

commentary

from other pens...

Census shows drivers have short commutes

The Manhattan Mercury on driving habits:
Some Census information is the stuff only policy works would pay attention to. Other data is similarly trivial but, perhaps because it seems pertinent, is more interesting.
Such is the case with some of the information in the latest Census wave to sweep across the Flint Hills.
In a story on Kansans driving habits, for example, the Associated Press reports that some 91 percent of us drive to and from work and that more than 82 percent of the people who drive to work drive alone while just 8 percent car pool. ...

That information isn't surprising; the numbers speak for themselves. We won't dwell here on the waste inherent in so many cars on the road going to workplaces close enough to justify carpooling. ...
What was more interesting about the Census data had more to do with how long it takes Kansans to get to work. Not only do more than half of the 1.3 million of us who work get there in 20 minutes or less, but more than 25 percent of us live within 10 minutes or our jobs. We hope those people realize how smart or lucky they are. ...

Cities like ours are a good part of the reason Kansas ranked seventh in the nation in the percentage of workers with short commutes. ...
Kansas is blessed to have a lot of cities and towns — small and medium-sized — where getting to work is quick and easy. Soon, maybe, more of us will realize that picking up a co-worker on the way doesn't lengthen the drive much but can cut the cost in half.

Parsons Sun on roadside mowing:
The Kansas Department of Transportation has joined forces with Audubon of Kansas to determine the effects of reduced roadside mowing. The idea is great for many reasons.
Already the state spends \$4 million a year in mowing costs, but beyond that there are natural benefits. Other states report that snow build-up on highways is a significantly reduced when the grass is left unmown. KDOT also believes that without the fresh regrowth, deer will not be as attracted to the roadsides, resulting in fewer accidents.

... The new program will measure the effects of reduced mowing along 10 test strips in the eastern part of the state. It's a move that KDOT has been inching toward over the past several years with quite pleasing results.
Already there are patches of wildflowers along some corridors, marked with attractive signs that resemble a colorful quilt block. And as new road work is bid, KDOT has been requiring the companies that get the seeding contracts to include wildflowers in the mix.
... Highways with wider lanes and much better shoulders, which often are paved, will not feel as narrow if 20-inch grasses are gently blowing along their sides as the old narrow roads would have 30 years ago.
For too long Kansas has tried to hide its prairie. Combining natural prairie grasses with wildflowers is an outstanding idea that says residents recognize the beauty of that heritage and want to point it out to others.

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Three reasons to belong, attend a church

I don't know about you, but I think there are a lot of reasons to belong to and attend a church. Let me tell you some of them. Now I suppose I'd better qualify that last statement a little.

I'm talking about a Christian church. Until quite recently in this country when we talked about churches, it was assumed that everyone would know they were Christian. We can't take that for granted any more; there are a much greater variety of religions established in America now than ever before.

Some of the main reasons I feel it's important to be a part of a Christian church are the Three F's: faith, forgiveness and fellowship. They serve as the backbone of Christianity, and all of them support and enhance each other. (Just a matter of information: Christianity isn't something you can do by yourself.)

Christian faith is personal, but it is also highly relational. You can't isolate yourself on a beautiful fishing spot or golf course or even a monastery regularly and continue to grow in the faith. The Bible tells us that "faith without works is dead." Christ requires that we lend a hand to others along on the journey too. True faith will show itself in



lorna g. t.

• commentary

action to help others. Faith doesn't require works; faith inspires works. Too many times we want to sit back and bask in our own "goodness." That prevents us from seeing ourselves from God's perspective. And when personal goodness is seen as an end product, faith begins to die.

Each of us is in need of forgiveness for something, yet we would rather judge others than forgive them. Forgiveness is hard. Human beings don't do that very well alone either. But in this case, we need God's help. Being Christian means being with others, and being with others will necessitate a spirit of forgiveness. We are always either hurting or being hurt by other people. Only God can teach us how to overlook and forgive the slights that come our way. Forgiveness is as healing to the one who gives it as to the one who receives it. Maybe more so. The biggest reason for us to forgive other

people is because God has forgiven us for so much. We have no right to be stingy with pardon.

And then there's fellowship. We are called into community. We are each an important part of the body of Christ. If you are hurting, I should hurt, and vice versa. We cannot isolate ourselves from the pain. But then, when one part of the body rejoices, all the rest of the body is happy too. That's fellowship. Believers are called to be people who care enough to rejoice and cry with others appropriately.

Each of these F's deserves its own column; I haven't begun to exhaust the topic. Some of you will argue my points. That's great! Make your own list with your own points. I am only trying to stimulate your thinking.

