

The battle against meth will get interesting

For the past few years, states have noticed the trouble meth has caused and have taken a stance against it by creating and approving their own laws.

Many of those laws are based on controlling the sale of over-the-counter medications that include pseudoephedrin, a main ingredient in the production of meth.

Now the federal government is considering creating a nationwide law to hamper meth producers.

"The fight against meth has been on the Kansas radar for years," said Kansas Rep. Jerry Moran, "But the meth epidemic knows no state boundaries. It is time for a comprehensive federal approach."

Are the feds too late?

Some major pharmaceutical companies have already helped the fight. The makers of Tylenol, which has many products with pseudoephedrin, have reconfigured some of products eliminating the chemical.

How the feds approach meth will be key. Congress is starting to hear the response of how it approved prescription drug coverage for Medicare. Critics claim the addition is too complex for people to understand and did nothing but fill the pockets of the pharmaceutical companies.

Will yet another Congressional act related to pharmaceuticals be a pain to figure out while, at the same time, benefiting the industry? Will a federal meth law be written in such a way to avoid upsetting the pharmaceutical companies that contribute to election campaigns?

But more importantly, how will the states that have already done their part to fight meth respond? Will a federal law supercede any and all state laws making the work of the local people worthless?

Will a federal law be as strong and effective as the state laws? Both Oklahoma and Iowa, which have taken the lead in the meth war, reported significant reductions in meth lab discoveries after their laws were enacted.

Rural states should be especially concerned since meth and rural areas go hand-in-hand. So far this year, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation reported 337 meth labs have been seized. It's easy to make meth in rural states because of the supply of needed ingredients and the seclusion. Meth can be made in the backseat of a car on a country road miles away from anybody.

Give the states the benefit of the doubt. They know their meth problems and how to appropriately handle them.

The states shouldn't take a back seat to the federal government on this one.

— John Van Nostrand

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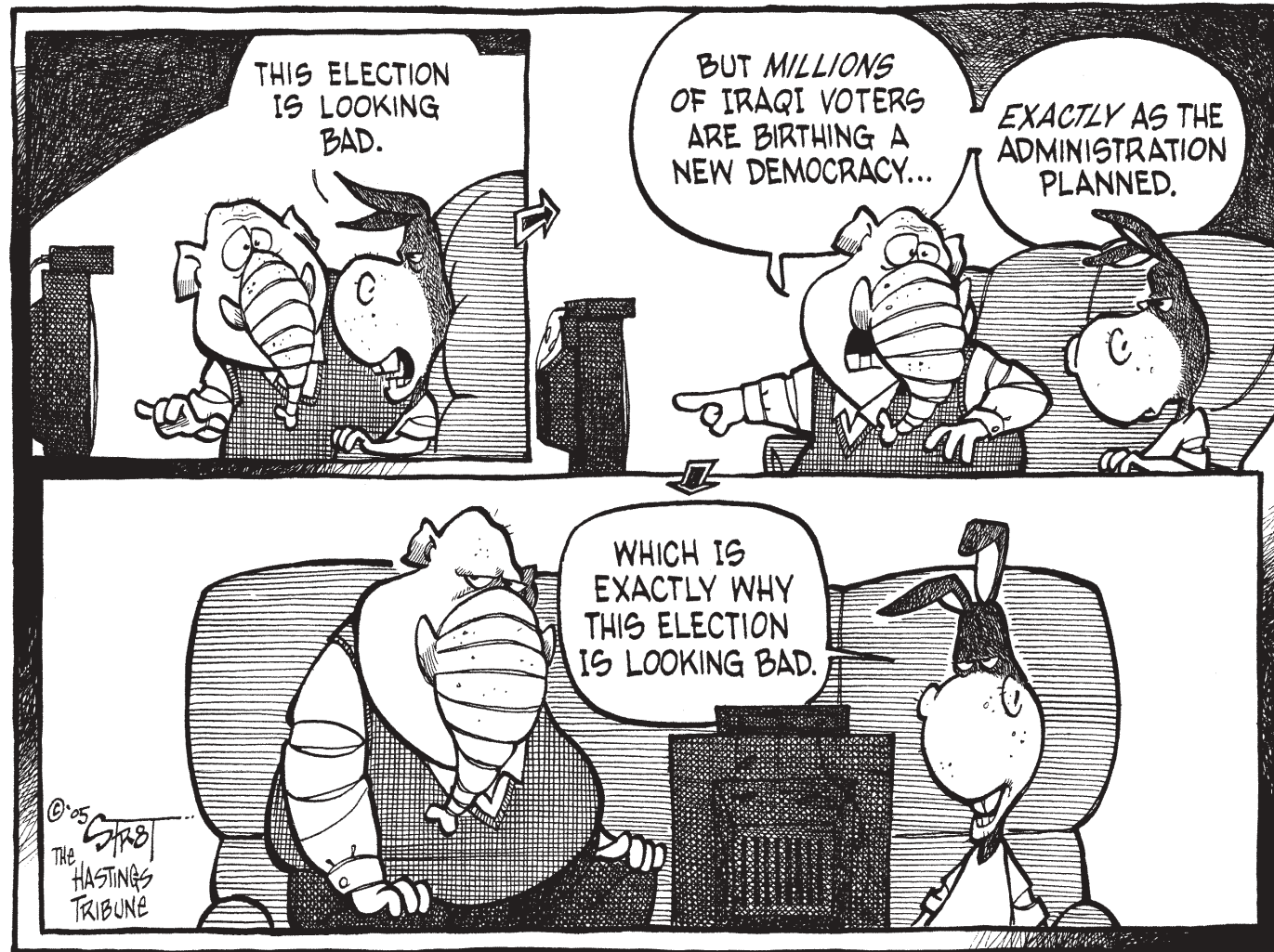
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Weather affects more than farmers

