

Plan to curb irrigation would idle precious land

Bad idea. A plan to take 100,000 acres in the Arkansas River valley out of crop production to retire water rights.

Bad, because it could cost businesses in 10 southwest Kansas counties \$8.7 million a year.

Bad because it relies on a federal program, Conservation Reserve, to pay farmers to idle the land. There's no guarantee the government will foot the bill or that Congress will continue the program.

Bad, because the world may well need the food — and fuel — being grown on that land.

Kansas does have a water shortage, especially out west. Most basins are over appropriated, that is, more well and ditch rights have been granted than there is water in most years.

Despite the fact that Kansas won a court order forcing Colorado to allow more flow at the state line, the Arkansas is dry west of Garden City most of the time. Farm wells suck up the flow.

The situation on the Ark isn't unusual — the other major basins of western Kansas, the Smoky Hill, Solomon, Saline and Republican — are over appropriated as well. Pumping has lowered the fabled Ogallala Aquifer to the

point where wells are dropping in many areas. Some are close to running out of water.

But taking land out of production isn't necessarily the answer. Conservation Reserve, in fact, already has done that in many areas.

Better to shift farmers back to dryland production. With new seeds and optimum crops, they can produce efficiently on non irrigated fields, continuing to contribute to the economy.

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran has asked the secretary of agriculture to allow dryland farming on land taken out of production on the Ark. We agree with his plan, but still, the federal government is not a dependable partner in a long-range effort such as this.

Whatever plan is adopted is liable to spread to other basins. Kansas has lost too many rural towns, businesses and schools as is. The state cannot and should not be pushing a plan to put even more of us out of business.

Yes, we need to save water.

No, we can't afford to irrigate as much as we have.

But the state shouldn't be paying to idle farmland. We need the production, we need the money, we need the grain.

This is a bad idea. — *Steve Haynes*

Remote dies after coffee bath

What to do, what to do. We might have to actually get up and walk to the television to change channels. In the world view of global warming, or war and peace, our inability to use the remote control might not seem like much, but it's a crisis at our house.

Don't ask me how it happened, but the television remote ended up in a half-full cup of coffee. So far, no amount of drying or cleaning has affected its operation. It's dead. It's not moving.

So now, just when I had about figured out all the buttons on the remote, I can't use it.

Jim tried to brief me on the manual controls, but I must have had that "deer-in-the-headlights" look because he gave up and said, "Find a channel you like and leave it there." Sounds good to me. All the HGTV I want.

-ob-

Jim and I are always in a rush. No matter where we go, we're always in a hurry to get there. Sometimes our personal grooming routines are so automatic we almost forget what we're doing.

Recently, we were getting ready to go somewhere and Jim had finished combing his hair. He was ready to shave next, but in his haste, he slathered hair mousse on his face instead of shaving creme.

No harm done, but it really made his beard stand up.

-ob-

A phone call to our daughter, Jennifer, on Saturday night found her family in the emergency room of a San Antonio hospital. Baby Ani had fallen off a bed and was beginning to sprout a "knot on her noggin." She was a little fussy and it was close to her bedtime, but Jennifer didn't want her to go to sleep until she had a checkup.

The baby got a clean bill of health and everyone breathed a sigh of re-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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lief. Ani is almost 9 months old and really starting to "motor-vate." Jim suggested to Jennifer that she duct tape Ani down.

But, of course, he would: Red Green is his hero.

-ob-

I want to buy a book titled, "Disorder in the American Courts." It contains the transcripts of actual court testimonies from real trials. Here are a few samples:

Attorney: What is your date of birth?

Witness: July 18.

Attorney: What year?

Witness: Every year.

Attorney: What was the first thing your husband said to you that morning?

Witness: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"

Attorney: And, why did that upset you?

Witness: My name is Susan.

Attorney: Now, doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Witness: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

Attorney: How was your first marriage terminated?

Witness: By death.

Attorney: And by whose death was it terminated?

Attorney: Is your appearance here

this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?

Witness: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

And, my personal favorite:

Attorney: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

Witness: No.

Attorney: Did you check for blood pressure?

Witness: No.

Attorney: Did you check for breathing?

Witness: No.

Attorney: So then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

Witness: No.

Attorney: How can you be so sure, doctor?

