

Governor has plan to boost rural population

You have to hand it to Gov. Sam Brownback. He's not only talking about doing something to help reverse the population decline in rural Kansas; he's got a real plan.

The governor proposes a five-year rebate of income taxes for anyone who moves to a Kansas county suffering double-digit population declines. That includes most of northwest Kansas excepting Colby and Thomas County, but Colby would benefit greatly if the surrounding counties stopped bleeding people.

While many politicians have talked about stopping the population drain in rural areas, Brownback's is among a handful of actual plans.

No one can say for sure how many people might be influenced to move to rural counties, of course. But the state can hardly lose.

The rural population drain is hurting the entire economy. While our population as a whole is up, rural losses kept the state's growth down below that of others. That threatens the loss of one of our four remaining congressional seats, not this time, but perhaps 10 years down the road.

So the entire state has a stake in our plight. We're all in this together.

The state can't lose on the money end, either.

If few people move to rural areas and claim the rebate, then it won't cost the state much. If a lot of people take the state up on this offer, then rural Kansas will prosper and people will be paying more taxes and the state will benefit

in the long run.

From our perspective out in rural Kansas, this program cannot hurt. If it's a winner, the state will be paying. Cities and counties and school districts will reap the rewards.

And let's face it, folks. Something is better than nothing. We're losing our way of life. We need some help.

It's hard to imagine any program that could help rural counties any more than this one. We've seen the standard economic development efforts, and they have not accomplished much.

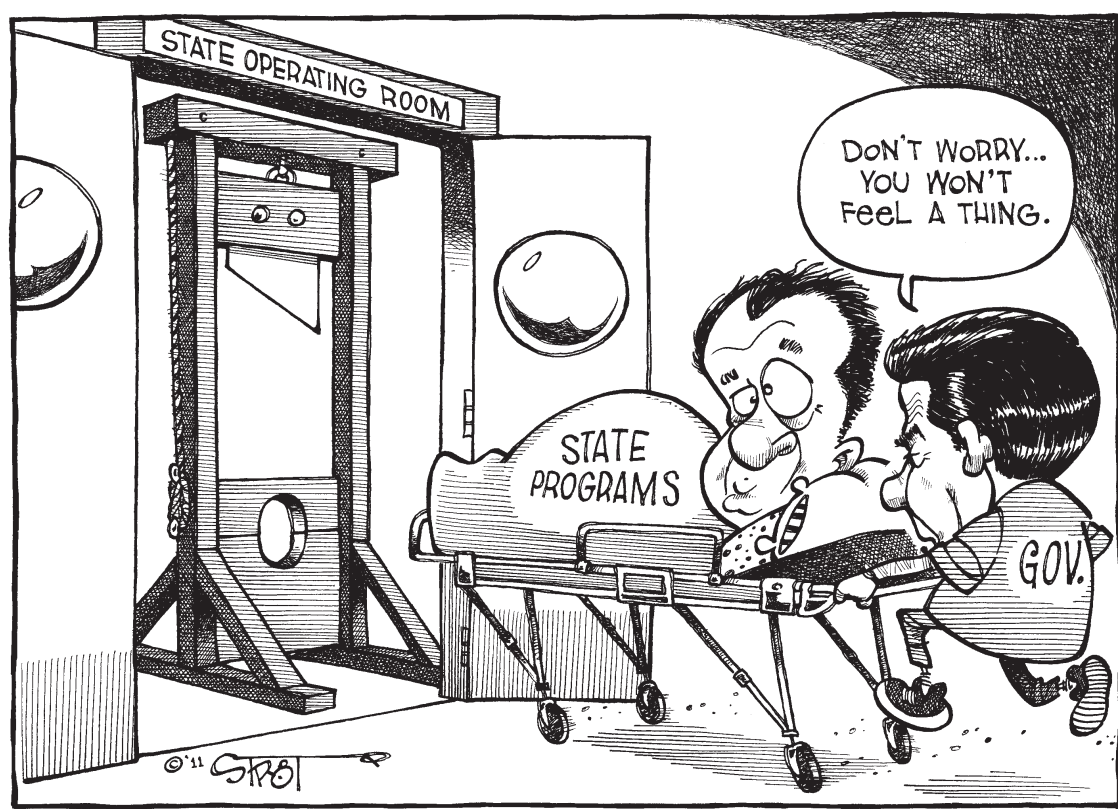
Bringing new jobs to rural areas is tough. The basic problem is the decline in farm numbers, a trend that's been rolling along for more than a century. It's finally gotten to the point that there's almost no one left in many rural areas. A lot of farmers live in town, and many plan to retire soon.

