

Grandma and the Christmas goose

Dear Readers you've heard the heart-warming tale of Grandma and the geese before. It was one of my earliest columns, written in 2004. But many of you love it and have asked to see it again and, as I have added a number of new readers to my e-mail list who've not read it . . . here it is again.

Pieces of life's puzzle
Liza Deines



Grandma and the Christmas goose. . . again
This Christmas story was told to me by my husband's grandma many years ago. In her own words . . .
Six fuzzball goslings came home in a cardboard box on my lap. The children hung over the front seat and cooed and giggled and poked at them. The goslings gleebled. It was instant love.

I was envisioning financial success, for I planned to sell five geese by Christmas time with one left for a festive dinner. I could sell goose eggs all summer, make a pair of goose feather pillows and feed my family crispy roast goose with raisin cream stuffing and goose gravy.

We put the goslings in the milk house for the night until George could get a pen built. The goslings wept. The children wept and beseeched. At midnight the noisy goslings were brought into the kitchen to sleep near the still warm stove. In the morning the children were found all cuddled in their quilts on the floor sleeping peacefully beside snoozing goslings. George went out to build a pen and coop forthwith. The children helped until they almost sabotaged the entire project. I was forced to bake cookies to keep them out from under his feet.

Weeks went by and the goslings grew and traipsed happily about their pen, losing their fuzz and developing feathers, losing their baby gleeblings and developing penetrating gwonks. The children laughed with glee and grew and prospered with the geese.

The birds were named, of course. Wilhelmina in honor of a cousin; Fat Foot for a deformed paddler; Hoot with his raucous voice; Grace for no known reason; Minor was the little one and then there was Schwartzerschnoot, named for a

black spot on his beak. He was everyone's favorite, large and loving with a habit of coming up and laying his face against my apron. He also ate off every geranium I planted.

Mrs. Van de Vere came to the house and offered five whole dollars for a young goose to roast for a special dinner. I sold Wilhelmina. The children wept. Every time we saw Mrs. Van de Vere at church she told us again how delicious that goose was and the children burst into tears. She was overheard to say that Sophie's children were certainly a strange brood.

Fat Foot and Grace met their demise one dark summer night when coyotes attacked, leaving a bloody mess in the pen. The children were inconsolable. They tied black bows on the pen posts and held a memorial. Minor was simply gone one morning and we never knew where or how. I told the children he had gone into the wide world to seek his fortune. My visions of fortune were fading fast. Still, Hoot brought a good price at Thanksgiving and provided cash for Christmas gifts. I, however, paid a high price in weeping children.

Christmas morning came and George was sent out early with

a hatchet to kill Schwartzerschnoot so I could dress him and get him on to roast before we left for church. Amidst forlorn wailing and fervent pleas for mercy I put bread and raisins to soak for stuffing and baked a pie. No George. No Schwartzerschnoot. No mouth-watering smell of roasting goose. The children followed me outside to search. We found them at the old tree stump in the east yard. George was weeping and I swear to you, so was Schwartzerschnoot. The children wept. I wept.

We had chipped beef gravy on soaked dressing bread for Christmas dinner. The children laughed and talked and ate heartily. George and I smiled at them and each other and held hands under the table. It was the best Christmas dinner we ever had.

Epilogue: Schwartzerschnoot lived to a ripe old age and was buried in the east yard with due ceremony. He left as his legacy enough feathers for a pair of wonderful pillows. I planted geraniums on his grave.

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Wedding announcement



The family and friends of Jennifer Marie Haines and Eric Dane Burton gathered together in Lahoma, Okla., to celebrate their marriage. The couple joined together in holy matrimony during a service in their backyard on Oct. 23, 2011. The bride was given away by her grandfather, Harry Haines. She was attended at the altar by maid of honor Melissa Miller, and bridesmaids Stephanie Haines, Adriann Matlock and Rashell Kent. David Day served as best man, and groomsmen were Patrick Burton, Jeffery Burton and Jeff Haines.

