

commentary

from our viewpoint...

Not taxing on-line sales unfair to our merchants

Congress is considering a bill to extend the tax ban on Internet sales, and if you like living in a small town, you ought to be mad about it.

The ban may sound like a good idea, keeping the Internet free of taxes, but the end result could be death for many small businesses and a big problem for states.

Internet retailers are strong for the ban. They claim that letting states tax Internet sales could be confusing and hurt development of e-commerce. That's bull.

They just want to be able to sell goods without the trouble or expense of collecting state taxes. And these same Internet sharpies know that not having to collect sales tax gives them an advantage over local merchants.

Many people may see the allure of buying tax-free merchandise off the web, but that may be short-sighted.

We are used to being able to go down to the corner store to buy food. We get prescriptions from the local pharmacy. We buy tires from the tire dealer and supplies from the Co-op.

And all of these businesses have to collect state sales taxes on most of what they sell. Since they are residents in the state, they have to follow state law.

Internet retailers have no such requirements. They can sell anything, ship it to your home and avoid taxes. They avoid both the expense of collecting state taxes and the tax itself, giving them a distinct cost edge over fixed retailers.

While you can still order some things across the state line and have them delivered tax free, it's getting harder. Most catalog retailers have been forced by the states to collect sales taxes. But not Internet sellers.

That's not only unfair to existing retailers, it could threaten the basis of most state budgets. States depend on the sales tax to finance public schools, highways, social services and all manner of programs. Without it, they will have to cut services or raise other taxes.

And in the future, the shift to Internet sales could become big enough to affect state budgets. It also could put a lot of small retailers out of work.

Do we want that?

The idea of the tax moratorium for the Internet, which will expire in October without an extension, was to give Congress and the states time to work out a plan that would level the playing field. That hasn't happened, largely, we suspect, because the Internet retailers and their supporters have no reason to compromise. Right now, they are not paying taxes, and they don't propose to start.

But if we value our local merchants and the convenience of doing business with someone who lives down the street, then we might want to think about opposing an extension.

There ought to be a way to collect state and local sales taxes, maybe based on the buyer's zip code or a weighted average, and not strangle Internet commerce. That would be fair. Not taxing Internet sales is not fair. — *Steve Haynes*

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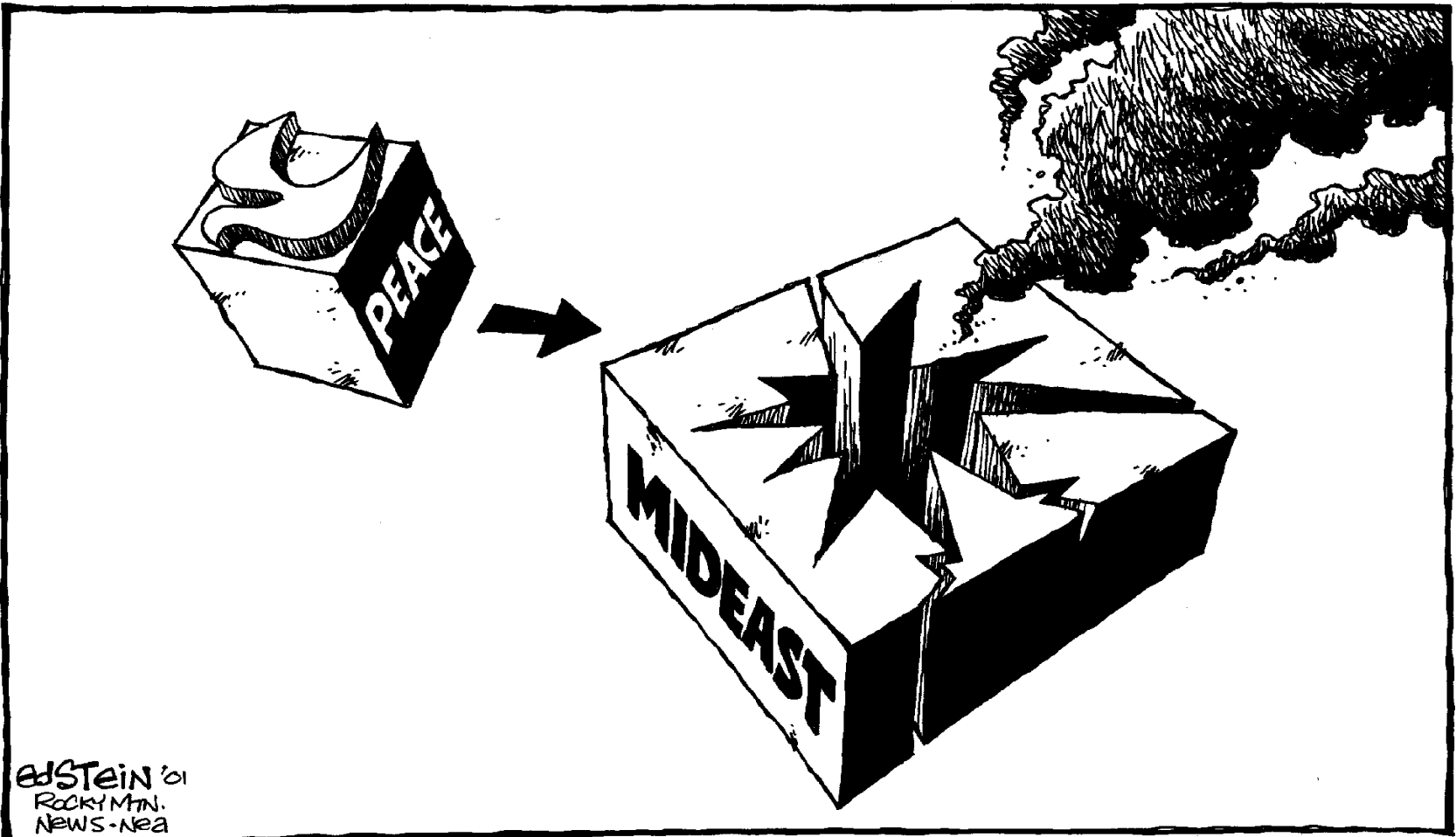
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INSTRUCTIONS: INSERT SQUARE PEG