With our cities becoming more and more crowded, rural America offers a way of life that includes room to breathe, contact with nature, unpolluted skies and low crime. It's an ideal place to raise a family, but few want to try. Economic challenges, finding a job, are a big part of that.

So we hope the Legislature will pass this part of the governor's program, and quickly. Even if the cost starts to mount, the state will win. We'll be able to afford it.

And there's nothing else on the horizon that might help much.

— Steve Haynes



Banking on computer faster?

Banking by computer saves time and money — usually.

My husband keeps telling me that I should put the business banking on the computer and issue electronic checks for my accounts payable.

That sounds like a good idea. If I could buy fewer checks, fewer stamps and fewer envelopes, I should save time. Not having to take the said checks to the post office will save more time, and not having to worry about whether the payments get there on time would relieve stress.

Get there on time is my biggest stress with check writing.

How long will it take to get the gas payment to Hays? Will a week do for the AT&T bills?

What about credit card payments? Those are the trickiest. If your gas or telephone payment is late, you get a note warning you that it is late and a late payment fee. If your credit card payment is late or for the wrong amount — less than the minimum — they send you a nasty note and raise your interest rate to something that would make



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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a loan shark blush.

So I tried. However, my bank and my computer software are not compatible.

Don't you just hate that?

My only choice is to do everything to setup a bill-payment system on my personal computer and then transfer everything by hand over to my business computer.

Doing everything twice does not sound like a savings of time or money to me. However, I might think about it for the credit card companies.

Having a system that automatically pays them a minimum amount might be worth the trouble. I could still send a hand check when I get their bill so that I pay more than

minimum and that way I wouldn't miss a payment either because their bill didn't arrive, or ended up lost on my desk or in the mail.

Of course, electronic banking has its drawbacks, too.

Last Monday, Steve put one too many zeros at the end of his check and overpaid a local business by \$2,200. Luckily it wasn't to a credit card since we, like most people, can't afford to pay an extra \$2,200 to anyone.

The bank covered the check. The business refunded the money. I was a supportive wife and didn't give him any grief.

I never said I wouldn't tell.

He still takes her breath away

It's Valentine's Day, and my sweetheart has done it again. He lit up the 10-foot-tall heart on the front of our barn so it's a Valentine

I'll gladly share with anyone who wants to drive by. We've been together more than 17 years, and Jim is as romantic as ever.

Some men are naturally romantic while others are like the old boy who told his wife, "Look, I told you I loved you the day I married you. If it changes, I'll let you know."

That might work for some women, but most of us like a little more reassurance. Call it "high maintenance" if you like, but if a woman knows she's loved, she'll follow a man about anywhere and endure almost anything.

Talk about romantic! Jim and I watched "Gone With the Wind" again. It's been years since I had seen it, and I had forgotten how manipulative and brazen Scarlett O'Hara was.

To be sure, the world is too forgiving of a beautiful woman, but she changed men like you would change your socks. Miss Scarlett was never satisfied. She didn't appreciate her



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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first two husbands or what she could have had in Rhett Butler until she finally drove him away.

Oh, well. Fiddle-de-dee. Tomorrow is another day.

My daughter Halley drove in from Dallas late last Monday night, right in the middle of that awful snow storm. The wind was howling, the temperature frigid and this mother was glad to see her baby arrive safe and sound.

We stayed up into the wee hours just talking, then slept in. Tuesday found us doing more of the same: Talking, sleeping and eating. We didn't leave the house all day.

Halley is a storyteller. She is also a political person. Here's her version of what happened during the gall-bladder attack that preceded

her surgery:

She had been scheduled to see a doctor about her condition and increasing discomfort. However, the night before, she began to suffer her worst attack yet. It was so bad, she drove herself to the emergency room.

The way she told the story she was practically on her knees begging for something to kill the pain. I know she's a little more stalwart than that, but you know it really hurt. Anyway, after filling out all the paperwork and being examined by a doctor, she got some Demerol.

It didn't take long for it to kick in, and Halley said she told the nurse, "If Obama cared, he would just give everybody some of this stuff." I know. It was just the drugs talking.

