



Opinion

THE NORTON
TELEGRAM

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In case you forgot, he's not a candidate

We find it strange that the Clinton presidential campaign is at a loss to explain why they are in the pickle they are in. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton was supposed to be a shoo-in as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. At this point in time, it might be just a matter of time before her hopes and dreams come crashing down.

And who is to blame?

Her husband!

Yep, Bill Clinton.

The former president.

We are getting mixed signals as to who the actual candidate is. When the former president started flashing the race card prior to the primary election in South Carolina, things were looking good for the Mrs. But he sunk any hopes they had of capturing that important southern state. And since then Sen. Barack Obama's campaign took on a new life. He's ahead in the popular vote count and he's ahead in committed delegates.

Thanks, Bill Clinton!

The Clinton campaign managed to hide Bill after the South Carolina disaster. But low and behold, here he is again, in the spotlight, actually fighting with people along the rope line who are opposed to his wife's candidacy. The campaign can't seem to keep him under control. Every time the media focuses its cameras on Bill Clinton they are diluting Sen. Clinton's importance. We wish they would just quit playing around with the former president and give his wife a break.

If Hillary Rodham Clinton does get the nod and wins the election, can you imagine the chaos in the White House?

Sen. Obama is an attractive candidate, he draws thousands upon thousands of people to his rallies, he is an eloquent speaker — one of the best in the business — and his stock just seems to continue to grow. But Mrs. Clinton has not just Mr. Obama to put up with, but also her husband.

Maybe she should have used her maiden name, Rodham.

If she loses this thing, she'll know who to blame.

— Tom Dreiling

Food safety a Senate priority

The Kansas Senate will consider SB 584 concerning food safety programs in Kansas. Beginning back in 2004 our food safety inspection system was divided between the Kansas Department of Agriculture and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The ag department's responsible for meat, poultry, dairy, and egg inspections, and the health and environment department inspected food service establishments: restaurants, grocery stores, food processing plants, and warehouses. Post Audit reported to the Senate Agriculture Committee on evaluating possible costs versus efficiencies of transferring the responsibility of food safety inspections back under the umbrella of the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

At the time of the audit, the two departments spent about \$3.2 million dollars for food safety inspection staff as well as \$700,000 on contracts with local health departments to inspect restaurants in 14 counties. The inspection system had a number of inefficiencies, and coordination between the two departments needed to improve. There were instances of grocery stores being visited by multiple inspectors from the two departments doing the same inspection. Territories overlapped and some establishments were inspected more often than necessary. Evidence showed similar food businesses being regulated inconsistently: State inspected meat processing plants were inspected sometimes twice weekly while meat processing departments at grocery stores were not required to be inspected at all.

It was also reported that five other states have already combined their food safety functions, four of which placed primary responsibility for food safety inspection

Senate Doings Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



programs within their department of agriculture. The audit concluded that combining food safety programs would produce several benefits: A single agency housing all programs would provide incentive to regulate more consistently, communication would improve, and the significant cost savings would benefit all Kansans. It is estimated that a combined inspection program could save \$90,000 per year by eliminating duplicate driving time and overlapping inspection duties.

In addition to that, conducting inspections under a risk-based approach could generate \$680,000 in savings per year.

