

Same-sex marriage not amendment material

The president and many in Congress are running around worrying that the sky is falling, when the only thing falling on their heads is a bad idea.

The president has called for a constitutional amendment to stop homosexuals — gays and lesbians — from marrying each other.

This is swinging a steam shovel to kill a fly. A constitutional amendment is a big deal. In more than 200 years, there have only been 27. They have been for such things as giving the vote to minorities and women, allowing citizens to disagree with the government and giving the states certain rights, though admittedly those seem to be getting fewer and fewer.

A constitutional amendment is not needed to solve every problem in our society. The “problem” of some states allowing same-sex couples to “marry” is not that big a deal. It’s a point of view; a reason for excitable people to get all aflutter.

Excuse us, folks, but this is a non issue. Allow the states to do their thing. It doesn’t make any difference. It’s not skinning our nose at all.

There is no such thing as marriage between two people of the same sex. Marriage is the union of a man and woman before God, period.

That said, there is no reason two people who are committed to each other cannot join in some kind legal union. This isn’t marriage, but

a legal contract similar to marriage, the purchase of a business or adoption.

As for insurance and Social Security benefits, it should be up to those who administer these programs to decide if they will allow partners in “legal unions” to have benefits.

Disney has long allowed partners of any sex to share in its benefit programs. That is a corporate decision made to attract talented people to the company with benefits they couldn’t get most other places. This is perfectly legal and probably a good decision for Disney.

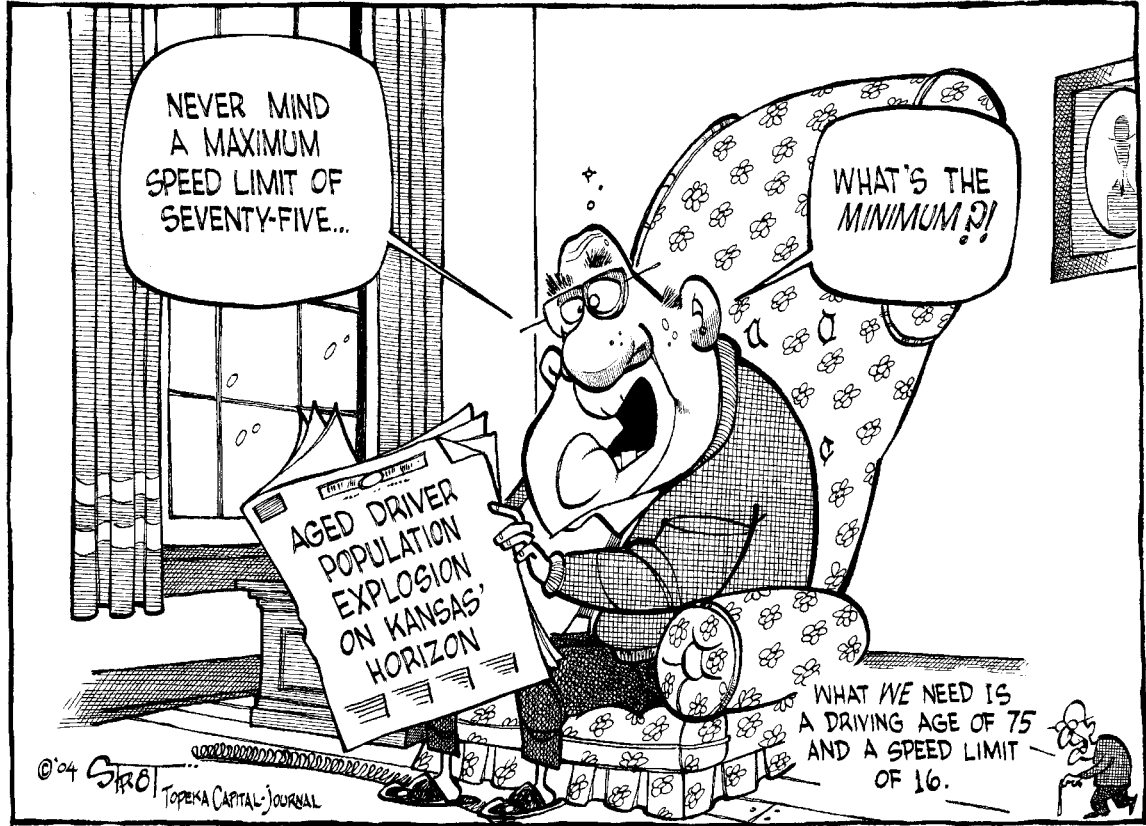
Social Security does not allow benefits to “legal unions,” whether they be same-sex couples or those of opposite sex, for partners who have never married. This, too, is a legal decision, made to protect the program.

