

### Tuesday's Snippets

A lot of diversity in these replies to items appearing in Snippets and Let's Chat columns this past week.

Here goes:  
• "Yea for your comment on the pre-season games! If the NFL wants to keep 'exhibition' games, which don't count in the ratings, then they shouldn't charge the regular game admission at the stadiums! Who wants to watch 2nd and 3rd strings practice for the same price as watching first line ups! If I want a hamburger, I'm not going to pay for Filet Mignon!"

• "Hey, how about Guv Kathleen? \$7,000? Isn't it something how some people will finally come clean when they have a shot at serving the prez?"

• "Or better still, keep wearing it!" [blindfold]... "Happy belated 4-1 Day!" [Serve America Act]

• "We knew all along Ms. Sebelius had faults.....somewhere!"

• "My comment for this week is that when the media and others talk about ways to save money and conserve energy, many rural people have always done the things suggested. We don't get the expensive coffee every morning, we brew it at home. We don't eat out every day, we still know how to cook, grow gardens and can. Some of us still hang our clothes out on the line for the energy savings, the exercise and that fresh smell. When you live in a small town try walking. It only takes a few more minutes and you can smile and wave at someone along the way and maybe stop and visit instead of rushing past."

• "Hey, governess, Toto ought to bite your leg."

• "Buddy, I served in Vietnam! Afghanistan and Pakistan are not in the same league."

• "I guess because you told your dirty little tax secret back in Washington, we can truly use the phrase, 'You aren't in Kansas anymore.'"

• "Hey, t.gram, I used to live in North Dakota. Key word "USED" to live in North Dakota. The cold, the blizzards, the endless winters, the flooding, even in winter. See why I USED...?!"

### Stop Look Listen Tom Dreiling



- "Sebelius' \$7,000 looks pale next to Daschle's \$150,000!"
- "We sure could have used half of Pratt's 28 inches."

Let's chew on this stuff as you prepare to comment:

√President Obama is taking some heat for saying we (Americans) are arrogant while addressing crowds at some of his stops in Europe. Hey, folks, we are!! Just look at our Congress?

√North Korea launched another satellite. Well, they really didn't, it fell into the drink. But we should be concerned because this one traveled further than the last one. No question about it, we are the target! I can't understand why we just don't blow those so-called test missiles out of the sky! That would be a deafening message!

√We can all be proud of the way former President George W. Bush is conducting his post-White House occupancy, unlike former Vice President Dick Cheney. President Bush is acting like a true statesman, while Cheney is acting like a true hater! Maybe the term-ending rift between Mr. Bush and Cheney was one reason the former president didn't pardon Cheney's buddy, Scooter Libby.

√This weird weekend weather must be the result of Mother Nature's in-laws dropping by.

√While we always warmly welcome visitors to our town, why don't we go one step further: install signs on the outbound lanes on US-36 and US-283 that simply say, "THANK YOU for Visiting Norton."

*(To join the conversation, simply e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for making this one of the best read columns in all of northwest Kansas. - td)*



Don't forget to render a salute to people observing anniversaries, birthdays, or for any deed you feel merits mention. Simply e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, telephone 877-3361 or 877-6908, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or bring to the office. You need not identify yourself. Thanks. - td

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### Here's something we do not need

Perhaps the greatest threat to rural Kansas life today is the misguided movement to consolidate both counties and school districts. Plans have been proposed to combine all of the state into just 40 school districts and 36 similarly sized counties, though boundaries would not be the same.

These plans are touted as saving the state millions while promoting efficient planning and management, "like Wal-Mart and McDonalds."

Thus, says Richard Shrock, an Emporia professor and education columnist, if your town is big enough to have a McDonalds, it may be big enough to have a high school.

And if that comes to pass, the future is bleak indeed for western Kansans, where less than a dozen high schools might remain. Of course, these plans beg the question of whether any of us wants our schools and counties run with the moral and ethical values of Wal-Mart or the nutritional content of a McDonalds' menu.

These proposals, however, have caught on with both good-government liberals and tight-fisted conservatives, at least to some extent. Inflated claims of savings upward of \$700 million look good to planners in a state facing a possible \$600 million budget gap.

### On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



Proponents tell us, of course, that we'd still get the same level of service that we get today from both counties and schools. Only "excess" job and surplus buildings would be dropped.