All of these three items are inter-related, and which comes first is open to as much debate as in "Which came first? The chicken or the egg?" Fellowship strengthens faith, as well as faith deepens fellowship. Forgiveness often gives us back our faith and reopens doors to fellowship. Fellowship creates a loving, atmosphere where faith and forgiveness can grow and develop.

Good marks in the Three F's will look good on any report card

Annual checkups can help save life

OK, so they cut this little piece of cancer off my ear.

It should be a simple thing, but of course, nothing in medicine is ever really simple any more.

My doctor and I had been watching the spot for a couple of years. It moved from "unusual" to "suspicious," and she said it had to go. I didn't argue with her.

She scheduled me in for office surgery the next week, and in a few minutes, she excised the spot and surrounding tissue, plopping them in a baggie for the pathologist.

It's funny how a little piece of you looks, floating there the formaldehyde, shreds of skin hanging off of it.

And she took pains to sew the ear back together with tiny fine stitches so it would look good. In five or six weeks, in fact, it was practically as good as new.

That could have been the end of it, but it wasn't. The spot went to North Platte, where the pathologist thought it was suspicious. He sent it to a skin specialist in Denver, who thought it was downright nasty.



steve haynes

• along the sappa

He said it looked to him like something fairly mild, but could have been almost anything, including melanoma.

He closed with the most unwelcome words, "extends to the deep margin." Meaning, they didn't, might not have, gotten all of it the first time.

My doctor said this time, because the cut would be deeper and wider, I should take the ear to a plastic surgeon. The only one I knew didn't do ears, but he explained the procedure to me and gave me some names of friends who did.

I made an appointment. Then came the hard part. Waiting.

I've been through this before, when a doctor found a lump on my prostate. Two sets of urologists later, it's still "unusual" and not growing, but waiting for those reports was an education.

Time for Kansas to outlaw barbaric sport

To the Editor:

A recent cockfighting bust in Anderson County should raise alarm bells all across the state. It is very distressing that Kansas is one of only four states that do not have laws specifically outlawing this barbaric blood sport.

Though cockfighters can be prosecuted under anti-cruelty laws, it's perfectly legal to possess, train and sell birds for fighting. This loophole makes it nearly impossible for police to crack down on this illegal activity.

Cockfighting is among the most egregious forms of animal cruelty, in which birds are drugged to heighten aggression, fitted with knives, and placed in a pit to hack one another to death for the amusement of spectators. Even the winners often die from their injuries, which include punctured lungs, broken bones and pierced eyes.

What's more, law enforcement recognizes cockfights as notorious hotbeds of drug traffic, illegal gambling, possession of firearms and other forms of violence. Especially disturbing, children were present at the Anderson County cockfight.

This exposure to violence and criminal activity desensitizes children to suffering. This year has seen a number of homicides nationwide connected with illegal cockfighting, including one in which the owner of a losing bird shot the referee and two others. We shouldn't have to wait for such outbreaks of violence in Kansas before doing something proactive against cockfighting.

This year a bill to ban cockfighting activities in Kansas, introduced by Rep. Peggy Long, passed the House but was not given a hearing in the Senate. It's time the legislature gave law enforcement



from our readers

• to the editor

the tools they need to stop the cruelty and criminality of cockfighting.

Amy Suarez
The Humane Society
Mid-West Region, Des Moines

To the Editor:

I have silently been keeping up with the news of Sherman County and Goodland for the past two years, looking for a place to call home, and there is no place for me in Goodland I can afford, so I am only passing through.

I feel obligated to my friends and good people of Goodland to at least let you know some wisdom and knowledge and let you decide. "For what man can tell another what to do?"

The people don't have a voice in government, because of a lack of knowledge. We have become as individuals separated and we cry, "What can I do? instead of saying, "What can we do?"

We have given our rights over to the alumni and now they can tax us without giving us a chance to vote.

Government is elected by the people, for the people to carry out the will of the people (quote from Constitution).

But when a government starts taxing without a citizen's vote, then you have a dictatorship. And it

is the citizen's fault we let them take over.

When a government gets out of control, it is up to the people to dissolve that government and appoint them a new government. No vote. No voice.

Friends don't let confusion among you blind you, and if you would like this little voice to help us all. Let me know, otherwise, I'm just passing through seeking a safe refuge, for Goodland is dying. Working people can't afford it.

Evangelist Jack Hinson
(Long Runner to my Indian brothers)
Goodland

"My people perish for lack of knowledge." (King James)

Letter Policy

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