Neither Disney nor Social Security is necessarily wrong. They have different aims and both should be allowed to do what they think best.

If the federal government would just forget about gays and lesbians marrying, the whole issue would die down. Yes, some couples would still go to California to get “married,” but no one would care except them.

It’s time the federal government got its nose out of others’ business and went back to solving the problems that need a steam shovel — like health care, foreign policy and where will the next parking garage in Washington be.

— Cynthia Haynes



And she thought she had a mess



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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The house is starting to get put back together.

I thought I was going to go mad for a few weeks while we had painters and carpet layers. Then a pair of guys came and tore off my back porch. I not only couldn’t I walk through the front of the house without moving sideways to get by the furniture, which was pushed to the middle of the rooms; I couldn’t get out my back door without jumping down about 18 inches or using a wobbly cement block as a step.

While intellectually I knew that you have to do all this stuff to make things better, I wasn’t prepared to deal with it when it came.

First of all, I had forgotten we had so much stuff. We have stuff stuffed behind couches, in drawers, in closets, on shelves, on the floor, on tables, on — well you get the idea — pretty much everywhere.

The scary part is we weren’t even touching the basement, where we store stuff.

The last time I had to deal with a mess like this was 10 years ago when I packed our household and moved to Oberlin. At that time, we had two teen-agers to blame for a lot of the stuff.

The teen-agers are now 20-somethings and live in Lawrence, and I think we have more stuff than when they were both here.

After getting the upstairs and downstairs painted and carpeting put down in three rooms, the painters departed and the carpet layers

said they would be back in a couple of weeks to finish the job of recarpeting the downstairs bedroom and the stairs that lead to the basement.

Over the last week, we have rehanging pictures, sorted and discarded piles of newspapers and magazines with articles we were going to read when we got around to it, and started putting things back where they belong.

The cats have done well during this topsy-turvy time. The painters found dozens of cat toys hidden under inaccessible cabinets and Molly somehow figured out how to get under the ice box.

I inherited my Daddy’s liquor cabinet — an antique ice box. It’s filled with booze we seldom drink, and glasses for same.

When the painters moved it out, the cats discovered that the flap on the front is hinged — I’m not sure why — and there was room to get under the other three sides for a cat hiding place. With the ice box back in its corner and the humidifier next to it, only the front with the flap is

now available. Molly has the contraption figured out. She puts her paw under and pulls it toward her, then snakes her plump little self under before it falls back down.

April Alice just can’t figure it out. She sees Molly get under there, and she knows that she was able to do it when the ice box was out in the middle of the room. Now, however, she can’t get the hang of opening the door. It’s driving her crazy, especially when she sees Molly under there.

The old back porch or deck was falling apart and it took less than a week for the builders to take it off and replace it. The new one is not only strong, but as beautiful as only redwood and cedar can be when fresh. I know it will gray out, but right now it’s great.

I still need to get the rest of the carpeting down, but I’m in no hurry. I don’t have to pay for the work until it’s done, and right now it’s just nice to have my house back.

Plus, I still have plenty of pictures to hang.

The way we were was great

Harry Higgins’ daughters asked for recollections and stories about their father for his funeral.

I couldn’t think of one single story that would tell you about Harry, which is odd, because I’ve known him all my life.

Where do I start? Harry and his wife Betty were part of a circle of friends who lived their lives, raised their children and enjoyed each other’s company in Emporia, in eastern Kansas.

Harry decided that he wasn’t getting enough from dialysis treatments to make it worth the pain and suffering. He told the doctor he was going home and having a shot of scotch.

That was Harry. He loved his scotch, and he knew when to fold.

