pinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Access to hunters helps farm image

Good news for rural America is a new U.S. Department of Agriculture program to help states lease land and improve habitat for public access.

Called the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program, the effort is authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. It offers states and tribal governments up to \$50 million in grants through 2012 to expand or create public-access programs for hunting and recreation.

"We believe that encouraging outdoor recreation activities in rural communities represents a real opportunity," said Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

The number of hunters and fishermen has been declining for years as America becomes more urban and less rural. Once, hunters could knock on the door and expect to be welcomed by a farm owner. Today, with many farmers living in town or miles from their fields, it's increasingly difficult to get permission to hunt or fish. Private leases take more land out of the pool.

But \$50 million isn't much money in this day and age, so why is this important?

First, with much land coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program, farmers maybe can use a little cash. The federal money might preserve some habitat that would otherwise be lost to the plow.

Second, rural America needs all the friends it can get. Face it: there aren't many of us compared to our brethren in the city. We don't vote in numbers anymore. So anything we get from Washington will be the result of partnerships with city folk.

We need them on our side. We need them to understand our positions, our needs. We need them to care. And hunters who visit the farm and get to know farmers are just the type of supporters we need.

We should make them our friends.

What we loosely call the Farm Bill today really is a welfare bill. Most of the money goes to urban programs. We've seen what happens when city-bred environmental interests get their hands on this money: Conservation Reserve cut, ethanol programs under attack, cheap food always in the forefront.

Rural Americans, as few as we are, cannot go to Washington and force anyone to do anything. Not enough of us. Farmers are fewer still. So we need all the allies we can find.

Third, hunting, fishing and recreation are big business. Secretary Vilsack estimates and people using public lands under his department spend \$12 billion a year in nearby towns, creating a quarter-million jobs. The department sees a chance to spread that around, and those of us surrounded by private land could use some of that business.

Kansas officials, knowing how little public land we have in this state, welcomed the new program. Kansas already has 1 million acres under lease and might be able to do more with some federal money.

We wouldn't say \$1 million per state was enough to change the world, but it's a start. To really help us, this program needs to grow and expand. But anything Washington does to help us

- Steve Haynes

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail colby.editor @ nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Free Press, its staff or the owners.

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"MY SMART PHONE IS BEGINNING TO MAKE ME FEEL INADEQUATE..."

Hotel is grand, but is it a \$100 view?

I've had numerous people (yeah, both of you) ask about our trip to Mackinac Island and the Grand Hotel.

What can I say. It was grand.

Well, it was also fancy, expensive and a heck of a long way to go to enjoy a little cool air.

We agreed. We're glad we did it, and we'll probably never do it again. It's too far and too much.

When you can get to Estes Park in a few hours, why go all the way to Michigan.

Well, there's Lake Huron, of course and the Grand Hotel itself.

If you're not a guest, they charge you \$10 just to look around the place. If you are a guest, of course, they charge you

Room prices are \$190 to \$290 a night. That's a bundle, but the Brown Palace in Denver starts about \$250 a night, so maybe it's OK. And the

that price. But wait! That's per person with a 6 percent Michigan sales tax and, since there is no tipping allowed at the hotel, a 19.5 percent gratu-

Grand will feed you breakfast and dinner at

ity addition. Ouch!

The cost of the room depends on your view. If you want a nice view of Lake Huron and the Mackinac Bridge, you pay for it. Our view was off a loading dock and back stairs. If I wanted to see Lake Huron, I got up, got dressed and went out on the huge front porch and looked

Yeah, it's a nice view. Not a \$100-a-night view, but nice.

Cynthia Haynes Open

Season

So what do you get for this oh so-scary Food, music and art and the feeling of vacationing like the rich did in the early part of the

last century. First of all, they feed you. The room price includes breakfast and dinner.

Breakfast is a full meal off the menu, or as many trips as you want to the buffet, with waiters offering coffee and juice.

Lunch is on your own, but the hotel has about nine places that, for an extra charge, you can get anything from quiche to an \$18 hot dog, or you can try one of the many restaurants

In the afternoon, there is high tea. You can have tea and finger sandwiches, chat with your friends in the lobby and listen to a lady play

Then there's a demitasse service with strong coffee, finger sandwiches and someone playing quiet music on the piano.

