

When a company is too big to fail

One glaring fault in our economy neither party seems willing to take on. Maybe there's too much corporate money out there. Big business, as in too big to fail. First the less-shaky banks were allowed to gobble up their less-fortunate brethren when the economy went south. Outfits like Bank of America then became "too big to fail," did they not?

There's more, though. With only three American automakers, they've long been considered "too big to fail." Where was the antitrust division when that happened? And airlines? We already have Delta, which was allowed to scoop up competing Northwest. Did we need an airline that big. Now United has swallowed Continental whole, "so it can compete," and American wants to soak up U.S. Airways, itself a conglomeration of the America West (the dominant partner) under the name of a better-known corporate weakling.

Won't they all be "too big to fail"? Where was the Justice Department when all this was going on.

Yet you almost have to go back to the Nixon Administration in 1974, when a federal suit was filed to break up the AT&T telephone monopoly, and the Reagan Administration in 1984, when the breakup actually came down, to find a real antitrust policy.

Since then, it's been open season for big-time mergers. In the years since, Southwestern Bell, at first just one of a flock of Baby Bells produced by the breakup, has gobbled up three of its siblings and its former parent to become the new AT&T. Airlines, banks, other businesses have merged with little opposition.

Take railroads: today there are just seven "Class 1" long-haul carriers, where once there were more than 200. They are big, mostly efficient and mostly profitable, but what will happen when one threatens to go down?

The next time Delta goes into bankruptcy? It's not like it hasn't happened before, after all.

There's just no evidence that bigger is better. A strong economy can't depend on just a few big outfits, because the odds are, one or more of them eventually will fail.

Antitrust policy used to be based on the idea that bigger businesses could control markets and manipulate prices. That's still a valid concern, but history suggests we've moved way beyond that issue.

Today, bigness threatens the entire economy. You'd think we would have learned that lesson, but there's just no evidence anyone cares about anything except a continued flow of big-business contributions to their campaigns.

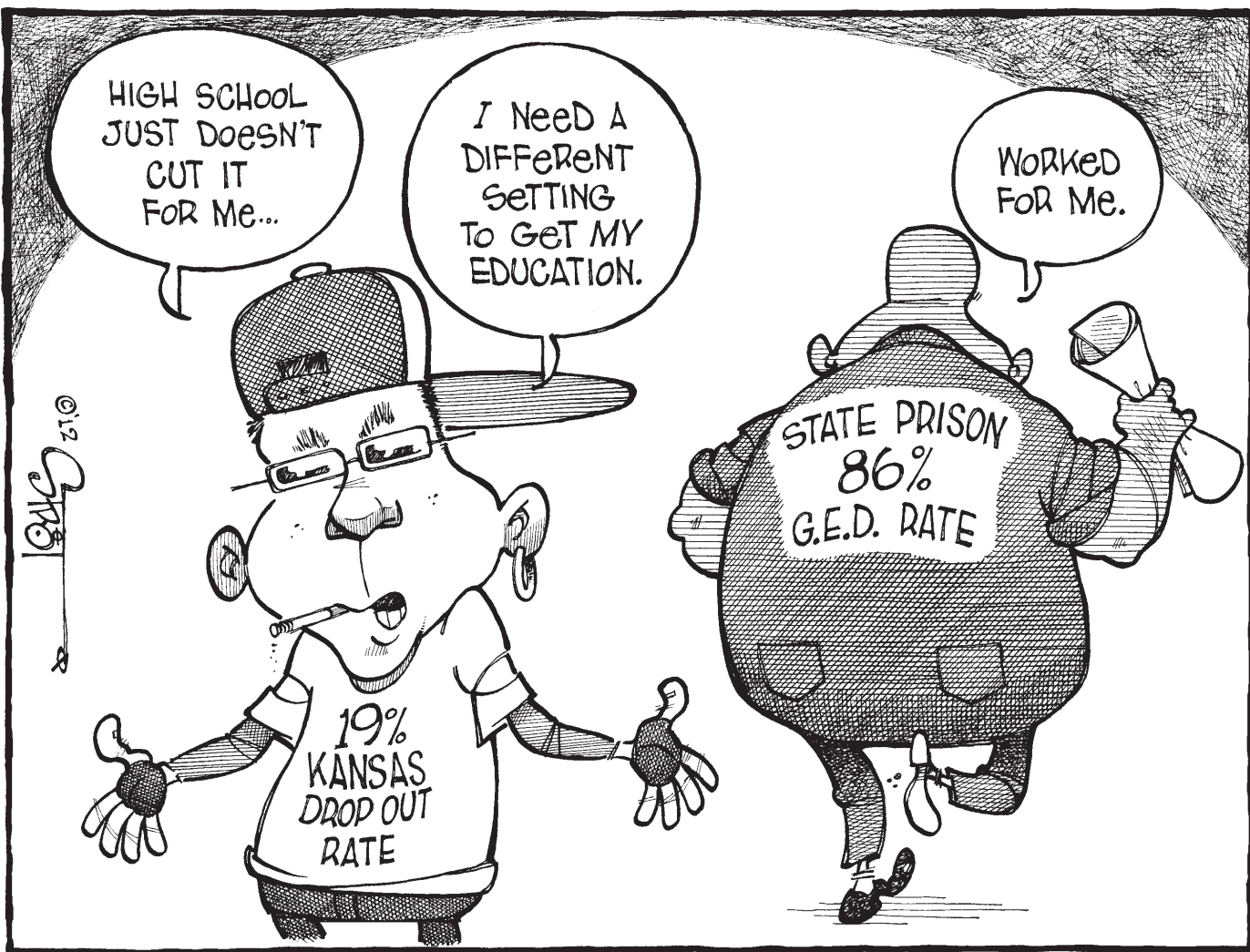
We will rue the day we let this happen. Markets dominated by a few big firms lose their natural ability to regulate themselves.