The flower girls were friend Miley Wedel and niece Aineka Burton. Ring bearers were son of the bride Xzavior Haines and nephew Tucker Haines. Parents of the bride are Mary and Orloff Haines of Enid, Okla. Parents of the groom are Jane and Charles Burton of Norton. A reception following the ceremony was held at the Cherokee Strip Conference Center in Enid, Okla. The couple will reside in Clovis, N.M. where the groom is stationed at Cannon Air Force Base.

New agriculture rule a step in the right direction

By Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Whether it was on my Rural Tour or at workshops with the Department of Justice to discuss competition in agriculture, time and again livestock and poultry producers emphasized the need for a fair and competitive industry and workable, commonsense rules to address bad actors. The United States Department of Agriculture recently finalized a rule to implement the 2008 Farm Bill to help remedy some of these concerns.

We were committed to taking even further steps to prevent anti-competitive behavior and address bad actors, but we were stopped from completing the rule making process by Congress. Despite this unprecedented action by Congress, we will continue our effort to make sure markets are fair and as transparent as possible.

In the last 30 years the livestock and poultry marketplace has not only become more concentrated, but also more vertically integrated. Although some important efficiencies come with concentration, the potential for increased unfairness and decreased transparency persists. Just as I observed these trends with concern, so did Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill when it required the department to update our regulations in several areas to promote fairness in the livestock and poultry

marketplace. Don't get me wrong, much of the livestock and poultry industry does a good job and treats their producers well. But as with any industry, there are some bad actors that do not follow the rules.

Since the enactment of the 2008 Farm Bill, there has been a healthy debate about what these rules should look like. As the discussions carried on in Washington, D.C., it was easy for some outside of farm country to lose sight of what is most important—the men, women and families that wake up before dawn each day to care for the poultry, hogs and cattle destined for our dinner table. These folks work hard and don't ask for much in return, but they expect to make a fair and decent living.

Eighteen months ago we proposed a rule to implement the 2008 Farm Bill provisions on livestock and poultry market and collected over 60,000 public comments to help guide the rule making process. Input from the public was essential in shaping our decisions, especially for making sure we targeted areas where farmers, ranchers and poultry growers are susceptible to unfair treatment in the production or marketing of livestock and poultry, while avoiding costs to areas where the market was functioning properly. For example, the comments helped identify the proposed rule that may have

hindered the ability for producers to receive higher income through more specialized products such as grass-fed, organic, source or breed verification and those provisions were not included in the final rule. In the end, the rule was changed for the better.

Our new rule, while smaller in scope than we had initially anticipated, does provide real and meaningful improvements. It will set new criteria to determine whether a poultry dealer has provided reasonable notice to growers when delivery of birds is suspended, when requiring additional capital investments is a violation of the Packers and Stockyards Act and when determining if a packer, swine contractor, or live poultry dealer has provided a grower reasonable time to remedy a breach of contract. Finally, the rule allows growers to decline arbitration and provides criteria for considering if the arbitration process is fair for the producer.

Farmers, ranchers, and producers of all sizes deserve to compete in a marketplace that treats producers with respect and equity. Despite significant setbacks from Congress, President Obama's strong commitment to our nation's farm and ranch families hasn't diminished and we will continue to look for ways to make sure they are treated fairly and enjoy the benefits of robust competition.

Health department promotes walking program for New Year's resolution

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment, in partnership with the Arthritis Foundation, is offering a free, individual walking program for Kansans interested in walking more in 2012. The Walk with Ease program is a six-week, structured walking program that teaches participants how much they should walk, how to increase walking pace and endurance and how physical activity can be a part of daily life. Establishing a walking program

has many benefits, to include reducing the pain associated with arthritis.

Walk with Ease offers information and tools to help people develop successful walking routines and stay motivated to continue walking. The training includes the warning signs of exercising too hard, tips on when to increase the intensity of a workout, stretching and strengthening exercises and information on building stamina and walking pace. Walk with

Ease is available to anyone (with or without arthritis) and can be modified to meet individual needs, so each person can develop an exercise routine that fits his or her unique goals. Information and strategies taught in Walk with Ease are based on research and tested programs in exercise science and behavior change.

