

Speeding things up in Kansas

Well, here's some good news for Colorado...thanks to Kansas! And that good news will probably generate a chant from the Colorado folks, something to the effect, "About time!"

It all has to do with Kansas on the verge of raising its speed limits on interstate and state super highways from 70 miles per hour to 75. Those heavy-footed Rocky Mountain folks will soon be able to venture into Kansas on I-70 without having to toss an anchor out the window to slow 'em down! Well, that's an exaggeration, for sure, because few drop their 75 mph speed to Kansas' 70 anyway. Blame those strong Kansas tailwinds.

I can remember when the speed limit on the nation's highways was cut some years ago to 55 miles per hour to help with a gas shortage, and other concerns that escape memory. That was booed loudly, but it did decrease the number of fatalities on the nation's roadways.

Reports are beginning to surface that the Memorial holiday weekend will usher in that much talked-about "magic number" - \$5 gas in this region! Maybe Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback can sign the new law in advance of Memorial Day so motorists can drive even faster to the gas pumps to take advantage of the "lower" priced fuel.

Seventy-five is a bit too fast for this Man of the Plains. When I was still driving, I would keep my speed at 68-70 in Kansas and when I entered another state with a speed limit in excess of 70 (like Colorado's 75), I would be content to let my machine roll along at, you guessed it, 68-70. I found no need to stretch my neck in the likeness of a pretzel to see if there were any highway partolmen around.

I watched a television reporter talking with a Texas congressman the other evening who was in full support of that state likely hiking its speed limit to 80. He pointed out that his congressional district covers 500 miles from one end to the other and with little or no air service, he must travel the highways to meet with his constituents. As if he didn't know that before he ran for congress! Poor excuse to up the speed.

Speed limits really have little influence on the way people operate their cars and pickups and trucks. I recall a few years ago when I was publishing the newspaper in Norton, I was going to Denver over a weekend to see my kids and grandkids and drove a couple of secondary roadways to connect with Interstate-70 at Colby. I was on the interstate no more than 10 minutes before one of those big Ford extended cab pickups, silver in color and bearing an SG license tag (Sedgwick County/Wichita), moved over to the left lane to pass me. It was being driven by a young man probably in his 20s. He was doing breakfast! A large cup of coffee in one hand and a sandwich in the other. As he moved up even with my driver's side window, he looked over at me and raised both the coffee and sandwich in my direction as if to say, "Hey, wanna taste?" I could only surmise that his knees were controlling the steering wheel. That was a recipe for disaster. But you know the old saying, "That'll never happen to me."

No, I am not an advocate of increasing highway speed limits. Experts will tell you that at 70 miles per hour, no driver has control of his or her vehicle. In fact, the 55 speed limit mentioned above was thought to be right on the line of being able to control a vehicle. Yes, recent reports show highway fatalities are down, but this is due to more and more people using seatbelts. But will raising the speed limit be pushing things a bit too far?

Tom Dreiling is a retired journalist, now living in Aurora, Colo. He edited and published newspapers in Kansas and Wyoming during his 44-year career.

Being a grateful cancer survivor

Most of you know I am a breast cancer survivor. Last week I had a conversation with a friend about being a survivor. I observed that I had read about a woman who had been through treatment for breast cancer and said she didn't understand why some people said they were grateful they'd had cancer. She certainly was not, and she wouldn't be defined by her cancer and just wanted to move on with her life.

I doubt that cancer patients would choose to have cancer, but I am one of the people who is grateful for having been through cancer. I learned a great deal. I learned I didn't fall apart when I received two cancer diagnoses just a couple of weeks apart. I discovered I had inner strength I had not tapped. I was amazed at the number of people who sent me cards or gifts and offered prayers for me. And I found how important my faith in God was. I relied on that every day through the shock of diagnoses, recovery from the surgeries and the experience of chemo. And it has continued to grow in the years since.

