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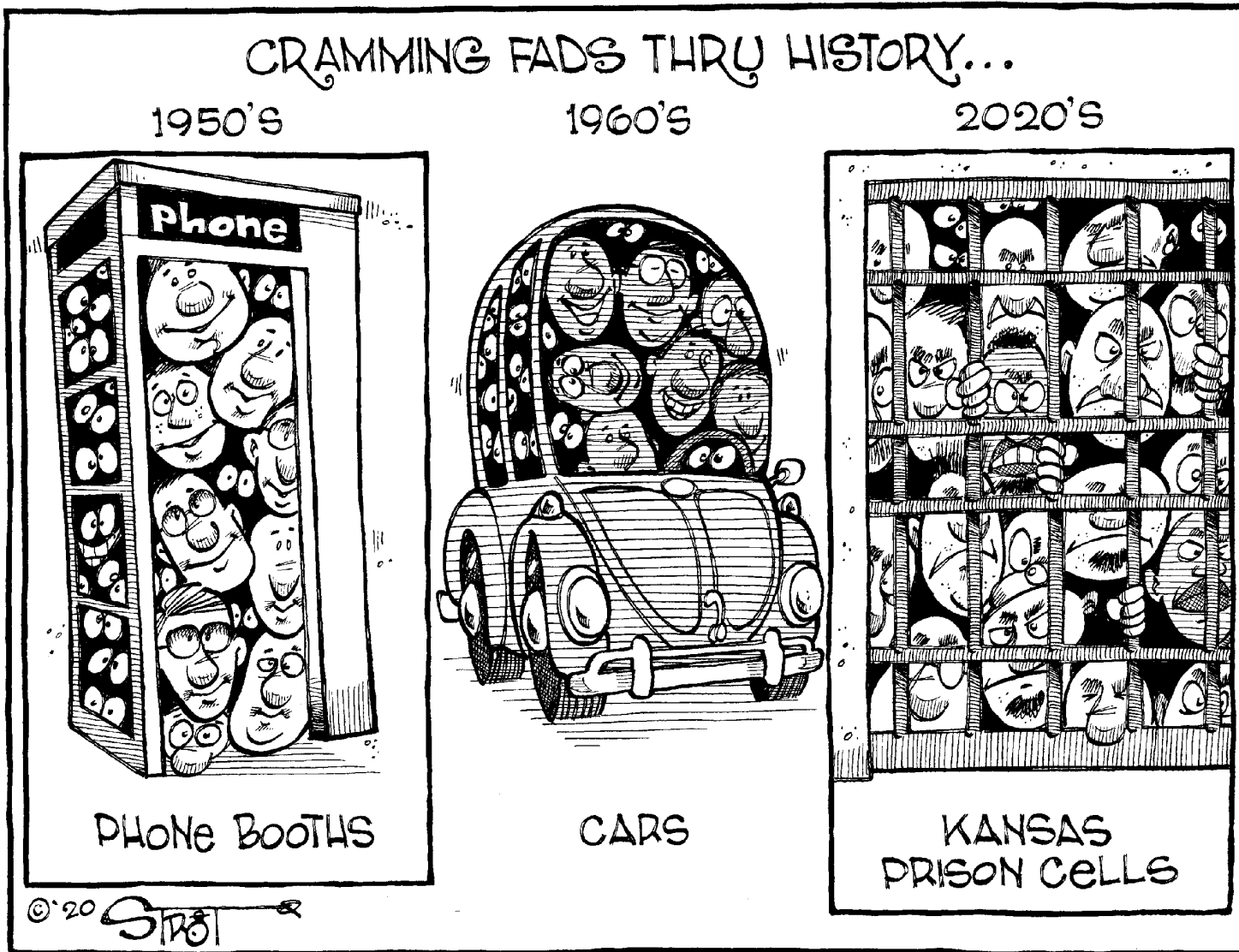
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Courage and integrity should remain pillars of friendly discourse

Bravery is not a virtue in 2020, or so it seems.

True patriots who expose their hearts and godliness often find themselves ostracized, at least by those who walk in lock-step, proud of like views; speaking the same lines; and demanding similar guidelines for personal friendships.

It is disappointing to watch, because anarchy peeks through the curtains during such stands. One doesn't need to fill

in the blanks with names, because strict partisans of every stripe would only belittle those in quiet opposition. What matters is that individuals with internal urgings — consciences, if you please — are not squelched, because such Profiles in Courage are needed in this nation, state, county and hometown.

We hurt for those who quietly avoid the duals, knowing their pathways are littered with cruel words and even vengeance. While many innocent people may cheer the gasbags for gutting the orphan, thoughtful observers will provide a hand of support to the courageous, albeit alone, heroes.

It may take years, even generations, to fully appreciate those making such courageous stands. But their time will come.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, a Kansan who climbed to the office of President, once wrote:
The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible.

The majorities may chant. The strong will flex their brawn. The religious might even claim God directs it. But the humble will find accord with the Christ who instructed his followers: A new command I give you; Love one another, as I have loved you. So you must embrace one another.

Therein is true bravery.

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Rudy Taylor
Taylor
Newspapers

This past week I was lucky enough to be allowed to attend the Young Farmers and Ranchers Leaders Conference in Manhattan. I say lucky enough because I have come to grips with the realization that I am no longer a young farmer or rancher. I guess it is the gray in my beard or maybe the fact that I have children who attend the conference on their own. Either way I am allowed to attend but not qualified.