When I was growing up I vowed I would never marry a man who had to watch the weather.

As a farmer's daughter, vacations, or any plans, depended upon the weather.

Sometime during late July or August my dad would come in and say, "Well, it has rained and I won't be able to get into the field for a few days so we might as well take a short vacation to the Rockies (or Black Hills, etc)."

And, so the night before the fateful day, my mother would have to get our clothes cleaned and ready to go and this without the aid of a dryer.

Frequently she would have already baked a cake and had it in the freezer, a premonition of that ever-needed rain falling on my mid-August birthday.

And so, sure enough, my physicist husband could care less about the weather,

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



but alas we do become our parents, as we grow older.

I now search to find the forecast and watch weather, not just locally, but across the country to see how we are faring. And the one thing I have realized as I've gotten older is this, weather affects us all, not just the farmer's daughter.

With new technology some weather systems give us warning, but even with warnings as evidenced by the recent hurricanes it can still wreak havoc.

My husband grew up in Colorado and I grew up here in Norton. When we had the last snowstorm, we told our son to go shovel the walks of his elderly friends. Ours could wait, besides the sun would come out and melt our walk off in a day or two.

We haven't had any storms to speak of since we moved back nine years ago and before that we lived in non-winter climates. And so, after two weeks of ice on our walk and drive, having to help numerous friends and neighbors get out of our driveway, and Jack falling on the front step, we have new respect for weather forecasts. When they say it is going to snow and remain cold sometimes they mean it.

I guess the lesson from this last storm is this: it isn't enough just to listen to the forecast, you need to take action as well.

Perhaps next time.

That deep voice couldn't be the wife

I was just finishing a conversation at the Associated Press meeting when the phone rang. The voice at the other end launched into a lengthy account of some computer problem.

I had no idea who it was. It was the kind of thing Evan talks about, but the deep and husky voice on the phone certainly wasn't Evan.

It kept talking, though, and finally I came to the only logical conclusion: It was someone with a deep, husky voice trying to impersonate Evan.

