

# **Opinion**

## Rural Kansas could face county consolidation

Perhaps the greatest threat to rural Kansas life both counties and school districts.

Plans have been proposed to combine all of the state into just 40 school districts and 36 similarly sized counties, though boundaries would not be the same.

These plans are touted as saving the state millions while promoting efficient planning and management, "like Wal-Mart and McDonalds."

Thus, says Richard Shrock, an Emporia professor and education columnist, if your town is big enough to have a McDonalds, it may be big enough to have a high school school.

And if that comes to pass, the future is bleak indeed for western Kansans, where less than a dozen high schools might remain.

Of course, these plans beg the question of whether any of us wants our schools and counties run with the moral and ethical values of Wal-Mart or the nutritional content of a Mc-Donalds' menu.

with both good-government liberals and tightfisted conservatives, at least to some extent. Inflated claims of savings upward of \$700 million look good to planners in a state facing a possible \$600 million budget gap.

Proponents tell us, of course, that we'd still Lincoln. get the same level of service that we get today from both counties and schools. Only "excess" job and surplus buildings would be dropped.

But those jobs and those schools are vital to the economy in many a Kansas county seat, where public employment is often the biggest factor in the job market. Take away the school, to sneak out for some good food at the nearby the courthouse and the hospital (and believe us, McDonalds in the few remaining school/county that will be next), and what's left in the average seat towns, huh? —Steve Havnes county seat?

The statistics can feel over-

prevented. State and local govern-

ments, community organizations,

more likely to provide safe and

healthy homes for their children.

they may be more likely to make

-Honor Roll-

New and renewed Herald sub-

scriptions: Ana Enfield, Windsor,

Colo.; Merlyn Hilt, Lindsborg;

Linda Carmichael, Lakewood,

Colo.; Lyle Lukas, Wray, Colo.;

Bill Wilson Accounting, St. Fran-

cis; Cathy Brunswig, Fort Collins,

can help.

glect or abuse.

It's likely that proponents like Dr. Shrock and today is the misguided movement to consolidate Sen. Chris Steineger, who introduced a bill to study county consolidation, have no concept of rural life. They only know the state needs to

> It's theoretically possible to serve all of the northwest corner of Kansas with one courthouse and one high school, presumably in Colby, but do we want to live that kind of life? And what kind of government would rural people have when many have to drive 70 to 100 miles to get to the courthouse, or when high school students are on a bus two to three hours a day?

> The consolidation might be good for Colby in the short run. But after a few years, how many people would be left in the outlying towns to come into the "big" city to shop, buy license plates or go to school?

This is a proposal for depopulating much of the High Plains to save the state a few bucks. Even those savings might not be what's projected. Government consolidations seldom reduce These proposals, however, have caught on employment or spending. Mostly, the same employees and budget are shuffled into a bigger office.

In the end, the counties, school districts and state would have fewer people and fewer dollars as people flee to Denver, Kansas City and

Out here in the sticks, though, we had better get organized if we want to fight this kind of thinking. These people think they are doing the right thing, even though it means the end of rural life as we know it.

At least the high school kids would be able



#### **News From the Past**

5 years ago - 2004

The 11th annual Northwest Kansas All-Star Basketball Classic, which features many of the top players in the area, in St. Francis. was held on Sunday in Colby. Among the players were Michael Raile of St. Francis and Sara Moore of Chevlin.

There have been more improvements made at the theater. are celebrating their 65th wed-The Theater Committee, Brent ding anniversary on April 20. Rueb, Tim Burr, Deb Harper, Kelly Frewen and Bob Bixler, have purchased a Christie in the last year the county's Model platter to move the film recycling centers have kept 82 to and from the projector. There tons of items out of the landfill. has been a recurring problem with film breaking and this will take care of this happening. The

her 100th birthday on April 7.

is changing daily. Before the re-

St. Francis students, Na- Robert E. Alsup, will be taking restaurant.

and Sam Marin, took "Best of Show" awards at the Northwest Kansas League Art Show held

Brandon Long recently returned to the United States after serving in Iraq as an Army Private 2nd class.

Mr. and Mrs. Gus Zweygardt

The Cheyenne County Commissioners were informed that 15 years ago - 1994

An announcement has been this week of the completed Mildred Rogers is celebrating of Goodland. The St. Francis banking institution which has ty State Bank since its inception

thaniel Clark, Keaton Frewen a long sought after retirement.

The Cheyenne County Commissioners have decided to go back to meeting twice a month, on the 15th and on the last working day of the month. 30 years ago - 1979

Milton Lampe was re-elected mayor of St. Francis in the general election in a close race. Dotty Lewis was re-elected to the city council and John Grace also was elected to the council.

The spring sale at Mills Ranch averaged \$1,546 on 60 bulls. The top 12 bulls sold for an average of \$3,580.