The lunch, high tea and demitasse are all extra charges, as are drinks you might desire with cial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes our meals or at the bar in the evenings.

sion, and is a full dress affair. Men must wear c.haynes @ nwkansas.com

suits and ties and the ladies are asked to wear their best. An army of uniformed waiters and waitresses serve you an appetizer, soup, salad, entree and dessert.

And music. There's always music.

Besides the lady on the harp and the pianists in the morning and afternoon, a combo playing in the upstairs bar, a dinner-time quartet and an orchestra with a singer in the ballroom after dinner. There's music on the porch most afternoons provided by choirs and musical groups.

And art. That was Steve's favorite part.

The hotel has its own collection of art, which is quite good.

While we were there, it also had a couple dozen pieces from the Manoogian collection, which were destined for a new museum being built on the island.

pressionists, including a couple of pieces by John Singer Sargent and at least one by William Merritt Chase. All in all, it was a great opportunity to eat

The collection is mostly from American Im-

too much, drink too much and generally loll in the lap of early 20th century luxury. We enjoyed it tremendously, couldn't button

our too-tight pants when it was time to come home and likely will never do it again.

It was truly a grand, once-in-a-lifetime ex-

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief finanthis column weekly. Her nets include cats Dinner is included in the price of admis- toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at

Texting has become addiction of girls

While many boys have dropped out of academic life over the last 15 years of video game development, leaving girls to excel in school and jobs, the electronic age may now start suppressing girls with texting.

Over the last 18 months, there has been a surge in cell-phone texting. And it is turning many young girls' lives into a continuous soap

According to surveys conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life project, one in three teenagers send over 100 text messages a day and feel they must respond immediately to those they get. Says senior Pew researcher Amanda Lenhart: "We asked, 'Why don't you just turn off your phones?' We got these looks of horror. They couldn't conceive of turning off their phones.'

Nationwide results included: • Daily text messaging among American

teens has shot up in the past 18 months, from 38 percent of teens texting friends daily in February 2008 to 54 percent of teens texting daily in September 2009.

- Older teen girls 14-17 lead the charge on text messaging, averaging 100 messages a day for the entire cohort. The youngest teen boys are the most resistant – averaging 20 messages
- Text messaging has become the primary way that teens reach their friends, surpassing face-to-face contact, e-mail, instant messaging and voice calling as the go-to daily communication tool for this age group. • 12 percent of all students report they can
- have cell phones at school all the time.
- 62 percent of students can have cell phones



John Richard Schrock

• Education Frontlines

at school but not in class.

- 64 percent of teenagers with cell phones have texted in class.
- 25 percent have made or received calls during class time.
- 24 percent attend schools that ban all cell phones from school grounds, but 65 percent of cell phone-owning teenagers bring their phones to school every day anyway and 58
- percent have sent a text message during class. • 43 percent of all teens who take their phones to school say they text in class at least once a day or more.
- 15 percent of U.S. teenagers 12 to 17 who own cellphones have received nude or nearly nude images of someone they know.
- Only 4 percent of cell-phone-owning teens in that age group have sent sexually suggestive pictures of themselves, a practice known as 'sexting.'
- The Pew survey found that girls and boys were equally as likely to have sent a suggestive picture to another person and older teenagers were more likely to have engaged in
- 8 percent of 17-year-olds with cell phones have sent a sexually provocative image by text and 30 per cent have received a nude or nearly

• 4 percent of 12-year-olds have sent suggestive images of themselves.

While cell phoning and social networking are completely unrelated to what teachers do, Education Week, the newspaper of record for public education in America, is laden with articles gushing about using "mobile learning" to engage this generation of students.

Tony Orsini, a New Jersey middle school principal with some common sense is not gullible. Interviewed on television by George Stephanopoulis, Orsini discussed an e-mail he sent to parents: "There is absolutely no reason for any middle school student to be a part of a social networking site! Let me repeat that - there is absolutely, positively no reason for any middle school student to be a part of a social networking site! None.

"The threat to your son or daughter from online adult predators is insignificant compared to the damage that children at this age constantly and repeatedly do to one another through social networking sites or through text and picture messaging."

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

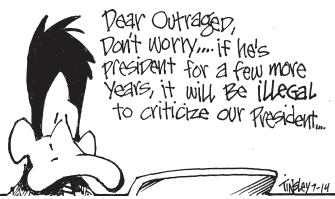


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