

from other pens...

## Produce inspection should be required

There is a push in the United States for Americans to eat healthier fare, including more fruits and vegetables. Yet, the biggest nationwide recalls in the last few months involved spinach, tomatoes, lettuce and cantaloupes.

In response to the increasing number of recalls, the Food and Drug Administration recently announced new regulations for fresh-cut produce plants. Stepped-up oversight makes sense, but the new regulations are voluntary, not mandatory.

This is the first time the FDA formally has encouraged the produce industry to implement such rules. But mandatory regulations in the food industry — like those in place for meatpackers — should be broadened to include the produce industry.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture inspects and regulates the meatpacking industry. Similar controls and oversight of the produce industry would help prevent tainted fruits and vegetables from reaching store shelves.

Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis., said disease outbreaks in the produce industry are on the rise. That is due, in part, to growing produce imports and increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. That provides ample reason for mandatory regulations governing the produce industry.

Japan, after the mad cow outbreak in 2003, refused to import beef that didn't meet strict testing criteria — and the United States complied. It shouldn't take a major disease outbreak in the produce industry for the FDA to mandate testing of imported fruits and vegetables or produce grown within this country's borders.

Merely suggesting produce plants step up testing isn't enough. And voluntary oversight falls short in protecting the consumer.

The meat industry long has operated successfully with USDA inspections and regulations. If the push to eat healthy includes additional consumption of fruits and vegetables, then producers should ensure consumers that the produce going to markets truly is good for us.

— The Hutchinson News

## where to write

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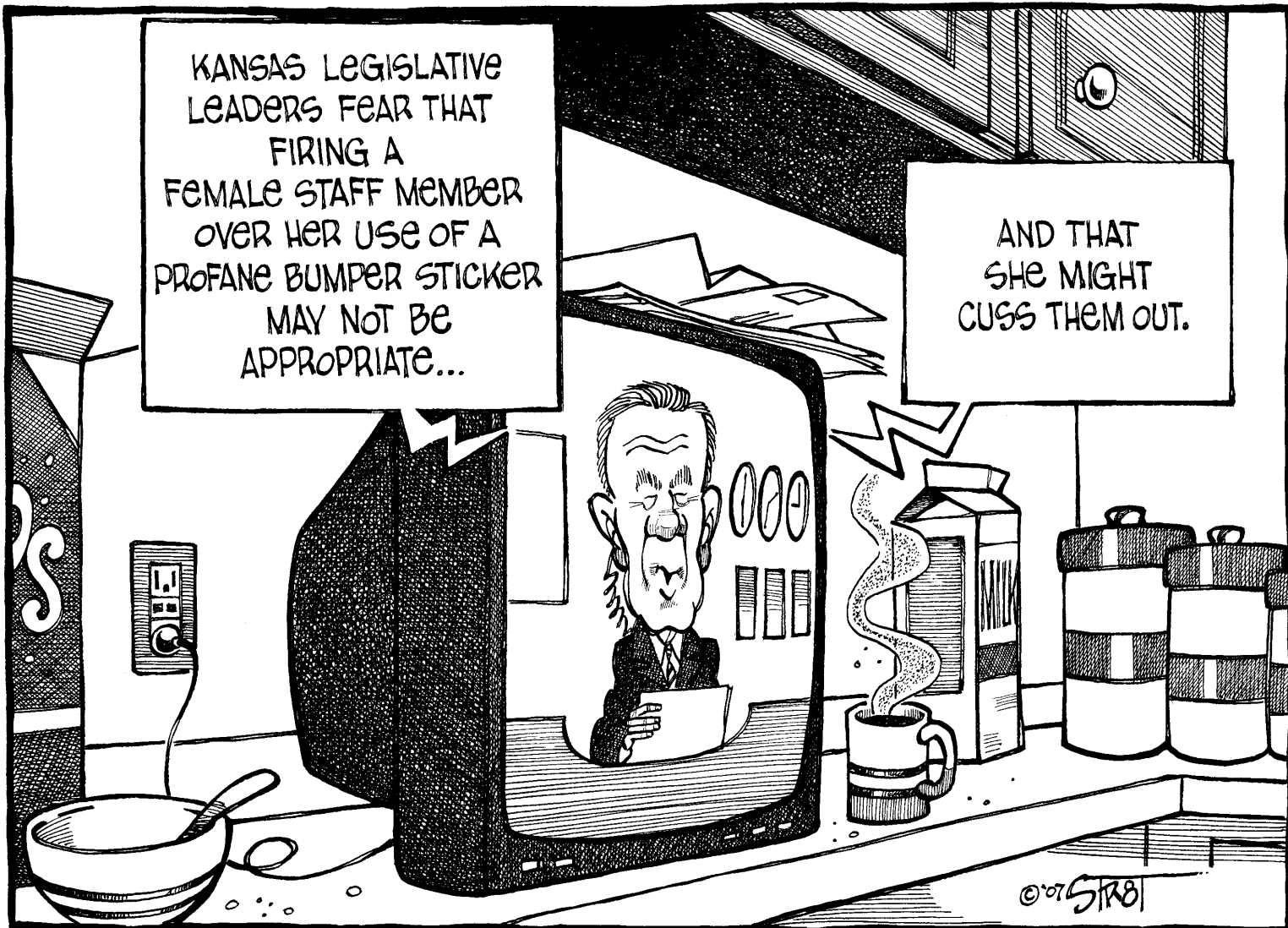
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## A cat short at roll call time

We're still a cat short when the roll call comes around.

