

from our viewpoint...

Rural schools target of closure fanatics

It's out in the open now. Eastern Kansas legislators want to close our schools. Not just the struggling "little" schools like Jennings, Brewster and Weskan. Under one plan on the table in Topeka, it's likely that every district in northwest Kansas, save one or two, would be forced to merge. The legislators say, of course, that they don't want to close schools. It's all about cutting administrative expense, they say.

Bull. First, there's no way to save money by consolidating districts. Most have cut costs to the bone. Buildings still need principals. Someone still has to fill out the state and federal paperwork. Classes would still need teachers.

Jim Has, a research specialist with the Kansas Association of School Boards, put it well: "The only way to have substantial saving would be to close buildings."

One plan, by Rep. Candy Ruff, a Leavenworth Democrat, would cut to just one district in any county with fewer than 26,000 people, which is all of our counties. That would eliminate 122 of the state's 302 school districts.

Another, by Sen. Phil Journey, a Wichita-area Republican, would require merging all districts under 1,000 enrollment. In northwest Kansas, only a handful would survive.

And at first, perhaps, schools would remain open in county seat towns. Forget about the little ones — Brewster, Rexford, Weskan and the like. They'd be closed. Many are on the edge anyway.

But two things happen in school consolidations: The town with the votes gets the schools, no matter what promises are made at the outset. Ask people in McDonald. And since closing buildings is the only real way to save money, someday it'll happen. Students in St. Francis, Atwood, Oberlin, Sharon Springs, Hoxie and other smaller county seats will wind up being bused to "efficient" high schools in larger towns. Even those schools will have less money than they get today.

And people in the cities will neither notice nor care. Their taxes won't go down, education won't be any better for anyone, but rural kids will spend hours on a bus every day of their school lives.

This is no joke, folks. The Legislature is under the gun to do something about school finance. Eastern Kansas has the votes. Unless we start screaming now, our schools are toast.

People in Topeka, Johnson County and Wichita are stoking the fires.

It will be up to our legislators, our school leaders and our people to make a case for small schools. Let's hope we are up to it, because nothing could be more important to our survival out here on the Plains. — *Steve Haynes*

The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor

Pat Schiefen, Copy Editor

Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor

Sports Editor/Reporter

Kathryn Burke, Reporter

Doug Jackson, Advertising Coordinator

Mona Carver, Adv. Sales

Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Richard Westfahl Ron VanLoenen Judy McKnight Betty Morris

Aaron Hickert Travis Jones Jerry Kirkpatrick Lana Westfahl

nwkanssas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(ntbetz@nwkanssas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkanssas.com)

Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735. Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkanssas.com

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$24; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$76. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$34; six months, \$49; 12 months, \$84. Mailed individually each day: 12 months, \$119. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman

County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants

1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY

STAR

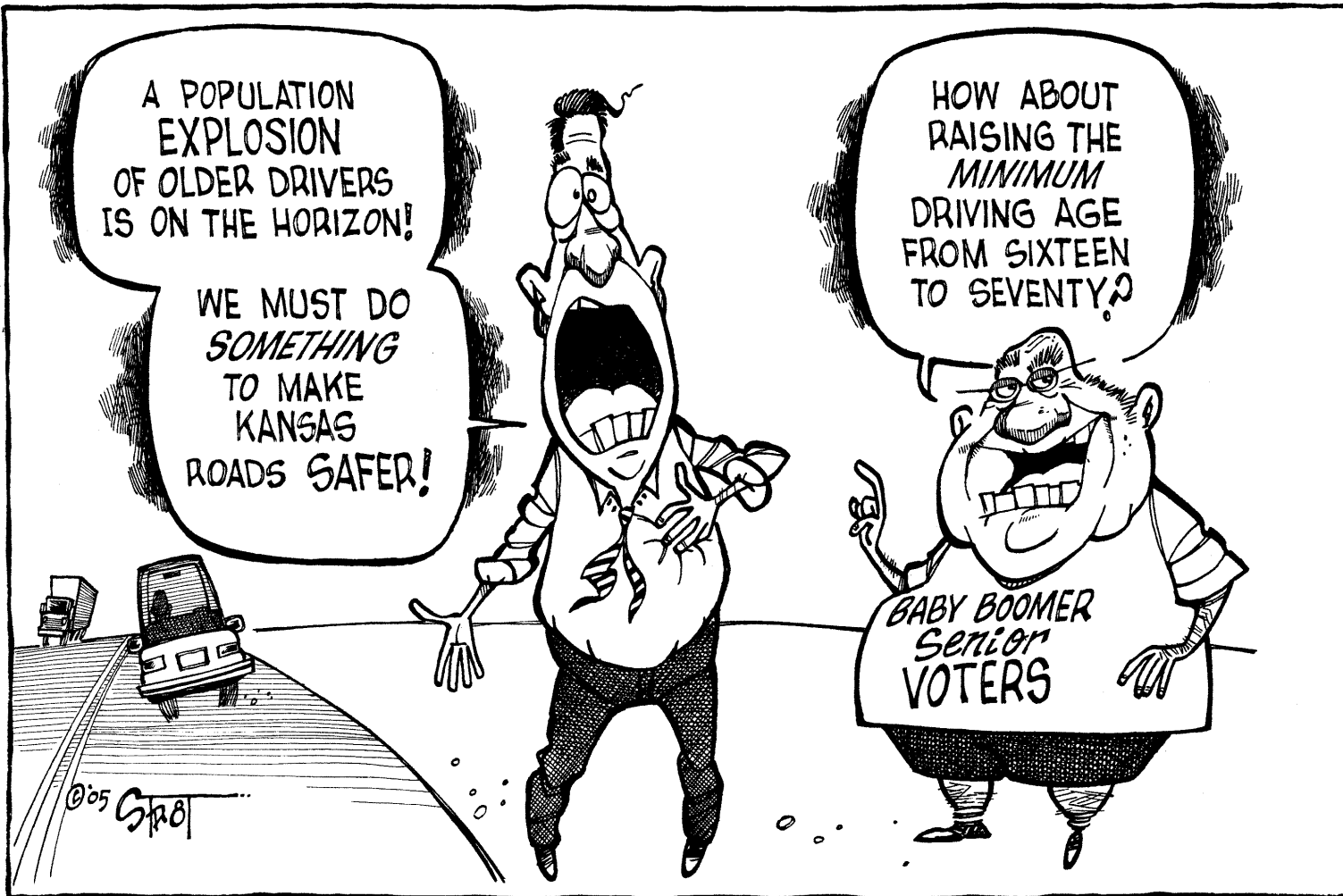
Founded by Eric and

Roxie Yonkey

1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



I'm always looking for those helpful tips

I'm an advice junkie.

I clip newspaper and magazine articles about how to have a cleaner, neater home and leave them to clutter up the counters.

I hoard great recipes I will never cook and save reviews for restaurants I will never visit.

So it's not surprising that I've saved an article from *The Denver Post* of 52 tips for better eating. (I'm also trying to lose a pound or 10.)

Many of the tips were common sense, some were dumb and a couple offered good advice on something I hadn't considered before.

In the common sense category there were:

No. 6: Eat the rainbow. Add color to your palate and challenge kids to do the same: green, red, yellow, orange, white, and you've covered the range of needed vitamins.

No. 11: Eat in-season fruits and veggies whenever possible.

No. 26: Use or buy a slow cooker.

No. 27: Bone up on calcium-rich foods.

No. 36: Eat fresh fruit instead of sweets for dessert.

No. 42: Get a salad next time you go to a fast-food place.

No. 43: Leave at least one bite of each food on your plate.

Under the "huh?, you got to be kidding me" (or boy, do they live in the city or what?) category were:



cynthia haynes

• open season

No. 3: Have a glass of red wine instead of a martini before dinner and another after the meal.

I don't even know anyone who drinks martinis.

No. 5: Pick the salmon over the steak at a restaurant. Check to make sure it's wild, not farmed.

"Hey, Joe, is this salmon wild?"

"I dunno, I didn't ask for his police record"

No. 12: Buy little ceramic ramekins at kitchen stores or thrift shops. They're perfect for all sorts of things, from melting two squares of chocolate to dissolving a teaspoon of sugar into hot water.

Why would I want to melt a teaspoon of sugar in hot water, anyway?

No. 13: Fill a ramekin with kosher or sea salt and place it next to your stove to feel like you're on the Food Network.

Is this another trick to absorb food odors, like baking soda? Personally, I like my home to smell like spaghetti, bean soup, fried chicken or whatever is in the pot.

No. 32: If you like butter, buy one of the

gourmet varieties, like Plugra, Buerre d'Isigny or Vermont Butter and Cheese-brand cultured butter.

My theory is if you can't pronounce it, don't buy it 'cause you'll never know what to do with it. That sort of fancy food is like the crocheted doilies in my cedar chest — another thing to take up space because it's too good to use. Besides, where would you get that stuff out here?

In the "Hey, I like that one," category were:

No. 2: Sit down and take at least 90 minutes to have a meal with family and friends at least once a week.

No. 20: Invest in a good set of Sharpie pens. Use them to write details and the date of whatever is in the container you're about to freeze. (I do that already, so it makes sense to me.)

No. 34: Make homemade soup stock.

No. 45: Share the wealth. When you feel hungry, donate a staple or write a check to the food bank.

No. 46: Try fixing your favorite vegetable in a cool new way.

No. 50: Try an ethnic food that's new to you.

And my favorite and one that I'm definitely going to try is:

No. 21: Every time the clocks change, go through your freezer. Use or throw out what's been there since the last time change.

You wouldn't believe the junk in my freezer. Most of it is mystery meat or maybe it's soup or a chunk of...who knows.

Remember our men and women in uniform

As we witness the 55th Presidential Inaugural and the start of a new Congress, I ask that we remember our men and women in uniform, particularly those who are serving abroad, fighting for the freedom of our nation.

We look to this time as a prime example of what they are fighting for: a government for the people and by the people.

My main priority at the beginning of this new Congress is twofold: Gaining stability in Iraq and safeguarding America from terrorism.

It is an honor to be selected again to be the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, a position that allows me to continue vital reforms necessary to better equip the intelligence community and as a result, better ensure the safety of all Americans. Over the next few months, the committee will examine the 9/11 reforms enacted last year. Our focus will be on looking for ways to improve our information sharing, analysis and intelligence capabilities.

I am privileged in this Congress to continue on the Senate Agriculture Committee. In confirmation hearings with Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, I discussed my top priority: resumption of trade of beef with Japan. I have already written a letter to the president requesting that this topic be included in every trade and foreign policy discussion that occurs between United States and Japan. I look forward to working on all issues facing our farmers and ranchers in Kansas.

President Bush has laid out a most aggressive domestic agenda for his second term. He has called for several education initiatives, in-



from other pens

• commentary

cluding increased funds for the Math and Science Partnership program.

As the author of this program, I am glad to see the president has recognized the crucial need for our schools to take the lead in science, technology and future job creation. Also in education, Congress will continue debate on the funding of Head Start, which I have championed for many years. I have seen first hand the difference that this education and child care program makes in the lives of Kansas children, their families and the community as a whole. I

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/CMEEmail.me

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

20510. (202) 225-2715; e-mail address — jerry.moran@mail.house.gov

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676; e-mail address — jmorrison@house.state.ks.us

Kansas Attorney General Phil Kline, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

garfield

