

The good old days and modern technology

Remember when turning the steering wheel on the family car was somewhat of a challenge? Many times it would take both hands. When trying to parallel park was like churning ice cream in the old wooden freezer with a frozen handle? Or trying to make a quick u-turn on a street where u-turns were not allowed, usually ended in embarrassment as you jumped the curb?

Man of the Plains
Tom Dreiling



But then came a big breakthrough: (drum roll) the "steering knob!" To make turning the steering wheel a lot easier, someone invented a device that you attached to the steering wheel, allowing you to use your fisted right hand to grab the knob and turn the wheel in a complete circle with what looked like ease. Wow! No way could they ever improve on that! It also allowed you more time with your arm around your honey.

If you remember these things, then you were part of the "good old days!" The good old days when cars came in two colors, or so it seemed - black or brown. When tires were black. And with the advent of more colors showing up on cars, the tires took on a new look, too - whitewalls! How fancy was that?

And the people of means would drive around in convertibles with the tops down. The envy was as obvious as a streaker running across the football field. "How lucky they are," was a comment heard time and again.

Despite everything, this "Man of the Plains" still considers "power steering" as the greatest change. You were able to turn the steering wheel with just one finger. The chatter over this invention was deafening.

What sparked this column's topic was a white 1936 Cord 810 two-door convertible that sits atop a bookcase in my front room. It measures 11 inches long, 4 inches wide and 3 inches high. The black base it is mounted on is 13 inches by 6 1/2 inches. The convertible's doors open, the trunk lid opens, the hood opens, the headlight covers open, the top is removable and the steering wheels turns the tires. The interior is a rose color.

While looking at that car, my mind started going in all directions, eventually settling on cars during my early years. It's fun to go back in time and then to look at what we see on our roadways today. Never but never could even the brightest engineering minds of that time envision what we see today. And the advances yet to come will provide other generations cause for chatter, comparison and awe.

They will also have their "good old days." But do you think their good old days will match what we've seen during our lifetime?

Of course we'll never know.

How bad is the economy? This might answer that question: While ordering a hamburger at one of those fast food joints a few weeks ago, a friend of mine said the young man behind the counter asked him if he could afford fries with that.

I always hate to pass along sad news, but that's the nature of the game I play, so... there will be still another GOP presidential nomination debate, this one on Wednesday, Nov. 9 at 7 p.m.(CT) and 6 p.m. (MT). For the record, I must confess that I have missed only two of them. These are the best of television's reality shows!

Snippets

"Did you see the debate where Romney and Perry were acting like grade school kids? And they want to lead our country? Never happen."

"I saw President Obama on the 'Ellen' television show. What did that have to do with jobs?"

"Have you ever wondered how long it's going to take Obama to find a job after the 2012 election? Maybe that's what he is doing being away from Washington so often..."

"...It would be interesting to know how many members of the Occupy crowd were also members of the Tea Party?"

"...There is much more to teaching than giving tests... We're missing the boat and our kids will pay dearly... Wake up!"

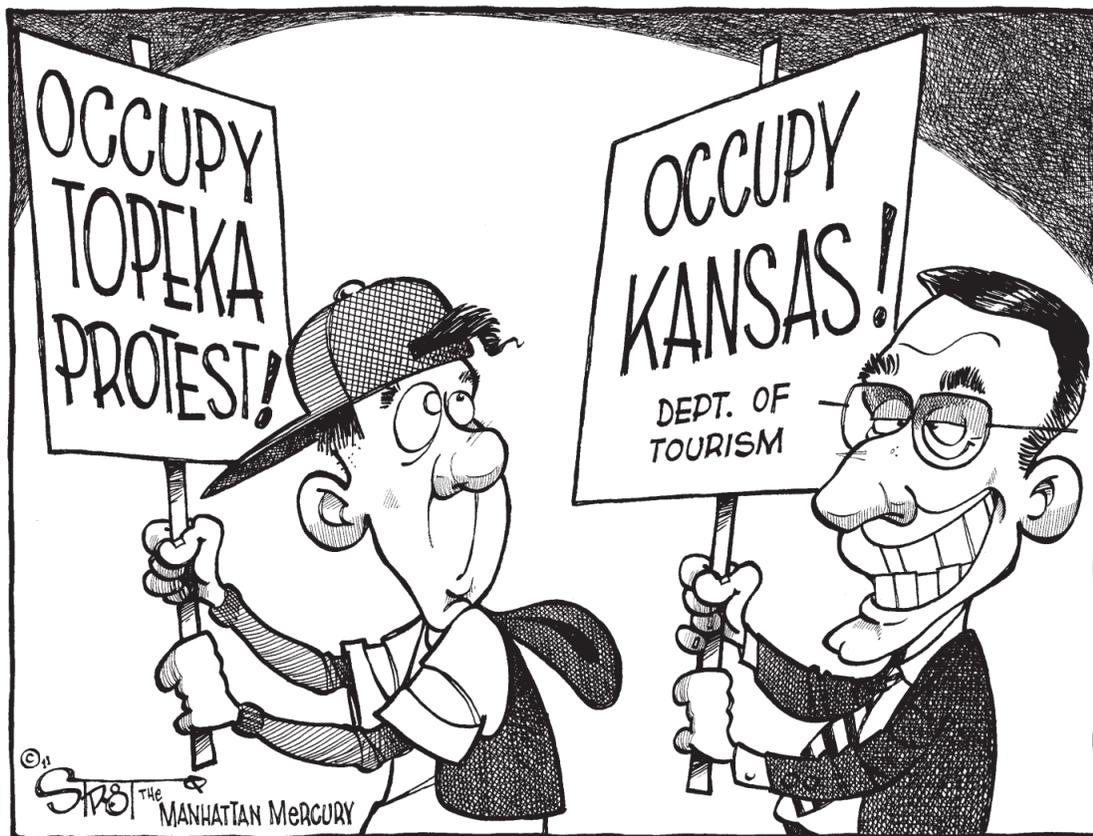
"...We could get by with some of Bush's moderate governing, but these are different times and only good old fashioned conservatism can get us out of the incredible mess we are in now. ..."

"Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain is still out front. Out front of what? There's not a presidential candidate in that bunch. Where is Sarah when you need her? ..."

Snippets to :milehitom@hotmail.com, no longer than three sentences. Your name will not be used.

Peace!

Your comments on anything that appears in your favorite newspaper coming from my computer, are always appreciated, regardless of the tone. Simply email me at mail to:milehitom@hotmail.com



Making adjustments due to the empty nest

There are some really cute car commercials out now featuring twenty-something children agonizing over how empty their parents' lives are. The parents, of course, are having a great time in their Toyotas! A friend just got a new Venza so I can relate. It's fun whenever we go for a ride!

My favorite is the one where the girl has moved to the west coast. She knows her parents must be really lonely because "I'm their only child, except for my sister!"

The issue of her amazing sense of self aside; is it possible kids have a reverse empty nest syndrome?

We were busy remodeling a house and moving at the time our youngest left for college. I had a lot to keep me busy. Everything changed, with a new house there were no memories of kids.

Is it necessary to do something so drastic to ease the transition? We adapted quickly to being a couple again. It's an AHHHH some time in our lives. If I need or want to do something I talk it over with the Hubby. The house is cleaner, the laundry is done, supper is on the table and we say "AHHHHH----". Instead of thinking about the kids' schedules and what they require, we think about each other.

I have wonderful memories of the

This Too Shall Pass

Nancy Hagman



things I did with the kids. This fall particularly, whenever I read the tennis results I'd think about Saturday tournaments and packing lunches or going to Subway with a wad of money and a list of sandwiches and toppings a page long! Seven years and the memories are still so strong! I want it back. Yet I don't!

In our house the Hubby always credited me as being the custodial parent. I ran after the kids. Sometimes he was around, but you never knew when that might be. So after awhile we unconsciously quit including him. Maybe he knew what was going on or maybe he didn't even know anything was.

In retrospect it seems wrong we led such parallel lives. At the time everyone was too busy to think about it.

There is no doubt the extraordinary business of child rearing can cover up deeper problems in a marriage. However, even in happy families the

empty nest is a time of adjustment for everyone.

We are happily anticipating the return of our youngest from Pennsylvania to Lincoln, Neb. I'm delighted they will be closer to home, though I can't quite wrap my mind around the fact that they will be living right off something called "Cornhusker Blvd". First there was the whole "Sooner" thing with daughter number two and now this!

Any empty nest syndrome we may have had is about to be cured! We will see Craig and Patricia the first five weekends they are back: two for football, for Abby Rhodes' wedding (thanks for getting married Abby) Thanksgiving and hunting. Then it will only be a couple of weeks until Christmas! Oh my, I have so much to do to get ready for all this!

The kid in the Venza commercial spins it her way. The Hubby and I spin it mine. We are a childless couple, except for four adult children.

After a busy football trip or a family time, the hubby and I do feel alone, but not lonely. We sigh (but with contentment as much as regret), squeeze each other's hand and say "You and me against the world!"

It is a different time in our lives, but it is possibly the best!

One woman's opinion on reality commentators

Have you ever wondered how certain newscasters "got their voice", let alone their own program? Well, I do and one in particular is Nancy Grace. The best part of this is the Bing Celebrity page lists her occupation as "actor". That makes me feel so much better as opposed to a title of news commentator.

I don't like reality shows and I guess this smacks too much of just that. A self appointed judge and jury does nothing to enhance our judicial system nor society in general. In the majority of crimes committed, we will never know what truly happened. We can wonder, speculate, imagine or just plain believe, but we do not know.

Often in high profile cases the public forms an opinion on the guilt or innocence of the accused. Something which is probably to be expected, but does it help us better understand our judicial system? Would it help us be a better jury person? Does it help us to create a safer environment? I doubt it.

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



If anything it probably is reflective of the polarization seen in other aspects of our government.

The first high profile trial I remember with 24 hour news coverage was the O.J. Simpson trial. I probably am a lousy judge of these cases as I thought he was innocent, well, let me rephrase that, I didn't think they proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he did it and that is a critical part of all trials.

My complaint with Nancy Grace is neither her lack of ability nor her lack of knowledge, but rather the way she uses her emotion/anger to decipher these awful situations. She has the

opportunity to guide the public into the world of justice while alerting them to the dangers which can occur. She can do this without being theatrical; she can do it with forthrightness, truthfulness and empathy. Having experienced the murder of a loved one, she has an opportunity to bring incredible light to living through a tragedy and to a better understanding of the difficult job law enforcement has in trying to bring suspects, and then the accused to trial and subsequently to justice.

It is too easy when a show like this airs to liken it to something like Criminal Minds. This is a real show about real events and real people. Regardless of whether it is the victim or the accused, each has family members. Not all of the victims' family will be good nor will all of the accused family be bad. And the worst part is not all of the accused are guilty even when Nancy Grace thinks they are. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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Thumbs up to the local businesses that contributed money or pumpkins to the Norton County Head Start for the kids to decorate. Called in.

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