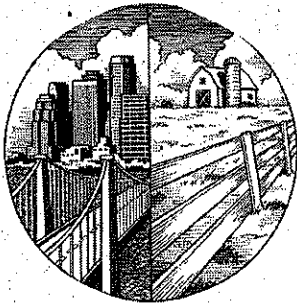


## Confluence Chronicles— Where City & Country Meet

# The turf is not always greener on the other side

by Peggy Sanders  
Oral, S.D.



**T**urf war. That phrase generally conjures up visions of an inner-city gang problem, but it has spilled over to rural areas — and it is not gang related. What we have is city people moving to the country without first learning about the realities of rural living, and the farmers and ranchers who view the urbanites as noxious weeds, moving in slowly, infiltrating, then threatening the native species.

Fortunately, both the city dwellers and those who make their living on the land can be educated, and most likely come to at least an understanding of viewpoints, if not outright acceptance.

My concern is that “city slickers” haven’t a clue what they are getting into. They build homes next to lazy creeks that flow through canyons, without a thought that the creek can become a deathtrap during a flash flood. Or they set up residence nine miles from the blacktopped road and expect the county to send snow plows when the weather turns. The surprise comes when it is not the county that plows them out, but the nearest rancher, whom the new resident has not even waved to on the road when they’ve met.

Yet the rancher wants to be neighborly and under the Code of the West, he will help someone in need. The reception by the former urbanite, once the rancher gets the road open,

will set the tone for years to come. A handshake, simple thank you and offer of a cup of coffee would be sufficient. Many will offer money, but most ranchers will decline, hoping the gesture will set a good example of how things are done — neighbors helping neighbors — and for many city people that may be a new concept.

Thereafter the rancher expects you to own the problem and seek a solution. None of this blaming others is allowed. Sure, you may want to blame the real estate agent who sold you the property, but in the end it is your responsibility to find out such details before you buy.

We ranchers are fiercely independent but we don’t like to see people suffer. That is why the road will be plowed. It’s a gesture every bit as welcoming as a plate of freshly baked cookies. Then, an acknowledgement is required, preferably one of thanks, to the rancher. A great deal of the future and how you will be known in the community hangs on this response.

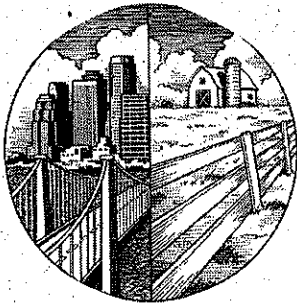
Who knows, you may find not only a new friend, but a mentor. In the end, the commonalities will come to the surface. In this small world they may discover they graduated from the same university, served in the same branch of the military, and even have acquaintances in common. At the least, you’ll realize that neighborin’ is a verb and it works both ways.

Peggy Sanders can be reached via email at [peggy@peggysanders.net](mailto:peggy@peggysanders.net). ♦

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