

from our viewpoint...

Law wants to bring new homesteaders

One of the more interesting things to pop up in Congress last year is something called the New Homestead Act, a bill backed by a bipartisan coalition of prairie legislators who want to use tax incentives to lure people back to the High Plains.

Kansas' Sen. Sam Brownback is one of the principal sponsors. The plan would give people tax credits for home purchases and repay students' loans if they promised to live in a target county where population has been declining. Businesses would get tax credits for moving to the area or creating new jobs, and people could save up with tax-free homestead investment accounts.

A venture capital fund would back new businesses in the target area, defined as counties which have lost at least 10 percent of their population in the last 20 years.

Much of the Tri-State area of Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado would fit the bill. Some counties, Decatur among them, have lost that much in far less than 20 years.

It's not that there is really anything wrong with this area. Some counties — mostly those bolstered by a large state institution or a packing plant — have held steady or grown.

Most of us have farm-based economies that simply can't be sustained as the number of farm families continues to decline.

That is a trend that's been unbendable since about 1900. And for more than a century, the government has tried to stem the tide.

The truth is, though, that no matter how many billions the government has thrown at the "farm problem," the number of farmers has continued to shrink. It's been that way pretty much since Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper.

And the evidence suggests that nothing the government can do will change that trend. Farm population will continue to shrink for a few more decades, then bottom out with farmers no longer a significant force in the population.

And all that money the government spent, well maybe it helped somebody. But it won't have changed the facts of life.

This new bill?

Who knows. Tax credits and help on students' loans haven't been spectacularly successful in ending the rural doctor shortage. Is there any reason they would work better on the populations shortage?

That depends to some extend on the final language of the bill, assuming it passes. Some incentives might work, while others will fall flat. The only way to know for sure is to try.

The five-year indenture seems flawed, for one thing. What incentive will people have to not just to move to some other town at the end of the period?

And then there is America's cultural bias in favor of cities, against small towns.

We idolize the rural life, but no one wants to live more than half an hour from the mall.

Will it work? Who knows.

But it's nice to see someone at least making an effort to help us.

— Steve Haynes

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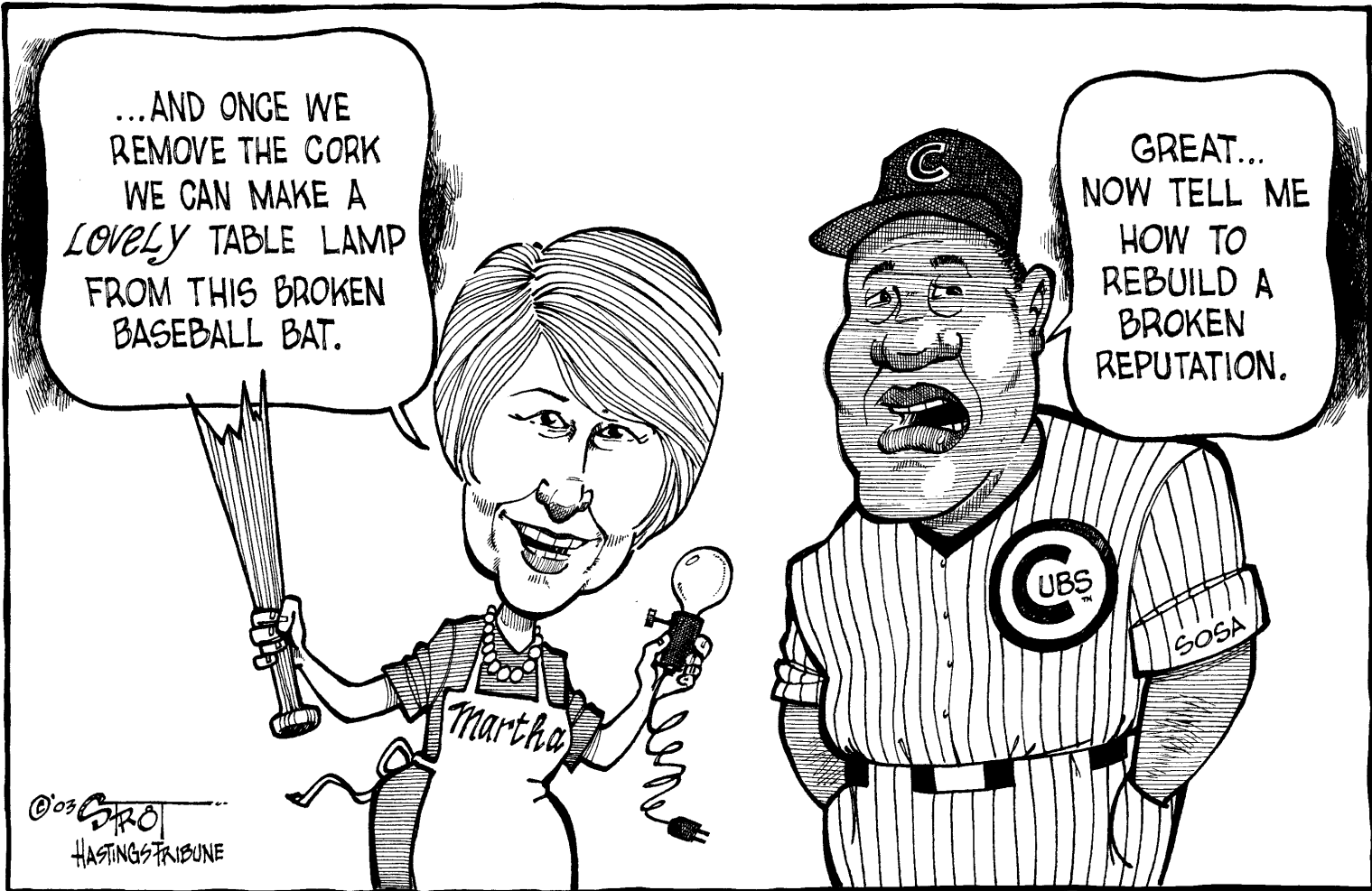
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We honor fathers, mothers, but children?

