

We must make sure that as we help others we don't hurt ourselves

Our nation finds itself at a crossroads following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Thousands of lives have been affected, and thousands more have sacrificed and opened their hearts to relieve the suffering of victims.

While Americans have given much, Congress has been slow to learn that being good stewards of the taxpayer dollar also requires a little sacrifice. Congress has provided a much needed \$65 billion in disaster relief — a record level in our nation's history — but has yet to tighten its belt to reduce spending in non-critical areas in order to pay for this aid.

Instead, Congress appears poised to pass on the burden of record deficits to future generations. As more aid is needed in the coming weeks and months, we must ensure this natural disaster does not become a financial disaster for our country.

The magnitude of rebuilding the Gulf Coast region requires Congress to make sacrifices, even if they fall close to home.

I am calling on my colleagues to adopt a one-year moratorium on all 2006 legislative earmarks. Last year, members secured nearly 14,000 special projects, totaling \$27 billion.

Delaying these projects for a year is a reasonable sacrifice members of Congress can make. I also have sponsored legislation to postpone for two years the Medicare prescription drug benefit, except for seniors with the highest financial need.

This delay of full implementation will save taxpayers billions of dollars. In this time of overstretched budgets, our country cannot afford this expensive program.

Now more than ever, it is time for Congress to get serious about exercising fiscal responsibility. As critical resources are provided for recovering and rebuilding the Gulf Coast communities, it is important proper controls are put in place to ensure taxpayer money is spent wisely and reaches those who need it.

There is also much room to reform the federal budget process in ways that eliminate wasteful, unnecessary and inappropriate spending. I am pleased to support legislation led by Kansas delegation members Sen. Sam Brownback and Rep. Todd Tiahrt that establishes a commission to independently review federal programs in order to eliminate those which are outdated, irrelevant or inefficient.

I am also supporting a Constitutional amendment to require the federal government to balance its budget. Almost every state, including Kansas, is required to balance its books by year's end, just as you and I do with our budgets at home.

The time for fiscal discipline and accountability is long overdue in our nation's capital. As we reach this crossroads, the decisions of Congress will affect generations to come. I have no doubt that Americans will come together and recover from the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina.

Members of Congress must now step up and work together to ensure the financial future of America does not become another victim of this disaster.

— Congressman Jerry Moran

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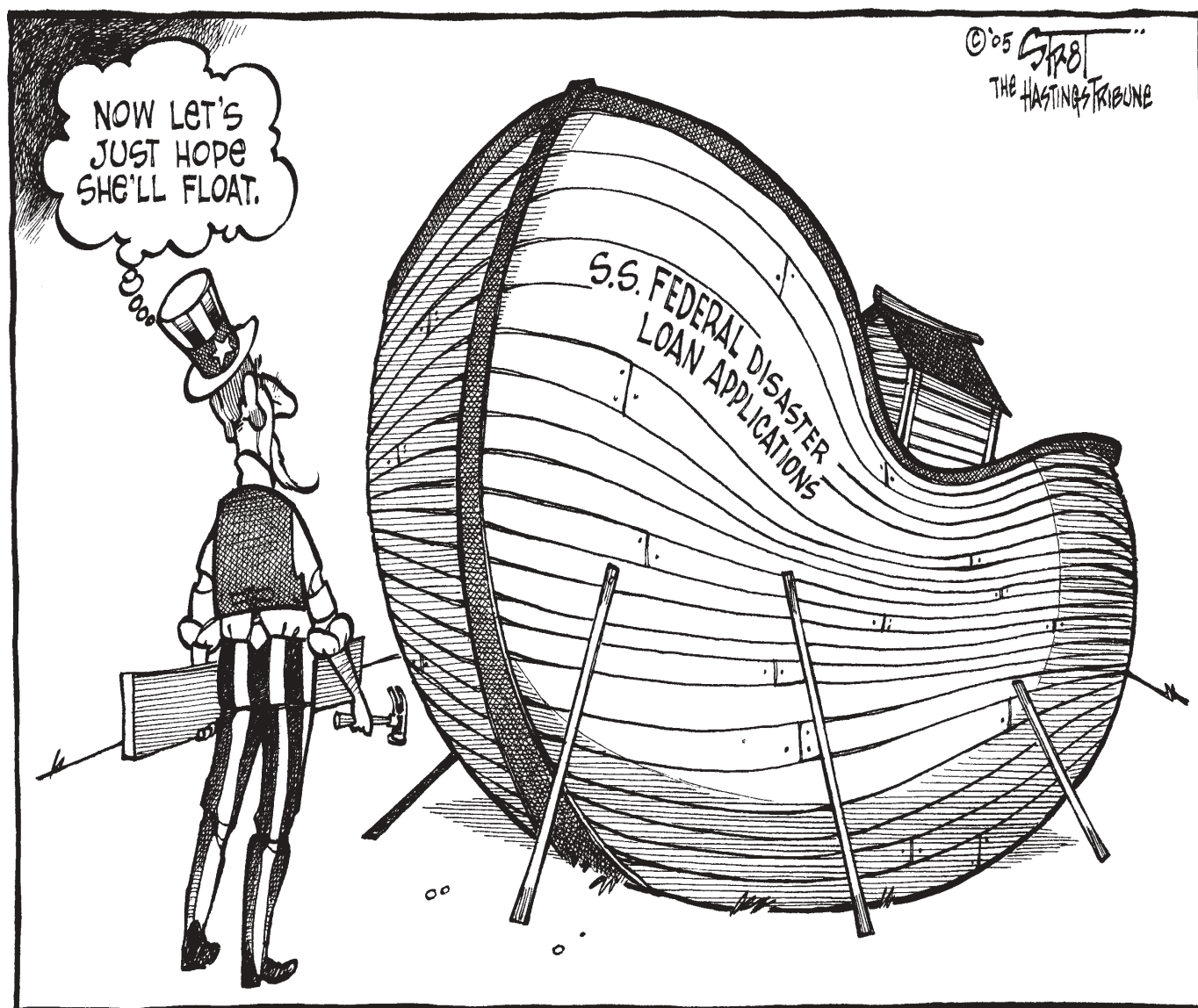
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The state song is a beautiful thing

Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam." Everyone knows this beautiful ballad, our state song, was written in Kansas by Brewster Higley and Dan Kelly.

