

from our viewpoint...

Highway system needs business sense

The Kansas Department of Transportation does a good job of building and maintaining roads, but it sometimes seems that the agency needs a good dose of business sense when it plans projects. Highway dollars are scarce with the state in a perpetual budget crisis, and the engineers try to plan every project to stretch the money as far as it will go.

Sometimes that means that a few businesses — or a whole town — will suffer while a road is rebuilt. In effect, these businesses wind up paying for whatever the state saves by closing down a road during construction.

Maybe the state saves more than the businesses lose, but small businesses often can afford no loss at all. Times are tough out here. New roads are necessary to keep our economy rolling, and there is no way to build (or rebuild) them without some inconvenience. The department tries to take these things into consideration when it plans a project, but still, there are disasters.

It was next to impossible to get into downtown Goodland three years ago as three major projects tied up the only access routes between downtown and the highway business strip.

That two of the three jobs were technically city projects, coordinated by the state, didn't help much. There appeared to be little planning about when access would close or reopen, and business suffered downtown and on the highway.

The next year, the department closed K-27 north of town, cutting off the flow of business from St. Francis, while merchants were still recovering from the downtown access issues. The year before, the agency closed I-70 exits and did away with a lot of the town's transient business for days on end.

In all, Goodland businesses suffered for three straight years. They have nice roads now, those that survived.

This year, it's Colby's turn. K-25 is closed through town, while the main intersection downtown has been torn up all summer. Merchants are fit to be tied.

All of this work is necessary. All of this has a payoff in the end.

But we think the department needs to give more thought to the here and now when it plans and schedules jobs.

Saving a few thousand dollars may be important to the state, but making a few thousand in the summer can be vital to a small business.

What to do?

The department ought to hold a public meeting in town before it schedules major, disruptive jobs. Engineers ought to go over the plans and the schedule and get suggestions from those most affected.

The department needs to adopt less-disruptive alternatives wherever possible, even if they cost a little more. It's actually done some of that, but it could do more.

An example: U.S. 83 south of Oakley was closed for two summers, with a detour through Grainfield, to allow new pavement to be installed mostly on existing right of way. However, U.S. 36 between Herndon and Atwood and U.S. 283 north of Norton were rebuilt on adjacent alignments. That costs more, because you have to buy land. But traffic flows and business don't suffer nearly as much.

Intersections, like the two being rebuilt in Colby this summer, can be done in quarters, rather than half at a time. It might cost a little more, but the work would get done and traffic gets through.

It might not seem like much — you can get from one block of downtown Colby to the next by driving six blocks, after all — but that kind of thing can be deadly to business.

The bottom line is this: If the state saves money, but taxpaying businesses lose, who wins? No one. — *Steve Haynes*

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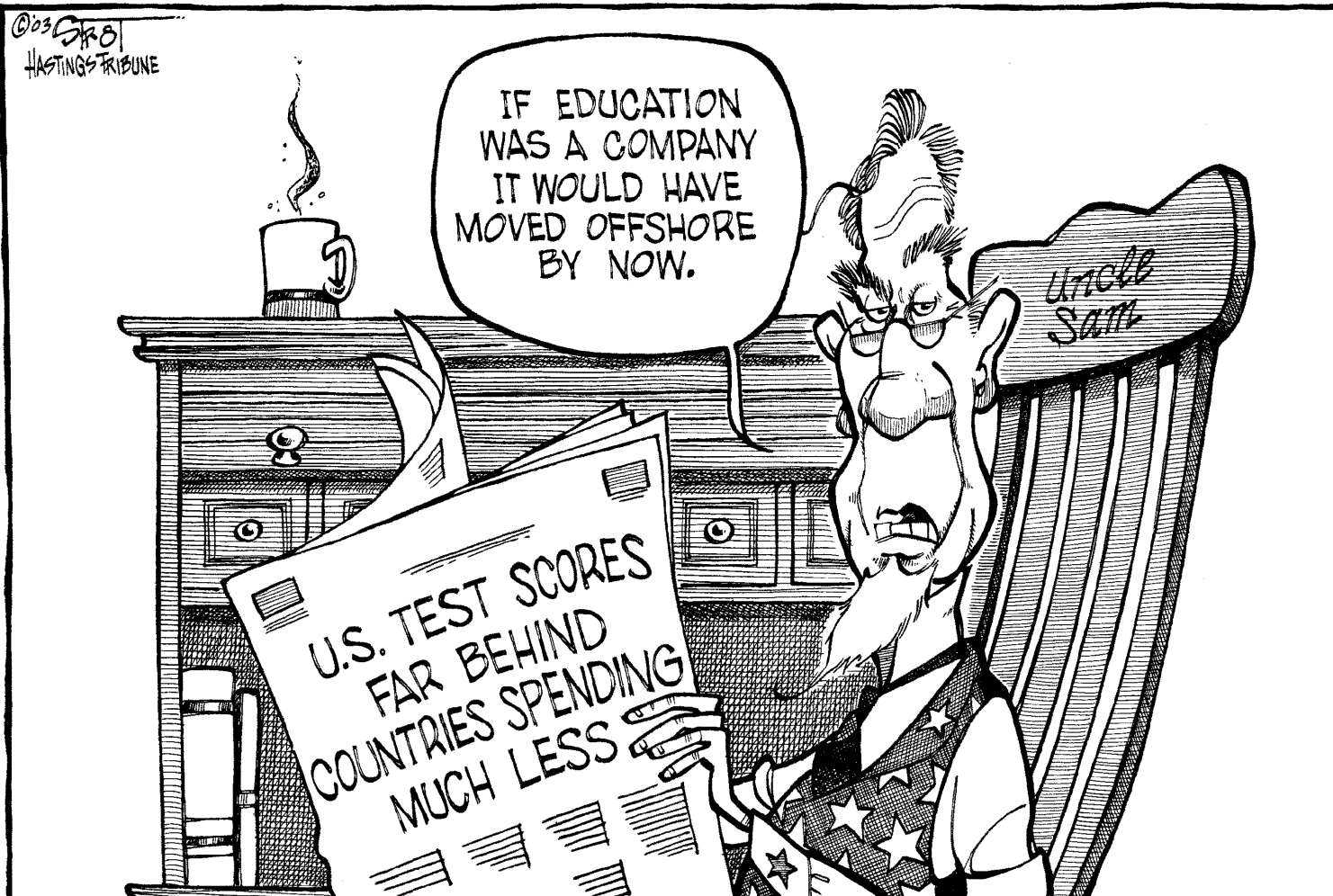
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I've developed a few pet peeves

