

Too many dairymen lost because of low prices

Dairy Farmers received 95 cents a gallon for milk in April of 2003. Today the are receiving \$1.69. Milk production in the U.S. has dropped 2 percent in the past year. Low prices have driven farmers out of business and dairy cattle have been sold for slaughter because of the high beef prices.

Here's a headline you will never see:

May 2003 — Riots erupt at grocery stores and Farm Services Agency offices

Consumers took to the streets today to protest low milk prices.

The protests stem from what one organizer termed "the failure of milk to keep up with inflation in other areas of the economy such as new cars, visits to the doctor, or even social security cost of living increases."

Researchers tell us that dairy framers are receiving 95 cents at the processor, a 25-year low.

Dairy farmers across the nation are pleased with the turn of events.

Local dairyman, Guernsey Jersey said "We are so excited to see such wide support of the dairy farmer. If milk had kept pace with the price of other goods and services our price would be five-10 times greater."

Simple math tells us that means dairy farmers should be getting \$4.75 to \$9.50 a gallon. Adding \$2 per gallon for processing and packaging would make milk at the least \$6.75 on the supermarket shelf.

Market analysts are surprised at the depth of support for farmers.

"The USDA has insured consumers will have low food prices with a variety of farm programs and price supports," economist Mark Ett D'man said in an interview late Tuesday. "This system has worked well for them."

D'man went on to say, "I am stymied by the response of consumers. If this sets a precedent and farmers will expect fair prices for wheat, pork and so on."

In fact wheat farmers have held organizational meetings calling for similar protests. In a statement issued to the press, wheat growers spokesman Imon D. Dole says, "The time seems right for a change in the system."

Local protester, A.A. Arepee, told this reporter, "Yeah, I am retired and on a fixed income but I just got to thinking that cost of living raise I get every year would really go up if I was paying what I should be at the grocery store."

A young mother participating in the protest agreed.

Minnie Mumwage said "Maybe they will finally have to raise minimum wages. My husband worked for a farmer once, it sure didn't pay much, but we could see that when commodity prices are at the same level as they were in 1978, it was going to be difficult to get 2003 wages."

A long time farm service agency employee who asked to remain anonymous says that she supports the movement.

"For too many years I have seen the farmers beaten down. The government programs insure cheap food, but they come with the resentment from consumers who don't understand what they are being taxed for. If this present turn of events closes down farm programs the logical assumption would be that the tax money presently used to fund them could be used to balance the budget or taxes could even be cut."

When the reporter pointed out that we are talking about the government therefore logic has nothing to do with it and furthermore she would be out of a job, the source admitted, "There is a downside to everything."

Another story you are never going to see:

May 2004 — Riot erupts at convenience store

Police responded to a noise complaint today when a customer in line at the Fifth and Main Hurry-Up-Store looked at the bottle of water he was about to purchase and shouted "What is the matter with me, why would I pay \$1.09 for a bottle of water."

His observation apparently struck a chord with the other patrons of the store who also began loudly self-examining their buying habits.

The noise became so loud that a neighbor called 911.

It is reported that the extra officers needed to calm down the crowd were delighted, because they will get some overtime pay. As one officer gleefully stated (while cooling off with a bottle of Aqua Springs gourmet water) after the altercation was over, "With the high price of milk I need all the overtime hours I can get!"

No arrests were made.

Can't we just be happy for the farmer and dairyman that they may be able to make a living

