

Money for scholarships not helping rural cause

Everyone bemoans the fact that we're losing population, leaving business and few of our kids want to come home, even if they could find jobs.

But, pretty much, no one does anything about those problems.

For instance, nearly every group that gives a scholarship to Decatur Community High graduates just gives kids money to go to college.

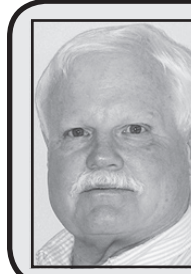
There's not much thought about where they will use the knowledge they acquire once they graduate.

And when they go to the city and find a good-paying job, no one will question the value of their education. It's our tradition, formed a century or more ago, to raise money to send kids to school.

Back in the day, no one thought to ask where they might settle. Back in the day, we just assumed most of them would come back to jobs here, to run the family business, teach at the school or work downtown.

Back in the day, and we're talking the turn of the 20th century and after, that was the norm. We figured if we gave graduates money to go to school, most of them would come home, and if a few went off to success elsewhere in business, a university, the arts, politics or military life, why so much the better. We'd all be proud.

All that changed after World War II. The decline in rural population



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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accelerated as farmers could afford bigger and better machinery. More importantly, our fathers and grandfathers who'd been overseas fighting wanted something more.

They didn't want to come home to the family business. They wanted to live in the new, burgeoning suburbs. Others who'd moved to the city wanted to stay with the factory jobs that had drawn them.

Yet out here in rural America, we kept on raising money to send our kids to college. No one thought to ask if we were just paying them to leave town. No matter how many left, or how many failed to come home, tradition held.

Maybe this would be a good time to change that. It's still a good idea, the right thing to do, to raise money for scholarships.

But do we have to just pay kids to move to the city?

Could organizations look at their scholarships and ask what they want them to accomplish? It might be a

good idea.

It'd be simple to just add a few strings. Give scholarships not for becoming a nurse, but for becoming a nurse and working five years in this county. Give scholarships not just to the brightest or hardest-working students, but to the brightest, hardest-working who promise to live in their home town for five years after school.

It might not work every time. Kids change their majors, their minds and their goals in college. Some might drop out of a scholarship program that encourages them to return home after school.

But enough who know the rules might just come home to make a difference in the trends of declining population and business numbers that beset our town - and nearly every town in rural America.

What, at this point, have we got to lose - except our youths, our economy and our towns?

Why not try it?



GETTING READY TO SIGN forms to attend Creighton University, Kade Brown (right front) checked with his father Kevin, who was looking at the papers. Kade's mother Carol was next to him and Decatur Community High Activities Director Joe Dreher took the whole thing in.

- Photo by Brenda Breth

Golfer signs with Creighton

Oberlin senior Kade Brown has signed to play golf at Creighton University in Omaha.

Brown, a Class 2A state championship player, said that his whole family plays golf and he has been playing the game since he was 3 or 4. His mother took over as coach of the Decatur Community High golf

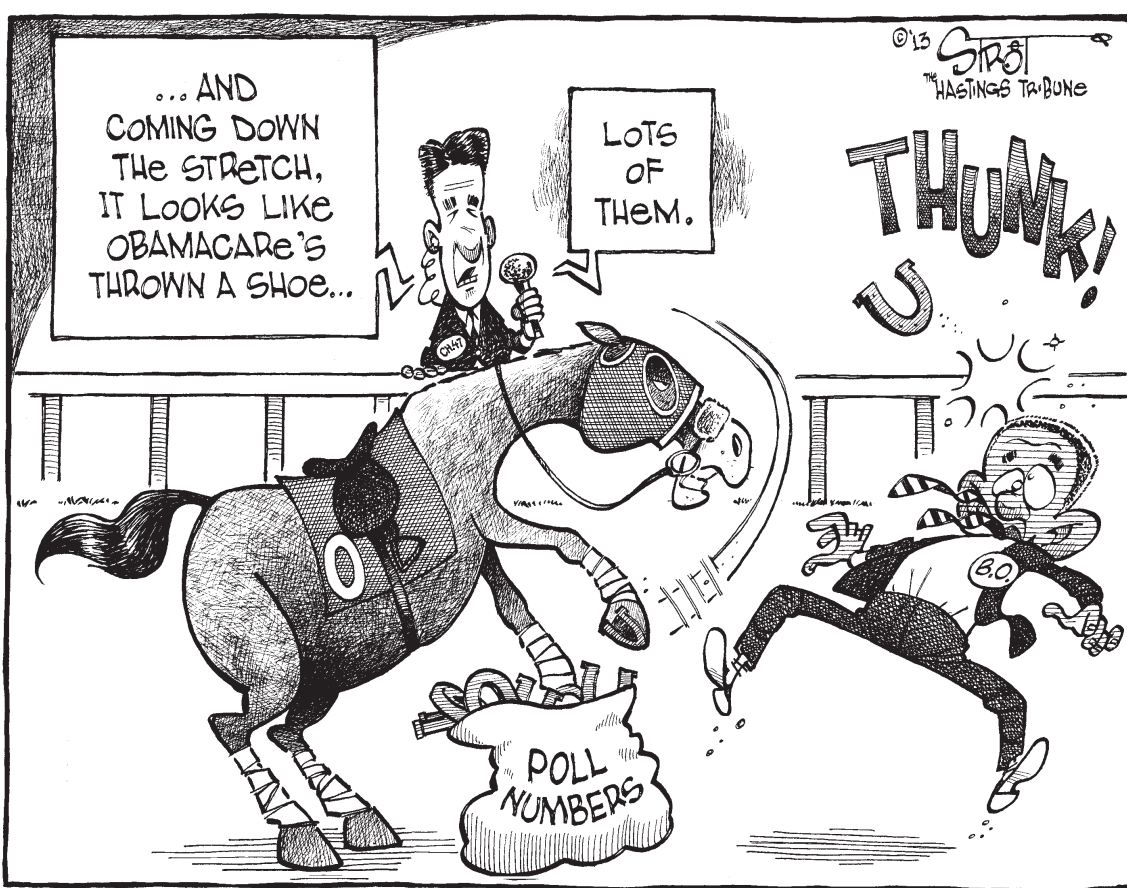
team this year after the retirement of long-time coach Dick Ahlberg.