I don't know about you, but I have developed a few pet peeves.

I hope I'm not the only one who has little irritations that rub the wrong way. I've thought about some of mine and wondered how they developed and why they get to me. For most of them, I have no good answer; I just know they're there.

Some pet peeves we inherit from others.

As I remember my mother, I recall some of hers: clothes hung on the line in random order, her good sewing scissors used to cut paper, slamming doors, twisted bra straps, the waste of anything, piling our school books on the dining room table as we entered the house and pictures hanging crooked on the wall.

Did my dad have any? I'll have to think about that awhile. I know he liked to have breakfast ready at almost the exact moment his "feet hit the floor", as Mama would say.

Maybe I just wasn't around Daddy as much to catch on to his little peeves, or else he was just more pliable and soft-spoken, didn't express his dislikes as often. I remember he didn't like to see his daughters wearing high heels. "You'll be sorry someday when you've ruined your feet!" he would tell us. He didn't appreciate swearing — especially from an educated person; he thought they should know



**lorna
gt**

• commentary

better ways to express themselves.

Yet he could tolerate it from someone without an education. He trusted everyone until they proved untrustworthy. He was a man of his word and expected everyone else to be.

So I guess we all develop some things that get to us — even if some people hide them better than others.

Some of my pet peeves are really quite silly, but the flash of annoyance sparks uncontrollably anyway. I dislike talking the moment I awake, hunting to find something, the toilet paper going the wrong way over the holder, parents who are oblivious to their children's behavior, rude shoppers (especially with shopping carts), careless drivers, social laws governing moral behavior, disrespectful people (especially children to parents), bad manners, sloppy dressing, and I also have some that I inherited from my parents: lying, slamming doors and twisted bra straps (even on some-

one else).

It's dangerous to talk to people about pet peeves.

Someone told me they got irritated at finding hair in the sink. Another person said it made her angry to always be the one to put a new roll of toilet paper on the holder.

I still think about them when those things happen, and I find myself getting irritated for them — even though those things had never bothered me before.

Recently I realized that you're never too old to develop a new pet peeve.

I now get out of sorts when I use my credit card at a gas pump to save time and walking inside to the cashier, only to have the pump out of paper and unable to print the receipt. By the time I walk up to the cashier for the receipt, I am very annoyed. To add insult to injury, one time I had to do that, I was charged on my credit card statements for TWO fillings for the same amount! And I seriously doubt that was computer error!

Oh well. There are too many joys in life to stay irritated very long.

God is good, and so are most of God's people — at least, most of the time.

And I refuse to let the others dictate my mood or behavior for very long.

How to feed, water captured tarantulas?

How would you like to babysit a bug, supervise a spider or tame a tarantula?

Me neither, but that's what I'm doing this week.

It's breeding season for tarantulas in eastern Colorado. (And you didn't even know they had tarantulas in eastern Colorado, right?)

On the way back from vacation, we picked up a nice, health, sex-starved spider and brought him home.

We have a small plastic cage where my son used to keep small lizards. It's perfect for a largish spider.

The spider is destined for our schoolteacher daughter in Lawrence. In the meantime, we have almost two weeks to feed and water the big arachnid.

What do spider's eat and how do they drink? Daughter said that tarantulas like meal worms or crickets. For water, she suggested putting a piece of sponge in a juice bottle cap and keeping in damp. Spiders can't really drink out of a water bowl, she explained.

Well, that seemed simple enough. I cut up a sponge and put it in the cage before we transferred Mr. Spider from his traveling cheese carton to his new home.

Water was taken care of. It's a little hard to hit the sponge from the top of the cage — I'm not putting my hand in there to get a better angle on it — but it works.

Food was another matter.

When son had his lizards, they also ate crickets. We would walk along country roads and put the little hoppers in our pockets.

We did that during the summer. In the fall and winter, we bought the common household



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

pests from the pet store in McCook, some 30 miles or so away.

It's past cricket season on the road. Haven't seen a single one all week. Although I can hear quite a few in the house, I can't find them.

That leaves meal worms or McCook.

My flour, rice, pasta and cornmeal do not have worms, thank you. I ran to McCook on my lunch hour.

The pet shop was out of crickets until the 2 p.m. truck.

I was frantic, so the man looked into the

cricket aquarium until he found five strays.

That, I figured, would last until we could deliver Mr. Spider to Miss Teacher.

It took the big bug a little over an hour to disappear the crickets. All that was left was a hind leg and an unidentified piece of exoskeleton.

This was one BIG, HUNGRY bug.

A couple days later, Steve took the time for another cricket run. He brought home 18 and after two days the spider has only eaten eight of them. I think he's slowing down.

Youngest daughter is a little worried with the state budget cutbacks, she won't be able to afford to feed this latest addition to her classroom.

I suggested that when it became too much for her, she could send it home with a student. That's how she got rid of the hamsters and turtle last year.

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