



## Healthcare reform isn't meant to trample rights

It looks like the Supreme Court will at least consider the plight of Catholic hospitals and colleges, and other religious institutions around the country which the administration would force to pay for abortion drugs, contraceptives and sterilizations under the "Obamacare" health-insurance reform.

Backers of the Affordable Care Act see this as enforcing women's rights to control their own reproductive systems. Church-run institutions see it as the court ordering them to violate the principles they stand for.

Last week, a Supreme Court justice and at least one Circuit Court of Appeals issued injunctions preventing the government from enforcing the regulations. It could be some time before the court actually hears the case, however, and it's anybody's guess how the full court might rule.

It's also unclear whether a victory by religious nonprofits like hospitals and colleges might help private firms and individual employers like Hobby Lobby and thousands of others whose owners and managers hold similar beliefs.

As the law stands, churches and other religious congregations are exempt from the rule, but church-run institutions such as hospitals, schools and charities are not. Nor are private businesses that happen to be run by believers.

Here's our take on the situation: The backers of this law won a long battle for a dearly-held

goal, and now they should be magnanimous to the losers. The government has no business forcing people to violate their religious beliefs anyway.

No one has to work at a church-sponsored hospital or college. Workers knew the policies when they took their jobs, and if they really want insurance that covers birth control, they could find a job at a secular institution.

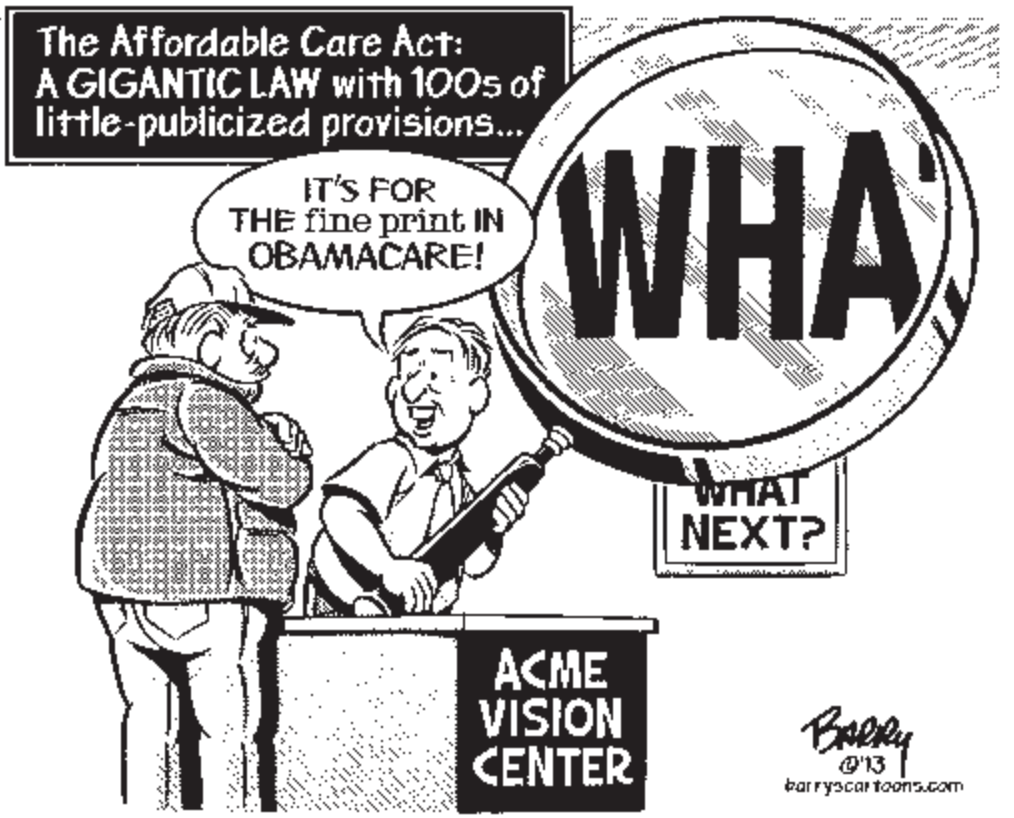
The government has no real purpose in forcing these church-related institutions to comply with this limited part of the new law. Its interest should be served by overall compliance with the law's goals, unless those go beyond providing health-care coverage for all Americans.

In short, this is a fight the government should not be involved in. Liberals may be unhappy that many churches still cling to what some feel are outdated beliefs. But that does not make the beliefs any less sincere, or these groups' First Amendment rights any less real.

If our country still believes in the rights the Founding Fathers staked out for all Americans, then the courts should strike down this move to force everyone to conform to one set of beliefs.

It's not a matter of whether we'll have health-care "reform"; that's already the law. It is a matter of whether we intend to trample the rights of minorities left and right in the name of doing good.

Let's not. - Steve Haynes



## Open Season

### New Year's Eve troubles

By Cynthia Haynes



It was New Year's Eve, and I had friends coming for dinner.

So, I wasn't surprised to find that there was a small lake centered on the drain in the basement.

People coming over, dinner to make, sewer problems - sounded normal to me.

I asked Steve to call the drain guy, who said he couldn't get here until "tomorrow."

I scratched my head, wondering what plumber works on New Year's Day, but I couldn't do anything one way or the other, so I let it go.

Steve bailed the basement and asked if we should cancel our dinner plans.

I said no, we'd go forward. The toilets worked. The shower and bathtub worked. The sinks in both bathrooms worked. The only things we couldn't use were the kitchen sink, dishwasher, garbage disposal and washing machine. We'd improvise. We'd get by. We'd do it.