I’m sure it wasn’t an easy decision. Betty had a stroke several years ago and is in a nursing home. I know she hated to leave her. They’d been together since before the war, 64 years.

The last day, he waited until the girls could bring their mom up to see him before he let go. Everyone figured he just wanted to say good-bye.

My folks were part of that social group. Their lives and their families were intertwined over the years in a unique bond that almost defies description. They all led middle-class lives, striving for the American dream in that GI-Bill era after World War II. They thought they could raise their kids well in a small Kansas town.

Harry and Betty had come down from Kansas City, Kansas, as my folks had. Harry was a salesman, my dad a lawyer. There was Lamar and Zelma Dee Markowitz; Lamar pro-



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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fane and funny, a contractor who built a good business but always talked like a ditch digger. Bob and Lucy Foncannon rounded out the group; he was a banker.

None of the wives, in those 1950s-Leave-It-to-Beaver, days, had a regular outside job. They thought raising kids and keeping house was work enough.

The group wasn’t constantly together. I don’t remember that many times when all four couples were in one place, and there were others who came and went.

But we were always at somebody’s house to visit in the evening. The adults would have highballs. The kids went to play.

There were other couples who joined, but those four were eternal. My brother said the thing he remembered was when they got together, they were having fun. There wasn’t a jerk in the bunch. They were all nice people, honest, hard-working, successful. Their children turned out the same way.

They were good couples. There was never a divorce. If there was infidelity, it must have been awfully discreet.

As the years went by, three of the four couples bought cabins at the city lake, and the social life shifted out there. It was a great place to be,

but as pre-teens, we hated the isolation.

There are times when I’d give anything to go back to those simple days, though.

Harry was the successful sales manager of a successful local firm. Then the company changed and they bought him out. That was hard, but as things turned out, maybe for the best. He and Betty lived well in their retirement as they watched the others die off one by one.

That era is pretty much gone. Rare is the marriage where both partners don’t work. There may be people who form that kind of lifelong bond, but the way we move around today, I think it’s harder. More of us live in cities, and the social structure is different.

But that was a time, and that was a gang. I miss them all.

From the Bible

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Psalm 128: 1, 2

Just call it a senior moment

If my head weren’t screwed on, I’d lose it.

You see, I’m still “milking” my trip to Washington, sharing the details with anyone who will listen. There must be still be a few people who haven’t heard me expound on the topic, because I had an invitation to speak about it this week.

I had dutifully recorded the date and time in my appointment book. More to the point is the information I had NOT recorded. Like to what group and where. I knew when I was supposed to be there; I just didn’t know where I was supposed to be.

I discovered my mistake last week when looking ahead in my appointment book. There it was, written in my own hand, “Monday, March 8, 7 p.m., D.C. trip.” But where was I supposed to be? My colleagues were no help.

“You’re on your own,” they said.

Knowing I only had a few days to figure this out, I came to the resolution, “Girl, if you work for a newspaper, now is the time to let the newspaper work for you.” (I can’t help it. I loved JFK’s inauguration speech.)



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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Filing my own ad, in boldface caps, I begged for someone, anyone, to inform me of where I was expected on Monday at 7 p.m.

If you ever thought advertising doesn’t work, just try publicly admitting you’re a reading-a-ling needing help. Carriers picked up their papers about 3:45 p.m.; the first homes got their newspapers about 4 p.m.; and no later than 4:15 p.m., I had my first call.

“You’re to be at Prairie Land Electric’s meeting room to speak to the Mid-Century Study Club,” came the sweet voice.

“Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!” was all I could say.

But after about the third or fourth call, my reply came to be more like,

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know. Prairie Land’s meeting room. Right, 7 p.m. OK, you can stop laughing now. Uh-huh, I wrote it down. No, I’ll remember.”

And church! Forget about it! Those Christians still have a little devilish streak! During the fellowship time between early church and Sunday School, I heard, “Hey, Carolyn. Do ‘ya know where you’re supposed to be?” or, “So, do you know where you are?”

Ve-ry funny.

The moral of this story is: If I don’t show up to speak to your club, it’s not because I forgot. It’s because I don’t know “where” I’m supposed to be and was too embarrassed to ask.

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