

The big price the public pays for giant mergers

Compounding its mistakes of the last few years, the Justice Department has allowed American Airlines to merge with US Airways into yet another giant company.

Perhaps it was inevitable, given the fact that Delta Air Lines had been allowed to swallow Northwest, followed by United gobbling up Continental. Now the U.S. has three mega-airlines, each one too big to be allowed to fail.

Business interests assure us these mergers are "in the public interest," creating stronger airlines more capable of serving the public.

Bull, we say. The public will wind up paying ever-higher ticket prices, and when one of these giants gets into trouble, who will be big enough to "save" it? Only Uncle Sammy, of course.

So the government, by allowing and encouraging these giant mergers, is setting us up for more expensive flights and for giant bailouts down the road — just like it has in so many industries, from autos to railroads to banking.

An enlightened antitrust policy would aim at preventing this kind of consolidation in any industry. It cannot be good for the economy or the health of businesses as a whole.

The airline industry has seen winners and losers since most of the old-line linear carriers failed to adapt to the "hub-and-spoke" world. Venerable names dropped out of the sky — Braniff, Trans World, Eastern Allegheny, Pan American, Western, the list seems endless.

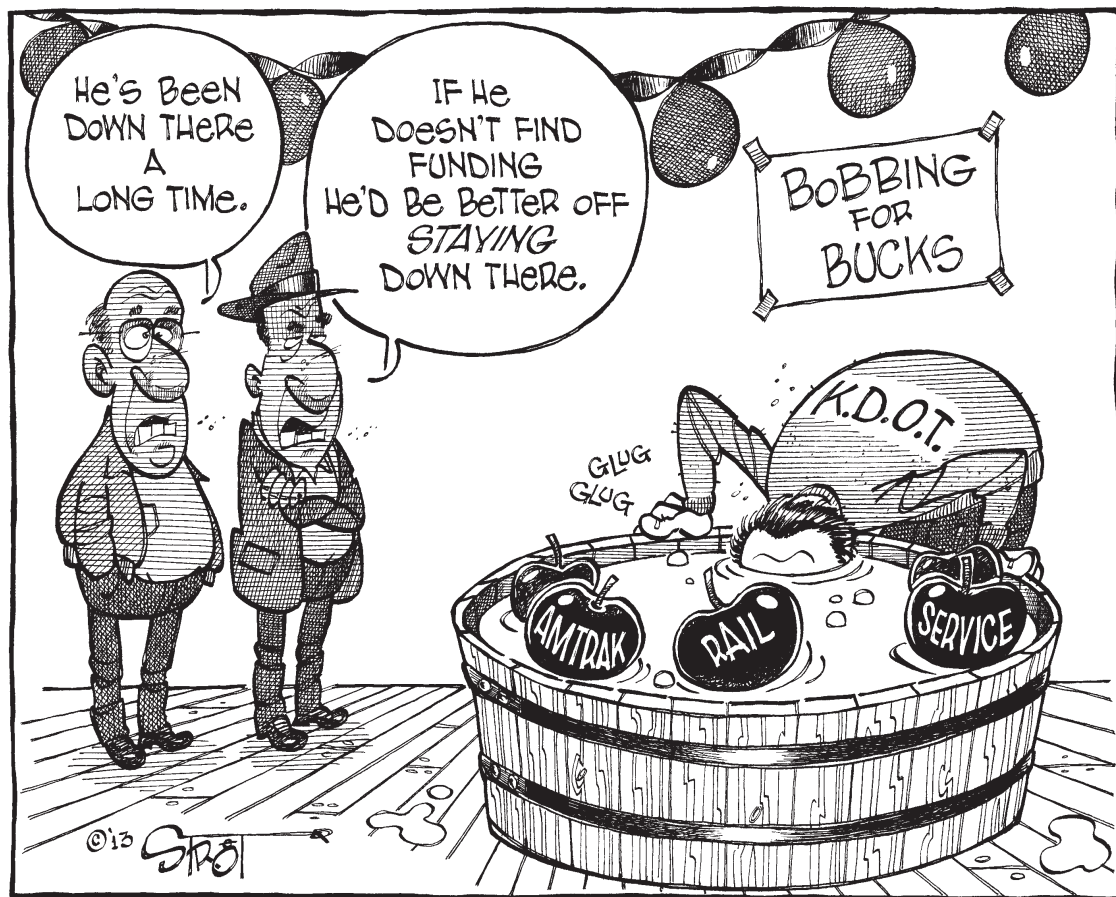
Low-cost carriers rose in their place, led by Southwest, a company which always seems to be profitable despite its smaller size. Texas Air took over the old Continental and made a success of it for a time. Now, little US West has come out on top, taking over first US Air, then bankrupt American.