— Nancy Hagman

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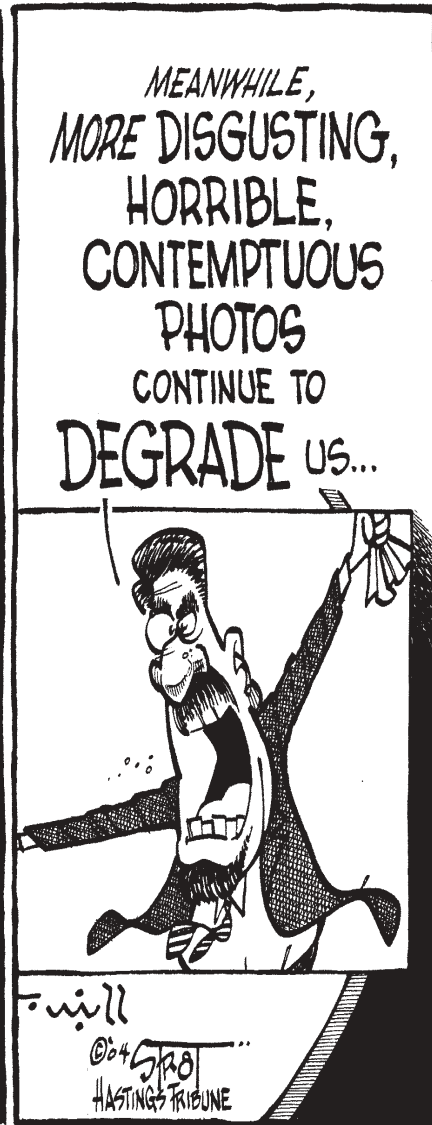
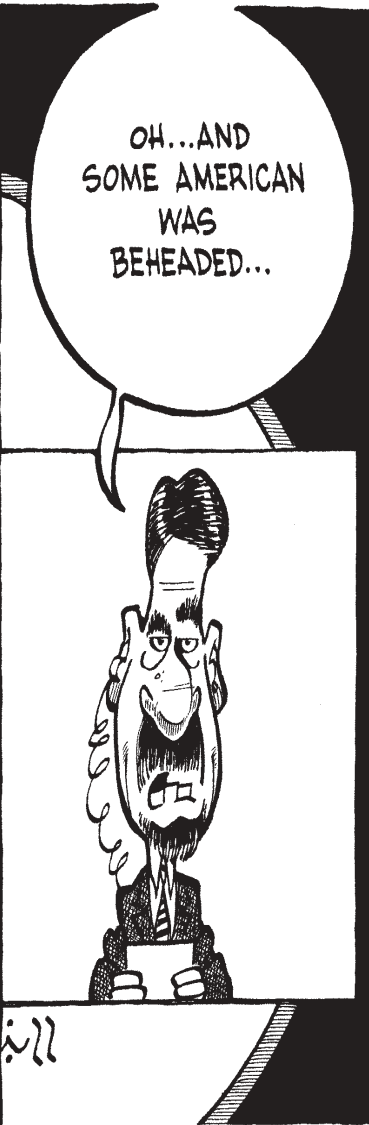
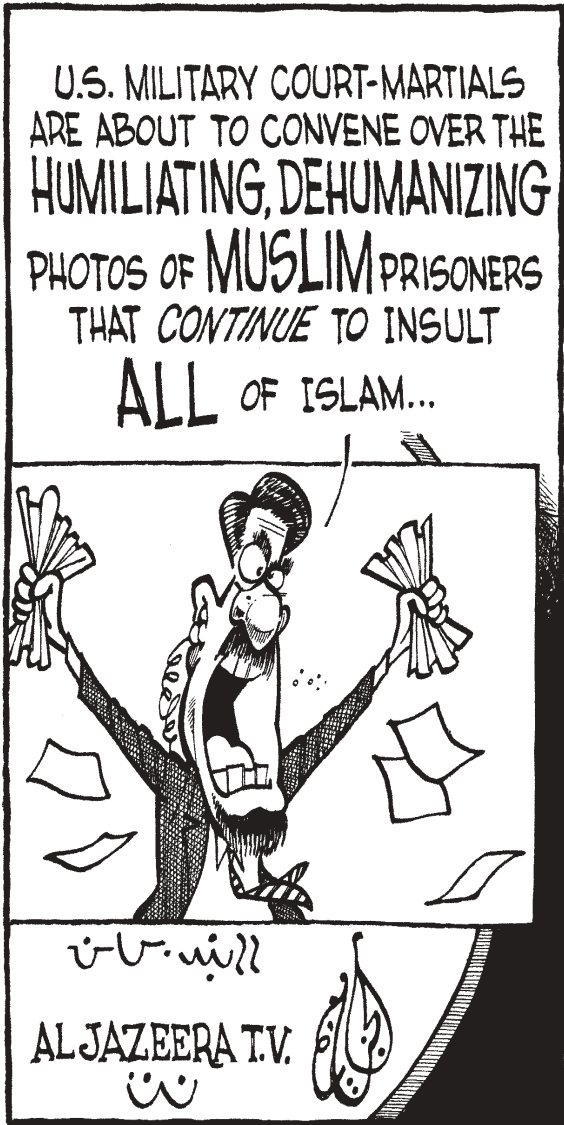
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Marriage is more than a wedding alone