There's Mollie. She's the top cat, bossy and thinks she's a dog. Her preferred place is the food bowl, anywhere she wants to be and at the foot of bed at night.

April Alice plays second cat most of the time. She walks carefully around Mollie and prefers to be nonconfrontational. She likes sunbeams and by my side at night then right next to Steve when I get up in the morning.

Jezebel is daughter Lindsay's cat. She will disappear down in the basement for months on end, then appear in our sitting room and demand to be petted — NOW!. She has adopted Steve and disappeared the week he was gone. Now she's back — now and then — demanding more love and affection.

Then there is what-her-name, the kitten. She disappeared in the basement and has only been seen in flashes over the last several weeks. We've seen so little of her, we haven't even named her yet.

She's definitely the mystery cat. In the last two weeks, I've seen her twice.



cynthia haynes

• open season

Once while in the basement I spotted her walking along the rafters. She looked at me, turned her back and continued on her way, way above my head. I spotted her through our glass back door when I came home unexpectedly one night. She immediately disappeared down the basement steps.

I sat downstairs on the floor for almost an hour one day with a can of wet food. After an hour, I picked up my can and headed upstairs. April Alice ate the food.

I have moved the food bowl from the basement to the kitchen. This makes it necessary for the cats to come upstairs to eat — thus the second sighting of the mysterious kitten.

Sherry, my favorite pet pusher, lent me a cat and puppy trap to catch the kitten but I haven't used it yet. Steve says that if you have to trap a

cat, it's probably not ever going to be a good pet. He has a point.

He also insists that any animal that doesn't contribute to our household should go.

For the dog, this means being insanely happy to see us any hour of the day or night, always ready to get in the car and go for a ride or a walk. The dog is our exercise machine. She needs to get exercised, so we walk.

For the cats, this means being cuddly, purring, warming laps and beds and providing occasional entertainment by chasing a moving light or string. The cat fights at 3 a.m. are an unplanned benefit, as is the occasional scratch or bite on the hand.

Baby kitten needs to get with the program and learn to be more sociable, or she will get deported — no matter how pretty she is.

No, I wouldn't send her back to the Norton Animal Shelter. However, Steve's sister Barb lives on a farm with about 20 cats. I bet she'd take a pretty little Siamese mix into her barn. At least, I hope so.

In the meanwhile, "Here kitty, kitty, kitty."

## Old friend leaves behind fond memories

An old friend from Lamar, Colo., died a week ago, and we went to a memorial service on Friday for her.

The memorial service was held for Jeanne "Jinx" Clark, 79, who had been the curator of the Big Timbers Museum in Prowers County. She had been the curator 10 years ago when we began writing the manuscript for our book "The Fleagle Gang."

Clark helped greatly with the research, and while renovating the museum exhibits that summer we discovered numerous pieces on exhibit from the First National Bank of Lamar that was the centerpiece of my book.

When Loren Reyher and I moved cabinets around Jinx would sit on the floor with a scraper and wax remover to clean the floor. She figured it had been years since the exhibits had been cleaned and rearranged.

Jinx encouraged our efforts, and we put together a special exhibit with all the Fleagle Gang and First National pieces we found that summer. Other special exhibits were discovered including a House of Worth Battenberg lace wedding dress from the 1900s, a priceless collection of World War I posters and collection of items from wars as far back as the Civil War and Spanish American War.

Working with her we got to know some of Jinx's history, and at the memorial service a collection of photos showing her ice skating brought her early life into focus. Jinx was a natural skater, and moved to Colorado Springs when she was young and began skating at the Broadmoor Ice Palace where her mother was working. Jinx was taken under the wing of some skating instructors and progressed quickly to be a performer.

She turned professional at age 17, and began skating with Sonja Henie's Hollywood Ice



tom betz

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Review, and later toured with Holiday on Ice. She skated in shows across the country and around the world through the 50s and into the 60s.

"She mesmerized a crowd," said Tom Collins, who skated with Clark as her partner for five years, and is now president of Champions on Ice, a company that produces shows across the country featuring world-class skaters. "When she was on the ice, you couldn't take your eyes off her."

Collins attended the memorial service and reminisced about the years he skated with Jinx. They kept in touch over the years, and Collins said he was close to Jinx, but was not one of her five husbands. He remembers Jinx giving his wife a black eye when the wife accused Jinx of having an affair with husband Tom.

She decided to retire from skating after 22 years, and returned to Colorado Springs where she opened a bar downtown called Jinx's Place in 1970. She moved back to Lamar in 1990, and became the curator of the museum about 1992.

In her years Jinx was known for her bubbly personality, and her enjoyment of life. She was part of a small group of people who gathered occasionally for an evening of fun and sometimes some intellectual discussions. The group adopted the name "the dead sea squirrels."

For years Jinx and my wife, Ava, and daughter, Nikki, would travel to Colorado Springs or Denver to watch Collins' Champions on Ice shows. They got to go back stage and Collins would greet Jinx and introduce them to the newest crop of young skaters.

Jinx touched lots of lives, and will be remembered for her passion for people and some of the more exciting tales she told and the real ones she lived through. The new museum curator is cleaning and rearranging the museum this spring to get ready for a busy summer. We think Jinx will be watching from her bar stool in Heaven.

## Letter Policy

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