

from our viewpoint...

Farm bill targeted by budget cutters

Get ready for the farm problem. No, it's not what you're thinking. The farm problem is going to come when the government stops subsidizing farmers and leaves us all to sink or swim. That day is coming. Maybe sooner than we think. A lot of things are coming together that work against continued subsidies. The farm bill has been held together by a city-rural alliance that packs the Department of Agriculture with welfare programs city congressmen will support.

But consider this:

- There's a growing movement in Washington to look at the farm bill as a prime place to cut the budget. It's a target, and there are plenty of non-farm members who have no qualms about voting against agriculture.

- At the same time, the "farm vote" continues to shrink. When the government got into farm subsidies, the nation was still more than half rural. The farm vote meant something then.

Today, even out here in ag country, the "farm vote" is just a small percentage. Even when you add in those of us who depend on farmers as customers, we're a tiny fraction of the national vote.

- Trade rules eventually will require the government to stop subsidizing agriculture. We get away with it today because Europe and Japan are so much worse at it than we are. But eventually, if we want to sell wheat and corn to the world, we'll all have to have a level playing field.

- There's a whole gaggle of left-wing groups that would love to stick it to agriculture, including environmentalists, animal rights activists like PETA, or People for Ethical Treatment of Animals, and the "sustainable agriculture" movement.

They all see modern, chemical-driven agriculture and livestock production as a threat. They won't support government payments to keep it going. And over the years, their power increases.

Now, the happy truth is farmers would be better off without government "help." All the government manages to do is mess up the markets and keep people in business a few years longer than they might otherwise stay.

The economic trends that force us to bigger farms and more sophisticated production methods aren't going to change. Despite billions in federal payments, the number of farmers needed to grow our food has gone down every year for a century.

Besides, farmers who raise unregulated crops tend to do better than those in subsidized agriculture. They make as much or more money, and they don't have a federal employee looking over their shoulder, examining everything they do.

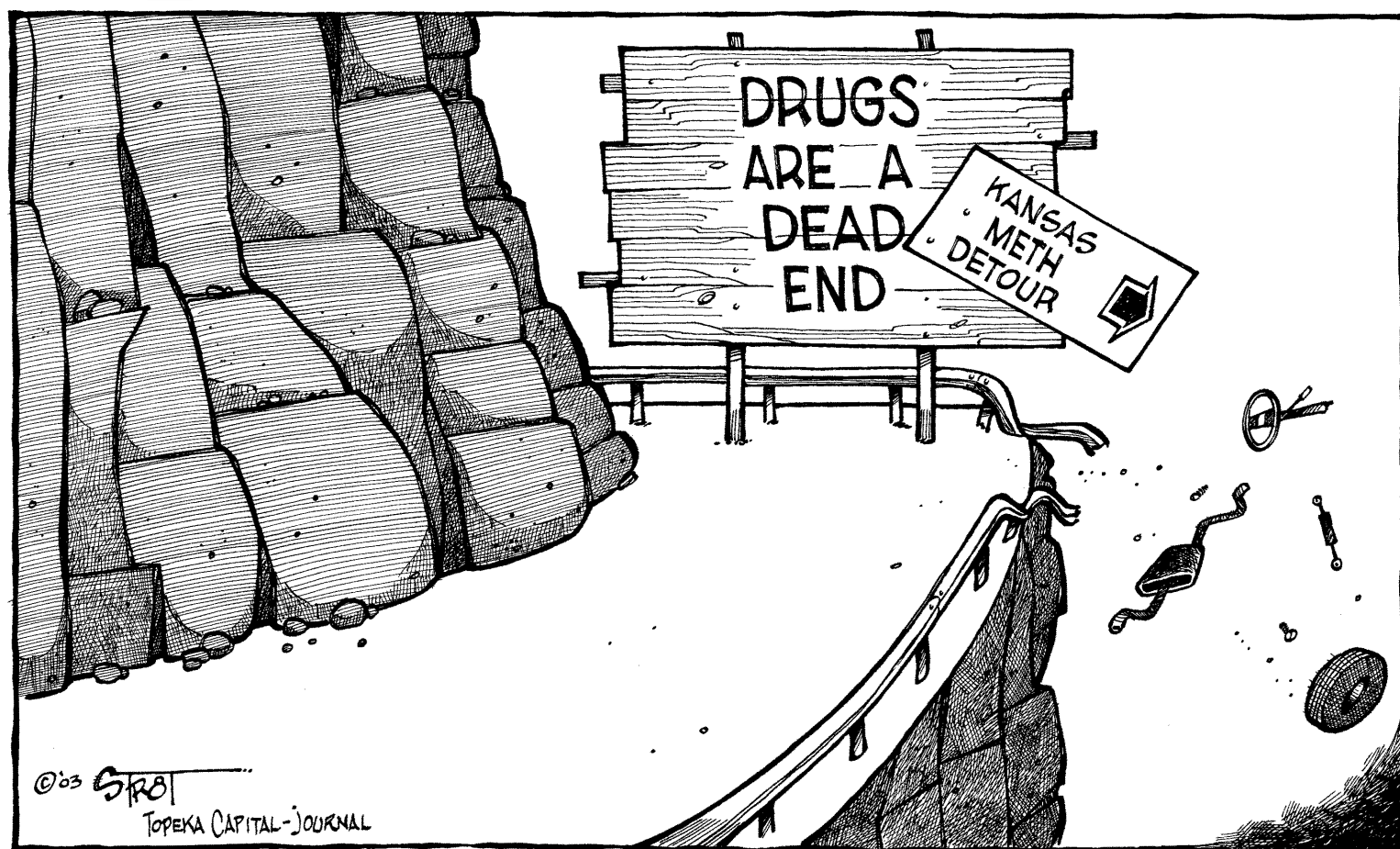
The problem is getting from here to there without breaking every farmer and banker in rural America. We're all hooked on federal money.