But those jobs and those schools are vital to the economy in many a Kansas county seat, where public employment is often the biggest factor in the job market. Take away the school, the courthouse and the hospital (and believe us, that will be next), and what's left in the average county seat?

It's likely that proponents like Dr. Shrock and Sen. Chris Steineger, who introduced a bill to study county consolidation, have no concept of rural life. They only know the state needs to save money.

It's theoretically possible to serve all of the northwest corner of Kansas with one courthouse and one high school, presumably in Colby, but do we want to live that kind of life? And what kind

of government would rural people have when many have to drive 70 to 100 miles to get to the courthouse, or when high school students are on a bus two to three hours a day?

The consolidation might be good for Colby in the short run. But after a few years, how many people would be left in the outlying towns to come into the "big" city to shop, buy license plates or go to school?

This is a proposal for depopulating much of the High Plains to save the state a few bucks. Even those savings might not be what's projected. Government consolidations seldom reduce employment or spending. Mostly, the same employees and budget are shuffled into a bigger office.

In the end, the counties, school districts and state would have fewer people and fewer dollars as people flee to Denver, Kansas City and Lincoln.

Out here in the sticks, though, we had better get organized if we want to fight this kind of thinking.

These people think they are doing the right thing, even though it means the end of rural life as we know it.

At least the high school kids would be able to sneak out for some good food at the nearby McDonalds in the few remaining school/county seat towns, huh?

### Calves are the topic now at our house

Mixing formula, sterilizing baby bottles, midnight feedings. All we're missing are burping and diapers. And, everything is in triplicate since the three "babies" came to live with us. Baby calves, that is.

It is almost springtime and we knew our farmer/rancher friend might be having some "bum" calves. He usually has a couple that get orphaned or their mother won't claim them for some reason. We're always prepared with big bottles and at least one feeding of milk replacer formula on stand-by.

A late afternoon phone call said calves were on the way over. Jim spread some fresh straw in a little shelter we keep for the babies and all was ready. We were just a little surprised when three calves emerged from the trailer.

Our friend's hired man and his wife made the delivery. One of the calves is a dwarf. Cute as the dickens but, noticeably smaller than his two heifer penmates. The man's wife had been bottle feeding him since he was born and had become quite attached to him. She had named him "Bear". I wasn't sure she was going to let him stay with us. Like adoptive parents, we had to assure her we would take good care of him. We even told her she had visitation rights and could come see him anytime she wants.

So now, our lives are regulated by feeding schedules and making sure we

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



have plenty of formula on hand. Among the three of them, we're feeding almost four gallons of milk a day. They are definitely eager eaters. Son James has taken over most of the feeding duties (especially the late night feeding) and will say to me, "If you'll 'milk the cow,' I'll feed the calves." Measuring, mixing, filling bottles and clean-up is still a good trade for not having to bundle up and brave the cold.

Sometimes what I write has repercussions. For example, after the column about Jim and the sour cream container we have heard countless jokes about leftovers and Tupperware. Whenever Jim picks up a few groceries, the check-out clerk asks, "Need any sour cream with that?"

You'd think he would have learned his lesson. After all, "the pen is mightier than the sword." Now, he doesn't know this, but I found his hiding place in my cabinets, where he has stashed two empty sour cream containers. He's got something planned but, I'm ready for him. Bring it on!

Crazy as it sounds, we made homemade ice cream Sunday night. While snow was on the ground outside and the wind chill factor was minus two degrees. And, at 9 o'clock at night.

You're kind of "on your own," food-wise, at our house Sunday nights. If you can't fend for yourself, you go hungry. So, obviously, I didn't have anything planned for an evening meal and had taken a very long, late afternoon nap. About 8:30 Jim said, in a pleading sort of way, "Boy! Some homemade ice cream sure would taste good about now." To which I replied, "Sorry, but we don't have any cream."

It was a trap. Jim came back with, "Oh, yes we do. Remember when I ran into the grocery store to pick up some juice? Well, I picked up a quart of cream too."

There was no way out. He had been planning this all day. I was going to make ice cream. And, I did.

Now, I've never made ice cream using a cooked mix. So, don't read any farther if you have a "thing" about raw eggs. I just whip up five or six eggs (depending on the size), stir in 2-3 cups of sugar, about three "glugs" of vanilla and a dash of salt. Pour in a quart of heavy whipping cream and fill the rest of the way with whole milk. Bad for the arteries and the hips, but homemade ice cream has got to be one of life's greatest pleasures.

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