

from our viewpoint...

What's wrong with tough new laws?

Here's what's wrong with tough, new immigration laws adopted in several states, and with a new Kansas law designed to stop "voter fraud" by forcing people to show a photo ID at the polls.

Both, by the way, are creations of our new secretary of state, Kris Kobach. He helped write both the pioneering Arizona immigration law and the Kansas voter ID law.

Mr. Kobach got elected on a platform of "stopping voter fraud," though neither he nor anyone else has been able to show the state ever had a problem. Many think it's Kobach who's the fraud.

The Arizona law directs police to determine if people they deal with are in the country illegally. That's tricky, at best, because American citizens are not required to carry identification, except for the law about having a driver's license on you when driving.

That means a police officer cannot legally ask to see your ID unless you are driving. It's simply not a requirement in this country, nor should it be in a free society, to carry "papers." That is what has separated us from many a dictatorship, even from many democracies.

So, when enforcing the anti-immigration law, how are police supposed to tell immigrants - who are required to carry documents - from the rest of us? By the color of their skin? It's touchy territory, with no simple answer to the question.

Why states should concern themselves with immigration is an open question. The federal government, which has the responsibility, has failed miserably. That is certain. But without federal backing, it's doubtful the states can do much better.

Meantime, we run the risk of slipping into a police-state mentality, driven by concerns for border security and keeping transportation safe from terrorists. Federal agents already skirt the law, intimidating people into showing ID when they could legally decline. The Border Patrol is active in searching buses, trains and planes within the U.S. and taking down people's names, which are then entered into a master federal database.

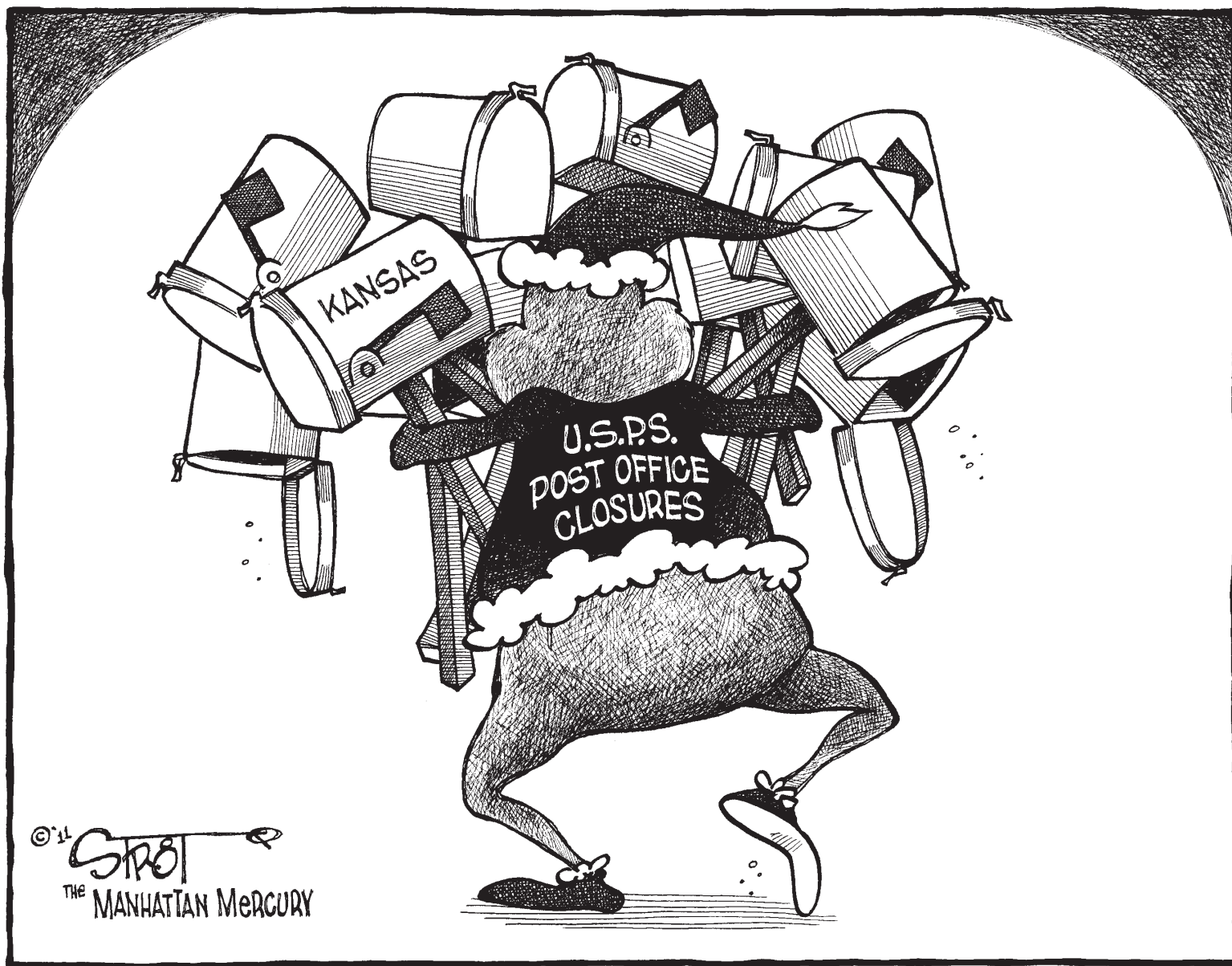
Most citizens do not know they can simply refuse these demands, and officers are good at making them feel they'll be in trouble if they don't. Many city and county law enforcement officers do the same thing when they want to search a car.