Witness: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

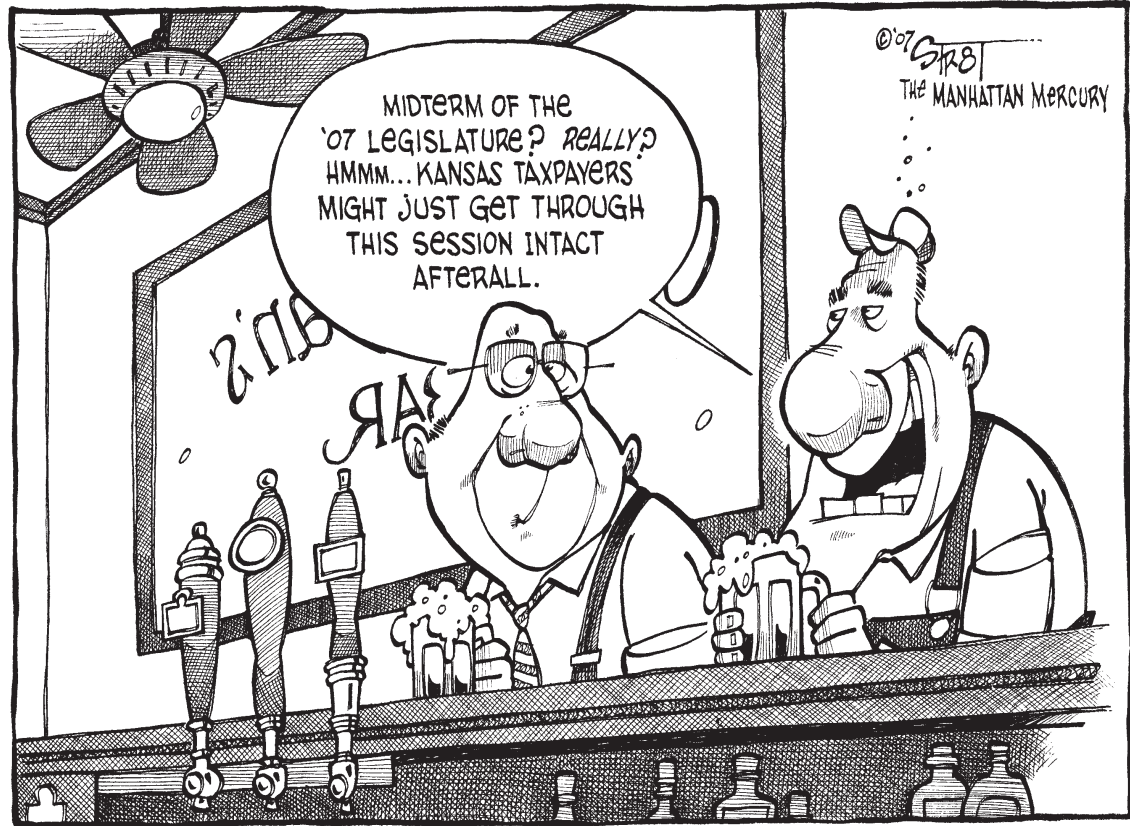
Attorney: But, could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

Witness: Yes, it is possible he could have been alive and practicing law.

From the Bible

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Isaiah 6:8



Siamese not pleased with move

Steve told me not to go looking for a new cat and, as usual, he was right.

Steve's theory is that the cats always find us. Too true.

But I've been wanting to replace my missing Siamese for about five years.

Every time a new cat comes — usually from my children — it's not a Siamese.

So when my favorite pet pusher told me about a Siamese kitten she had at the Norton city animal shelter, I tumbled.

Sherry works as the Norton animal control officer and as the circulation/classified/you-name-it manager at *The Norton Telegram*. Which is probably why *The Telegram* has a lot of information about lost, strayed, dumped and under-loved cats and dogs in it.

The newspaper office even has a pair of birds, which Sherry brought in for a short visit — about a year ago. Oh well. The Oberlin office has a cat and we never even pretended it belonged to anyone but the newspaper.

Anyway, back to the Siamese. Sherry said she had a 5-month-old female Siamese-mix that needed a home.

I talked to Steve. I discussed it with the girls at the office. I talked to Steve.

I called Sherry about a test drive. Sure, she said, I'll bring her down to the office.

I stopped by *The Telegram* and picked her up — a scared bundle of



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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shedding fur. She's beautifully marked and lay unresisting in my lap.

Ah, I thought, the perfect cat — pretty, loving, docile.

At home, I showed her where the water was upstairs and the food and litter box and food bowl downstairs. Then I let her go.

She ran between a couple of boxes near the food bowl in the basement.

OK, no problem. I knew where she was and she was safe from the other cats.

But I was afraid she'd get lonely. So I headed for bed, taking the new baby with me.

She needs a bit more socialization, I figured, and a night in our bed should help her to get close to Steve and me.

Steve stays up late, but he was ready to hit the hay at about 2 a.m. when I woke and realized something was wrong.

The baby had had an accident all over me, the bed and herself.