But the government does not seem to get the dangers of bigness. The same Justice Department that once spent years breaking up the original AT&T has since allowed one of the resulting "Baby Bells," Southwestern, or SBC, to gobble up two of its siblings and its one-time parent to become the new, ever-larger AT&T. Airlines swell with routes and planes. Banks are encouraged to "save" struggling brethren.

But what happens the next time the airline industry gets tough? The next time banks get out on a limb? And don't tell us these consolidations don't affect competition, even with the relatively minor concessions the government finally got out of American, US Air and other merger partners.

What next? Why not go back to a policy that makes sense, that keeps business competitive, allows for winners and losers, exit and entry? And protects us from price gouging and mega-failures?

Where is Teddy Roosevelt when we really need him? — *Steve Haynes*



Moving and clean up day can turn into quite a mess

It was moving day at the Haynes house, and there was stuff everywhere.

I'd decided that I was tired of my dining-room table being used as a desk. For several years, Steve and I have been bringing our laptops home and working at the table.

First it was the computers, then the notes for stories and business, then the backup information for things, then just about any scrap of paper we didn't know what to do with. My beautiful antique oak table was covered, no wood showing. It was just a sea of paper with a few electronic devices floating along the top.

I wanted to be able to actually eat at the table now and then, but that had gotten to be impossible.

Then, our son called and asked for a bed for his spare room, when we came to fix him Thanksgiving dinner, so we stuffed a single bed into the back of the Explorer and drove it to Lawrence. This gave us the opening we needed to get started on our office project — the big move from the dining room table to a spare bedroom right off the kitchen.

First the double bed in that room had to be moved upstairs to replace the single that had

departed us for Lawrence.

Then the monster roll-top desk in that upstairs bedroom had to be moved to the new home office — both because Steve needed his desk, and because it wouldn't fit in the small bedroom with a full-size bed. There was also a tall file cabinet full of folders to go to the downstairs office.

A tiny roll-top writing desk, which had lost its home when we remodeled the kitchen a couple of years ago and had since been taking up space in the living room, was moved upstairs to replace its massive brother.

And since we were moving all this stuff around, we figured we might as well move the old television and oak entertainment center it lived in to the basement. We bought a large flat-screen television several years ago, and it wouldn't fit on the old entertainment center. We just shoved it, the record turntable and heavy television that were on it into the guest bedroom upstairs.

Now was the time for this piece of stored stuff to get moved to the basement, where a spare sofa was awaiting a television and entertainment center.

Steve and I figured we couldn't do this ourselves. We had to have help.

We got a friend and his son to come over, and between the four of us, disassembled stuff and then huffed and puffed and lugged it up and down the stairs. It took a little over an hour to get it all done.

After our friends left, we looked around. The stuff was moved, but there was still a huge amount of cleanup. File drawers decorated three rooms, furniture was out of place from having been moved so that the big stuff could go through rooms. Bedding was everywhere, and boxes of stuff that had once resided in or on the desks littered the floors. And of course, the dining room table still had its sea of papers.

Another couple of days have led us close to normalcy. The table is clear. The desks and bed are put back together, and most of the boxes are emptied. There are still file drawers everywhere, but we'll get there.

We'll get it done, and all the rooms will be neat — until the next time.

Well, there's always the closet in the new office. That's where I shoved everything that had been stored on the bed in there. But that's another story.

