

Immigrants aren't the problem, prejudice is

We've been trying to get a handle on why people get so worked up over the current wave of immigration. It's just people coming here to work, and to build a better life, like we always have. No one moves here to go on welfare or subvert the American way of life. Immigrants want to work. They want to make money. Most want to be Americans, and history shows, in a generation or two, they will be. Most of them speak another language, Spanish or Vietnamese or Thai. So did every immigrant group after the first. But the children of all those Poles and Swedes and Bohemians and Germans learned to speak English. So will the children of today's immigrants. And despite what it says on the base of the Statue of Liberty, today it is no different than a century ago. There've always been those who abused and maligned the latest immigrants, whether they were Italian or Irish or Greek or Mexican. While we say we welcome the tired, the poor and the hungry, just as often, we've called them names and told them to stay away. By the middle of the last century, we'd put quotas on immigration and tried to limit the number who came here. But our economy is so good, we can't find workers at home. Haven't been able to in years. And quotas or not, they come. Across the border, through the fence, following trails through the desert or hiding in trucks and railroad cars. Many risk their lives. Some pay the ultimate price. They must think it's worth it to be here. We must, too, because we hire them. Without immigrants, roads wouldn't get built in this country. Construction would stop. Packing plants would close. Fast food would be slow. Americans don't want these jobs. We think they're beneath us. Maybe they are. Immigrants will take them. They want to work. But it's natural for humans to look askance at someone from another tribe. We fear what we don't know or understand. We dislike anyone who is different. There is hope. The longer an immigrant group is here, the more it assimilates. Children lose their accents and the grandchildren are as American as the next guy. It'll happen. Meantime, we need to just stop worrying and get on with life. Immigrants aren't the threat. Prejudice and ignorance are. Common sense will prevail. We think.

— Steve Haynes

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Dentists do more than check teeth

I heard on CNN recently of the plight of dental health in rural America, in large part because of the lack of dental services.

Throughout my growing up years here we were blessed to have active dentists and now is no exception. Part of what makes them so good is their interaction within the community and who they are personally and professionally.

When I was a child I was the patient of one of our dentist's fathers.

He extracted a tooth and filled my cavities. After the father's death, the son opened a practice. When we came home on vacation my children would have their check-ups from the son.

Not long ago when Jack and I were out at the state park today's dentist gave us a quick lesson on the varieties of geese on the lake. His role in the community is as valued in his knowledge of local wildlife as his professional ability.

My Aunt Daze lived just a short way from her dentist.

More than once when she had emergency her dentist would pull up in front of her house and take her to his office on a week-end to take care of her pain.

Not only is he a sensitive practitioner

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



he is a gifted photographer. Recently he donated a photograph for a CASA fundraiser, which provided money for this worthy organization. No matter which hat he is wearing — father, theater projectionist or photographer — he is a valued community member.

There is the young woman who had grown up in the city and had her own dental practice in eastern Kansas.

Her husband wanted to return to his hometown to practice medicine and she gave up her practice and followed him to what some would call the end of the earth.

She uses her skills now as one of the dentists at the Norton Correctional Facility. In her spare time she is the busy mother of two pre-schoolers and a dear friend to one of my daughters-in-law.

I wouldn't consider my mother vain,

but she certainly was proud. She was adamant about not being seen without her teeth.

Her dentist knew of her sensitivity and not long before her death she needed to have her dentures worked on. He took the needed impression and sent her on her way. When it was time to work on them he picked up her dentures at 5 p.m. one evening and they were returned back to her apartment by 8 a.m. the next morning, in time for breakfast, leaving her dentures in good shape and her dignity intact.

In his spare time he is active in his sons' lives, coaching teams and hunting.

Each of these people has made their profession a gift to our community, but they also have made their life a gift.

They serve on boards, are active in fund-raisers and mentor children in the area. How they live, what they do and their kindness to individuals translates to a love of our people and we are grateful.

And so, although February was dental health month it is never too late to say thank you Drs. Mark Klein, Craig Krizek, Kim McKinley and Lamont Shirk.

Thank you for being a part of and in our community.

Higher education is needed to get aid

It's getting to be that time of year — tax time. Time for filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA.

Wonderful, there is nothing I enjoy more than dealing with the bureaucracies of higher education.

This year Patricia got the 1098-T (Tuition Payments Statement) from Colby Community College and Kansas State University. Kate apparently got one from Hays.

Kate was asking me some questions about deducting the tuition from her tax return. Since I seem to remember paying her tuition for the spring semester I don't quite understand how that was fair, but never mind.

Since Patricia is still a dependent we can deduct her tuition from our return. If you are starting to do your taxes and have no little deductions you might want to keep this in mind: They are dependent long after you can deduct them.

Anyway, around the first of February Patricia forwards me e-mail from the KSU Controller's Office saying that due to an error in the system the amount on the

Back Home Nancy Hagman



1098-T was incorrect. They were working to correct the problem and the new information would be sent later.

I wasn't too worried, thinking later would be in a week or two.

As farmers we have to file our tax returns by March 1, so the accountant got antsy and called and asked if he had everything. I told him I was waiting on the 1098-T and I guessed I would see if I could hurry it up.

Of course, I knew they weren't going to give me any information because it is in Patricia's student account and "is available to students ONLY." (Caps are on the form from the college.)

Still I decided to try. The woman told me they would have the correct 1098-A

out by the end of February. But Patricia could get the information from her student account.

The problem is, Patricia doesn't understand which figures to get.

The woman rattled off a bunch of instructions.

"Let me write this down," I said.

She told me she did not understand what my problem was — "it is all right there" (yeah, if you are a student and can get into the account).

I was annoyed. She again told me she did not understand the problem.

So I said, "The problem is the university has messed this up for thousands of students and will not have the correct information out in time to get early tax returns filed or FAFSA's filled out."

She came right back, "Oh, not everyone's was messed up. Most of them were fine."

Well — Alrighty then, as long as it wasn't everyone — just us!

I love my alma mater.

Like they say, "Just because you are paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you."

Representative, secretary talk about drought assistance

Congressman Jerry Moran recently met with newly confirmed U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary, Mike Johanns.

The two discussed issues important to Kansas, including drought assistance to farmers, the upcoming farm bill, budget cuts and Canadian beef imports.

"As our neighbor to the north and someone who grew up on a dairy farm, Secretary Johanns has a good understanding of production agriculture and brings a common sense, Midwest approach to his leadership at the USDA," Congressman

Moran said. "I believe he understands the challenges that face agriculture, and I look forward to working with him."

In early December, President George W. Bush announced that Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns would serve as the 28th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. On Jan. 21, Secretary Johanns was sworn in as the new Secretary of the department.

"Governor Johanns will bring a unique understanding of the legislative process from his time as Governor of Nebraska,

which will be critical as we begin work on the new farm bill," Mr. Moran said. "We have a lot of work ahead of us, and I am encouraged by the good relationship that Secretary Johanns and I have established."

Congressman Moran is a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee and is the Chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management.

For more information, call Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at www.house.gov/morank05