

Planned merger should challenge 'Too big to Fail'

The planned merger of United and Continental to form the world's largest airline should challenge the Obama administration's commitment to the idea of doing away with "too big to fail."

For just as the collapse of two of the last three U.S. automakers produced a crisis, and just as the collapse of several merged-and-merged-again megabanks and brokerage houses threatened the financial system, so the collapse of one of these huge airlines will get us yet another crisis.

What this country, and the world, need is not bigger and bigger businesses, each too big to fail. But fail they will. It always happens.

Take the auto industry. Once, there were dozens of brands. A few hardy firms came to the top, buying up the competition along the way. We had the Big Four, then after American Motors failed, the Big Three.

There was competition from foreign manufacturers, then Chrysler failed, only to be bailed out. Then Chrysler and General Motors failed. And proving once again that "What's Good for General Motors is Good for the U.S.A.," Congress and the Bush administration bailed both out.

President Obama, threatened by the growing financial crisis, was only too quick to sign on to the bank and carmaker bailouts when he took over. There's little downside for him: if things go south, he'll claim it was all Mr. Bush's doing.

Now the airline industry, with the balance upset by the previous merger of Delta and Northwest, seems ripe for further consolidation. Ripe may be too mild a term; between the recession and the price of fuel, hardly any airlines are making money, and none of the big ones.

United brags that it's doing better, losing "only" \$82 million in the first quarter this year. The companies expect to save \$1 billion to \$1.2 billion this year from the merger, allowing the new United to make a profit.

How the merged company will fare in the market is anybody's guess. United already suffered from its bureaucratic weight and from years of acrid labor relations. Service standards were abominable, crews surly, service poor. Continental was a pretty good airline to fly. Which "culture" survives is anybody's guess, but the new company will control a lot of traffic.

It'll be too big to fail, as Delta probably is already.

And you can be sure, as has happened in other industries that consolidated past the point of no return, that one or more will fail.

What then will the government do?

Why not put our foot down now, and start enforcing the antitrust laws? Why not return to the spirit of the Ford administration, which oversaw the dismantling of the AT&T monopoly and unprecedented growth and competition in the telecommunications industry?

The antitrust enforcement machinery touted by Theodore Roosevelt a century ago had begun to rust so badly by the second Bush administration that it was largely abandoned. The government, influenced no doubt by money emanating from megabanks and megacorporations, all but gave up policing big mergers.

But bigger has never proven to be better. Industries that consolidate their way out of competition usually wind up in bankruptcy. Airlines are there most of the time anyway, so there's no reason to believe they are different.

Why not stop this nonsense, Mr. Obama, before it costs taxpayers more billions?
— Steve Haynes

Goodbye, God bless and good luck

The eight months of my retirement, which started on Sept. 30, 2009, was spent writing columns for *The Goodland Star-News* and *The Hays Daily News*. Additionally, I wrote editorials for the Goodland paper and these were available to the other newspapers in our company.

It all comes to an end today for the Goodland paper and May 19 for the Hays paper.

On or about May 28, I will be packing up and settling in as a resident of Centennial, Colo. The lure to that particular community shakes down this way:

Lance and Tobie, and their two children Alyssa and Caleb; Todd and Darci, and their two children Grayson and Kennadi; and Denise and Darren, and daughter Samantha.

I think those are pretty good reasons for doing what I'm doing.

It's been 20 years since all three kids ended up living in the same community — Centennial. Lance's various Air Force assignments never allowed this to happen. But in February of this year, he was notified that he would be transferred to Buckley AFB, Aurora, Colo., from Fairchild AFB, Spokane, Wash. With that news, he and Tobie purchased a home in nearby Centennial where Lance's two siblings live. Lance has just begun his 21st year in the Air Force; he is a master sergeant and one of several first sergeants at Buckley.

I am looking forward to my new career, that of "grandfathering." I suspect I will be kept mighty busy in that role. Additionally, I will also be a 'petfather.'

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



I kind of like that word.