Casey's Comments

'Tis the Season of Giving

By Casey McCormick



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Shouldn't this be the season of giving rather than getting?

All of us are carrying our identity. This is how we are viewed from the outside in. In other words, we are judged to a degree by our actions.

Whether we chose to do good or bad, be nice or nasty, or give and take, our actions dictate

Honor Roll

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: Floyd Larkin, St. Francis; Vicki Hill, Salina; Lucille Price, St. Francis; Larry Schultz, St. Francis; Kim and James Witt, Oberlin; Kyle and Crystal Schultz, St. Francis; Ryan and Annette Schultz, Imperial, Neb.; Jim Reynolds, St. Francis; Ed and Sharon Deeds, Goodland; Bill Pannbacker, Washington; Patsy Rethke, St. Francis; Judy Rockwell, St. Francis; Mike Cecil, St. Francis; Maurice Barnhart, Colby, Jacquelyn Lutz, Benkelman, Neb.; Dale Rath, St. Francis; Rueben Hilt, St. Francis; Alice Schauer, St. Francis.

how we fit in with each other. This is called a society.

I'm putting this in pretty basic terms, because it seems we have, as a society, gotten away from the basics.

When I was a kid I got an award in elementary school for citizenship. To me it meant being nice toward others, using the manners my parents taught me and not being the first in line.

Today, we have gotten away

from this sort of behavior and being a good citizen has become square. Priority has shifted to a "me first" attitude. Everyone deserves stuff from others as they are entitled to it.

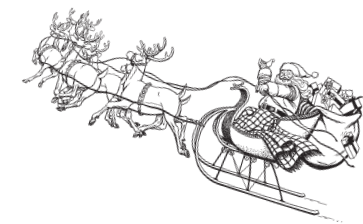
I don't know how we are going to get back to caring for the collective, other than individuals making the choice to give rather than get.

Is it possible this would make us all have a better identity?

Write Santa Claus

Christmas seen through the eyes of a child is priceless. This year The Saint Francis Herald and Bird City Times would like you to send us your children's letters to Santa! We will publish the letters in the paper, and be sure that Santa receives them and that any letters he writes back get to you!

Send all letters to The Herald at Box 1050, St.



Francis, 67756, or email them to amiller@nwkansan.com. We look forward to celebrating Christmas with your family!

Corrections

The Saint Francis Herald will correct or clarify any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at 332-3162 to report errors. We believe that news stories should be fair and factual, and appreciate your calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

GOD SAYS

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. **Luke 2:6-7**

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Children's letters to Santa Claus

Dear Santa,

I want da toy on TV, da Legos, animals, da star light pillow on TV. I want horses, cloppity clop horses, I want to draw on da paper, may I have a color, I want to draw something, may I

have a draw? May I have a paper please?

Love you Santa!

Rachel Knauer



Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 9 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.

United Methodist
Church Office 332-2292,
Church 332-2254,
512 S. Scott
Pastor Warren Cico
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Seventh-Day
Adventist Church
423-650-5663 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor James McCurdy
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

St. Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Carlos Ruiz Santos
1st Sunday of the month
Morning Mass 8:30 a.m.
Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8:00 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Communion 3rd Sunday

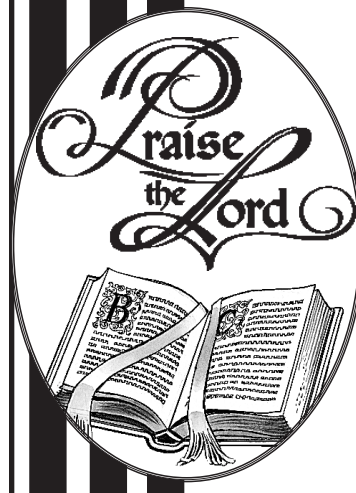
Solid Rock
Baptist Church
412 S. Denison
Welcomes You!
Pastor Allen Coon
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Prayer Meeting, Wed
7:30 p.m.

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.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Randy Nelson
Church 332-2928
Parsonage 332-2312
Worship 9:30 a.m.
Communion 1st Sunday



St. Francis
Equity

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