

from our viewpoint...

Development efforts take step backwards

The resignation Thursday of the economic development director is a loss for the businesses and citizens of Sherman County. We regret the decision by Carolyn Applegate to leave her post with the Sherman County Economic Development Council after two successful years, but her position had become untenable. She took a fledgling office and made it into a program respected at the regional and state levels. Her untiring efforts were directed to help existing businesses and to bring new businesses to the county.

One of her best accomplishments was taking the county's foundinging microloan program and seeing that all \$90,000 was loaned out to businesses before the end of the grant period. She worked with 57 businesses to find the seven who got loans. Before her time, not one business had been able to navigate the program's complex and confusing application process. Not everything Applegate tried worked, and at times people felt she was overbearing. She described herself as a prickly person who did not mince words because she wanted to get things done rather than tie up time in side issues.

It was those side issues that brought her downfall, however. In one case, Applegate was chastised for getting the council to approve purchase of the welcome flags which now appear downtown during special events.

Members of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau complained about the way Applegate brought them into the discussion on the flags, which were a joint project of the Chamber of Commerce, the council and the visitor's bureau. In effect, the visitor's bureau felt the project had been crammed down their throats.

There was an effort to push Applegate out last year, but in the end the council gave her a contract for a second year. Before her resignation last week, Applegate said she felt the council spent over three hours behind closed doors listing all the mistakes she had made, but didn't look at the successes of the last year.

Disappointed, but not totally dejected, Applegate said it was better to get out now because it was not worth trying to stay and continue her work when it was obvious her efforts were not appreciated. She said resigning was better than waiting to be fired by the council.

Applegate seemed to work well with the Goodland Chamber of Commerce and had tried to get along with the Convention and Visitors Bureau. She said she felt it was important to work with the other offices, and tried to coordinate things when possible.

In the fight between her and the visitors bureau, there is plenty of fault to go around, but finding fault will not solve the problem. Nor will it produce the unified effort that is needed to bring people and businesses to this county.

The economic development office will continue, but it may be harder to fill Applegate's shoes than council members think. No matter who they bring in, it will take the new person time to get the feel and to make the contacts that came naturally with Applegate.

Much of the effort of the last two years will be left behind, and the county will be the worse for the opportunities missed. — *Tom Betz*

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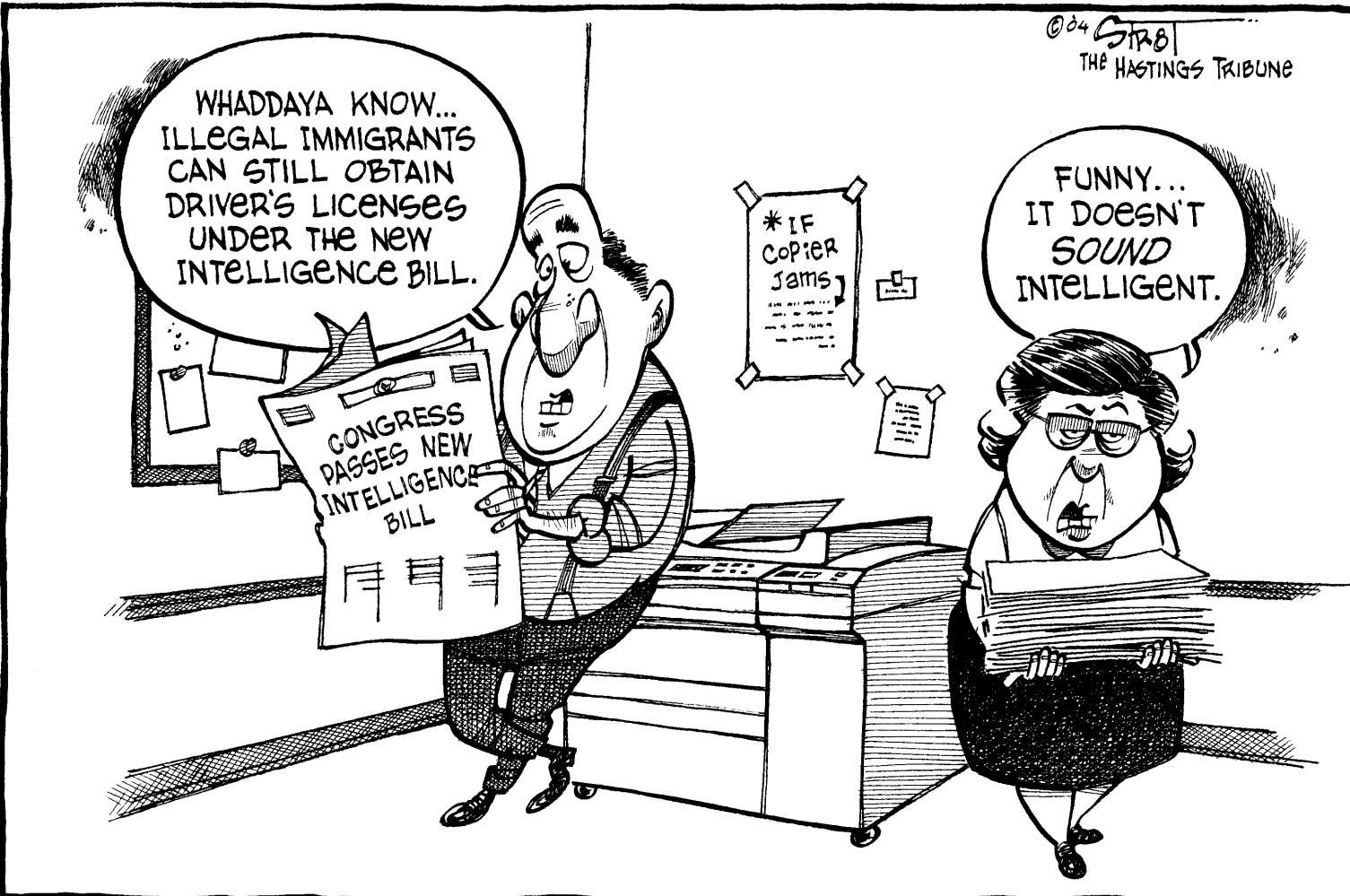
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Making his favorite dish for Thanksgiving

