

## LETTERS

### Farm bill should contain safety net

To the Editor,  
As a wheat producer from Winona, I am concerned about the ongoing debate over the 2007 Farm Bill.

Farm policy affects everyone who eats; we just have to look at the recent pet food contamination to be reminded of the importance of an abundant, domestic food supply. While not all foods can be grown in the U.S., it is in the best interests of all Americans to produce what we can here at home, and this is where the Farm Bill helps all of us. This federal legislation should provide a safety net to American agriculture and America's farmers who, in turn, provide a safe and affordable food supply to this nation and to many others — all at a cost of about 4 cents per meal, per person.

There is a lot of debate in Congress about how farm bill funds should be spent — from conservation to renewable fuels to food stamps. The fact remains, though, that without farmers on the land and an equitable and adequate commodity title, none of these other possibilities exist.

Sincerely,

Richard Kvasnicka  
Wheat Producer  
Director, Kansas Association  
of Wheat Growers  
Winona

### Let shape dictate postal rate savings

To the Editor,  
A new Postal Service approach to pricing will reshape the future of mail on May 14, enabling customers to save money, in some cases, by simply folding the contents of an envelope. The new pricing system is based on the shape of mail, not just the weight, reflecting the fact that the costs for handling letters, large envelopes and packages differ. Customers can reduce their mailing costs simply by choosing different packaging.

For example, if the contents of a First Class Mail large envelope are folded and placed in a letter-sized envelope, customers can reduce postage by as much as 39 cents per piece. If the contents of a First Class Mail package are laid out to fit into a large envelope, customers can save 33 cents per piece.

Shape-based pricing, in effect, creates a more flexible rate system by giving mailers the opportunity to obtain lower rates if they find ways to configure their mail into shapes that reduce handling costs for the Postal Service and that helps to keep rates affordable for everyone.

With the new emphasis on shape in its pricing, the Postal Service is also reducing the additional ounce rate on May 14. As mail pieces become heavier, the new additional ounce price declines. For letters over one ounce, the new prices are actually lower than the current prices.

More information about the new pricing can be found at:  
<http://www.usps.com/ratecase>

Brenda Darnell  
Norton Postmaster

### High Plains WIND new to the area

(The following letter deals with a new service provided by the National Weather Service. Announcing it in a Memorandum to Media from the weather people at the Goodland office, we secured permission to share it with our readers who, we feel, will find it valuable and helpful. The memorandum, in part, reads:)

Weather has certainly received its share of attention during the past five months, starting in mid-December with blizzards and ice storms, and continuing well into spring with our more recent episodes of hail, wind, and tornadoes. It seems everyone has weather on their mind.

Mother Nature provided us with a perfect way to introduce our quarterly newsletter called *High Plains WIND* (Weather Information News Data). This is our first edition and we're excited to share it with you! Our goal is to keep you up-to-date on advances in new technology, provide reviews of significant weather events, let you know about office programs, highlight the efforts of the many hundreds of volunteers to assist the National Weather Service in carrying out its mission, and maybe pass along a few tips on the way.

If you would like to receive our newsletter...just let us know your e-mail address and we will send you a link to the next issue as soon as it is available. Just write to our office in care of our administrative assistant at her e-mail address: [joy.hayden@noaa.gov](mailto:joy.hayden@noaa.gov).

Let us know what you think about our newsletter. We would appreciate your comments.

