

Northwest Tech revolutionizes education

Northwest Kansas Technical College this week announced that, starting next school year, the school will be handing out Apple iPad computers to all of its students.

The college was going to use the smaller iTouch, but after the iPad was announced, they decided to go with the bigger version. The college is touting itself as the first in Kansas to offer this technology.

Who better than a technical college to be on forefront technology?

This is a wonderful way to incorporate technology in the classroom. iPads and other similar mobile devices can hold dozens of textbooks in one handy pad that can be held in your hand.

Imagine not needing a bulky backpack with six or seven heavy textbooks you need for class that day weighing you down. Instead, you whip out your minicomputer, touch the icon for English 101 and you're set. Then you head to the next class and you have that book as well right at your fingertips.

Upgrading to the iPad was a good decision. The iTouch is the size of a cell phone, and while it is a fun device with a lot of utility, for long hours staring at a textbook, students will need the larger display.

You could even take notes right on the iPad. Granted, many of us would still prefer a pencil and paper, and the motion of writing helps keep you from falling asleep in class.

However, we can foresee some problems.

First, the iPad is expensive. The basic version costs \$500 compared to the basic iTouch, which is going for \$200. We hope the college got a good deal.

Next, we don't really know yet how fragile these devices are. A lot of them could get scratched or broken, and then what? Would it be the college's responsibility to replace it or the student's? There would have to be an ironclad policy and probably some sort of agreement each student will have to sign.

Last, many students look forward to the small cash infusion they get from selling back their used textbooks at the end of the semester.

Potential problems aside, this should serve as a good pilot program for larger colleges. If it all goes well, we could see iPads or similar e-readers become standard issue in classrooms around the world. Plenty of students already tote their laptops to class, and this is a natural evolution.

When the iPad was first announced, we told you it probably wouldn't revolutionize newspapers, but it might just revolutionize education.

— Kevin Bottrell

Car 'lock down' causes problems

It seems every time I get our mechanic paid off, something new goes wrong with my car. This time, it's electrical. The power sliding door has no power and won't slide; the electric window on the passenger side will go down, but not up; and the other sliding door won't even open. I'm almost afraid to get in for fear everything will "lock down" and I won't be able to get out.

Our mechanic has been on the family payroll for so long now, perhaps he won't mind a little longer.

— ob —

Everyone should celebrate Easter at a Sunrise Service. We try to go out to my old home church in the country every year. More than 30 others joined us for the beautiful service. As the sun came up, it peeked through the overcast sky as a meadowlark sang his little heart out.

After singing "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Up From the Grave He Arose," everyone went to the Community Building for breakfast. This is the second year we've served ham-and-egg casseroles, fresh fruit, juice and coffee. I added a cheese Danish for a little "sweet."

Anyway, I don't think a single person missed having pancakes, sausage and eggs. And, by having everything done ahead of time, no one had to "stay back" to get breakfast ready.

— ob —

April 1 was the 16th anniversary of our first date. It also turned out to be the

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



wedding anniversary of some new friends.

Last week, a couple in our little town called to see if Jim could and would perform a wedding ceremony for some friends of theirs. The bride and groom had the marriage license and were slightly beyond the "age of consent."

They liked our little town and chose the shelter in the city park as the setting for the nuptials.

The bride-to-be wanted to be married at 4:10 p.m. That seemed a strange request. When I asked her about it, she said, "April is the fourth month of 2010. So I wanted to be married at 4:10 on 4-10." Makes sense to me.

After the "I dos," and the tears of happiness were wiped away, the bride announced, "I want to sing a little song for my new husband." She broke out in a spirited rendition of "Oh, we ain't got a barrel of money; maybe we're ragged and funny; but, we'll travel along, singin' our song....side by side."

