

A strong economy needs foreign workers

Sen. Pat Roberts has it right when he says the U.S. needs to do something about the mess we call an immigration policy, and soon.

The senator, at a stop in Topeka, called for "guest workers" visas for the estimated 11 million illegal aliens now living and working in this country. He wants Congress to act by summer.

The biggest problem, Mr. Roberts said, is that with so many illegals in the country, it's impossible to control our borders and keep an eye out for terrorists.

Immigration foes call for stronger laws and tougher border enforcement, but that is not working. More law and more border guards will only increase the expense of patrolling a border that can't be sealed.

Work is the key.

These workers would not be coming here if there weren't jobs for them. Our economy depends on foreign workers. Europe is in the same position, and has the same doubts. We both are so prosperous, we need foreign workers to keep our economies rolling.

As in Europe, there is opposition to foreign workers here.

Much of it is based on fear and prejudice. But all of us descend from someone who came here as an immigrant. Even the so-called Native Americans came from Asia.

Assuming that we could round up all the illegals and ship them home, the result would be a disaster.

Our economy would grind to a halt. Work would not get done. Roads would not be built. Crops could not be harvested.

We need a work visa program, and we need to offer people a chance to earn a place in this country. That's part of what America is all about.

Just letting workers in won't solve the problem, because many people come here not just to work for a few years, but for a new life.

Their desire is so strong they risk their lives sneaking into the country. A few more guards won't stop them.

People who want to live here that badly will make good Americans — if they have jobs, homes and a chance to pay taxes.

We need to share our dream with them. As Sen. Roberts puts it, we cannot ignore or extinguish the flame on the Statue of Liberty. If the words on its base are anything but a hollow sentiment, we need to welcome this new wave of immigration.

As all the ones before, it will make us stronger, better and happier in the end.

There will be a fight.

But it's important to make some sense out of this mess. We'll all be better off if immigrants among us are legal, with drivers' licenses, insurance and tax forms, not hiding in some invisible empire.

We'll all be better off if the government can keep track of aliens and screen the flow for terrorists, criminals and drug dealers.

And we'll all be better off if we welcome our guests instead of scorning them.

— Steve Haynes

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Cold weather makes for poor fashion

This might become known as the "hunker down" winter. With day after day of relentless, bitter-cold temperatures it has become a blur of days and nights wrapped in snuggle bags and wool socks.

I'm afraid Jim nor I, neither one, would win any trend-setter awards for our at-home attire. In fact, we fear the "fashion police" are planning a raid at any moment. We would both be found guilty of serious crimes against polite society.

Jim strives for an airtight "seal" when he dresses for work. First, it's two pairs of socks brought up and over the long underwear. Next, a short-sleeved T-shirt goes under a long-sleeved one. They are topped with a sweatshirt, then overalls and finally coat, hat and gloves. He says he is "hermaneutically sealed."

I am fortunate enough to have an inside job, so at the office, I have to maintain a semblance of style and decorum. Home is a different story. Jim has an old pair of

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



100 percent wool socks with the back of the heel blown out. They are now my socks. I wear them constantly when I'm home, lounging and to bed. Nothing beats wool for warmth. Ever see a sheep shiver from the cold? I rest my case.

—ob—

This cold has forced folks to stay indoors. However, a couple of my writer friends have decided to fight back. We agreed, months ago, to have lunch "some day." This week (barring a blizzard) we are actually going to do it. We have set a luncheon date and even though we'll all

probably order soup, we're going to brave the elements and get together.

I have always admired their talents. These women are clever and erudite. They have the ability to turn a phrase and paint a mental picture. Perhaps I can learn something from them.

—ob—

Our granddaughter Alexandria celebrated her 10th birthday with a party for all her classmates. During the gift opening, I was standing next to one of the boys. He seemed a little impatient as Alex opened up one "girly thing" after another. A diary, a purple purse with feathers, bubble bath and lotions.

I said, "What's the matter? Don't you want to go, 'Ooh and aah,' like the girls?"

"Naw," he replied, "I just want the cake and ice cream."

At 10, I think Alex qualifies as an official pre-teen. I'm just glad her grandpa and I can sit back and enjoy the show from the sidelines.

Are clean windows really important?

A lady I knew said her grandmother always said there was never a week so busy that you could not wash a window.

At the time, I lived in the house we are now remodeling.

It has 27-39 windows, depending how you wanted to count them. (Are the three separate windows in a window seat one or three? Do sidelights count or are they part of the door?) I really paid for it too — once at a club I belonged to the roll call was to pay a tax for every window in your house. We went with the 27 figure on that.

Anyway, the point was well-taken, even with my abundance of windows, they could all be washed at least once a year and it would take very little effort.

My present house has only six windows (or eight if you count the big three-window unit individually), a patio door and no windows in the bathrooms.

My windows would be washed away to nothing if I subscribed to Grandma's schedule of window washing. If you have been to my house you might have noticed I do not.

Having clean windows never seemed that important to me. Because, usually, we just put sheer curtains or blinds or drapes up so you can't really see if the windows are clean or not.

A great uncle (after building his wife a new house) grouched, "It takes a lot of money to put windows into a house and then it takes a lot of money to cover them up."

Boy, is that the truth. We replaced those 27-39 windows this summer.

We got the new windows with much reluctance on my part.

The old windows had charming details in the top panes. But even with storm windows they leaked like a sieve. Some of them had wood rot. Some of the old rope and weight mechanisms just didn't work anymore.

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



I tried to convince the carpenter he could fix them.

He agreed he could. He could fix them this year and next year and on and on because the problems would just keep on coming. And I would still have to deal with storm windows.

If you think about it that actually doubles the number of windows you have to wash.

So we replaced them. I wanted something sort of fancy (because look at what I was giving up) so I picked a style called Prairie Nine or Prairie Light.

Unfortunately those only came in certain sizes. We couldn't get them for the cute little dormers. And then there was the price. You know how they are putting those defibrillators in public places and airplanes and such — well the hardware store might consider that.

Not to worry with one little touch to the computer keyboard the salesman figured

the cost of plain windows. The hubby breathed again.

Good-bye charming windows. As a compromise he let me have a fancy new door.

We picked that out too fast. The door is up. I hate it. But I am not going to say any more about it. I have complained so much even I am tired of hearing it.

I must say the new windows are very, very nice. They kept the house cool in the summer and now that it is winter the house is snug as can be.

Having so many windows is quite an experience — especially having windows in the bathrooms.

I fear this could cause problems down the road when all the girls are home. The daughters have commented on how much they like their new bathroom. One likes it because the heat vent is right beside (ahem) the throne. Another because she can see the trees and the sky while she meditates. I must confess I too have noticed these advantages.

Now that I have all these windows I have to get them covered up. To save money I am sewing most of the window treatments. And maybe I won't put a curtain in the bathroom. These new windows are very easy to clean. I will just wash it every week.

Uncle Herman would be so proud.

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