The St. Francis boys 440-yard relay team set a new school record at the Oberlin quad on April committee is continuing to look merger of the Cheyenne Coun- 4. Keith Zweygardt, Lenny Wefor new "used" seats for the the- ty State Bank of St. Francis ber, Curtis Confer and Mike with the First National Bank Kimmel set the record with the time of 47.4.

The La Fiesta, St. Francis' The St. Francis Senior Center been known as Cheyenne Counnewest restaurant, will hold its grand opening Thursday, Friday modeling is done, there will be in 1906 will now be referred to and Saturday. It is located on a new roof, some new windows as the First National Bank, St. College Street near Washington and a coat of paint on the out- Francis. The president of the Street and has been completely Cheyenne County State Bank, remodeled as a Mexican food

### - Moments With Mila

**April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.** 

and private citizens take action protect their children from harm.

Increasingly, concerned citizens whelming. In 2006, an estimated and organizations are realizing 905,000 children in the United that the best way to prevent child States were found to be victims of abuse is to help parents develop child abuse and neglect. However, the skills and identify the resources child abuse and neglect can be they need to understand and meet their children's emotional, physical, and developmental needs and

every day to protect children, you ents and caregivers who have sup- have a stake in ensuring that parport...from family, friends, neigh- ents have access to the resources bors, and their communities...are and support they need to be successful. Entire communities play a role in helping families find the strength they need to raise safe, When parents lack this support or healthy and productive children. feel isolated, on the other hand,

Here are some things you can poor decisions that can lead to ne- do:

- Get to know your neighbors. Problems seem less overwhelming when support is nearby.
- Help a family under stress. Offer to baby sit, help with chores and errands, or suggest resources in the community that can help.
- Reach out to children in the community. A smile or a word

of encouragement can mean a lot whether it comes from a parent or a community member.

• Be an active community member. Lend a hand at the local How can you help? Parenting is school, community or faith-based one of the toughest and most im- organizations, or other places portant jobs in America, and we all where families and children are supported.

Mila

County Health Nurse

**Bandel** 

· Learn how to recognize and report signs of child abuse and

Resources on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Website in-

- Child Abuse and Neglect... www.childwelfare.gov/can/
- Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect...www.childwelfare.gov/ can/identifying/ • Preventing Child Abuse and
- Neglect...www.childwelfare.gov/
- •Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect ...www.childwelfare.gov/ responding/reporting.cfm



scmccormick@nwkansas.com A frightening trend is occurring in America. Major city newspapers are going under.

This is due to a drop in advertising revenues and the increase of Internet use by more and more adults.

Perhaps this is the way of a free market economy and the change should be accepted as inevitable. But there is something that really worries me, both as a newspaper man and a citizen.

Sure websites can report the news and in a faster manner. You

don't have to wait for your paper to come out. But there is a downfall to Internet reporting.

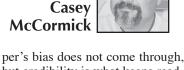
Papers rely on reporters who use several sources to get the story as accurate as possible. Even then, follow up calls are made before an article goes to print.

In addition, stories are proofed by editors and checked for accu-

Who can say that the same diligence will come from the Internet?

This is not to say the newspa-

McCormick



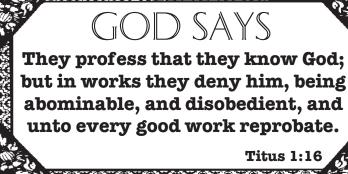
but credibility is what keeps readers trusting their news source. I'm bothered that the watchful-

ness that has exposed corrupt individuals, groups and organizations may disappear. And the thoroughness of big city coverage will become a thing of the past.

Will the Internet continue to play the roll of watch dog for our



but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.



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Seventh-Day **Adventist Church** 785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams **Pastor Jerry Nowack** Sabbath School 9:30 Morning Worship 10:45

625 S. River • 332-2680 Fr. Roger Meitl Sunday Mass 11:00 a.m. Weekday Mass 8 a.m. Confessions Sat. 4-4:30 Salem Lutheran Church

St. Francis of Assisi

**Catholic Church** 

332-3002 **Pastor Chris Farmer** Sunday School 10 a.m. Morning Worship 11 a.m.

> Solid Rock **Baptist Church** 412 S. Denison Welcomes You! Pastor Allen Coon Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

First Christian Church **Pastor Jeff Landers** 332-2956 • 118 E. Webster Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m. Church Service 10:15 a.m.

First Baptist Church 2nd & Scott • 332-3921 J.W. Glidewell, Pastor Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m., Wed. AWANA Club 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

St. Francis **Community Church** 332-3150 204 N. Quincy Street www.sfccfamily.com **Pastor: David Butler** Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Potluck & Communion -**Every 2nd Sunday** Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

202 N. College **Pastor Ken Hart** 332-2928 Pars. 332-2312 Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Sunday Eve. Bible Study 7 p.m. Communion 1st Sunday of the Month

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC



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