I was about to stop this impostor, call his hand and demand to know what he had done with Evan.

I wasn't the only one. Pat said the same guy called her. She finally asked who the heck it was.

And it turns out, it was Evan. Evan on tiny time capsules. Evan with a really bad cold.

It was four days before we could recognize him when he called. It wasn't so bad in person, because you could see the deep,

On the Prairie Dog

Steve Haynes



husky voice was coming from someone who looked a lot like Evan. Over the phone, though...

Next, it happened to Cynthia.

When she talks, though she looks like my wife, she sounds just like ... well, someone else.

And while I'm thinking that could enhance our marriage, it's a little unnerving in the morning.

The other day, when I was still half asleep, she called to me from the other room. I was lying there thinking, wondering how our son had come back from

Lawrence already.

When she stuck her head into the bedroom, though, it looked like Cynthia and not like Lacy, so I'm assuming she has the cold, too.

And what a cold. It seems to lower the average voice two octaves below even the ordinary winter cold.

Now, I think I am getting it.

I'm pretty sure I didn't get it from Evan. Cynthia will get the blame, well deserved.

And I'm not sure who people will think I am when I call. I may let them guess. Or maybe I'll be polite and tell them who I am. Then again, maybe not.

If I have to suffer, why go easy on the rest of the world.

Besides, as low as my voice will be, I'll be able to call people and whine and complain, and no one will know who's calling or whom to blame.

I kind of like that prospect.

And if I talk a lot about computers, they'll probably just think it's Evan calling.

Friends, family get packages delivered

Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



When you want to send a parcel, you have several choices. There's United Parcel Service (UPS), Fed-Ex, DHL, the U.S. Postal Service — and then there's the friends network.

Of the paid delivery systems, the post office is almost always the cheapest. However, you have to pay extra for fast service. Still, you can't beat the friends network for cheap — it's almost always free. The speed of delivery varies a lot, however.

Back when we were living in a tiny hamlet of Creede in the mountains of Colorado, all our medication was delivered by the friends network. The pharmacy in Del Norte, 45 minutes down mountain roads and in another county, would give your prescription to whom-ever showed up from Creede. That person was supposed to leave the package at the Standard station.

Then you just picked up your prescription at the gas station, as long as the person picking it up remembered to deliver it. Occasionally, there would be some long-distance calls to find out where Johnny's antibiotics were or Aunt Sarah's arthritis medicine. Usually, it was just

someone who forgot to stop at the gas station when they got back to town.

Everyone in town helped move stuff. Steve once brought back a truckload of shingles for someone reroofing their home.

We still do that today.

Our offices are connected by our drivers. The Oberlin driver takes stops by St. Francis and trades mail sacks and picks up inserts. Then she goes to Goodland and trades mail sacks, drops off the inserts and picks up *The Oberlin Herald*. Then it's on to Colby to trade mail sacks and leave off a few papers. Then back to Oberlin. The Norton driver picks up mail and inserts in Oberlin on other days and delivers all of it to Goodland.

Last week, I noticed a sack on a desk in Oberlin. It was for an employee's sister, who would pick it up later in the week.

The sack was from her daughter in St. Francis.

That sack had been delivered to our office in Sainty, driven to Goodland and Colby before getting to Oberlin, and would eventually be picked up by its intended recipient or delivered to her by her sister.

Our family does the same thing.

I made my son take a package to his grandmother after Christmas. He was stopping by Concordia on his way from Oberlin to Lawrence, so I sent the package with him. His sister in Augusta, Ga., sent to me for her grandmother, along with other presents for the rest of the family, knowing someone would take it to Concordia.

When we've had Oberlin kids going to the junior college in Concordia, we've sent stuff with them and delivered stuff to them. When a high school senior told me that she planned to attend Emporia State University last week, I was elated. Now I had someone to send stuff to my brother-in-law and sister-in-law in Emporia.

Poor girl, she just thought she was going to college. She didn't know she was joining the friends transportation network.