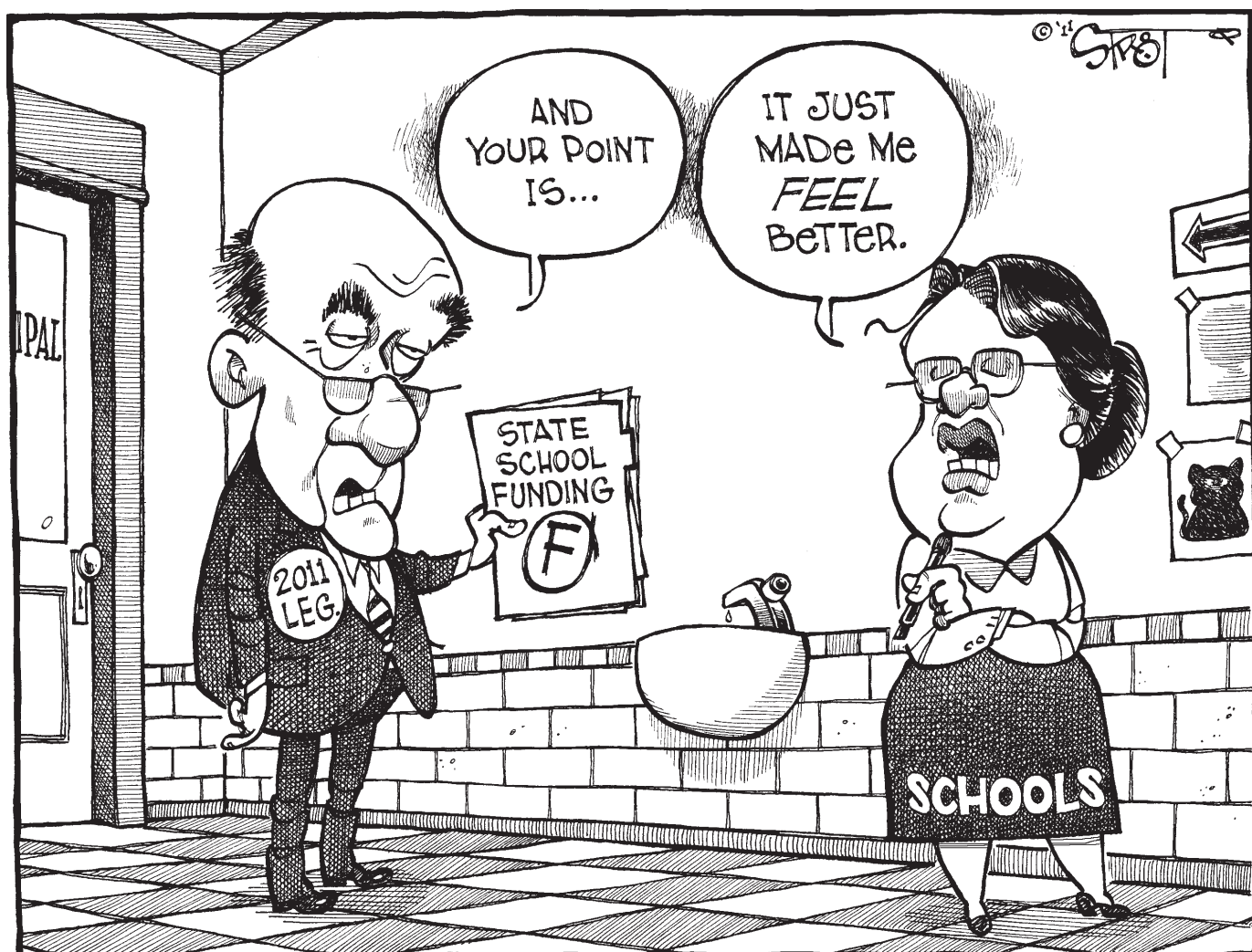
Another discovery I made was that, although my life had been turned upside down, I could look forward to what I call a "new normal." Life isn't like it was before those cancer diagnoses, but there is again an established rhythm to life;

Life is Good
Rita Speer



it's just that the beat is different. Not a day goes by that I don't remember I am a cancer survivor, but it is a joyful memory now. It took a while to get to the place of being joy-filled, but I am there. Being a survivor means that I sometimes engage in conversations with other women that would not have happened before cancer. Just this morning I talked with two other women who have had mastectomies, and we shared some of our experiences.

Finally, I am defined by the fact I am a breast cancer survivor. It is not only who I am, but it is a big part of who I have become. I make it a point to reach out to other women who are diagnosed, just to let them know I am available to listen if they need to talk. I let them know of services available of which they may not be aware. I became a Reach to Recovery volunteer to further enable me to reach out to others. I support Relay for Life with my presence, work and money.



Working women touching others lives

I particularly enjoyed the "Working Women" issue of the Telegram, April 15, 2011. However the reporter missed the most amazing part of Peggy Ninemire's work story. Peggy, alone, has doubtless prevented many life threatening injuries during her tenure at the Co-op.