Arrogant director falls hard

They say, the bigger they are, the harder they fall.

Lew Perkins always seemed to think he was pretty big.

The imperious University of Kansas athletic director had his own one-man table placed at court side in Allen Fieldhouse, among the officials and scorekeepers.

Too busy to travel with others, he'd jet around the country on private planes, saving his precious time. The athletic department paid the bills.

No one ever took Lew Perkins for Mr. Nice Guy, especially not former football coach Mark Mangino, who had been hired before Perkins arrived. Though he was the university's all-time winningest coach, with an Orange Bowl trophy in his case, Mangino was never Perkins' guy.

When he had a losing season, and complaints started to come in about the big guy, the AD sharpened his knives and appointed an investigator.

Mangino had a temper, to be sure. The emotional coach once was ejected from a high school football game — his son was the quarterback and he went on the field to argue with officials. He had his problems, but still.

There's your reward for winning all those games, Mark.

There's another cliché that fits here: Live by the sword, die by the sword.

Perkins tumbled over, among other things, allegations that he accepted \$50,000 worth of free exercise equipment from a vendor. It wasn't just that, of course. The athletics department had lost millions of dollars worth of basketball tickets on his watch while Perkins was squeezing ever-bigger donations out of alumni for the ones



Along the Sappa

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they had.

The guy got things done, but he made KU look bad. And so it was his time to go.

Perkins paid a \$4,000 fine to the state Governmental Ethics commission last month under a consent decree which allowed him to claim, "I never acted with any intent to violate any laws or ethical rules."

Like any fool couldn't have figured out that allowing \$50,000 worth of exercise equipment delivered to your home for personal use might compromise your ethical standing.

Timberrrr! Thud.

KU has not had much luck with athletic directors since the well-liked, long-serving Bob Frederick was pushed aside a few years back. Everyone thought Frederick was a nice guy, good at the job, but the powers that be maybe came to think maybe he was too nice to losing coaches.

The Frederick fiasco led, eventually, to the loss of basketball coach Roy Williams. Frederick was replaced as athletic director by Al Bohl, a strange character who talked a lot and seemed pretty important. He had hired some great coaches, including Gary Pinkel and Nick Saban, in earlier jobs, and of course, Mangino, but handling coaches apparently wasn't his specialty. If fact, it was hard to see what he was good at in Kansas.

When he found out he was being

fired, Bohl held a press conference on his front lawn, blaming Williams for his troubles, and talked like he could make it all go away. Instead, he went away, and not a moment too soon.

Bohl was replaced by Perkins, whose track record at the University of Connecticut made the case that he was the guy who could finally lift the struggling women's basketball, baseball and track programs to heights of glory.

And, you have to hand it to him, Lew Perkins was, if not humble, at least good at his job, or at least better than the last guy. He built buildings, raised money and made enemies.

Now, the university has a new sheriff, Sheahon Zenger, who talks about integrity, hard work, adversity and other old-fashioned values. Zenger talks a lot, packing sentence after sentence into a machine-gun delivery that's, well, breathless.

Has Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little finally got this right? Time will tell. Zenger, who says he tells student athletes when they come on board that life will be hard, talks about the right things.

Maybe he's the guy to restore the integrity and humility so lacking since Bob Frederick went away. (Both came, interestingly, from Illinois State.)

We hope so. Our university and its fans deserve a better deal than they got from the last two.

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Do patients really have rights?

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter to give you some true facts, as they happened to me. This has to do with communication and the patient's rights.

I had no rights. I went to the clinic having a doctor's appointment. Can you believe for three different times, the clinic personnel sent a different nurse for a different doctor for me to see. My appointment was with a different doctor.

Usually, when a patient goes to see a doctor, they are sick and they do not need this kind of behavior. It is not respectful, ethical or professional.

The last time I was there, they sent out the nurse for a different doctor I

Letter to the Editor

was not to see. I confronted them. I asked the receptionist why she did that? She knew the appointment I was needing was not with that doctor.

I asked her, "Why did you do that?" Her answer, "The registered nurse told me to do that!" I could hardly believe what I was hearing? Through my persistence, I was finally able to see the doctor I had made an appointment with.

We all have certain doctors we relate to better than others. Be thankful we have some doctors. And

remember a house divided against itself cannot stand!

Elsie Wolters
Oberlin

From the Bible

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

Proverbs, 3: 1, 2.