



Current passport mess is government planning

The current mess with passports is a great example of government planning, which is pretty much an oxymoron anyway.

The Homeland Security people decided that to beef up border security, Americans would have to have a passport to return from neighboring countries, including Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean islands, at least by air.

U.S. immigration officials have never required a passport for simple cross-border visits, but in this age, there's an insane desire for security people to control every movement.

This may sound like a good idea, but it has little to do with fighting terrorism and a lot to do with police power to watch and control all of us citizens. Police agencies have wanted this for a long time, but Congress resisted. The Sept. 11 attacks gave them the chance to get what they wanted.

As usual in Washington, if something sounds like a "really good idea," it can fly through with little thought to the consequences. That's how we got the present mess with passports.

The security guys said it was a good idea. Terrorists might be infiltrating through Mexico or Canada, they claimed, though there's not much evidence of that. The only terrorists we know of coming through Canada got caught.

And on the Mexican border, there's no telling who might be coming in, but really, it's unlikely terrorists could pass themselves off as Latino illegals.

There are ways for terrorists to get into this country, but most of them involve sneaking in through regular channels, on regular flights, right under the noses of the authorities. Customs and Immigration officers usually are too busy checking ordinary people to see the real terrorists. They spend their time harassing Arab visitors and other

friends of America.

But regardless of whether the passport deal was a good idea, it's created a mess. No one asked if the State Department could issue a passport to every American planning to travel this year.

Passports that used to take a month to get now take three. The "expedited" service that used to take a week — at a cost of \$60 — now takes three or more. People with tickets and hotel reservations find themselves stranded. Even pleas to congressmen can't speed the process much.

Even after the initial crunch, no provision has been made to beef up the passport offices for increased business. In fact, the State Department has had to hold employees who planned to retire to keep the pipeline flowing at all.

We're obsessed with identification in this country, but the real benefits of beefed-up ID aren't for terrorism control. They're just for control. Terrorists find ways around such things. Ordinary people just have to put up with the new rules.

Even with supposedly foolproof "Real IDs," passports and computer tracking, in the end, a terrorist who's well trained and sophisticated, as the dangerous ones are, will find a way. It takes good police work and good intelligence to find those guys and block them.

Meantime, the new rules have cost billions and inconvenienced millions for no real purpose. It's a sham, an expensive charade and a real nuisance. Not a benefit to our security.

The smart thing would be to eliminate the passport requirement — it only applies to airline flights, not to land crossings, anyway — and go back to the old system. That's not likely to happen, because it's too sensible and the security hounds are in the driver's seat.

— Steve Haynes



News From the Past

35 years ago 1972

St. Francis varsity cheerleaders won several awards at the cheerleading clinic at Rock Springs. Squad members include Sarah Getty, Shana Winston, Cindy Frewen, Gayle Henderson, Kris Hale, Linda Hall and Jan Keller.

75 years ago - 1932

Virgil Stone opened up a auto and tractor repair shop sometime ago. The building was put up new and is large enough to hold a couple of cars.

Henry Rieb is now assisting Mr. DeGood at the K-T Oil Corporation.

Charles D. Robinson is the new president of the Commercial Club. Roy T. Johnson was elected vice president, Herman Miller is the new secretary and H.T. Sawhill the treasurer.

Newly elected members of the board of directors include James T. Manson, N. A. Ketchum and A.A. Gillespie.

Members of the high school faculty for the new year include G.E. Greene, R.E. Cleland, Lorence Laird, William Gilmore, Dorothy Schrupf, Mary Greene, Rudolph Jilka, Edward Cain, J.E. Timken and Burniece Fallis.

Several persons in St. Francis are a little richer on account of the action of the State Bankers Association who has sent out reward money for the capture of Joe Standord who a few weeks ago robbed the First National Bank. A check for \$150 was divided among Ward Schields, Harry Howard, Dan Danielson and Jesse Chance. Also \$50 was given to a traveling salesman who backed out of the bank and gave the alarm and \$25 each was given to John

Indorf, deputy sheriff and Ray Slyhoff, city marshal.

90 years ago - 1917
Miss Carman surely has a dandy bookstore now. She is permanently located in her new brick, just east of the Herald office. Miss Boyington has her millinery store with her.

John Barnhart had the misfortune of losing seven head of fine cows last week. The cattle got into the green cane field.

St. Francis has entirely too many weeds growing over the town for either benefit or beauty.

Work on the high school building is coming along fine. It will be a grand addition to this city.

Henry Santrock, a young attorney, is assisting County Attorney J.L. Finley in his office.

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



By Casey McCormick

In some ways, I'm still waiting to grow up. I can't help it since I continue to have a lot of boy in me.

But certain things can't be avoided. I recently saw the eye doctor and he saw me. At the early age of 47 I got my first pair of glasses.

The cost seemed pretty high at first. Then I realized that they were actually three pairs of glasses in one.

They are made for seeing better at distances and, being seamless bifocals, I can read with them, too.

In addition they have Transition lenses which make them sun glasses automatically. How do they know? They're really pretty cool glasses.

When I first put them on I was amazed at what I had been missing.

Trees were no longer fuzzy balls, but had limbs with distinct leaves attached. Animals who had brazenly strutted at distances were again easily spotted. And I knew our children were good looking, however, with further inspection they appear to be attractive in an above average way.

But I think the best thing I've seen in the last couple weeks has been my beautiful Lezlie, also quite striking, canning various jellies, jams, pickles, okra, peaches, pears, tomato sauce and salsa. I can see us having many goodies to eat this winter!

The other night she watched me reading a book. She said I look "smart" in my new spectacles. I guess that could be another feature of my pretty cool glasses.

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Ag Talk with Jeanne

Dryland Corn on the Ground



By Jeanne Falk

By Jeanne Falk, K-State Multi-County Agronomist for Wallace, Sherman and Cheyenne counties

Throughout our area, there is corn lying on the ground in dryland fields. This has not occurred in every dryland corn field, however there is enough to cause concern.

So what is going on in these fields?

If you look closely at the corn plants, the brace roots are not fully formed and do not reach into the soil where they can provide support to the plant. Several factors can affect the formation of brace roots. Extremely warm and dry conditions can affect the surface of the soil, causing the soil to be too hot and too hard for the corn roots to penetrate.

This resulted in the roots reaching the soil surface, but a callus-like covering to form on the root and the root ceased growing.

A difference in the corn can be seen in tillage systems. No-till fields, with residue on the soil surface, seem to have less of this problem. The residue shaded the soil surface and kept it cool enough for the roots to penetrate and provide support for the plant.

Another factor that is contributing to the corn plants falling over is soil compaction. It seems like the worst of the corn falling over is on the edges of the field. These edges most likely have the most traffic and likely the most soil compaction. This was probably especially true

with harvest and planting this year is a little moister soil conditions than we would really like to see.

These factors add up to poorly formed and not deep penetrating root systems. In addition, the ends of the field also get battered the greatest from the wind. Some of the thunderstorms this year have had high winds and with moist conditions, the poorly formed root systems have not been able to support the corn stalk.

All in all, I don't think the falling over corn can be attributed to one single factor, but to a combination of factors that encompass environmental and cultural practices.



GOD SAYS
The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.
Psalms 10:32

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