

from our viewpoint...

Pennies waste time, are a real nuisance

Why do we have pennies, anyway? A penny today isn't worth the copper it's stamped on. In fact, a penny today isn't worth what a dime would buy in 1953. Pennies are more of a nuisance than a benefit. They're worth so little that stores keep trays of them out for people to make change. Most of us won't stoop over to pick one up. But the government keeps making them, even though the Treasury figures it loses \$8 million a years stamping and distributing the little Lincolns. Why? Tradition, mostly. We all grew up using a monetary system that included pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and half dollars. Somewhere along the line, the government sort of did away with the half dollar, and the quarter became our standard change.

Though they aren't worth much anymore, we're used to having pennies. There was a time when some stores made change in mills, coins worth a thousandth of a dollar or one-tenth of a cent. Most of these were private issue, not government coinage. Some were even made of plastic.

But those days are way long gone. Who'd want to count out mills as change today? For that matter, who really wants to count the pennies? If it costs the government \$8 million a year just to make them and spread them around, what does it cost banks and businesses to handle them?

Billions. Billions of dollars spent to count, store, exchange and handle a monetary unit that's past its prime.

We should do away with pennies, but the latest polls show little support for that. Reportedly, only 23 percent of Americans would agree to do away with pennies.

It'd be easy to design a system to work without them, but the government has had remarkably little luck in changing the coinage. It's tried twice to introduce dollar coins, but we won't use them.

The Treasury keeps pumping out expensive dollar bills when we'd all probably be better off using coins for \$1 and \$5 denominations.

The government makes dollar coins, though, and people don't use them. We don't use pennies much, either, but we won't let them go.

It's mostly because Americans figure that in any system where businesses get to round off transactions to the nearest five cents, it's the consumer who'll come out on the short end of the stick.

And they're probably right. Until someone figures out how to sell the switch, then, we're stuck with pennies. The penny even has a lobbying group, Americans for Common Cents, supported no doubt by people who sell coin-counting machines.

There's a bill in Congress now, the Legal Tender Modernization Act, which would do away with the penny. It should be passed.

But don't hold your breath. — *Steve Haynes*


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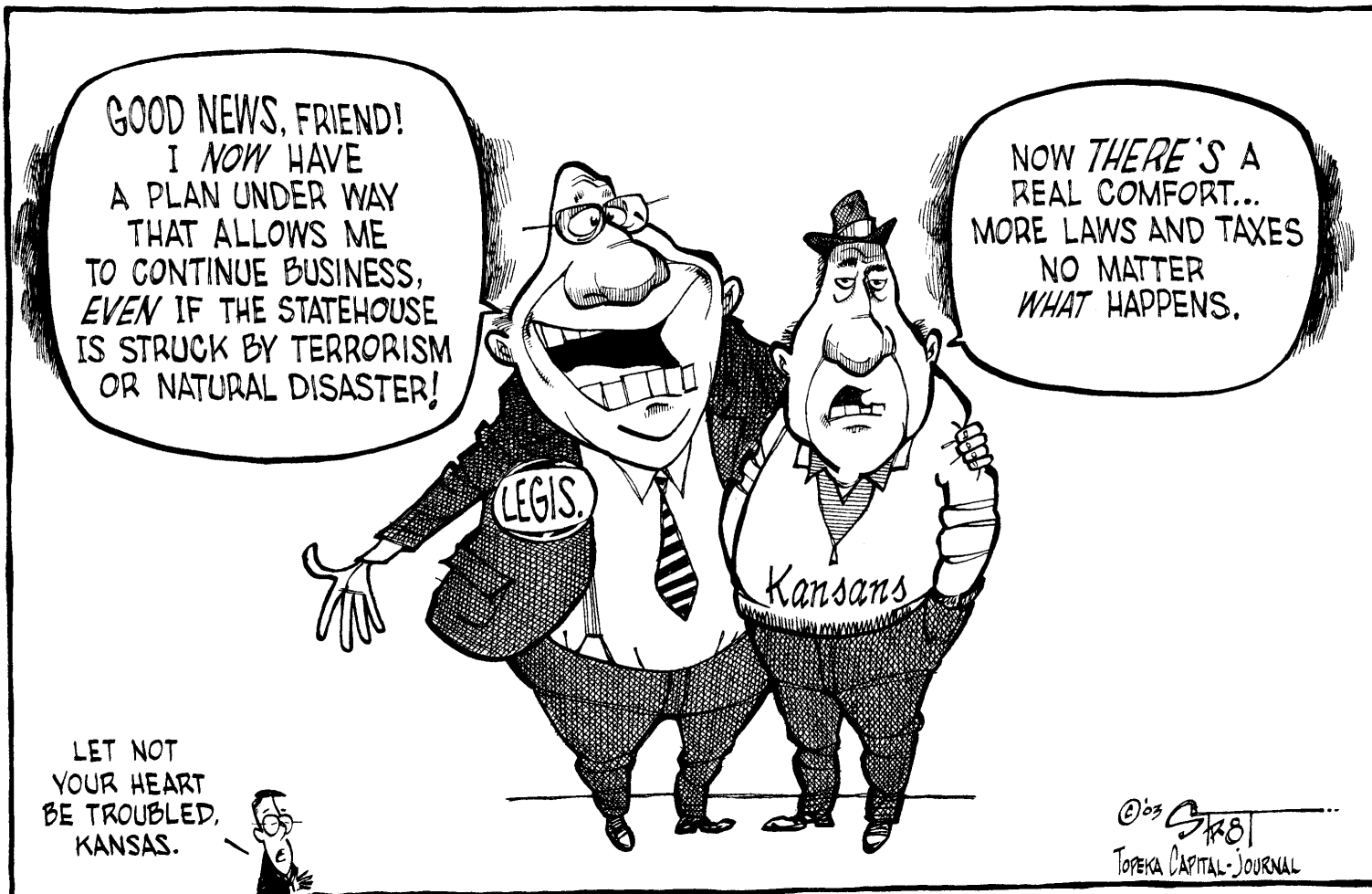
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My hometown seems to be slipping away