The YF&R program is something that is near and dear to my heart. It was where Jennifer and I got our first taste of Kansas Farm Bureau and saw the power and importance of not just being a member but being involved. It was where we learned that while attending was a sacrifice, what we got back was more than worth the time invested.

I must admit my motivation for attending the conference is somewhat selfish. Yes, there are many great workshops, and I always come away with great information and ideas, but the workshops are not the most important thing. The conference also has some of the most incredible speakers, and often they are very motivational. While I need as much motivation as possible, and I enjoy a great speaker, that is not my number-one reason for attending.

No, my greatest motivation for attending is to soak up the energy and excitement that comes with being in a room with nearly 600 of the best and brightest in agriculture in Kansas. The passion that comes from the young farmers and ranchers in Kansas Farm Bureau is incredible. They are the newest and best trained professionals in our business and excited about the future.

If you have ever been worried about the future of agriculture, you have never attended this conference. It is so infectious, even an old guy like me can catch it. I must admit I learn a lot from this group, and my energy and enthusiasm levels are

Young at heart

through the roof after this weekend. It is refreshing to see the way new technology and ideas are embraced and considered. Again, I must admit as an old guy I am envious of how easily they adapt to the ever-changing landscape of agriculture. Often skeptics wonder how we are going to meet the challenge of feeding a growing world population. Spend the weekend at the YF&R Conference and it will be apparent.

Optimism and enthusiasm are infectious, and after this weekend I have caught it. I must admit that this conference makes me a little jealous — if only I could find the fountain of youth and start all over again. I guess in a way I did find that fountain of youth at the conference; just being there made me feel young again. OK, maybe that is overstating it, but I am grateful they allowed this old-young farmer to tag along.

—*"Insight" is a weekly column published by Kansas Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization whose mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service.*

has taken up in years. The bill that I'm in favor of is Senate Bill 252. SB 252 does not include coverage of pregnant women. Pregnant women, up to 171 percent of the federal poverty level, are currently covered by the existing Medicaid program and have been for over 20 years. SB 252 is written to leave pregnant women to apply only for the state's existing Medicaid program, not the expanded one.

With this bill, there does not appear to be a way that abortions can be paid for by expanded Medicaid. Furthermore, K.S.A. 65-6733 prohibits any state general funds or special revenue funds to be expended for any abortion. It also prohibits any health care service of a state agency, from covering an abortion. Senators recently received a letter from the Archbishop of St. Louis outlining support for Medicaid Expansion efforts. This letter is posted on my website www.brucegivens.com.

I have also been told that people getting on the Medicaid expansion would be moved ahead of those already waiting for Medicaid services, this is not true either. The entire SB 252 is available at the www.kansaslegislature.org. My website contains a list of statutes about abortion (mostly Kansas).

Senate District 14 has five hospitals and numerous clinics that would benefit from Medicaid expansion. All five of these hospitals have expressed that the expansion would benefit them.

As always, feel free to reach me at (785) 296-7678. My email is bruce.givens@senate.ks.gov.

Medicaid expansion is one of the most misrepresented topics that the legislature

Moving 'Forward'

With abortion and Medicaid and even unpasteurized milk under the legislative microscope, this week hearings start on yet another topic — maybe one of the better ideas that legislators have seen pop up in the last several decades.

It's called "Forward," and it is a dramatically new way to figure out how to improve transportation of people and goods across the state. That not only gets people to work on time, but makes it possible for manufacturers in Kansas to get their goods to market and make themselves and their businesses and cities more prosperous.

Sound like a good idea? Yes, but it's also one that has taken Kansas government nearly 40 years to come up with. Hmmm ...

Basic idea is that instead of pulling together local and state officials to plan for what might or might not be the needs for roads and bypasses a decade in the future, how about you first plan how to maintain and keep safe the thousands of miles of roads that we've already built? And, once those maintenance needs are met and financed, we look at projects that will make economic development activity achievable.

Well, that's what the new transportation plan looks like. It took new Secretary of Transportation Julie Lorenz, to help come up with it, and a new governor Laura Kelly, to produce a budget that just might make it possible.

First item of business is to do the work that was promised more than a decade ago under former Gov. Sam Brownback, which sounded good of course, but which saw about \$2 billion of money to perform that work evaporate as the state's finances were ravaged by tax cuts that didn't supercharge the state's economy as Brownback had promised.

So, to keep government running, the state diverted money from roads to nearly everything that the state does for its citizens, ranging from education to social services to prisons to ... well, just about everything but roads that it had promised Kansans.

The result? Those promised highway improvements didn't get done, money for maintenance was siphoned off for general government operations and nobody is happy. The new plan includes finishing off those promised projects and devoting millions to preserving the highways we have that are steadily deteriorating.

It's not as easy as it sounds. Kelly will need to delay many of the tax cuts that all legislators want to tout as they seek re-election this year. She's going to have to keep spending low so that those old projects get done to spark a new era in which maintenance is paid for from federal funds and from the motor fuel taxes we pay every time we fill up.

And, if the Legislature goes along with it in probably a year or two, we won't be siphoning from the "bank of KDOT" the portion of sales tax revenues that can be used for new projects the need for which are tied to not-quite-sudden but developing changes in the Kansas economy.

Do you build a road to lure a factory or new businesses to Kansas in the next 10 years as under old transportation plans, or do you watch how the economy is growing, and where, and then make the investment to make it successful?

That new Forward program being considered also will see local units of government investing in their futures by participating in the cost of highway projects in their areas. Nothing like a local investment to make things work, rather than just hoping highway-builders will buy their lunches at local restaurants.

Yep, we're interested in seeing how this works out ...

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Martin Hawver
Columnist