A group format of Walk with

Ease is also available to individuals and organizations interested in hosting a walking class. A class meets three times a week for six weeks and is led by a certified instructor. For more information on Walk with Ease or to register for the free individual program, visit www.kdheks.gov/arthritis/wwe-overview.htm.

Accident Report

Dec. 29-A white 2004 Oldsmobile Alero, driven by Hannah M. Hawks of Almena, was traveling west bound on Highway K9 when a deer entered onto the roadway. Hawks was unable to avoid the collision, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported. The accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Adam Wahlmeier.

Dec. 30-A red 2000 Chevrolet 2500 pick-up, driven by Tyler Harting of Norton, was traveling west bound on Highway 9 when a deer entered onto the roadway from a ditch. Harting was unable to avoid striking the deer, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported. The accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Rich Wenzl.

Jan. 1-A black 2011 Dodge Lariat pick-up, driven by Tina Tanner of Norton, was traveling east bound on Highway 36 when a deer ran out of the south ditch onto the highway. Tanner was

unable to avoid striking the deer, causing over \$1,000 damage to the vehicle. No injuries were reported. The accident was investigated by Norton County Sheriff Officer Larry Land.

Bill and Doris Nelson's 48th Anniversary Dance
Sat., Jan. 7
7:30-10:30 p.m.
Norton Eagles Club
Music provided by Ramblin Andy
Come Join the Fun
Members and Guests Welcome

Metcalf Real Estate
is proud to announce the addition of two new agents
Nicole Sauvage became a real estate salesperson in November 2011. Nicole has been working at Metcalf Real Estate and Randel Appraisal for almost a year now under the supervision of Kris Randel. Nikki is a 1999 graduate of DCHS and a 2011 graduate of NWKS Technical College in Goodland, KS with an associate degree in Medical Assistance. After working at the Oberlin Clinic for several years, she decided to make a change. Nicole and her husband Justin have two boys, Breckin, age 7 and Talan, age 4.
Abby Rice is the newest member at Metcalf Real Estate and will be an agent for our neighboring county, Norton. Abby graduated from Kansas University with a degree in Finance. She and her husband Chase have lived in Norton for three years, both grew up in Smith Center. Abby and Chase are currently in the process of buying Moffet Drug, where Chase has worked as a pharmacist for three years. Together, they have a son named Hadyn who will be two in March.
Metcalf Real Estate welcomes these two agents and is proud to have them as part of the team!

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING
Solomon Valley Rural Fire District No. 3
Monday, Jan. 9, 2012
8:00 P.M. at the Lenora City Office, Lenora, KS

James E. Reeves
DPM, P.A.
Norton Hospital Specialty Clinic
Tuesday, January 31
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Call to schedule an appointment
PHONE: 785-877-3351

6th, 7th and 8th Grade Girls, join us for a PURE ROCK Pajama Party!!!
A girls night out for pj's, pampering and promises. Come spend the night at the Rock, Norton, KS on **Saturday, January 14**, starting at 4:00 p.m. For more information and registration visit, www.mypurerock.com.

Dec. 28-Jan. 4
Showing at the
NORTON THEATRE
Alvin and the Chipmunks 3: Chipwrecked
(G) 1 Hour, 38 Minutes
Friday, Dec. 30-7:00 and 9:30 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 31-7:00 and 9:30 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 1-5:00 and 7:30 p.m.
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.
Sherlock Holmes 2
A Game of Shadows
Digital Sound (PG-13)
2 Hrs., 19 Min.
Only Premiere passes accepted for Alvin and the Chipmunks 3
Only Premiere passes for Sherlock Holmes
Sherlock Holmes is Premiere Price: \$7.00 and \$6.00 (No Sunday Discount)
Alvin and the Chipmunks 3 Premiere Price: \$7.00 and \$6.00 (No Sunday Discount)
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