I don't know about you, but my hometown is slipping away from me.

I suppose it has been fading away for years, but I'm just becoming aware of it.

Memories are wonderful, yet flawed. Things I thought I remembered vividly have changed.

For instance: the large gymnasium at a primary school where our high school junior/senior banquet before prom was held. It was a magical place, a magical night and everything was perfect. I even had a date.

Years later, I stepped inside the gym to relive the memory. Nothing seemed right. The room had shrunk in size; it was drab and colorless. How could my magical junior banquet have been held in such a small, terrible place?

My hometown schools have changed; they aren't as I remember. Additions changed the dynamics as well as the dimensions. Classrooms look different than I remember, and there has been an increasing emphasis on sports — both for girls, as well as boys.

It feels like the whole focal point of public education has gone away from scholastics to high-profile sports. It seems that knowledge serves everyone better than a few brief mo-



**lorna
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• commentary

ments of adulation, and should be the focus.

Main street isn't the same either.

Remember the Duckwall's lunch counter? The gas stations on Main? The old roller skating rink? (It seemed big when we were smaller.) Two grocery stores on Main? The Carnegie Library just a block west that seemed huge and impressive and quiet (certainly not like modern ones)?

My hometown used to be quiet and peaceful, except maybe the week of the county fair or the month of wheat harvest. (And maybe evenings when we honked at each other as we cruised Main).

The parks were safe to walk through at night.

The truck stop on the highway was a big deal, and the food was made from scratch. And the drive-in restaurant had car-hops and "to-die-for" pork tenderloin sandwiches?

People in Kansas are helpful to strangers

To the Editor:

Having grown up in Kansas, I should have remembered how nice everyone is there.

This was brought back to me on Thursday, Oct. 23. My friend and I unfortunately had a flat tire just outside of Burlington, Colo.

This might not have been so bad, except that it was almost 8 p.m. and pitch black on Interstate 70.

A nice person stopped to change our tire and we limped to Goodland, knowing we might have a problem getting a tire, thus putting our trip way behind schedule.

At the Sinclair station, we ran into two good samaritans. They offered to change the tire for us, but at their shop, the tire machine wasn't working. They took the time to get a hold of the Co-op mechanic and lead us there to get a new tire.

We really appreciate all the effort they gave us, these two complete strangers.

It just proves that nice people are still ready and willing to go the extra mile. Thank you very much, and we will definitely stop in Goodland on our trips through Kansas.

Paula Vanderbilt
Arvada, Colo.



**from our
readers**

• to the editor

formed consisting of music students, parents and teachers.

We elected officers, planned fund-raising activities, established committees and a regular meeting time, and are writing bylaws. The officers elected to serve for this year are Carol Jolly as president, Jane Philbrick as vice-president, and Nancy Shores as secretary/treasurer. Connie Grieves was appointed to serve as publicity chair.

We are off to a busy start in support of our young people. In addition to upcoming Christmas concerts, the music department is considering several possible outings for this year.

This has prompted us to plan future fund-raising. The music directors and the Music Boosters (serving in an advisory capacity) are establishing an academic lettering system for students in the department.

We will hold a coffee/cookie reception after

the matinee on the last day of the musical, Sunday, Nov. 16, in the high school cafeteria.

Marilyn Pruitt has donated a beautiful quilt to Music Boosters that took her two years to complete. The quilt is on display at area banks and will be auctioned off on the last day of the musical. All proceeds will go to Music Boosters. The first week the quilt was at People's State Bank. This week it is on display at Bankwest, and next week, it will be displayed at First National Bank.

We are planning three fund-raising activities. The first, a pancake breakfast, will be from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday at the Knights of Columbus building.

The second will be the sale of T-shirts imprinted with Goodland Music on the front and a musical emblem on the back. We are hoping to have those available at the musical and other upcoming events. Thirdly, we are planning a chili dinner before the high school Christmas concert on Tuesday, Dec. 16.

We encourage ideas and support from community members as well as those involved in Goodland Music Boosters.

Carol Jolly, president
Goodland Music Boosters

where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; web address — roberts.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; web e-mail address — brownback.senate.gov/CMEmail.me

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garfield