I thank the Goodland community for the warm welcome when I returned back to my adopted hometown last fall. The months since have been very good. Of course with the name GOODland, it couldn't have been anything but. The people here live their name.

I took on the role of "contributing editor" at The Star-News, whereby I would write and submit. I don't think Editor Tom Betz ever rejected anything. I did try my hand at a few feature stories, but it became apparent my energy level wouldn't allow me to keep up that pace. Perhaps if I had been just a few years younger it might have worked out. But this 75-year-old soon recognized, and accepted, his capabilities.

My health, to some degree, figured into the decision to live where my kids and grandkids live. Sometimes aging invites situations that one would be best served without. But you take what's dished out and go from there. I choose not to make health a topic of conversation. There are just too many

uplifting things to chat about. Humor trumps the most costly medication. And keep in mind that you don't hold an exclusive on aches and pains; those listening have them, too.

"Somewhere over the rainbow..."

Then there's the story about a highway patrolman pulling alongside a speeding car. Glancing at the car, he was astounded to see that the woman behind the wheel was knitting. Realizing that she was oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, he cranked down his window, turned on his bullhorn and yelled, "PULL OVER!" The woman yelled back, "NO, IT'S A SCARF!"

If any of you are looking for some good furniture, see me. I have a recliner; wooden/padded rocker; couch makes into a bed; wooden dining room table (47X30) plus 4 padded wooden chairs; standard sized bed; couple of dressers, flat screen 27" tv, etc. Call me at 890-2475 if you want to take a peek. Best offer by the piece or whole lot. Won't need any of this when I move, and time is limited.

Allow me one final smile. It's about two people going to Disneyland. They were driving on the interstate and noticed a sign that said, "Disneyland LEFT." They started to cry as they turned around and went home.

Good-bye, God bless, and good luck!

I won the 5k race

I WON the 5K race. Well, that's not quite true, but I did walk the 5K Race For Hope in Washington D.C. and I guess the exaggerations of that area just rubbed off on me to say I won. I was there to participate in the Race For Hope which was raising money for brain tumor research.

Thank you to those who sponsored my walk and if you would like to add your dollars to this worthy cause, you can still do that, just contact me for information.

Some of the participants including two of my grandsons, Justin and Billy did "run."

There were about 2,100 "survivors" of brain tumors which were at the front of the run/walk of which my granddaughter, Jessica, was one.

There were over 9,000 others of us including my son, Michael and wife Claudia and others who were family and friends of Billy and Jessica. Many of the other participants were running/walking in memory of victims of brain tumors.

We walked down Pennsylvania Avenue, around a building near the Capitol and back up Pennsylvania Avenue. The temperature was 85 degrees with humidity, but it was a fun experience.

We also had a few days to spend touring the area including the Capitol, White House, Memorials, Mount Vernon and other points of interest.

I had two tours of the Capitol since Mike and Claudia had arranged for us to have a guide from the Illinois congress-

Memories Sonya Montgomery



man aide. Then I spent a couple of days with a cousin of mine, Stephen Nelson, who some in this area may remember. His niece is an aide for her Congressman from Massachusetts and she gave a tour for just Stephen and I and we had a little more time and saw even more of the sights.

Our tour of some of the Memorials was taken on a motorized trolley in the evening when the memorials are full of lights. We were able to walk around the memorials as well.

The newest Memorial is the World War II memorial. On my plane going into Baltimore, there were 31 World War II veterans and 12 volunteers who were going to Washington for the tour they have for the veterans. All in all, it was a very emotional and inspirational tour.

Some of the halls in the Capitol have paintings and sayings of our Founding Fathers. Very moving statements. I only wish some of our leaders and politicians now in Washington would read those and take them to heart.

Mount Vernon may have been my

favorite place to visit. If you have the opportunity to visit there, be sure to take time for the film about George Washington, very informative and moving.

The Potomac is sooo beautiful and when you view the Potomac from the back porch, it's no wonder George Washington always wanted to be there.