According to CNN in June of 2003, the average cost of a wedding was, are you ready for this? \$22,360.00 Can you imagine? And on top of that, half of all marriages end in divorce, now that is not what I would call getting your money's worth.

The father of one of my future daughters-in-law during a wedding "planning" session said, "I hope there is as much thought going into the marriage as there is the wedding."

Great line.

My mother was only about 7 or 8 when her much older sister was married. She remembers it well.

They gathered wild flowers from the pastures, my grandmother baked the cake and made the dresses (the bride and one attendant) and they had punch, coffee, cake and ice cream.

The wedding was held in their home decorated with the same wild flowers found in the bride's bouquet. People

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



drove over in their buggies. No one used paper plates and I imagine friends and family stayed late to help wash the dishes.

The kids played outside until after dark, while the women shared memories, did the dishes and the men talked of crops and livestock.

People went home feeling good about themselves and their neighbors. It was a family and community event.

And the marriage lasted.

Years later when my sister was married and later for my own wedding, the local seamstress made the dresses for the attendants and we both purchased ready-made

dresses. A local baker baked my sister's cake and my sister-in-law baked ours. They both were served with punch and coffee.

And the marriages lasted.

Somewhere in the last 40 years things have moved into a different realm.

Weddings have become productions complete with directors and wedding planners.

In a town such as ours a wedding still brings together a community to witness the commitment of two people beginning a life together. When we all meet for the event we are acknowledging our own role in helping this couple to succeed in a relationship that is both full of joy and hard work.

The fellowship of good friends and family is the important part and it is not achieved with the \$22,000+.

It is the result of a ceremony marked with love and caring, not fabric and frills.

Alumni gatherings equal good times

Memorial Day and alumni gatherings go together in the Lenora area. This year I am in the middle of a three-year stint as an alumni officer for Lenora.

One fun thing about this is getting to talk to other alums as they call for reservations.

Richard Taylor, son of Shirley Jacobs Taylor — class of '31, called. He plans to travel with her to the reunion.

Richard lived in Lenora as a child and knows a lot of history. Somehow the subject of tornadoes came up. Richard asked what town it was that had made a little tourist attraction out of the movie "The Wizard of Oz". He thought it was Lyons. "It's Liberal," I corrected.

His reply: "I didn't realize there was a Liberal in Kansas."

Of course there is. At least one, take my friend Steve Hickert (another Lenora grad by the way).

I was very nervous because he read my column about taxes at my house. His wife told me the only reason they renewed the paper was to read my column. (This is not really due to any argument they have with the paper in general but they have lived in Lawrence for a while now and have sort of lost interest in the news from this area.)

Anyway I would have hated it if he had been annoyed because I took it as a great compliment that they liked my column so well. Also it was a graduation party and you know you are never supposed to talk about politics and religion at social gatherings.

But after reading the column Steve told me that he more or less agreed with my assessment of what a fair tax is.

However, he said, the only fair tax is: "A tax someone else pays."

Steve, never one to be shy, also took on

Back
Home
Nancy
Hagman



religion before he left.

Another Lenora grad, class of '30 — Leonard Clydesdale, died earlier this month. He was a "staunch" Democrat or so his obituary read. Leonard was the same age as my Dad, a pretty staunch Republican. But they were great friends anyway.

Elbert Goldsby was also about the same age. He had the most uncanny memory. He could have told me all their birthdays and my own and yours if he had know you

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