

## Free market is a system that works

Little noticed amidst the cries about higher fuel prices is the fact that the free market worked well to regulate supply and prices as Mother Nature delivered shock after shock to the system.

First it was Hurricane Katrina, which shut down as much as 10 percent of the nation's refining capacity and much of the oil production in the Gulf of Mexico.

Then came Rita, spreading the damage west into Texas at a time when many of the Louisiana refineries were just coming back.

The two combined to push high gasoline prices to near-record levels. Pipelines serving the southeast were shut down, causing some shortages. Within days, though, everything was working well and the price headed back down.

The market really is a marvel. As Katrina hit, with rumors of shortages and higher prices, people rushed out to fill their tanks. The price shot up, discouraging hoarding, and people stopped buying.

Any dealer who thought he could get \$5 found out quickly that he was wrong. Any merchant who tried to hold prices down quickly ran out of gas.

Then the nation flexed its limbs and discovered that, though bruised and battered, it was whole. Prices started to decline.

Rita came with another blow, but people are used to the drill now. Prices have not jumped anywhere near Katrina levels.

Contrast this with the 1970s, when the government slapped price controls on fuel and suddenly, no one could buy gasoline. Drivers had to line up at stations that often ran out of gas. Supply was precious. The country was in a panic, and we wound up with the 55 mph speed limit.

Price controls are never a good solution. They're inflexible and bound to create shortages. Government rationing is inefficient and prone to corruption.

Despite cries about prices and profiteering, the fact is, the market works. It responds quickly and with great flexibility.

As oil gets more scarce and demand continues to rise, we can count on the market to ration the supply without intervention. There is no grand conspiracy to prosecute.

While the government has failed to push us toward alternative fuels, they're out there. When the price is right, industry will develop them — and we'll buy them.

China and India are major drivers in the higher price of fuel. Their economies are awakening and demanding more oil.

It's not correct to say that we'll run out of oil. There'll always be some, but as supply goes down, the price will go up.

As that happens, we'll find alternatives. Society isn't going to give up the things we love: electricity, communications, entertainment, industry. We need not fear for the future.

The market is there to save us. — Steve Haynes

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We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

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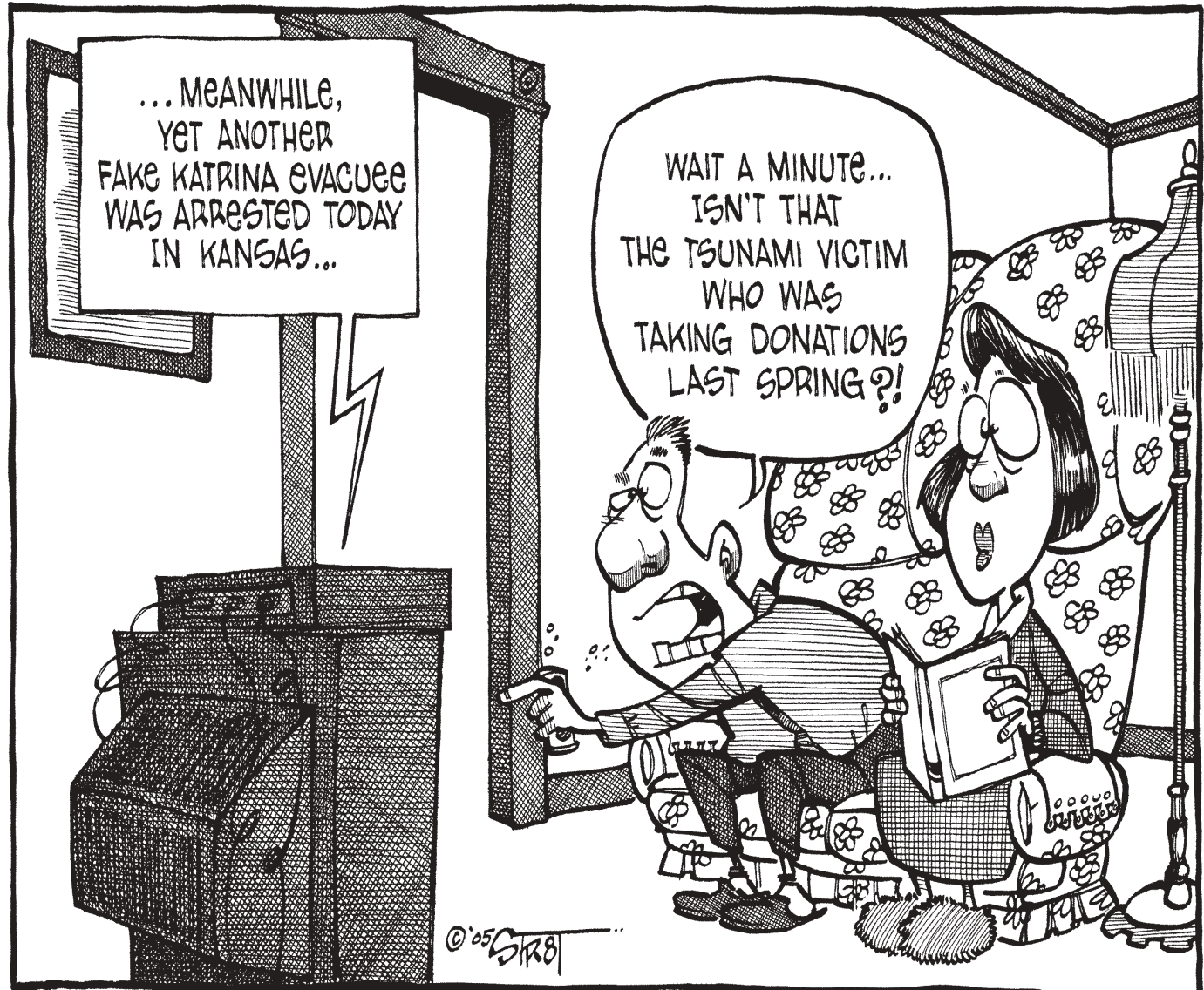
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Incorporating the Norton County Champion

Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



## It's amazing what some people eat

Every family has its little food peculiarities. My family eats salt and pepper on cantaloupe; we like vinegar and raw onions with our beans and cornbread; and I love butter and grape jelly on saltine crackers.