Steve removed the kitten to her hole between the boxes in the basement. I took a shower and stripped

the bed and rinsed the sheets. He hauled the bedding to the washing machine.

We remade the bed and went to sleep, figuring that I was to blame for the "accident."

That was four days ago, and neither of us has touched the new kitten since.

We figure she's somewhere in the basement among the boxes, Christmas decorations, summer clothing, books and stored items. There are about a million places a small cat could hide down there.

We're pretty sure she hasn't left through the cat door. It's kinda hard to get to, and every time one of the other cats goes down there, it growls and sniffs around suspiciously. Steve says he saw a flash of white the other night.

The up side of this is that Jezebel, the cat we hadn't seen since we took her to the vet three months ago, has come upstairs demanding love and attention. Rooming with a kitten apparently wasn't to her taste.

We still have a cat in the basement we never see. It's just a different cat.

Writer wants to bar animals

To the Editor:

Here's my opinion on revising the city ordinance that prohibits chickens and other barnyard animals from living in the city limits:

Don't give me a home
Where the chickens can roam
And the roosters can crow
Night and day.

Where often is heard
From the small barnyard herd
The "moo," "baa," "cluck," "oink"

Letters to the Editor

and the "neigh."

What, what
Can we do
To avoid the bird flu
And the poo?

Don't let it pass through
When the voting is due

Or we'll live in a
Barnyard-like zoo.

I appreciate the efforts of those petitioning for the revision; I just don't agree with them.

former city councilwoman
Leslie Bartels
Oberlin

Saving energy will help everyone

Is Al Gore right? Whether he is right or not about global warming, I believe one thing: this winter's weather is definitely different than it has been in the past 50 years of my life.

Viewing Mr. Gore's film on global warming, "An Inconvenient Truth," got me thinking again about our Ol' Mother Earth.

No matter how much I try to help stop global warming, doing what experts suggest to cut down carbon dioxide into our atmosphere, I am only one person. It will take each person on this planet to see the big picture.

Sure, most likely, I will never live to see what happens, but somewhere down the line, future generations are going to have to live with what I, along with every other person who lived during my time, left them.

When Americans crossed this land, calling it Manifest Destiny, they didn't give a damn about the environment. They felt it would last forever.

Now sitting in my house when the temperature is 104 degrees, or when the temperature dipped to -10 degrees, I think to myself, what did my ancestors do back in the day?

They didn't have the comforts that spoil us today. We have developed technology to make our lives easier, but does it really hurt us to cut back and see what it felt like to be alive 150 years ago?

When the blower motor went out on my furnace the coldest day of this year, the temperature dropped to 46 degrees in the house.

I decided to heat the house with

the six kerosene lamps that I inherited from my grandparents. It wasn't that uncomfortable, and if I had a wood-burning stove like grandpa did, the house would have been nice and toasty. I have no way of knowing how much emissions the stove would have put out, but I do remember tossing in dried cow chips in one, the ol' timers way of recycling. It wasn't that bad.

So I have looked at the website www.stopglobalwarming.org to see if there is anything I can do. Here are a few things we all can do to not only help global warming, but put a few bucks back into our pockets.

- *Check the water heater*, keep the thermostat no higher than 120 degrees. Save 550 pounds of CO2 and \$30 per year.

- *Use a push or electric mower*. Use your muscles instead of gas; this can save 80 pounds of CO2 and a few bucks per year.

- *Put on a sweater* instead of turning up the heat. Wear more clothing in winter. Save 1,000 pounds of CO2 and \$250 per year.

- *Inflate your tires*. Keep the tires on your vehicle adequately inflated. Check them monthly. Save 250 pounds of CO2 and \$840 per year.

- *Install a low-flow shower head*, using less water means less energy to heat it. Save 350 pounds of CO2 and \$150 per year.

- *Switch to a tankless water heater*. Your water will be heated as you use it. Save 300 pounds of CO2 and \$390 per year.

- *Change the air-conditioner filter*. Clean or replace dirty filters as recommended. Save 350 pounds of CO2 and \$150 per year.

- *Insulate your water heater*. This could save 1,000 pounds of CO2 and \$40 per year.

- *Replace old appliances*. Inefficient appliances waste energy. Save both CO2 and money.

- *Buy minimally packaged goods*. Less packaging could reduce your garbage by 10 percent. Save 1,200 pounds of CO2 and \$1,000 per year.

- *Insulate your home*. Make sure your walls and ceilings are insulated. Save 2,000 pounds of CO2 and about \$245 per year.

- *Finally, take some action*. There are many simple things we can do in our daily life that can have an effect on our immediate surroundings, and places as far away as Antarctica.

If everybody pitches in, we all win and save a few bucks along the way.

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