

Airline passengers face increased security

Since Sept 11, 2001 airline passengers have been subject to increased security when traveling. In the last ten years we've gone from a simple wait in a security line to having to turn over electronics, shoes, water, other items, and now travelers may be subject to full body scans and other security measures the next time they board an airline.

The latest incident happened when a Northwest Airlines plane almost exploded over Detroit on Christmas Day. The alleged bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, had boarded the airline in Amsterdam with explosives hidden in his underwear.

Immediately after the incident, there was discussion about taking away airline blankets and pillows, limiting movement on planes and not having access to carry-on bags. These measures are cited as security that is needed to protect passengers; however, they further limit the freedom we currently have to get a book out of our carry-on in the middle of the flight and even use the restroom if needed.

The details of further security measures have not been decided but may go further than restricting movement during flights.

According to an article in the Washington Post, full body scans are being discussed as a way to detect things hidden under clothing. The units are already in use in 40 airports in the United States, and the Transportation Security Administration has ordered 150 more scanners to be installed across the country.

The units produce images similar to x-rays to detect objects hidden under clothing. Critics call the scan a virtual strip search, saying it goes too far in the name of homeland security.

New security measures are to be expected due to the attempted bombing, but how much are travelers expected to sacrifice the next time they board a plane remains under debate.

—Erica Bradley



Nelson's antics a proud day for democrats

This is my day to pound on a democrat. Ben Nelson of Nebraska has shown his true colors by black-mailing fellow democrats. Not only did his insistence on gaining perks for his state come across as a spoiled child, it, as one republican put it, demonstrates not negotiation, but blackmail. Nelson garnered increased federal funding for his state and his state alone to help offset "an expanded Medicaid population." The dollar amount of this appears to be about \$45 million over the course of ten years.

I applaud the birth of a health care plan despite Nelson's childish antics. If we do not start somewhere we get nowhere, but Ben Nelson put a black smudge on the whole party because of his own politics, in no way resembling statesmanship. Not wanting to fund abortions with federal money has long been his stance. Gaining access to abortions with federal funds is/should be a negotiable subject right now, but using your position to gain perks for Nebraska in exchange for your vote only highlights his lack of dedication to the country as a whole. Unfortunately for Nelson even right to lifers are angry with

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



him because he supports the bill at all.

Some will say this is how Washington works and I have no argument with that statement. What I do argue with is the "rightness" of it. It reminds me of the statement from churches, service organizations, etc., "We tried that once and it didn't work." What would happen if we used that statement when toilet training a child or teaching a youngster to ride a bike. Anything worth gaining is worth the repeated effort.

The late Senator Ted Kennedy said his biggest regret of his career was when Nixon brought a universal health plan to him and he didn't support it. Kennedy felt it didn't do enough. At least Ben Nelson is grabbing the baton and giving this a chance albeit with some pork attached.

Usually, Jim and I at least go out for dinner on New Year's Eve. I am especially partial to Chinese food as a "good luck" talisman to ring in the New Year.

This year, however, found us both at home, Jim asleep before 10 p.m. and me darn ing socks.

Darning socks is almost a lost art, but in the wintertime, Jim prefers heavy-duty, 80 percent wool socks that cost about \$12 a pair. You can bet I'm going to darn those.

At first, I thought I could sacrifice one sock to unravel and crochet that yarn into the offending hole and, thereby make a nice, smooth patch.

I soon learned that machine-made socks don't readily unravel.

But, they can be cut.

I also learned that a light bulb makes an adequate darning "egg" and the "toe" of the sacrificed sock can be split in two and makes a good substitute for a heel.

My mother and her mother, Grandma Davison, both were expert menders. Grandma taught me her technique for mending little holes.

First, make small stitches all around the hole. Then, starting at one side, outside

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



the circle of stitching, weave the needle back and forth across the opening, catching as many threads as possible. After working across the hole that way, turn the piece a half-turn and work back the other way. Don't pull the threads real tight, as that will make a "pucker." Keep the thread snug and soon the hole will be filled with a nice, tight "weave."