Kim, the editor, was in a twitter. She was supposed to cook Thanksgiving dinner for about 10 people.

Kim got married in July, and this was the first Thanksgiving she has had with in-laws, friends and assorted family members.

"I've never cooked a turkey for a lot of people before," she confided. "I'm going to make my Mom's stuffing and homemade rolls and pies, but I don't know what I'm going to have as a vegetable."

I suggested green beans. That's what I was cooking for Steve and our son Lacy, who would be driving in from Lawrence for the holidays.

My recipe for green beans is toss two or three cans of French-cut green beans in a pan. Add an onion, cut in half, and a couple pieces of bacon. Then you let it cook a couple of hours until the liquid in almost gone and the beans are about to burn. Add water to make more liquid, and you can serve them as soon as the rest of the meal is ready.

This sounds a little slapdash, but it makes great green beans.



cynthia haynes

• open season

However, my son wanted me to fix his grandmother's green-bean casserole.

I told him no. I don't fix my mother-in-law's green-bean casserole. His sisters fix that, and they're in Georgia.

Then we found out that Lacy would be late getting to town, so we decided to have lunch at the community Thanksgiving meal and I decided to make the green—bean casserole.

If I took out a serving for Lacy, he could have one of his favorite dishes and I wouldn't be serving a side dish with more calories than the pie.

The casserole was a hit and three people asked me for the recipe. The fourth one suggested I just put it in the paper.

That seemed a good idea, so here it is:

Mom Barb's Green Bean Casserole
1 can French-cut green beans
1 can white corn
8 ounces sour cream
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 can sliced water chestnuts
1 can cream of mushroom, chicken or celery soup

1/2 cup diced onion
1 tube Ritz crackers, crushed
1 stick melted margarine.

In a greased baking dish, mix the drained corn and green beans. In a bowl, mix the sour cream, cheddar cheese, water chestnuts, soup and onion. Layer that over the beans and corn. Mix the crackers and margarine and sprinkle over the top. Bake at 400 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes or until cracker crumbs are browned.

I made a double batch and had enough left over that Lacy had it for Thanksgiving and took some back to Lawrence with him.

It's a good Thanksgiving when you can make the family's favorite dishes and have leftovers.

Cell phones bring soldiers closer to home

Only an echo on the line gave away the distance, about 7,100 miles, nearly a third of the way around the globe.

But here I was, sitting in Kansas, talking with Randy McHugh in Kuwait.

That's the first clue that this is not your grandfather's war.

Just a couple of generations ago, soldiers on another continent might send a letter home every week or every day.

These might arrive in some sort of timely fashion, but more often not. There were no telephone links to North Africa or Normandy. No cell phones on the Rhine.

A man's family might hear from him once a month, when a bundle of mail arrived, holes cut out by the censors. Or they might not know where he was for months on end.

Few came home from Europe on leave. Soldiers were there for the duration, unless they came back wounded, or worse.

Today, they can get on a plane and fly home, then be back at the front next week. That doesn't lessen the sacrifice of men like Randy McHugh, who has been away from his job, his wife and his kids for most of a year now on active duty with the Army.

Randy didn't want anything for himself. He wanted to thank everyone who's been kind to him and his family since he was called up. He wanted us to know that a lot of good has happened in Iraq since Americans invaded the Middle Eastern



steve haynes

• along the sappa

country and captured the former dictator Saddam Hussein.

He wanted people to know he was there because he cared.

People like Randy make the all-volunteer U.S. Army the best in the world. Like thousands of men and women across the country, he's a career National Guardsman. This is his second call to active duty.

Though he missed the first Gulf War, he spent weeks guarding Nebraska airports after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Now he's overseas. He talks about two tours "up north," escorting truck con-

voys into Iraq.

His job was to sit atop a truck with a .50-caliber machine gun, just waiting for the convoy to be attacked. In fact, it seldom happened. And that's one of the truths that often escapes our bomb-blast conscious media.

If it wasn't for the willingness of highly trained non-coms like Randy McHugh, a small professional army wouldn't work. It's the citizen-soldiers of the Guard and the active Reserves that give the volunteer force its punch, that allow the army to go with just a handful of regular divisions.

He has a cell phone. He can call home when he has time, talk to his kids, hear what his wife is dealing with.

Still, he says, it's hard to miss their games, their birthdays, their little triumphs and losses. He'll be glad to be home.

And we'll be proud to have him.



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garfield