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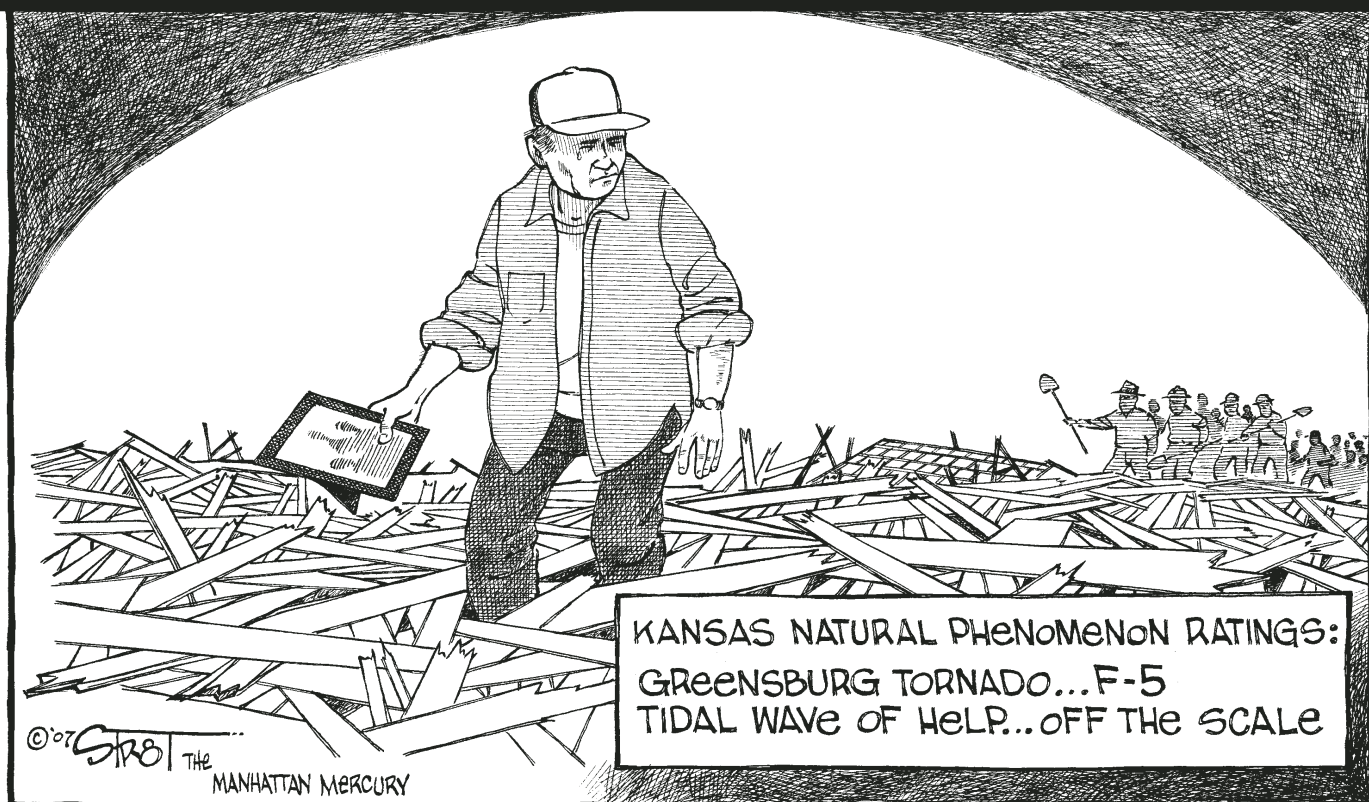
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## Christmas tree stood for long time

I finally took down my Christmas tree. It's not that I forgot it was still up, it was just a matter of waiting for someone in my family to get a look at it. You see, distances involved do not always allow for someone from my little clan to be home at Christmas time. So, when I put the tree up in early December 2006, I vowed to not take it down until someone from the family sees it.

It's not that it was an outstanding tree or anything like that, no, it was just one of those little personal things I was dealing with. And let's face it, this past winter season was not a good one for traveling, so I hadn't really anticipated visitors from afar.

Well, on April 28 and 29, one of my kids and his little family were my Christmas visitors. All three were surprised to see the tree still up, and that there was still one gift beneath it. The gift was for the little grandson. A day after their departure, I looked at the tree and told it to "take a hike!" It did, with my help.

For many years, a sister-in-law of mine, Judy Wintz, and I had a little contest going to see who would get their tree up first each season. We pulled out all stops, trying to stump one another into believing (but mostly not believing) the tree was up.

Judy won the contest most years. Now and then I would put my tree up at a ridiculously early date, knowing she couldn't best that. She'd simply laugh and say, "Ha, I still beat you!" I think if memory serves me correctly I won on three occasions. If truth be known, however, I think she had her tree up before me on each of those occasions, but let me think I won. She's that kind of caring person.

Judy lived in Colby for most of her life and now in retirement lives in Overland Park. We don't play the tree game anymore, but every now and then I think back to those happier times and the crazy things family members involve themselves in.

Judy, I bet I found more Easter eggs this year than you did!

-td-

When I watched the television coverage of the disaster that struck Greensburg, I noticed something in those pictures that I see in nearly every photo of a town hit

-td-

by a tornado. When word surfaced that the force of the Greensburg tornado was an F5 with winds in excess of 200 miles per hour, I was surprised the something I referenced at the outset of this item, was still standing.

Good Evening Norton  
Tom Dreiling



What was it?  
The grain elevator! These things must be built to last and last and last. Which brought me to ask myself, "Maybe they could use those things as tornado shelters." I'm sure there are many drawbacks to that line of thinking, but when they survive tornadoes that knock down everything else, well, it gets you to thinking. That F5 tornado was the most powerful tornado to hit the U.S. in the last eight years.