My mom always kept a bag of mending in the car so that if she had to sit and wait on someone, she would have something to do. I'm not that extreme but, I can't see throwing out a perfectly good pair of socks because of a hole or two. I also sew on buttons and turn up a hem if need be.

Mom didn't make clothes, but she sure kept us in patched shirts, pants and overalls.

Jim said my patches were perfect.

Didn't rub his foot or feel the least bit uncomfortable. I must have sewn something right.

— ob —

The new year has also brought on a renewed interest in "getting things in order." Let it be known I have started to work on the dreaded basement.

Over the years, it has become a "catch-all." I started sorting through boxes of stuff I have hauled around for 45 years. I know it's that old, because some of it is from my high school days. I'm a sentimental sucker, so I can't just pitch it, but, I have reduced it considerably.

It was fun, all over again, to read notes my best friend Galene passed to me in study hall. At the time, I'm sure I knew who "HE" was. "HE" would have been the object of one or the other of our affections. "HE" is just a memory now. But, I still couldn't throw those notes away.

I found an old diary, the cast from my broken arm in fourth grade, report cards, a stuffed baby alligator from my trip to Florida when I was 11, bushels of pictures and my oldest daughter's many shoes.

Oh, fiddlesticks! I think I'll just keep it all and let the kids deal with it when I'm gone.

Renewed interests in the New Year

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Safe food is top ag priority

Insight John Schlageck

Today's consumers are continually bombarded with scads of conflicting food-safety information. Before today's shoppers believe all the stories and headlines, they should consider the producer's side.

Very few celebrity spokespeople, activist leaders or the urban press seek out farmers, ranchers or agricultural leaders when they champion food safety concerns. Contrary to what some consumers and media may think, growing and selling safe, nutritious food is a farmer's number one goal.

Farmers are in business to provide products for their customers. They care what consumers think about their milk, oats, wheat, beef and other products. When consumers asked for leaner meats and low-fat dairy products, the beef, pork and dairy industries respond.

A clean, healthy environment is important to everyone, but probably most important to farmers. A farmer's well being and livelihood depend on his natural resources.

While buildings and farm machinery are important tools, a farmer's most precious assets are his land, soil and water. If a farmer destroys his resources, he won't be in business long.

Environmental stewardship has always been important to farmers. It always will be.

Quality and safety of food are as much a concern to farmers as they are to consumers. Farmers shop at the supermarket like

everyone else. They eat the same foods. Farmers are consumers too. Farmers not only care about the health and safety of their families but also consumers.

Farmers use technology responsibly. They constantly learn new farming methods and practices by attending training sessions and courses.

New farm technology is expensive. It is in the best interest of farmers to use it carefully and sparingly. Misuse would add to the cost of production, which would result in an even lower return on their investment.

Farmers use agricultural chemicals only when necessary. When they use chemicals, farmers follow label directions designed for public health and safety.

When ranchers use antibiotics and other animal health products for their stock, they follow proper drug use practices. When new advances in biotechnology are discovered, farmers must abide by stringent testing and monitoring practices that ensure only safe products in the marketplace.

Food produced in the United States is safe. More than three decades of Food and Drug Administration testing has shown the majority of fruits and vegetables have no detectable pesticide

residues. This underscores that American farmers use pesticides properly.

Each year federal agencies spend millions of dollars to support food and agricultural safety and quality inspection. The Food and Drug Administration uses millions to inspect and to check processors of "high-risk" foods.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to monitor and trace outbreaks of food-borne illness, from its many labs nationwide.

Farmers and ranchers fully support efforts to evaluate and enhance the current regulatory and food monitoring system. They fully understand that Americans should be able to feel confident that the food on their tables is the healthiest, safest anywhere in the world.

Agriculture is committed to working with all parties toward maintaining safe food. Decisions affecting the course of agricultural production into the next century must continue to be based on sound science and never on fear or false information.

Farmers and ranchers must remain engaged in helping shape long-term policies. They must continue to maximize their production capacity with an ever-watchful eye on food safety, quality and the environment.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects passion.