

from our viewpoint...

Atkins aids cowman, mad cow scare hurts

Pity the poor cowman. Just when the late Dr. Atkins and his diet fad pushed beef prices through the ceiling, they find a mad cow in Washington state. Millions of pounds of American beef stack up in warehouses, banned by dozens of importing countries. Consumers shocked by the price of steak opt for chicken — or the other white meat. Vegetarians wag their fingers and say, “We told you so.” PETA, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals, probably will blame the whole thing on a conspiracy by cruel ranchers. And needless to say, beef prices have taken a tumble. But for how long? Many observers say the market will recoup most of last year’s gain. They don’t see much permanent damage from the mad cow scare.

For one thing, the beef industry has been moving to better track and account for its product. Many experts say the long-term damage to the industry will be minimal.

That doesn’t help much if you need to sell a bunch of calves next week, though.

Stronger government regulations and more testing seem certain. There are problems. For one thing, the prions thought to cause the disease are shadowy, protein particles classed as non-living.

Though not considered a life form, prions seem to be able to spread, reproduce and infect other organisms. While it can take years for a cow to become sick after infection, though, people who eat infected parts can go down rather quickly.

The disease, while frightening, is rare even where it is most common. Britain reported only about 150 deaths before it got control of it’s epidemic. In Japan, where all beef slaughtered for the table is tested, only nine infected animals have been discovered.

Science has little understanding of the prion or brain-wasting disease. The infection leaves brain tissue with a sponge-like consistency when viewed through a microscope, but scientists can’t explain exactly how it spreads or why similar diseases in other animals don’t seem to affect humans.

A version in sheep, called scrappie, has been known for more than 30 years. A big proportion of the deer and elk in north central Colorado are infected with “chronic wasting disease,” still another relative. Cannibals of New Guinea were known to pass a similar disease on by eating brain tissue of the dead as much as 65 years ago.

While the link between eating infected tissue and human infection is clear with cows, there is no proof — yet — that humans can contract the disease from deer or sheep.

There is the problem, that “yet.”

The government has banned beef parts from cattle feed, hoping to prevent transmission, but infected material might still be fed to pigs, pets or other animals. Why not bad use of brain and nerve tissue entirely?

There is just so much we don’t know. Yet people seem determined to eat steak, despite the price. And losing weight has a strong appeal.

The market will recover because Americans like their beef. But the scare hardly seems fair to the cowman. — *Steve Haynes*

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Hard to hand off to the next generation

“Gwamma, gwamma, they’s stealin’ you blind.”

My little nephew (now a junior in high school) wasn’t kidding. We were stripping an upstairs bedroom when my mother called from Texas.

Mom was spending the winter in Texas and my sister Marie was watching her home in Concordia while she was gone.

I had a child in college who needed some bedroom furniture and Mom had a set that hadn’t been used since my sister and I left home.

Mom told me to go over to her house and get the stuff whenever I had a chance, so Marie and I were busy moving beds and a dresser from the upstairs of Mom’s place to the tiny U-Haul behind my truck.

In the middle of this operation, Mom called and Curtis, who must have been all of 5 or 6 at the time, told on us.

I remember this as I watch my youngest daughter pack up my china for the trip to Lawrence.

“Gwamma, gwamma, she’s stealing me blind.”

The china, like that bedroom set, has not been



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

used in years. In fact it has not been unpacked since we moved back to Kansas 10 years ago.

The kids left home and we have another set of good china, so I have just not needed a set of fine dinnerware for 12.

This set is enormous. It has 24 plates and 12 of everything else that you can think of. There are two sizes of bowls — one for soup and one for fruit. There are cups and saucers and half-size or demitasse cups and saucers. Serving pieces include cream and sugar, salt and pepper, three sizes of vegetable bowls, platters, a coffee pot and lid and a tea pot and lid.

Unfortunately, the lids are broken on both the sugar and coffee pot. This is not bad for a set I got before I was married 32 years ago.

The dishes have silver around the rims and tiny green leaves and white flowers about one-half inch from the rim. The bottoms say Sheffield Fine China, Japan, and Elegance,

Time to show your support for baseball

To the Editor.

On Monday at 7 pm, in the school district’s administration building there will be a school board meeting, and the topic of having baseball be a high school sport will be discussed.

For all you people who have told me you support having baseball in our school system, this is a chance for you to show it by coming to the meeting.

Several people have been working hard to get this task accomplished, and would appreciate your support.

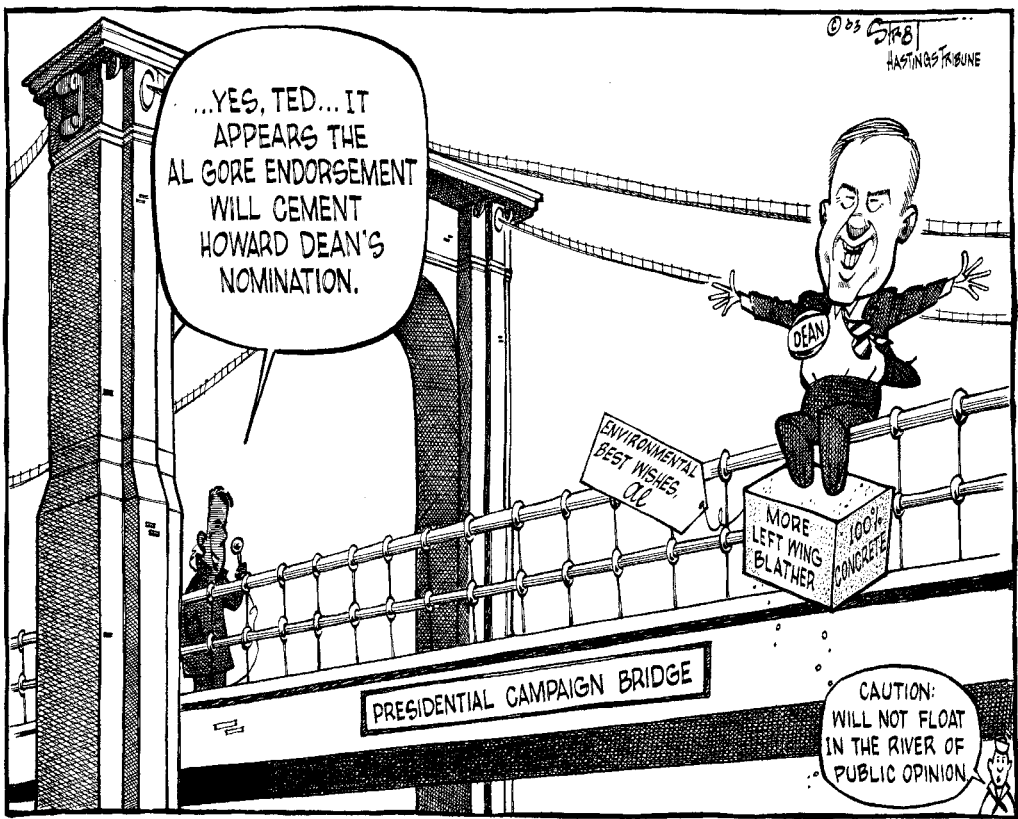


**from our
readers**

• to the editor

We have formed a club (much like the Wrestling Enthusiast Club) in which anyone interested can join.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to join our club, please give me a



garfield

