

Seatbelts are a must just about everywhere but on school buses

You have to wear a seatbelt to drive your car. The law doesn't allow you to make that choice anymore. Your kids had better be belted it, or you'll get a ticket. Heaven help you if you have a baby bouncing around in that buggy. Airline passengers have to wear a seatbelt. They want you to keep it on even when the "fasten-seatbelt" light is out, go figure. You need a seatbelt to drive a go-cart. Dale Earnhart Jr. has to wear one to drive his car, or he'll get fined. They're even starting to put the things on ski lifts, and next, who knows, maybe Amtrak will have them in its coaches. So why, in God's name, don't school buses have seatbelts? It's easy to say that school buses are safe, and they are one of the safest modes of transportation, no doubt. School buses have to stop before crossing a railroad track. School buses have a stop sign to flag drivers and stop them from whizzing by while they're loading and unloading. School buses have to let kids out on the right these days; no crossing the highway after the bus is gone. School buses have to be clearly marked for safety. So why the heck don't school buses have seatbelts? You can't tell us that kids aren't bright enough to buckle them. Or our schools are worse off than even Congress suspects. You can't tell us that kids wouldn't be safer belted in than bouncing around the bus in a wreck. That just defies logic. You can't tell us the drivers and teachers are too busy to make the kids strap in. Heck, they'd be a lot easier to manage tied down that they are loose and squirming. No, it's not that, is it? It's the money. It'd cost some bucks to put 40-50 three-point harnesses in all those school busses. It'd be hard to rig the aisle seats, too. A couple grand per bus, anyway. More to retrofit old equipment. And there are thousands of buses across the country. Schools probably don't have the money. It's scarce these days. But these are our children and our grandchildren. Shouldn't we do it anyway?

— Steve Haynes

Assistance for short line railroads is now law

Congressman Jerry Moran announced that Congress has passed legislation he introduced to provide tax incentives to improve short-line rail service. This legislation encourages railroads, customers and suppliers, who depend most on short line railroads, to invest directly in maintaining the over 2,000 miles of short line rails in Kansas.

"The short line railroad network is a significant component of our transportation system and provides a critical role in helping Kansans to transport their goods—both manufactured and agricultural—to market," Mr. Moran said.

"This year, while some areas of the state dealt with drought conditions, others could not get their grain from the elevators to the market fast enough and were stalled due to capacity limitations. The passage of this legislation means that rail operators will be able to increase their capacity and service to transport goods."

The legislation will provide a 50 cent per dollar tax credit, when investment in railroad infrastructure is made, for up to three years. Short line rails are being

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



threatened due to the use of new, heavier 14.3 ton railcars that have become the industry standard. The use of these cars has strained existing tracks, making the upgrades necessary.

"Upgrading these rail lines is very important, particularly as fuel costs continue to rise," said Charlie Swayze, General Manager of Farmers Cooperative Equity in Isabel, Kansas. "We can get these grains to market more efficiently and at a cheaper rate. This efficiency is a benefit to producers and allows them to get more money for their crops, which, in turn, puts more money into the local economy."

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True 'Cats fans will stick by their team

Last summer my husband got this idea. He wanted to get season tickets for the K-State football games. I enjoy football. My husband and I are both KSU grads. But I wanted to spend the money and the time on the house.

I tried ignoring him. Thinking he would forget about it. He was tenacious, however, so I finally ordered tickets.

My mom was a KSU grad also (class of 1935). My sisters are KSU grads. The husband's brother is. Daughter Kate and the cousins, Jill and Alison are. Daughter Tricia and the cousins Janis and Brandon are students.

It is definitely in the blood. I have a theory about K-State, football, and their fans.

It is after all an Agricultural College. It is a practical college. People who attend KSU are practical people. And they are humble people.

Before the football season went so sour, I had a conversation with a big (i.e. arrogant) OU fan.

"So what," he scoffed, "last year you won the Big XII Championship. Where is your National Championship?"

Well, what do you say—I just told him he needed to realize when you had a family history of over 70 years with KSU like we do winning the Big XII is enough. It is an amazing, unbelievable thing. What we have is not diminished by what we do not have.

The things we treasure most are the things we never dream we will get. My mom lived long enough to see K-State go to a bowl game. Yeah, we lost. But we were there.

Our biggest disappointments are not

Back Home Nancy Hagman



getting the things we think we were entitled to.

Unfortunately my children and their cousins see K-State football like this—they expect to win. And they are the poorer for it.

A friend who grew up in Denver but has come to love the prairie has always been baffled by what he perceives as a lack of self-esteem of people here.

Our small town way of life, the characteristics of hard work and honesty that he sees as being praiseworthy—I would guess most of us just see as the way things are supposed to be. Nothing to be particularly proud of and certainly nothing to brag about!

Rural Kansas is a hard place. The old settlers who went back east said, "In God we trusted, in Kansas we busted." Not Nebraska, not Oklahoma.

Maybe it just rhymed better, but I do think the ones who stayed did have pride in it. They were tougher. They could survive.

This was also true of the thirties. We admire the grit (but maybe not the brains) of those who stuck it out. Farmers are independent and stubborn. They keep coping with whatever fate hands them and in the view of many are just too stupid to give up. (I confess I have thought that about my

husband many times.)

Even in the view of many Kansans I know who have attended or have kids who attend KU, K-State if a poor relation.

KU is a "liberal arts" college. They require more for admission. They grade harder. They do not recruit heavily from rural areas because they don't have too.

They don't give as many scholarships because most talented students just naturally want to go there.

Anyone can get a degree from K-State. Although I drug my feet about buying the tickets and the season was not what we hoped, I have no regrets.

We had a wonderful time and oh, the memories we have. In every game we saw and in fact every game of the season we had opportunities to win. The only game that I felt K-State was truly "beaten" in was the Texas Tech game.

I admit it hurts but I am trying to take it in stride. It is just like farming. You put in the next crop and you hope for better things. You never give up.

I am putting all the purple paraphernalia and the portable grill away. But I am looking forward to next season. And the husband will not have to nag to get me to buy season tickets again.

Anyone who claims to be a K-State fan and is giving up on the 'Cats is just like those settlers who headed back east or left in the thirties. True Kansans stick with it even when it defies reason.

I don't much care if it's stupid and I certainly don't care if we ever have a National Championship. Even in a losing season the Wildcats gave us some great moments.

They are my team.

Breaking up is sometimes hard to do

Dear Plain Sense:
I have been dating someone for several months, but it's just not working out. I want to break it off, but I hate to hurt their feelings and end up feeling guilty. Any suggestions?

Feeling guilty

Dear Guilty:
Ending a relationship is not simple and not always quickly undone, particularly when those who are involved see it differently. Good communication is vital, even when your views may be something the other person doesn't really want to hear.

Your differences need to be discussed, and worked out if possible. But it's also important that both people involved understand and accept when there is not enough on which to build a healthy relationship.

Some suggestions for breaking it off include:

- Let it be known that you have concerns. Don't just end it without warning or by acting disinterested.
- Be honest and forthright, even though that can be hard to do. Say it with kindness, accept responsibility for your decision and avoid blaming.
- Be prepared for an angry reaction and express your empathy. But, don't let that

High Plains Mental Health Karen Beery

keep you from continuing with your original intentions.

It is also possible that your friend agrees, and has also been wondering how to let their feelings be known. A breakup

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Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish at-

can be emotionally devastating for all involved, but is usually the best decision in the long run. Both people need to look to the future and view the breakup as a new beginning for both.

(The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help.)

Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Consultation and Education Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, KS 67601

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