, knowing that they are the course either their sophomore

My book, entitled Gardener's Common Guide to Vegetable Gardening in the Midwest" would make an excellent textbook. A teacher with gardening experience could surely be found in the community. I have

Kay

I think it makes sense that Gardening 101 be offered to 15 and 16 year olds rather than kindergardeners or first graders. I believe the older students would feel a closer connection to fresh home grown food than the younger kids, and would more easily learn the importance of learning about gardening.

drawn up an outline for the course

for the entire semester.

I know nothing about high school curriculums these days. But I submit that this idea makes as much sense as some courses available, or forced upon, our students today. What do you

Doctor makes decision to stay in county after disagreement

Letter to the Editor:

The hospital and I had a disagreement over a recent

-Letters to the Editor-

management decision concerning procedures are being addressed. Brown and Dr. Dallas Walz. I the clinic. During this last month, As a result I am going to remain did not want to leave them in a I had some serious concerns in practice here. The people lurch prior to their completion of about whether I would be able of this county have been so residency. to remain in practice here. I have supportive of me as well as the been here for 14 years and I had clinic and hospital. I did not think never thought about leaving it right to leave such a trust. I also feel this county will be getting Administration and I have two excellent physicians with been republished with proper agreed to disagree and policies/ the recruitment of Dr. Megan corrections.

Sincerely, Mary Beth Miller, MD St. Francis Editor's note: This letter has

Casey's Comments-Casey You won't find many around Lake Waconda for our annual McCormick | these parts who will complain ballet of communal living, we

about rain. It's like the country tune that claims, "Rain is a good thang!" So as the Bucholtz-Ross-

Lampe-Hilt-Marin-McCormick families and friends gathered at

-Honor Roll---New and renewed Herald

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Rocky Mountains it was not so.

Today folks have well-equipped and air conditioning. Food is kept nicely chilled in refrigerators. Fire needs to be replaced. can be made on a stove top.

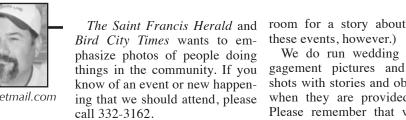
Teenagers and young adults used to be. Even with the rain.

took the weekend down pours in mccormickcasey@rocketmail.com

It is pretty easy to do with all the are still in touch with the outside modern conveniences of camping. world and they constantly I recall as a kid camping in the use their hand-held devices to communicate. The adults can We considered ourselves lucky to catch the weekend sporting events have a down-filled sleeping bag on television with mobile satellite that ideally stayed dry for awhile.

The only temporary recreational vehicles with heating inconvenience comes when the ice that chills the liquid refreshments

· II Peter 1:21



Please be sure to allow a cou-

ple of days' notice so we can be Space in the paper is limited less you submit a self-addressed, each.

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 Camping certainly isn't what it like. (We will always try to make

The Saint Francis Herald and room for a story about any of stamped envelope with clear in-

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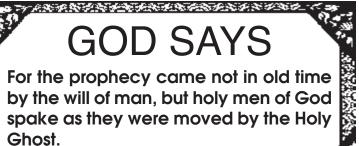
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structions for return. Other photos

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