And we did.

I alternated between the tiny bathroom sink and the porch for washing my preparation bowls and dishes, washing, rinsing and drying each piece as I went. It was slower and clunkier than usual, but the day was beautiful and we got 'er done.

Oh, we had a few setbacks. Several times, the water would start rising and Steve would have to start bailing again.

Then there was the dishwasher.

I had carefully removed everything - it had been full - and hand washed and dried every piece of silverware and glassware, every plate, bowl and pan in the dishwasher so that they would be available. Then we went for a walk.

What I had forgotten was that I had set the dishwasher on a two-hour time delay in the morning before I had discovered the basement swimming pool. When I pulled all the dishes out of the dishwasher, I had left it open a crack. Somewhere along the line, however, it got closed and two hours later,

as we merrily walked the dog in the park, the empty dishwasher turned itself on, washed nothing and poured all that water down the drain into - you guessed it - the basement.

When we got home, the dishwasher was happily finishing its task and, with a grunt and a grumble, Steve got out the ol' bailing bucket.

Still things were in good order when our guests arrived and we all traded stories of plumbing problems past. The dishes were scraped, rinsed in the bathroom sink and stacked on the kitchen bar.

New Year's Day saw no drain guy, but the bar began to look like Dish Mountain.

On Thursday, the drain guy showed up, the problem was solved and Steve did three loads of dishes.

He said he was happy to do the dishes. It was a whole lot better than bailing, but he's keeping his bucket close at hand. Just in case.

## Insight

### Ag Success Depends on Change

By John Schlageck



With the advent of the New Year, Kansas farmers and ranchers must once again look to the future with an open mind and the flexibility to develop new ways of marketing their products.

Customers and consumers are driven by changes in personal preferences and increased income levels. "Give consumers what they want" will never ring truer than it will in 2014.

Today's consumers have money and they want to spend it on what they want. Convenience also is very important, and while price is less important, it will still be a major piece of the buying equation.

Our future agricultural economy will continue to be driven by consumer demand. Consumers become wiser, and savvy every day. Tomorrow's well-informed shopper will want, and demand, more information about how and where their food is produced. It will be up to the producer to help provide such information.

Consumers must never be viewed as adversaries. They are the folks who buy agricultural products and keep farmers in the business of producing food, fiber and fuel.

We can never discount consumers' intelligence. Rather, we must seek input from them, and, once we understand what their needs are, provide for them.

Along with giving customers what they want, agricultural producers will be once again called upon to become better risk managers, especially as they continue moving into a market-oriented world arena.

The successful farmer in 2014 and beyond will be the one who manages yield and price risks by knowing exactly what break-even costs of each crop will be. They will incorporate specific goals that ensure profits and include prudent risk-management strategies.

Flexibility will also key future success on the farm and in the market place. One day soon farmers will no longer be able to rely on government disaster relief. Farmers must examine sound, new marketing techniques and the latest crop insurance options coming down the pike.

One attribute many farmers

share is common sense. Don't forget to use this vital tool during the upcoming year.

Remember, that past performance never guarantees future success. Avoid greed when marketing. Never wait to sell at the top of the market because you rarely will.

If something sounds too good to be true - it generally is. Always, and this means all the time, explain risk strategies you are considering to your spouse or partner. If they cannot reiterate what you have said and have it make sense, then you may want to reconsider.

While relying on common sense is helpful, it will not always make you a successful farmer. Being thought of as a good farmer will not always ensure profitability either. But, becoming a keener business specialist is a prerequisite to continuing in the profession of farming in the New Year while providing customers what they want.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

## Honor Roll

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GOD SAYS But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Matthew 12:36

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## Casey's Comments

### One of the "Greatest Generations"

By Casey McCormick



By Casey McCormick mccormickcasey@rocketmail.com

There are countless tales of the selfless and courageous acts performed by the citizen soldiers of the "Greatest Generation" and this column could be used each week only for that. Along that line, the story of William Overstreet, Jr. must be shared.

Born in 1921 in Virginia, Bill Overstreet was just another young man who rushed to serve after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. What set Bill apart though was his gift to fly. This would lead him to become a much decorated combat

pilot over the airs of Europe.

His most famous act became the thing of legends.

In the Spring of 1944, his 357th Fighter Group was escorting bombers which came under attack by planes over German occupied Paris. Separating from the group, Bill's P-51c Mustang tangled with a Messerschmitt Bf 109G.

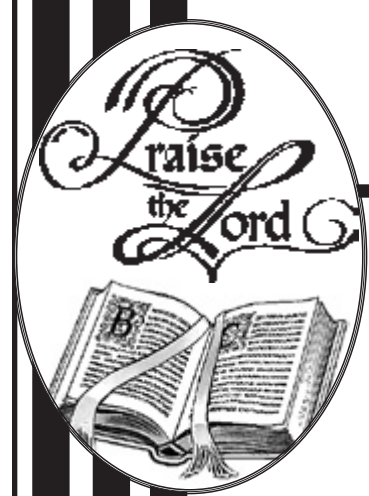
Bill had named his fighter the "Berlin Express," and it was in hot pursuit of the enemy. The German thought he could lose the other by flying over the anti-aircraft guns of the city. But the American continued to follow, even as the two

planes flew below the arches of the Eiffel Tower.

After the ME 109 went down, Bill flew at high speed, just feet above the river and made it safely back to England. That one action was said to have boosted the moral of the resistance fighters on the ground, and in 2009, Bill was awarded the French Legion of Honor in recognition.

Bill Overstreet passed away recently, at the age of 92, but he sure left a great legacy for all who value freedom.

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