How you ask? When she did not have work outside she cleaned the interiors of vehicles when they were in for oil changes. Have you ever looked in a farmer's pick-up? They are full of all manner of tools, equipment manuals, coffee cups, pop cans, extra boots, spare trailer hitches, fence stretchers and the requisite coffee can of rusty nails, nuts and bolts. Have you ever ridden in a farmer's pick-up when he is chasing an errant cow across a bumpy pasture? One good jolt and it all becomes airborne!

A wise wife never disturbs any of it because no matter how much it may look like junk, the thing you toss is the first thing needed. The girl deserves a purple heart for nerve alone.

After reading "Working Women" I updated my daughters on the whereabouts of their classmates. Information I gleaned from the articles and pictures.

It's hard to believe our kids grow up, isn't it. How did that happen?

Once I had a conversation with a father about his son's job. They had visited him and he took them on a tour of the place he was managing (it was a holiday and the place was closed.) I thought he was bragging about his son's success as he described the scope of his job and how he had keys to everything.

Voter fraud and one solution to it in Kansas

I have a son who takes voting very seriously. He asks why someone might be good in a certain position and why not. He fills out his ballot and I would venture to guess has more knowledge of candidates than many. A few years ago he was turned away at the polls and had he not had an advocate, he would have walked away never to have voted again. Some would be happy with that, but those who believe in the fairness and justice of our system would be furious. After I alerted officials he received a letter apologizing for the mistake, but not everyone has an advocate.

This week amidst great fanfare Governor Brownback signed into law the SAFE act to supposedly protect the voting rights of Kansas citizens. This law requires a photo ID to vote. Would this have been a safeguard to protect our son? No, because in this small community he is well known. He is his own photo ID.

This Too Shall Pass
Nancy Hagman



The dad must have noticed the bemused look on my face because he further explained himself. "If we had locked our house we would not have given him a key! We just never thought he was very responsible."

AHA---That kid had cleverly disguised himself as a responsible adult!

I had the same feeling when I met our daughter for a restaurant meal. She was on a business trip and used a company credit card to pay for her dinner. It all seems foreign to me! In the first place: company credit cards??? Wish someone would give me one!!!

Secondly, once you face the fact your kids are, in fact, responsible adults, you start thinking---just how old does that make me?

One of our daughters related the story of a friend (NCHS graduate 2005) who is training some other women at an office her company recently acquired. Apparently the women were old (my age) and, hard as it is to imagine, they had not previously used computers in the workplace or ever! This happened in the Kansas City area making it all the more surprising. And they think we are rubes!

It was amusing to hear but later I got to thinking: Those poor "old" ladies! They

had probably been working in this office for years, doing their record keeping manually or with a word processor and calculator. Or whatever you would use, I really have no idea! Out of nowhere comes a very young woman with a computer to "train" them. I imagine I'd be looking at her thinking, "Come on now. I've got a winter coat older than you!"

It's sort of like doctors, lawyers, bankers and accountants. At my age younger might seem ideal because maybe he/she will be available for the rest of my life. On the other hand wisdom comes with age, right? Or is that senility?

I found it interesting how working women adapt to their situations. Each is different and yet the same.

Very few people, men or women, end up with the job they see themselves in when they are young. I have heard that most children born today will work at jobs that do not exist yet. So we adjust and make the best decisions we can when situations present themselves.

Our "work" is only finished when we are. We may not enjoy every minute of every working day, though how lucky you are if you do! We also will never know the impression we have made or how we have touched someone's life by the work we do. But in trying new things or sacrificing what we want in exchange for a better life our children, spouses or any greater good; everyone can look back at their life and say, "Oh, yes, I was a success!"

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



Obstacles placed in our path of participation will undermine the very foundation of democracy. If we make it more difficult to vote, many won't go to the polls. The government however is meant to represent each of us.

The proponents of this law say a photo ID is easy to obtain and free. I would argue, not for everyone. Some have physical difficulties, others have trouble reading the forms, still others cannot get time off. Beginning in 2013, hopeful voters must supply a birth certificate as proof of citizenship. My husband's

response to this is, "Not if you were born in Hawaii."

It is hard not to see the hidden agenda of Secretary of State Kris Kobach in this when he says, "I think that really shows the rest of the country what you can do. If you want to have the top-shelf model - if you want to have the Cadillac of voter security measures - the Kansas model is the way to go." This act isn't about protecting Kansans, it is about securing a place for an aspiring politician.

The purported reason for this voter ID comes from rampant voter fraud in our state. We have had, according to Kobach, "59 reports of alleged irregularities involving at least 221 ballots since 1997." This is 221 ballots out of millions.

Kobach says, "There's no reason we should have any voter fraud in the state at all," and I would agree. The difference is how we define fraud. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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