The guides told that one year the Washingtons hosted over 600 people who "stopped by to visit" and because of Virginia hospitality, they did not ask how long people were staying.

The five days went by very quickly and it was time for me to head back to Kansas City. I am always amazed as the plane headed down the runway at 6 p.m. our time and I arrived on the ground in Kansas City at 8:37 p.m., the actual arrival time was supposed to be 8:55, but I guess the east wind gave us a little boost.

What a wonderful visit and to help with raising money for brain tumor research. Again, if you would like more information on how to donate to this cause, give me a call at 785-669-2145 or 785-871-2020.

Our team will still get credit for the donations given in the next few months. Our team is called J-Team for Jessica.

I might add that Jessica is doing quite well, she taught one college class this last semester. She still goes to therapy about once a week for exercises especially for her hip and leg. It has been three years since she had her surgery.

Not in Kansans' best interest

Evidently the Kansas Senate Ways and Means Committee has determined increased taxing of cigarettes is not in Kansans best interest. It seems there might be a trail of smoke lining the campaign road of our politicians.

The argument has been proffered of business and personal hardships if this new tax was implemented. Anyone with a business dependent on tobacco sales has certainly been living in the dark ages.

The dangers of tobacco have been widely publicized since the sixties. Secondly, I am willing to add pop, candy and alcohol to a list of heavily taxed items. None of the aforementioned products are necessities to good health. In fact they are just the opposite.

They aren't good for us and in the long run contribute to health problems, which in turn contributes to the high costs of medical care. If I want to drink that Pepsi, then I should be willing to pay extra for the pleasure. It might take away some of

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



the guilt of consuming these products if I knew I was in fact supporting our educational system.

Another issue was brought to my attention by Kevin Bottrell's editorial regarding seat belts. Mr. Bottrell points out the waste of time and money involved in both enacting and enforcing a law with a \$5 fine for not wearing a seat belt. How do we convince youth of the necessity of seat belt usage when the fine for not using one is pocket money?

When I first moved to Norton 14 years ago, I was appalled with the number of fatal and serious injuries which occurred because of the non-use of seat belts.

This may be a way to placate the federal government and for the Department of Transportation to receive federal funds, but Kansans need to be held accountable for their actions and \$5 is more like a pass than a fine.

Lastly, another item caught my attention on Tuesday. Under the County Commissioners' report was the suggestion to consider voting by mail. Commissioner Applegate said residents would like to be able to vote by mail rather than taking time off from work.

When we lived in Oregon we had mail in voting and the benefits far outweighed the negatives. It would be even more beneficial in a community with an aging population. Bad weather days, illness and work schedules will have little impact when voting by mail. Voting is our badge of democracy and finding ways to accommodate the most people is our responsibility. Fraud is possible in any form and with oversight it will be as safe as voting in person.



To... **Jeremy** at the Norton Theater. You're doing a great job, you have wonderful new ideas to promote the theater. Super job! (E-mailed)

To... **Dan Walter and John McClymont Law Firm**. Thanks for being there for all of us who need great lawyers! (E-mailed)

To... **Erma Hackney and Mabel Bohl** for all their service and dedication to the American Legion Auxiliary and American Legion. We appreciate all you have done and wish you well. (Called in)

To... **Tom Dreiling** for his outstanding newspaper career in Kansas. Dreiling received the Clyde M. Reed Jr. Master Editor, awarded each year to an editor or publisher who has exemplified the best of journalism.

To... **Norton EMS**. We're lucky to have such dedicated people. (Called in)

To render a Thumbs Up write:

- ebradley@nwkansas.com
- nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

There is no charge to render a thumbs up; names of those providing the information are not used, only the method of transmission

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654. Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002



Office hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail:
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

- Dana Paxton.....general manager
- advertising director
- Dick Boyd.....Blue Jay sports
- Erica Bradley.....managing editor
- Harriett Gill.....society editor
- Sherry Hickman.....bookkeeping/circulation
- Vicki Henderson.....computer production