Brown said that he plans to study business and finance at the Catholic university. He said that he chose Creighton because it was the only NCAA Division I school to offer a scholarship and it has long been his goal to attend a larger school.

"It's an added bonus that Creighton is such a good school," he said.

Besides his golf scholarship, Brown said, he expects to receive some academic scholarships.

Kade is the son of Kevin and Carol Brown. His brother Kelly, a freshman, also plays on the high school golf team.



Ignorance not bliss with meat

"Meat Processing" is the latest issue of the Kansas School Naturalist, available free upon request. This issue follows livestock from unloading through the meat processing plant to final packaging for your grocery store.

Co-authored with Professor Temple Grandin of Colorado State University, a recognized expert in the humane handling of animals, this issue fully illustrates all stages: from avoiding stressing animals in unloading to stunning to final packaging.

There are two responses to the copies that have been distributed so far. The older generations of Kansans flip through the booklet and matter-of-factly state: "Yep. That is where our meat comes from." Some remember butcher knives at home and how their grandparents processed meat in the winter.

The second response from many - but not all - younger Kansans is quite different. Except for farm kids who show their livestock at the county fair (and sign "intent to sell" statements), many younger Kansans do not know where meat comes from.

Animals are a big part of Kansas. Most people know that agriculture and aviation are two big drivers of the Kansas economy. But many do not realize that the area from Manhattan to Kansas City is a major animal research corridor. Animal testing in pharmaceutical research and for FDA and environmental safety protocols is conducted at facilities that few passers-by notice.

This research is done in Kansas and not on the East or West Coasts.



Education Frontlines

By John Richard Schrock

Folks in California and Florida simply do not know where their food comes from. They are easy targets for organizations that would stop all biomedical animal research and have everyone become vegetarian.

But Kansas is a fortress for this research that protects the environment from dangerous chemicals and develops drugs that help humans and animals alike. The animal industry is here because many Kansans are only a relative or two away from the beef industry. Most know where their meat comes from.

But unless things change, this will not be true for long.

The older generation of Kansans understood meat processing by observing it - indeed, by doing it. No booklet, pictures or video can provide the full understanding gained by direct experience.

Unfortunately, in most cases, the suits at the big processors have chosen to seal up their plants. This makes it difficult to counter the charges made by animal extremists. Such secrecy makes kids think that conditions must be really bad.

As Temple Grandin puts it: "We've got to show what we do. We've got to get over being bashful. Professionals in the meat-packing

industry need to show stuff done right. If you don't show kids interesting stuff, they won't get interested in interesting stuff."

If the big meat packers can overcome their shyness, our science teachers face a second hurdle. Field trips for science experiences have been dramatically curtailed. Cost is a small part of the reason. The teach-to-the-test curriculum is the big reason. It keeps good teachers from taking our students to an important learning experience. Our school boards can solve this problem.

The third problem is also educational. The current Kansas science education standards have very few references to animals or anatomy. But if the state Board of Education adopts the Next Generation Science Standards, there will be absolutely no secondary school science standards related to animals or anatomy. Teachers trying to justify a field trip will have nothing to back them up.

Thirty years from now, Kansas can remain a beef state and the center of animal research. Or we can be buying our meat from Asia, where our animal research will also be conducted. The choice is in the hands of our meat-processing industry and our educational policy makers.

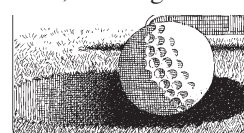
Team comes in second

Goodland won the Colby Invitational Golf Tournament on Friday, but Oberlin came in second with its five players shooting a 343.

Decatur Community High freshman Kelly Brown took second with a 79 and his big brother Kade Brown came in fourth with an 80. Logan Berry shot a 91 to take 12th; Zach May, 93, 14th; and Ryan May, 104, 22nd.

Goodland posted a 324 for first, followed by Oberlin, Atwood 355, Scott City 370, Colby 382 and Norton 439.

Gage Ihrig of Goodland won the tournament, shooting a 72.



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