It's time to start breaking up the "too-big" businesses and letting the forces of nature and economics operate as intended. Let firms compete, let those that make mistakes fail, let new competitors spring up.

But don't let our prosperity depend on a few far-from-stable corporations.

— Steve Haynes

On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



Our Christian beliefs, tradition or factual

The headline read, "Historian says piece of papyrus refers to Jesus' wife." As Christians, we have long held the belief that Jesus never married. I'm not sure why this was such an important tenant of Christianity, but it has been passed down at least from the second to the fourth centuries. This latest finding, dated from the fourth century, supposedly reveals a very brief statement accredited to Jesus, using the term "my wife."

Some are afraid of anything that changes their portrait of Jesus, hence of their faith or is in conflict with what the teachings of our faith have been. The Bible, for some, is a rule book, for others a work of inspirational guidance and for still others just another book. Why is this discovery, other than for historical significance, of any consequence to those who practice

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



Christianity in their every day life?

To me, the beauty of Christianity is its flow. Its belief in a living, personal God. A God that reminds us of the growing nature of ourselves and of our faith. From time to time, we are accosted with similar headlines as above, be it a wife, a shroud or the ark. People seem to think as Christians, these things are vital to our faith, but I disagree. What is vital is our belief in God and His unconditional love. It doesn't have to center on Christ's death, but rather on

this example of how we live our lives.

Let's face it, there are many "Christian beliefs" we have held because they are a part of our tradition more than because of their factual nature. For instance, we know Jesus wasn't born on December 25th, but more than likely in the spring, but it doesn't matter. It doesn't change who He is/was. He is the Son of God. We also know being of Middle Eastern descent, He did not have blue eyes, fair skin and light hair, but it doesn't change anything. He is still the Son of God.

I, for one, believe God has a wonderful sense of humor and the idea of Jesus' wife may be one of his best. Perhaps it really is as the joke goes, when the monk, translating scripture, slaps himself on the forehead and says, "It's celebrate, not celibate." Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net.

Looking for some helpful fairies to lend a hand

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



some time and read it then!!!

Devon got the hint, except then he says: What is your phone number and the last four numbers of your social?

That's an hour out of my life I'm never going to get back! Only to find out that my cell phone carrier automatically sends a message telling me when I have used 50% of my minutes even though it is the last day of the billing cycle. If I had just talked to a person I could have asked, "Do I need to change my plan or something?" and they could have said, "No, it's just an automatic thing we do. You are already on the lowest price plan available!"

The main reason I'm not proactive about the computer is besides supplying me with a new computer, the girls decided to seriously work on stripping the bathroom wallpaper. Remember, the paper that to all outward appearances seemed to be falling off the wall?

They got a good start and cleaned up their mess. But now someone has to put the new paper up (maybe before Thursday when the deer have hunters come)!

I hung two strips over relatively new

sheetrock. It looked great!

Around the corner is the original plaster, is patched in places, and partially painted bright blue, also original! Lead paint I suspect, flaking off like crazy. Oh dear, something my future grand child was exposed to!

I did two more strips and stood back to admire my work. You could see exactly where the patch job was! You could see the blue paint!

The doorbell rang. Maybe it was the home renovation fairy! You know the one who comes around and rescues people who seriously have no idea what they are doing.

Nope, just some lost guy!

Rather than hang any more wallpaper I worked on stripping (the wallpaper). I had this theory after the new paper dried you would not see the blue paint any more. Sort of like how wet t-shirt contests work.

If not, I'd have to strip the new paper off and paint the wall!

And the hunters are coming and my computer doesn't work and I have to write this column and it looks like there is so such thing as fairies! It's been a bad week!!!

The next morning I stumbled out of bed, climbed the stairs and inspected the wall. Back down the stairs to find my glasses. Ah ha---it looks fine!

If only it was done. If you find any fairies looking for something to do, send them my way!

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com.

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THE NORTON
TELEGRAM

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ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

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