My dad relished pickled pig's feet. Ate 'em right out of the jar.

My mother used to eat beef tongue on crackers. I'm afraid I couldn't handle that. But then, she liked Rocky Mountain oysters, too. I like the sauce, but think the "oysters" themselves are rather tasteless and would rather pass.

One of Jim's favorite snacks is a cold gravy sandwich. His other favorite is a big glass of milk with cornbread crumbled into it.

During a church potluck, we talked about mincemeat pie. Who would have ever thought a dessert pie could be made from meat? I guess it's kind of like jelly. If you add enough sugar, you can make a pie out of anything, for example, corn cob jelly.

Next we discussed fried green tomatoes. There's no middle ground with them; either you like them or you don't. I happen to be on the "do like" side. Plus,

## Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



they're versatile. I'm on the look-out for green tomatoes because I have a recipe that uses ground green tomatoes, sugar and jello. It makes a jam that tastes just like strawberries.

Then someone mentioned blood pudding. Let alone the fact that the scriptures say we shouldn't eat it (Gen. 9:4), who in their right mind would? I had a friend who always made pudding from the blood of a goose and the thought of it just about made me ill. It's in the same category as scrambled eggs and brains.

Last night after Bible study, the conversation turned to things our mothers canned. One recalled tomato preserves, another bread and butter pickles. Before electricity reached our farm, I know Mom canned meat. My friend Charla cans meat

and it's a real delicacy. She shared a pint with us and Jim claimed it, eating it right from the jar.

Jim's mother canned deer meat. I have added noodles and passed it off as "beef and noodles" at potluck dinners.

The flip side of the weird things we eat are the wonderful things some people won't eat. I have a friend who won't touch pumpkin pie or blueberries. Same friend won't eat fried zucchini. But, guess what? She doesn't go overboard on snacks and candy, and still is slim and trim.

My mother made me try a bite of everything. Consequently, I like everything. I blame that for the weight problem I've had all my life. You know mothers get blamed for everything.

My youngest daughter was a "picky" eater. She would go for days and hardly eat a thing. Drove my mother crazy. But, she would eat when she was hungry and she doesn't have a weight problem, either.

The old question, "Do you eat to live, or live to eat?" is the fine line between loving anything that crosses your plate and turning your nose up at most everything.

## Dreams come true with new home

Moving into a new home, or new to us, is in some ways like walking into someone else's world or into another era.

Floor plans, colors and left over items give a glimpse of the people who before us called this place, home.

In the 1950s when the home was built entertaining was popular, but at the same time so was the isolation of women to the kitchen.

Small kitchens were the plan of the day, but large bathtubs to soak in following a big event must also have been popular.

A pink square tub surrounded by burgundy tiles must have helped to ease the pain of aching feet. The kitchen has a five-foot long breadboard with long drawers beneath perhaps to hold table clothes, those things of the past that required careful ironing.

The eating area is separated from the kitchen by a wall with a small sliding opening between the two rooms. Just wide enough for a plate to pass through.

The wood paneled family room or of-

## Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



rice, as it was called then, houses a wet bar with its mini sink and wooden shelves, hidden behind louvered doors.

A decouped picture of the house hangs in the room highlighted with light from a dimmer switch. And most unique is the coat closet wallpapered with the blue prints of the home.

From the home I have learned the former owners were interested in the weather. An old rain gauge struggles to remain upright, wind chimes of the 70's hang from the patio and one of the original indoor/outdoor thermometers let the owners know what might await them outside.

Claudia and Duane Bridges built the home in 1953.

I remember as a child watching the construction and thinking how wonderful to see the panoramic view of the sky from their living room just like I was able to see it from my farmhouse. It was the beginning of a long admiration of a building I knew little about. Never then, could I have imagined living in it.

And now as fate has it, the one-level home without a basement seems like a Godsend to Jack and me with our not so youthful joints.

The house's view allows me a feel of country with the benefit of town. And it also made another childhood dream a reality.

My good friend, Bev (Keiswetter) Hardiek, and I always thought it would be great when we grew up to be able to live next door to each other. Well, across the street will have to do and it does prove dreams really do come true.

## Congressman to look at fuel prices

House Majority Whip Roy Blunt has appointed Congressman Jerry Moran to serve on a task force to address rising fuel prices. Congressman Moran will join eight other members of Congress in serving on the Gas Price Task Force, with the goal of finding ways to reduce fuel prices nationwide.

"An increase in global demand, coupled with restricted oil supplies and the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast, have contributed to escalating fuel prices," Mr. Moran

said. "These high prices are creating financial hardships for families, farmers and businesses in our state and across the country. I am honored to be a part of this task force as we work to bring down the costs of fuel nationwide."

Since arriving in Congress, Moran has advocated for the passage of comprehensive energy legislation.

"Congress must continue working to support the expansion of domestic production, increase our national refining capacity, encourage the growth of renew-

able fuels and promote energy conservation," he said.

The congressman is a senior member of the house agriculture and transportation committees.

For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at: <http://www.house.gov/moranks01/>.