I don't know about you, but I often get asked some challenging questions.

Sunday was Father's Day. We honored our fathers, living and dead, in our church service. But during the informal time of our service, a child questioned why there was a Mother's Day and a Father's Day but no Kid's Day?

Thinking on my feet — especially in front of a group of people — is always a challenge for me.

My answer was: "Well there really is a day we celebrate as Children's Day, but I can't tell you exactly when it is. But then, many people say that every day is Children's Day."

So there were two answers, and he could accept the one he preferred.

So today I looked all through my calendars. One didn't list Children's Day at all; it had Grandparent's Day and (to my surprise) Parents' Day, but nothing for children — except Festival of the Christian Home, which is the



lorna g t
● commentary

same day as Mother's Day.

I had more success with calendar number two. National Children's Day is October 12th this year.

We'll have to remember to mention that and honor the children when it comes around.

Thinking about children today, I thought I'd share some of my favorite quotes — all by unknown authors:

1. Advice for the day: If you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle: "Take two Aspirin" and "Keep away from children."
2. You spend the first two years of their life

teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next 16 years telling them to sit down and shut-up.

3. Grandchildren are God's reward to you for not killing your children.
4. Mothers of teens know why some animals eat their young.
5. Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said.
6. The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own.
7. We child proofed our home 3 years ago and they're still getting in!

And then there is the one that is so true it may not be funny at all:

"Be nice to your kids. Someday, they'll choose your nursing home."

I suppose its humor depends on which side of the generation gap you're on!

Recipes for entertaining kids

With school being out how many times do parents hear 'I'm bored'? The following creative craft ideas are provided by Jeanne Thyfault of the Resource and Referral Agency at Colby Community College. A library of child care materials is available through them. Their toll free telephone number is 1-888-634-9350.



pat schiefen
● postscript

Lint modeling

3 cups dryer lint
2 cups cold or warm water
2/3 cups flour
3 drops oil of cloves (optional)

Stir lint and water in a saucepan. Add flour and stir to prevent lumps. Add oil of cloves. Cook over low heat and stir until mixture forms peaks. Pour out and cool on newspapers. Shape over boxes, bottles, balloons or press into a mold or use like paper mache. Makes approximately 4 cups and dries in 3-5 days. It is very hard and durable. Dries smooth if pressed into a mold but dries rougher if shaped over an object.

1/2 cup cornstarch
2/3 cup warm water
food coloring or poster paints, shellac or clear nail polish

Mix baking soda and cornstarch in a saucepan. Add water and stir until smooth. Over medium heat, boil and stir until is resembles mashed potatoes. Pour on board to cool. Knead. For color, knead coloring into clay until blended or paint when finished. When dried brush with shellac or nail polish. Makes 1 1/2 cups and recipes doubles well. Hardens quickly and stores for several weeks in an airtight container.

Play clay

1 cup baking soda

Diorama and map modeling clay
(Dries in one to three days)

2 parts salt
1 part flour
1 part water
food coloring or tempara paints

Mix salt and flour in a bowl and add water until mixture resembles icing. Add food coloring in small amounts until blended or paint competed project. Use at once. Spread mixture on heavy cardboard. Build up mountains a little at a time by drying each layer.

Permanent sand castle

1/3 cup flour
2 tablespoons sugar
1 cup water
6 cups sand

Mix flour and sugar in a saucepan. Gradually add water while stirring. Cook over low heat constantly stirring until clear. Remove from the stove and cool. Mix with sand. Add water until mixture is clay like. Pack firmly into containers (cans, plastic cups, small buckets). Start with largest shapes. Dries to permanent hardness. Cut windows and shapes with a spoon, stick or other tools.

U.S.A. won war; is vanquished in peace?

To the Editor:

If the terrorists were intelligent enough to use our airplanes to strike American targets, if Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein were conspirators, bribing the Mafia or daring the abortionists to euthanize them would be cheaper than war, in dollars and lives.

The economic stimuli by putting the unemployed in the military and huge contracts for armaments are fleeing as a firefly. How many war dollars are on the national debt for your grandchildren's kids to pay? The fuel used and restoration would have built a lot of roads and driven many miles here.

Abolish the income tax. A sales tax exempting food so taxpayers won't starve is less cost, hassle and fairer. Get rid of the income redis-



from our readers
● to the editor

tributions system How can you justify taxing all the people to enrich one?

Bestow a government gift, welfare subsidy, exceeding the legal exemption for a taxpayer? Let alone pouring two-thirds of the moola on 10 percent of the farmers?

What profit have you received from your dollars the Cheat Off crowd seized? If you haven't made a profit from your branded beef,

how can you get rid of a country of origin law, increasing cost and tyranny on all producers? Label the imports with a tariff! Would you hobble cowboys, demand packers Keep a bit of hide and hair in meat? Brands and tatoos require hide. If gone, shop Wal-Mart, eat McDonalds!

Does anybody check country of origin on tools, clothes, menus, etc?

"For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul." Mark 8:36

Frank Sowers
Benkelman, Neb.

PS: The novelty of country of origin is forgotten as consumers compare quality and price!

garfield