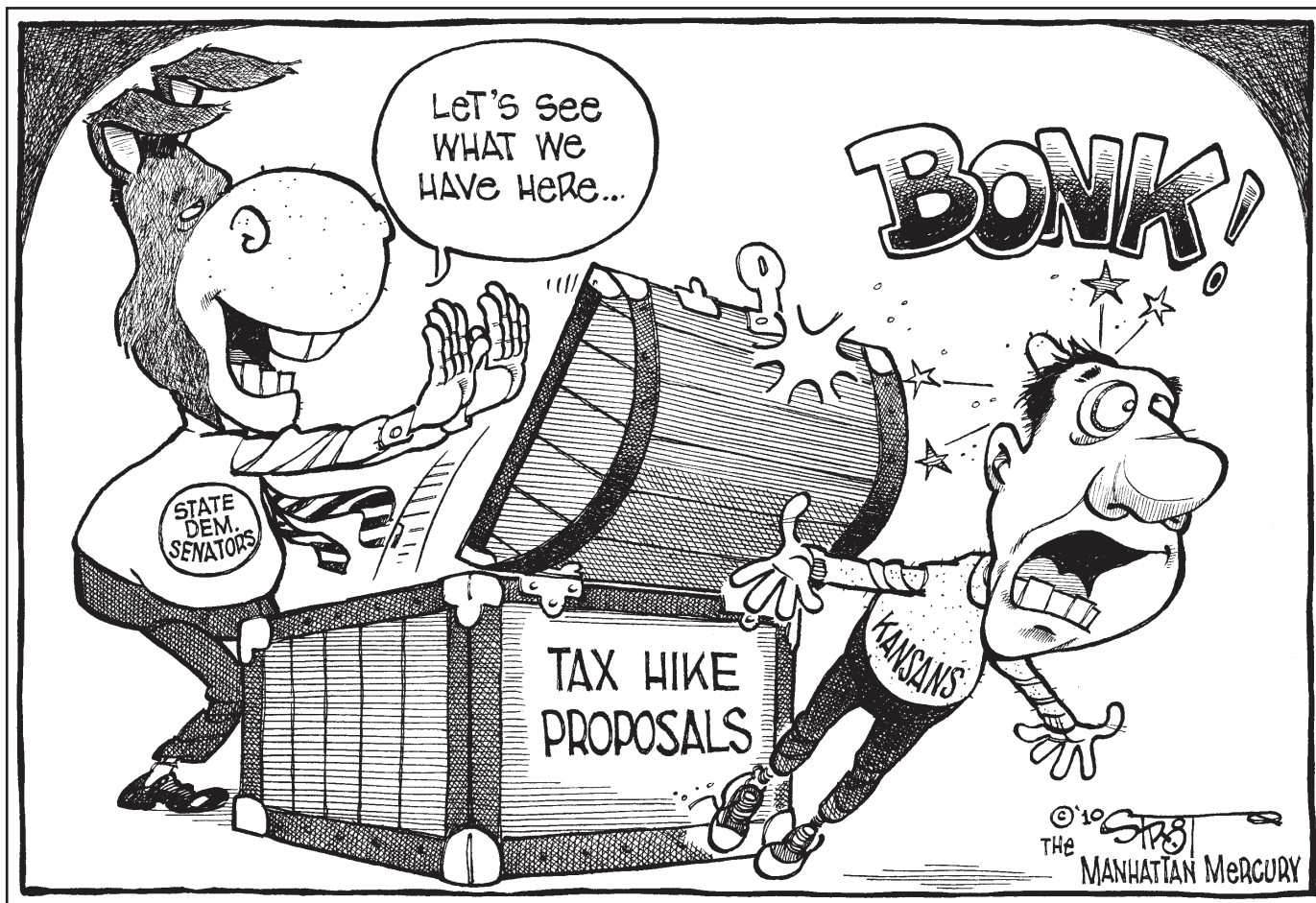
We think they are going to do just fine. Best wishes, Greg and Gina.

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Do you play fetch?

How many of you still take your dog's favorite toy and throw it across the yard to play fetch? A simple game can get you outside to spend time with Fido. Many animals are turned over to their local shelter just because the children of the family have outgrown the puppy and have turned to video games instead. At Christmas time or birthdays many people choose a puppy, thinking it is an ideal present for the family. Yet when that puppy has grown up and is no longer cute, problems arise. The overgrown puppy that is now a teenager is chewing up everything in sight! Bad habits don't get corrected, Fido is soon turned out into the yard and is no longer an inside dog. He is then forgotten by the family and eventually is turned over to the local shelter or to another friend. Then the cycle continues, because the dog's bad habits are never corrected and he is never taught to be obedient. Lack of training and the disinterest of the animal's human family is the number one cause as to why animals are handed over to the shelter. Approximately 5 to 7 million companion animals are entering animal shelters nationwide every year. Sixty percent of the dogs that walk through the

Vet tips Amber Nuttycomb, RVT



shelter door are euthanized.