Horse show awakens memories

Like every other kid in America, I wanted a horse.

Horses were great. All the cowboys had them and the cowboys were sooooo cute.

They were obviously a much better pet than a cat or a dog, although I didn't plan to give up either Inga, the cocker spaniel, or Lover Boy, my black tom cat.

But, horses could take you places — wonderful places, where the weather was always perfect and the people were beautiful, or at least interesting and colorful. And when your Mom or Dad yelled at you, you could get on your horse and ride away from your problems.

Mom and Dad just didn't seem to understand. They said a horse was too expensive and besides, we lived in town and had nowhere to keep one.

I know I would be a good horse owner. I would feed it and pet it and it could live in my bedroom. Lover Boy stayed in my bedroom most of the time. He wouldn't mind sharing with a horse. And my little sister wouldn't mind sharing our bedroom with a nice horse, either. I'd even let her ride it now and then if she didn't bug me and stayed out of my stuff.

As I got a little older, I realized that an upstairs bedroom might not be the best place to keep a horse. It would be hard to get it up and down the stairs every day to go riding, although in the movies I'd seen cowboys take their horses up an out-



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

side staircase a time or two.

However, we had a two-car garage Dad had built. Now that would be a perfect spot for a horse. Mr. Ed seemed to live in a garage behind his owner's home. If it wasn't a garage, how come it was right behind the house?

Then, as I grew older, I realized that a horse was not going to happen. I discovered boys and cars and they both started looking more interesting than horses — and both could be kept at home. As a succession of young men traipsed through our living room and emptied out the refrigerator, and several vehicles kept my father constantly making repairs, I'm sure my mother would have agreed that a horse would have been cheaper, had she thought about it.

Over the last 20 to 30 years, I've come to the realization that I'm afraid of horses — not terrified, but not comfortable around them.

I'm not comfortable around any big animal. It's nothing personal against horses, mind you; I don't trust cows, llamas, camels or elephants either.

It's just that they're so big and powerful. It's not

Mom on speed-dial eases leaving-home blues

Once again I've come to a point in my life where I will be leaving my mother.

When I went to college, I didn't think it would be that big of a deal. I mean Hays is *only* a little over two hours away from Goodland.

I didn't realize how far that was until I woke up in the middle of the night with an earache. I sat in the dorm lounge with the hair dryer blowing on my ear, wishing for mom and her comforting touch.

When I moved from the dorm into an apartment, I found it already inhabited by a large family of spiders. I realized that my mother could not come and squish them all for me, as she had when I'd been at home. So I learned to live with them. I showered, ate, slept and watched TV with them.