Pat Roberts thought he had it figured out when, as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, he wrote the "Freedom to Farm" bill.

That didn't work out so well. And no one in Congress has worked up the nerve to try again.

But we need to. The days is coming when the farm bill just won't fly. We need to be ready for that.

Meantime, pay your Farm Bureau dues and hope that Washington continues to listen to the farm vote for a few more years. — Steve Haynes



What happened to those people we knew?

I don't know about you, but I've been thinking about some of the people I've known throughout my life.

Some I was not sorry to part from, but some I would truly like to see again — for one reason or another. I would like to know where they are now — what they're doing, if they're happy, if their memories match mine.

People are strange creatures, aren't they? We remember the past and dream of the future, while seldom appreciate the present.

Maybe if I'd spent more time appreciating people when they were in my life, I wouldn't have lost so many of them along the way. I guess that's the curse of moving too many times; you lose people.

But then living in the same place your whole life has drawbacks too, I suppose.

Youthful mistakes and indiscretions are always remembered. You never can get away



lorna g t

• commentary

from the ones you'd like to lose.

I lost some of my closest friends from high school. I didn't realize that graduation meant I'd never see them again. They never came back for reunions and quickly quit writing letters. Several have since died, but I often wonder about the others.

After saying hello, we'd probably find it difficult to make conversation after all these years. But I'd like to try.

The years have taught me many things. I believe we learn something from every person we meet, and I believe that some people are at

least temporary angels sent by God to either teach or help us. It's harder to believe that I might be God's agent to help someone else, but I hope that is occasionally true.

I like this quote from Albert Schweitzer: "In everyone's life, at some time our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."

Don't waste your today; spend it in appreciating those who are around you right now. Thanksgiving is approaching.

Why not count your blessings (many of them are the people around you), forget your troubles, and set out to "rekindle" someone else's "inner spirit"?

In the process, your spirit might re-gain its glow, and your Thanksgiving might take on a whole new dimension.

Armistice Day is historical Veterans Day

During my conversations with people in Goodland in the days leading up to this past Veterans Day, I realized that many people know little about the history of the holiday.

While preparing some articles for last Tuesday's issue, I did some research on Veterans Day and thought some readers might be interested in what I found out. If anyone disagrees with what is here, please let me know. As a history major in college and a veteran myself, I have a deep personal interest in the heritage of our nation and its military.

On Nov. 11, 1918, at 11 a.m. in Paris, the armistice was signed that ended the fighting in World War I. America suffered over 53,000 killed in action. More than 4,700,000 Americans were in uniform during the war years with less than 200 still alive today.

An Act of Congress on May 13, 1938, made Armistice Day a national holiday, but the "the war to end all wars" failed to accomplish that goal. War broke out again in Europe a year later. Two years later, the United States declared war



greg stover

• as i see it

against the Axis Powers after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

More than 16 million men and women served in America's armed forces during World War II, of whom about 4,370,000 are still living. More than 291,000 lost their lives in action.

World War II ended in 1945, but in June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea, and America once again was at a war. The Korean War lasted three years and cost the United States over 33,000 combat deaths.

Recognizing the sacrifices veterans of World War II and Korea made for their country, the 83rd Congress passed a bill on June 1, 1954,

changing Armistice Day to Veterans Day. President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first Veterans Day Proclamation on Oct. 8.

In June 1968, the Uniform Holiday Act changed Veterans Day, along with three other holidays, to fall on a Monday beginning in 1971. Veterans groups nationwide united in opposition to including Veterans Day in this law. Part of the reason for this was their desire to maintain the significance of "the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month" as part of the historic and patriotic legacy of Veterans Day.