How can this ongoing problem be stopped? Start with teaching your dog to fetch. Take your dog on daily walks, or play fetch to let him run off some steam. Many dogs just enjoy a ride in the car or a run at the local park.

A frisbee or tennis ball is the perfect item to get your pup to play fetch. Fido's favorite toy will work just as well, as long as it is not too bulky. If you accidentally hit him with it, and it is heavy you may teach him to distrust you and then you have to earn it back. If you have your kids join in, it might get them out from in front of the computer or video game. Fido can also be a very good coach in helping you slim down. Long walks or jogs is just what a dog needs to run off steam and it will benefit you too! The second step would be to teach your dog obedience. Some of the basic commands

are: sit, stay, come, lay down and down. The problem with teaching a dog obedience is that many people don't follow through. They begin to teach what they want the dog to do, but then get bored or don't take time out of their busy schedule. Also Fido tends to have more than one trainer, which makes it very confusing to him as to whom he is to listen. Another big mistake the owner makes is that when he gives a command, he should correct the animal the first time a problem occurs, instead of repeating the command continuously. When repeating the command with no reprimand, for not listening, Fido learns to ignore you. The owner is the one left looking dumb.

Here at Norton Animal Health Center, we can give you the skills needed to get a great groundwork structure for training your pet. We have a bi-annual obedience agility class called Fetchn' for Fitness. It is designed to help the owner and his dog have a better relationship. We teach all the basic skills needed to get you and your pet headed in the right direction. If you think you, your family and Fido need help, the first class starts April 26. Call today to sign-up! Limited to the first 20 dogs as of April 25.

Bury the death tax

Insight

John Schlageck

The fondest wish of most farmers is to pass their land on to their children. They work a lifetime to leave a legacy for a daughter or son who will one day take over the family farm.

Preservation of farming and ranching operations for future generations is being threatened. Estate taxes are especially harmful to agricultural producers because their businesses are capital-intensive with a high concentration of assets tied up in land, buildings and equipment.

Estate taxes tend to be more burdensome for farms than many small businesses because 80-percent of farm and ranch assets are land based. When estate taxes exceed cash and other liquid assets on hand, surviving family members may be forced to sell land, buildings or equipment needed to keep the business operating.

This has a multiplier effect because rural communities and the businesses they support also suffer when farms and ranches downsize or disappear. Also, farmland close to urban centers is often lost forever to development when estate taxes force farm families to sell off land to pay taxes.

The estate tax expired for one year and one year only on Jan. 1. This coming Jan.

1, 2011, unless Congress acts and does so soon, the estate tax will return and carry an exceedingly low \$1 million exemption — anything above \$1 million will be taxed at 55 percent. This will harm most family farming and ranching operations.

The talk on Capitol Hill is the Senate will take action on estate tax reform after the Memorial Day recess. Before Christmas, the House passed a permanent extension of the estate tax at 2009 rates. This carries a \$3.5 million exemption for individuals and \$7 million for couples, while taxing the rest of the value of the estate at 45 percent.

The "off again, on again nature" of estate tax law makes it difficult, if not impossible, for farmers and ranchers to engage in planning for the transfer of a family business from one generation to the next. While estate tax planning may be able to protect some family farms and ranches from the devastation of estate taxes, planning tools are costly and take money needed to operate and expand businesses. Even with planning, changing asset values and family situations

make it impossible to guarantee that a well thought out estate plan will protect a family business from estate taxes.

Farmers and ranchers who belong to Farm Bureau back permanent repeal of federal estate taxes. Until permanent repeal is achieved, Farm Bureau calls for an exemption of \$10 million per person, indexed for inflation. The \$10 million exemption may sound high, but it really isn't when you factor in land costs and other variables, particularly for farms in areas where land values are high.

The estate tax amounts to double taxation, because the income is taxed first when it is earned and again when it is transferred to heirs. Eliminating the estate tax will encourage farmers and ranchers to keep the businesses in the family.

As a result farm families can continue the mission of providing food, fuel and fiber for America and the world. It would be a travesty if the next generation was forced to abandon the farm, just to pay the taxes.

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

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