In time I got used to taking care of myself. But it seems no matter how old I get, and no matter how many more responsibilities I take on, I still need



**debra
turner**

• just beginning

my mother.

Mothers just know everything. If you have a mother on speed dial, you have a limitless amount of information at your finger tips.

I always call when making new recipes to make sure I'm doing it right. She always knows what to substitute if I don't have the right ingredients and how long and in what to cook things.

The best advice I've ever gotten has come from my mother.

Travelers wonder about large sunflower painting

To the Editor:

I am an 18-year-old girl who just graduated from Goodland High School. I do not care much for Goodland and I will be gone in less than a month.

However, it has come to my attention that my younger siblings and my parents will still be living here, and the quality of this town is going to ruins.

First, they spend so much money on things we really do not need. For example, and one hot topic, is the "Sunflower painting." I work in two restaurants and I overhear many conversations concerning this issue.

Why do we need a large sunflower painting sitting on a large easel that costs a large amount of money?

They say one reason is to promote tourism. You are supposed to see the painting on the Interstate and that would attract tourists. Actually, there is only one spot on the Interstate where you can see the painting and you have to really be looking for it in order to see it! Second, why would you want to pull off to see a large sunflower painting anyway?

Another reason I have heard is they put it up to promote children's art. (Since they took all of the art out of all the elementary schools ... as if it wasn't important anyway.) They could use the money to promote children's art in many other ways. In fact, they could have given the money directly to the schools to help put in an art program.

Being at two restaurants, I hear more complaining about this town than anything. I haven't heard any tourists complimenting the painting. A couple asked me why we had an ugly painting on a big easel in an empty pile of land. I just responded I



from our
readers

• to the editor

did not run the town, I just lived here.

Another thought I have is all of the road construction. I think it explains itself and I am really glad they blocked the roads off just in time for the reunion. Good thinking!

I also think it is important they are going to build a new sports complex behind Presto. As if the one we already have isn't good enough.

All over Goodland, there are businesses going out and for sale signs being put up. Yet, nothing is being sold, no new businesses are moving in, and the population is dropping rapidly. The junior high's population is so low that it will be moving into the high school soon.

To the head people who run this city: This town will be a ghost town with a nice pool and an ugly painting. I am sure everyone is proud of your decisions!

To Kathy Miller, I agree with you 100 percent. This letter probably means nothing to the people

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten if possible, and should include a telephone number and, most importantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste.

that I think they're mean, except for camels, which have a nasty look in their eye. It's just they're sooooo big.

So why did I get stuck doing the 4-H horse show for the county fair? Kim, the reporter, loves horses. She rides. She probably ropes and knows what a girth and a spavin are.

But she went to visit friends and family in Colorado. I don't begrudge her the trip, but that means I got to cover the horse show.

Watching three-foot kids pull a ton of horse around — I don't know how much a horse weighs but it looks like a lot — did nothing for my self-esteem.

As the day wore on, I got up enough nerve to pat a few noses and ran my hand down a warm furry flank or two. Most of the horses looked friendly, patient and ready for their afternoon nap.

Finally, as I was driving off, I stopped and asked a friend to help me onto her horse. As she held on to the lead rope and her husband took the picture, I held on for dear life and tried to look poised and nonchalant. I didn't succeed, but it was fun and you get a great view from up there.

I told my husband about the experience. He's a horse lover and knows how to ride, although I think his roping skills got lost 20 or 30 years ago.

He got that gleam in his eye. The same gleam he got before he brought Annie, the dog, home.

No, Steve, we cannot keep a horse in the garage, not even if you call him Mr. Ed.

berry's world

It's amazing how things began working out when I actually started listening.

Once of the best things on earth is the hug of a mother. When your sad, happy or just on your way to bed their hugs can make you feel so much better. Of course my mom's hugs are the best, but I've found it really doesn't matter whose mom you hug. You'll feel even better afterward.

I still can't help thinking life is backwards. Living at home, all we see is all the totally embarrassing things our parents do. Then we move away right when we start realizing how awesome they really are.

So as I step into the next trek of my life, my phone bills will get bigger and my heart will ache a little. But now that I'm older, I realize I can't always be there for her and she needs to go out into the world and live her life. I just need to let go.

who run this town, but if you want to make it a better place, you have to be able to offer young people something.

Bridget Renae Schierburg
Goodland