Don't they?

It was written in Smith County. There is a little book about the authors, the homesteaders of the area and the times they lived in. I've read that book.

The thing I remember most about it was a sad little anecdote about a young bride who came to the area. Her first baby was born, then died and she used her wedding dress to line the tiny coffin. I can't even imagine how hard it was for the early women in this country.

A friend of Italian heritage and transplanted from "back East" often comments about the stiff upper lip we children of the Great Plains proudly strive to keep under any circumstances. I suppose it just comes from our homesteading heritage.

If you did not just keep putting one foot in front of the other, if you allowed your armor to crack, life would completely crush you.

There is a controversy about "Home on the Range".

I think it was Charles Kuralt who, about 30 years ago, did a story on the song from Texas. Some old cowboy down there was taking credit for it.

We were living in Smith County at the time. It about caused another civil war. Apparently Higley and Kelly never got a copyright. But the poem was printed in the Smith County Pioneer in 1873; before this other supposed author was born.

There was also a famous lawsuit involving some people named Goodwin in Arizona in the 1930s. They actually had taken the time to copyright the song in 1905 as "My Arizona Home". Evidence

Back Home
Nancy Hagman



disclosed that the song had also been published as "Colorado Home". But the Smith County Pioneer publication trumped everything and the Goodwins lost their suit.

When I was younger I thought our state song was too slow and way boring. I remember my sister returning home after a multi-state 4-H conference complaining about how it just didn't hold a candle to our neighbors to the south when they burst into "Oklahoma".

Garrison Kelliior brought this all to mind when we attended his show the first weekend of the state fair.

I read in advance of his appearance that he loved to do live broadcasts of "A Prairie Home Companion" from state fairs. One thing he particularly enjoyed was having the audience join in singing "The Star Spangled Banner" at the beginning of the shows.

During this show Kelliior also had us join in singing "Home on the Range". His band and featured performers did a beautiful arrangement of the verses. We sang the chorus. I confess it very much moved me. It may not be the kind of song that you can shout your neighbors down with but it is a very meaningful reflection on the kind of life we can only aspire to live.

But Kelliior had to ruin the moment by commenting that the origins of the song are unknown and probably will never be

known.

Hold on there — everyone knows the poem was written by Brewster Higley and the music by Dan Kelly, don't they?

I can't believe Garrison Kelliior does not know this. All his folksy little stories about the mystical Lake Wobegon and he stood before a Kansas audience and with such gaping knowledge of our legends.

I think he would like the story of "Home on the Range". If I could find a book I would send it to him. I know of a copy that sold at an auction recently for \$50. Apparently the book is out of print and it's not worth that just to prove my point.

I did come home and looked up "Home on the Range" in some song books. One attributed the arranger of the version in their book. Another said it was "A cowboy song". A third had this footnote, "There were a number of disputes and lawsuits over authorship of this song in the 19th century. The probable authors are Brewster Higley and Dan Kelly."

It is "probable" that we are going to have to be satisfied with that. It is no wonder that many states and people would want to lay claim to this song. This place sounds like heaven.

The people who live in such a place should be at peace not worrying about what anyone else is thinking, saying or laying claim to. And so I am going to try to be.

For those of us who work the land, life can be as hard as it was in Higley's time. Yet every farmer knows of a fall morning when the air is cool and it is time to plant a new crop of wheat or harvest a field of deep red milo; the leaves are turning and the geese are flying overhead. A little glimpse of heaven.

It is "probable" there are such moments everywhere. It is certain there are in Kansas.

Helping others brings a good feeling

Memories
Sonya Montgomery



The weather can be so fierce, as been shown by the recent hurricane season in the south.

Most of the news has been from New Orleans, but there is much destruction other places, small towns and large cities.

I have been in New Orleans and even though it certainly is different from Kansas, I enjoyed visiting.

I am sure the television pictures we see do not even begin to capture the horror caused by the wind and water.

I remember a flood in Salina many years ago when my aunt and uncle lived there and their basement was filled with water. What a mess. But, they still had a home. It was nothing to match what has happened in the south this month, but, it does give me an idea of how dreadful it can be.

I am always moved by the outpouring of compassion shown by so many people when they give and give of their possessions. Most of the citizens in this country are very compassionate and caring.

I feel we need to be careful when "donating" however, since there are always a few who feel catastrophes are their license for taking from the compassionate instead of helping their fellow citizens.

My son and his wife have very good friends, Joe Major and his family, who minister in a church in Mandeville, just north of New Orleans.

Another friend Rick Grover ministers a church in New Orleans.

Rick is a grandson of the late W. F. Lown, who was president of Manhattan Christian College. These people will help anyone in need without administrative fees being taken from the donations.

I have heard of many people who can hardly stay home, they want to head to the area and began building.

I understand it will be a long time before carpenters and those kind of helpers are needed. I'm sure when the time comes there will be many volunteers for that kind of help.

will help those in need.

I understand that it also takes large organizations to help the multitudes, but sometimes helping one person at a time can be good.

We must continue to help others, maybe we should even look closer to home to help people in small ways and not wait until some large problem comes.

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