The question here is not whether we want to do something about illegal immigration. Everyone should agree a functioning immigration system would be to our advantage.

The question is, rather, do we want to slip into a police state, where citizens have to account for their actions and movements at the demand of any officer? Or do we want to maintain the precious freedoms our ancestors - and lately, our friends and neighbors - fought so valiantly to win?

If American citizens and voters do not answer this question soon, it will be too late. The security apparatus wants ever to grow and increase its power at our expense.

What is your answer? - Steve Haynes



Travel fun keeps things hopping on trip

Our trip to Georgia last week went fine - once we got in the air - but getting to that point was sort of a trial.

No major problems, mind you. Nothing that couldn't be handled with a calm head. Just one little disaster after another.

The drive to Denver went fine. In the morning, though, when I went to take my various pills, I realized I'd done an awful thing: left them sitting at home. You can't get away with that today: the blood tests tell on you, and you get a scolding from your doctor.

I confessed to my bride. "Oh," she said. "It's no big deal. You've got some spares in your suitcase, enough to get you through the weekend. And I'll have the pharmacy send an emergency supply to the kids' house."

We looked out the window at snow falling sideways. A fine day in the Queen City of the Plains. My phone rang; it was Delta's computer telling me our flight was half an hour late.

We got on the hotel shuttle and crept to the airport. Went to the ticket counter, where a lady told us since our plane was late, we should check with special services. That counter agent told us we'd be "protected" on a later flight out of Atlanta - if necessary.

He gave us boarding passes, and we rushed off to security. The government guy looked at them, turned to Cynthia and said, "Where's yours?"

She got a blank look on her face, but sure enough, all we had were my boarding passes for two flights.

Not to worry, the security guy said: "Just go get yours, take this pass, you can come back in through the employee lane." She took to calling it her "get-out-of-jail-free" card.

I promised to wait for her on the far side of the scanning-and-poking-and-prodding place. Never got past the metal detector, though, be-



**steve
haynes**

• along the sappa

cause when I emptied my pockets, there was my \$40 Leatherman tool.

They gave me one of those "get out of jail free" cards so I could go mail it home. Cost \$3.15, first-class mail. Called Cynthia and told her I wouldn't be waiting at security because I was going to the post office.

"I thought you had learned your lesson about that knife," she remonstrated. So had I; so had I.

At this point, if you believe the old tale about bad things coming in threes, you'd think we'd have paid our dues. Not so. We faced a second cycle.

When I got back, Cynthia was waiting for me. We took the shuttle train to the terminal. She wanted to wander around, look at food options. Then felt in her pocket, got a funny look on her face.

"No phone?" I asked. "No phone," she said.

We figured it must be at security. A nice young man at the information desk called down there, and they said, yes, we have it. He tried to explain to her how to get back up the normally one-way channel to the back side of security.