President Gerald R. Ford signed a law on Sept. 20, 1975 that returned the Veterans Day observance to Nov. 11 beginning in 1978.

This year, on Oct. 31, the U.S. Senate passed a law declaring Emporia as the founding city of Veterans Day. The measure passed the House of Representatives in September.

In the resolution, Congress recognized Emporia native Alvin King as the founder of Veterans Day and honored Congressman Ed Rees of Kansas for his efforts in establishing Veterans Day.

Veterans Day was special for Kansans

Tuesday was a special Veterans Day for Kansans. This is the 50th year the citizens of Emporia, the home of Veterans Day, gathered to honor and recognize the sacrifices and service of all our nation's veterans.

In 1953, Emporia resident Alvin J. King asked his congressman, Edward H. Rees, to sponsor a bill making Veterans Day a national observance. The bill passed Congress and was signed into law by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 2003, both the House of Representatives and the Senate passed a resolution formally declaring Emporia the home of Veterans Day.

As residents honor our servicemen and women, we need to not only thank these veterans for their service, but do what we can to make sure they receive the benefits and services we have promised. Recognizing the contributions and sacrifices that our nation's veterans have made to protect this nation is important not only on Veterans Day but every day of the year.

A commitment was made to those who have



jerry moran

• in congress

served our country to receive quality health care. Although direct funding for veterans health care has increased by almost 50 percent over the past five years, an ever-increasing number of veterans still face unacceptable waiting times at Department of Veterans Affairs health care facilities. Earlier this year, I offered an amendment to provide additional money for medical care to make sure that the department will be able to treat our current veterans, as well as servicemen and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. As Congress works to improve veterans' services, I will continue to fight for funding that keeps pace with new veterans joining the system.

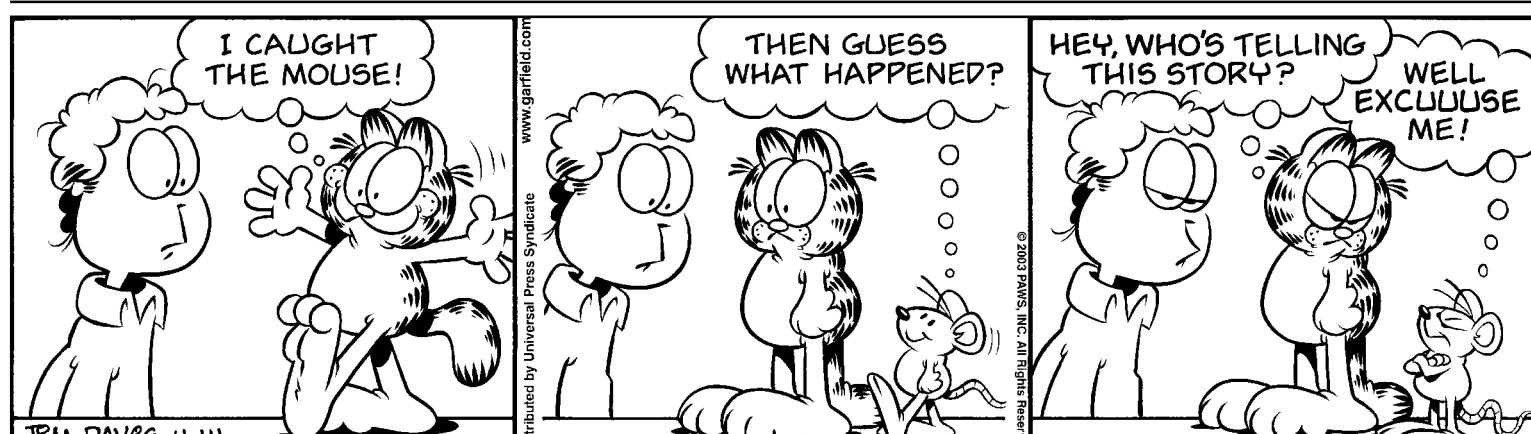
Receiving care closer to home is also essential to ensuring our veterans receive quality health care services. Many Kansas veterans

must travel hundreds of miles in order to receive necessary care. I sponsored legislation that would allow the government to pay for veterans to receive routine health services at local clinics and hospitals. The Rural Veterans Access to Care Act would allow enrolled veterans who live in rural areas to receive care from their own doctors at their local facilities.

A new proposal allows qualified Kansas veterans to receive medication, prescribed by private doctors, through VA pharmacies. Under the previous system, veterans were required to see a VA doctor to have prescriptions filled by the department. To be eligible for the new benefit, veterans must have already enrolled in veterans' health care and have been waiting more than 30 days for their first primary care appointment. We hope this program will help reduce the waiting time for all veterans.

Our veterans and their service to our country have always been a proud part of our country's heritage. Let us never forget that America draws its strength, its prosperity and its majesty from the sacrifices of its people.

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