-td-

Speaking of grain elevators, the one across the street from the Pinestone Apartments on West Washington, seems to lean a bit to the north. If you drive west on Washington about two blocks beyond Walter Motor Company, and take a look, it leans. Of course that could just be my eyes playing games. But coming off US-36 onto Washington a while back, I told a passenger in my vehicle to take a look at that elevator as we got closer. Agreed, it leans!

As I continue with checkups after having cataract procedures performed on both eyes and intraocular lens implanted, I'll take another look at that elevator when the checkups are completed, to see if it still leans.

-td-

Now that the Republican and Democratic candidates for president have held warm-up televised debates, I have come to the conclusion that I'm more confused than ever. I sort of pared down my choices to three from each party, but after the debates I am reassessing my earlier assess-

-td-

ment. And if that sounds goofy that's how some of the candidates sounded. I was disappointed in Rudy Giuliani, receptive to Mitt Romney and felt sorry for Sen. McCain. Sen. Clinton is moving towards the middle where she needs to be, former Sen. John Edwards' recollections of his childhood days is a cheap way to hide his current lifestyle that middle America can't even comprehend, and Sen. Obama needs to begin telling us his plans, not just that he has plans.

As the months roll on, the picture will become a lot clearer. And many of those we see on the debate stages today won't be around when we move into the fall. Frankly, if the election were held today, friends, I think it would be a Romney-Clinton showdown. I seriously doubt late entries by former Vice President Al Gore or former Sen. Fred Thompson will make any difference.

Hey, I picked Street Scene to win the Kentucky Derby, so....

-td-

A young boy had just gotten his driver's permit and asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car. His father said he'd make a deal with his son. "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, get your hair cut, and we'll talk about the car." The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, I've been real proud. You brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm real disappointed you didn't get your hair cut." The young man paused a moment then said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, too, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair and there's even a strong argument that Jesus had long hair."

To this his father replied, "Did you also notice they all walked every where they went?"

-td-

Have a good evening and a good weekend. If the weather's nice and you are up to it, why not try walking to church this weekend?

-td-

## We just like to hold onto old things

When we last visited, our heroine was contemplating the theory of planned obsolescence precipitated by the failure of her computer and sewing machine. Much as I would like to report some of these issues have been resolved, nothing much has changed.

The man of the house, eternal optimist he, says "Hold on dear, I still think we are going to have a wheat crop!" Gotta love a man like that!

At least with the delivery of a new mattress, we have been sleeping well! It is debatable as to why a new mattress was necessary. More planned obsolescence? As we looked at new mattresses we realized that the old one was way past any warranty. Things do just wear out. (I'm a prime example.)

Besides the old set is not going to the landfill, it will live on in the eldest daughter's guest bedroom. It might not be much but it is better than the air mattress we currently sleep on when visiting.

The sewing machine thing is really bothering me, however. During the winter, I did counted cross stitch. Back in the fall, I ran into a snag on a sewing project and I just quit!

Back Home Nancy Hagman



Then a couple of weeks ago, Tricia and I were in JoAnn's and they had patterns for 99 cents. We bought a few ranging in price regularly from \$10.50 to 16.50. No wonder people quit sewing. Tricia got excited and we ended up purchasing fabric. I came home and started sewing. She now has the cutest jacket ever and I realized something — I love to sew.

But, only when things go right. Before starting any more new projects I ought to finish the thing that was causing me all the grief last fall. I may not need a new machine after all. While I was rummaging around I ran onto a couple of other little jewels that are not right and probably never will be. I hate to sew!

Art truly imitates life. I don't think I am so different from most people in that my

successes usually count for much less than my failures. What is it about a little heap of fabric and thread? Why can't I just chalk it up to education, throw it out and move on. Why do I keep it around to look at? Even if I hide it away, sooner or later, it shows up and usually at the worst possible moment.

In terms of material things: worn out mattresses, broken sewing machines, crafts that proved to be craftier than the crafter. The pain is often in the pocket book. I look at it and think, "I paid good money for that, I have to get my money out of it." Or even if I have gotten the good out of it, I still hold on maybe someone else could use it. Is it some sort of Bible Belt frugality? Why do we hate so much to give up, to admit defeat?

Most of us have probably heard the old Scottish tale "How to sleep on a windy night." If you have not the upshot of the story is if you have taken care of the things that need to be attended to during the day you will sleep at night.

No more worry about what would have, could have, should have been. Peace of mind gives us better rest than we can get on the newest mattress and the warranty lasts forever.