She looked like a deer caught in the headlights, and I figured I'd better go with her. We were running out of time, even for a delayed plane. But it's not really that far back to the main terminal at Denver, and at security, she showed her ID and signed a form, and they gave her the phone.

We rushed back aboard the shuttle; it took off with a lurch; we seemed to fairly fly back to the

Delta terminal. There, the train stopped with a lurch, my suitcase went flying and knocked a man's lunch right out of his hands. His hoagie spilled out of the sack, right on the floor.

I apologized. He glared. His wife seemed a little amused. They took off ahead of us. Cynthia stopped at McDonald's for a Big Mac, I went on down the concourse for something more substantial. I was waiting for my burger when a pleasant-looking blonde woman behind me said, "Are you going to buy us a sandwich?"

I think I had that blank look, and she went on to say, "You knocked our lunch onto the floor."

Ah, it was her. Well, given a chance to atone for my sins, I did. We had a nice chat while we waited.

Both Cynthia and I got back to the gate before our plane began boarding. With a 41-minute connection, we left only a half-hour late.

When it's snowing, though, planes have to be de-iced. Lines at some stations were four and five deep. I thought we'd lucked out when we got in a line with only one plane, but ground control had other ideas. The ramps and taxi ways were crowded, our runway closed for snow plowing. Wait, they said. Wait we did.

We were an hour down leaving Denver, but the rest of the day went like clockwork. I'm guessing we'd done our penance.

In Atlanta, we had 30 minutes to catch our - later - flight, two terminals away. Went like clockwork, the gate agent had our passes ready and we made the hop to Augusta with 10 minutes to spare.

Our daughter was surprised to see us so soon; so surprised, she hadn't left home yet. But she came right down to get us, and things have been fine since.

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Use the gift of memory

If I could request but one gift during the holiday season, I'd ask for a book. Books abound with a wealth of knowledge and wisdom. They provide hours of adventure and entertainment rarely found anywhere else in today's culture.

A couple of books I would include on any wish list would include, "Cutting for Stone" by Abraham Verghese and "Pillars of the Earth" by Ken Follett.

"Cutting for Stone" is about Marion and Shiva Stone, twin brothers born of a secret union between a beautiful Indian nun and a brash British surgeon at a mission hospital in Addis Ababa. Orphaned by their mother's death in childbirth and their father's disappearance, bound together by a preternatural connection and a shared fascination with medicine, the twins come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution. This novel is an unforgettable journey into one man's remarkable life, and an epic story about the power, intimacy and curious beauty of the work of healing others.

"Pillars of the Earth" is set in 12th-century England and the story line revolves around the building of a cathedral in the fictional town of Kingsbridge. The ambitions of three men merge, conflict and collide throughout 40 years of social and political upheaval as internal church politics affect the progress of the cathedral and the fortunes of the protagonists.

Another book I once read, and pick up to review from time to time, is Howard Thurman's, "The Mood of Christmas." The message in Thurman's book revolves around a gift he says everyone should enjoy and use in the best way. This gift is memory.



**Insight
this week**

• john schlageck

Thurman defines memory as, "one of God's great gifts to the human spirit without which neither life nor experience could have any meaning."

What Thurman urges in his book is to use your memory now, today and often. Think what a priceless gift it is.

What if you had no memory? Every second, minute and hour of every day would have to begin for the first time. Learning would be impossible and education would be meaningless.

Instead, humans have the power to store vast amounts of information and experiences throughout their lives. All we have to do is think about it and we can recall these thoughts and experiences on demand with the use of our memory.

Some people store only unpleasant memories. Every slight is filed away. When a later encounter is made with the person responsible for the offense, the individual is chastised again, either mentally or verbally.

After a period, the memory storehouse is full of unpleasant thoughts. The mind is filled with suspicion, resentment and hate.

For others, only pleasant thoughts are stored for safekeeping. Such thoughts can be summoned at a moment's notice. They restore faith and re-establish confidence in life at difficult

and trying times.

Remember with the coming of the New Year, look to the future with hope - the confident expectation of good. Use the gift of memory to your benefit. Enjoy past experiences and remember life is what you make of it. Make it good.

And as for reading or giving a book this holiday season, there are plenty of other wonderful books waiting to be read. So go on line, visit your favorite book store or swap books with a fellow reader. Just remember, this is the perfect time of year to read a book.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

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