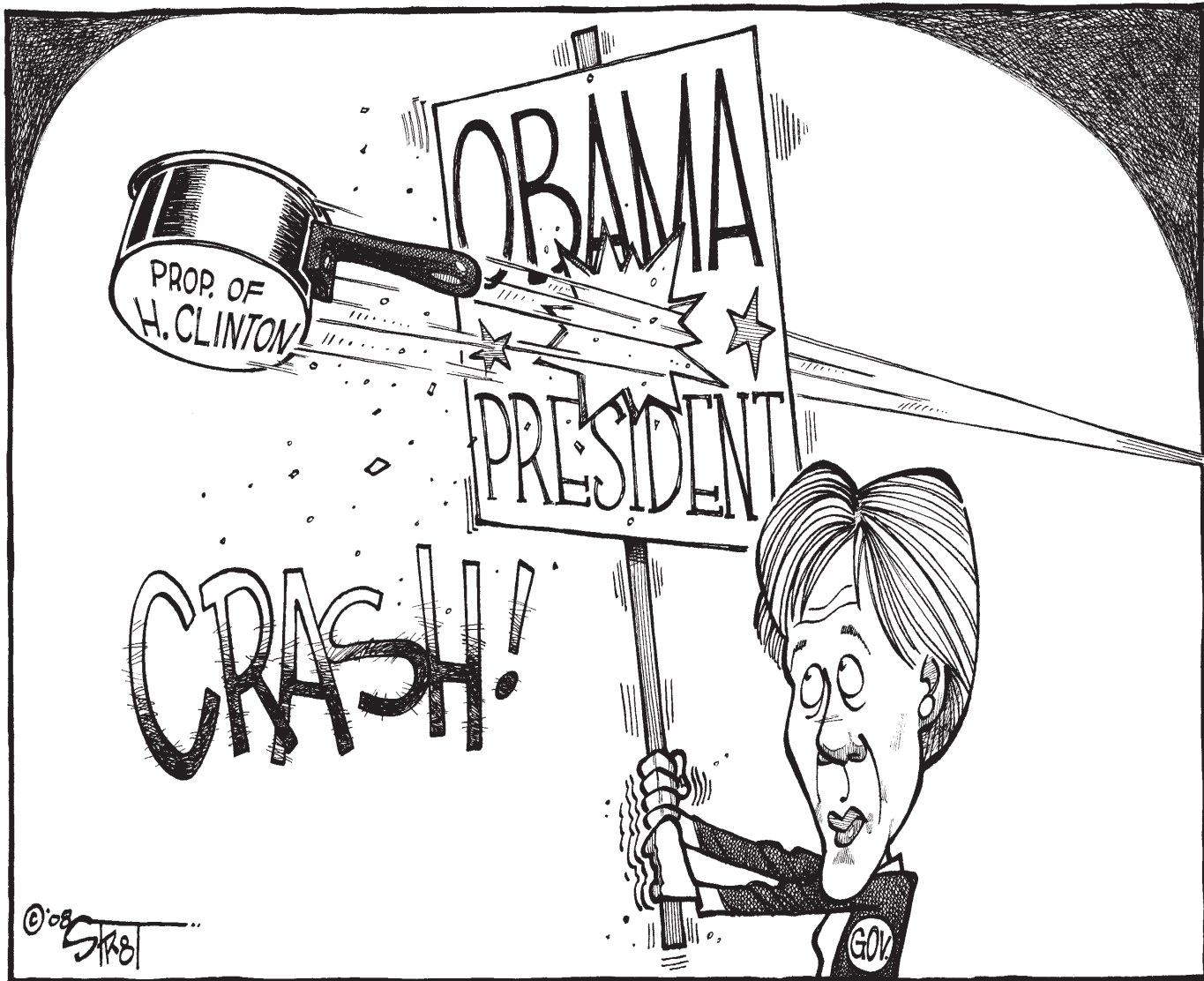
The audit recommended the legislature transfer responsibility for all food safety-related inspection into a single agency.

Even if these programs are not combined, it was recommended that a risk-based food safety inspection system should be implemented because of improvable public safety and cost savings.

The State Board of Agriculture reported to the Senate Agriculture Committee on the positive effects of combining these services. SB-584 will complete the transfer of responsibilities back to the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and should provide an overall improvement in assuring food safety for Kansas.

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer represents the 40th District. (785) 296-7399

Email Ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us



'and on their farm they had some chicks'

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



We're back in the egg business. Remember the baby chicks we had last summer? Those baby chicks are now strutting around their pen crowing, cackling and laying eggs. I better back up a little, though. I'm getting ahead of myself. Because you probably also remember that we already had laying hens. When the chicks got too big for their temporary pen, Jim built a little house for them right beside the chicken coop. He divided the outdoor enclosure so both sets of chickens had room to run and (our theory) get used to each other.

Didn't work out that way. If you have ever been around chickens, you know they can be savage. If one shows a sign of weakness or injury, the others pounce on it, unmercifully. "Only the strong survive — Law of the wild," that sort of thing. Now you know where "pecking order" comes from.

The two sets of chickens never did "bond." They didn't even try to like each other. If one of the youngsters got close

to the dividing fence, the old hens would "hit" it full force. There was no way we were going to have a "blended" chicken family. A kind neighbor agreed to take the older chickens and peace was restored to the Plotts family farm.

It takes awhile for pullets to begin laying, but once they started they have kept up a steady stream of little "cackle berries." And, they keep getting bigger.

Now, our only problem is we have almost as many roosters as we do hens. Somebody's gonna have to take the noodle bath. 'Cause we can have only one "Main Man," one "Top Dog," one "Cock of the Walk." The one with the best look-

ing tail feathers will win.

-ob-

My brother, Bill, spent Friday night with us. He had made a trip to visit the old Kelley farmstead which is now owned by his son, Brian. It was too late to make a return trip to his home, so he bunked-in with us.

He took us out for pizza and we stayed up way too late talking. Saturday morning I made a modified version of my famous "Texas Trash" breakfast and his plans to "get an early start" disappeared along with the hash browns. You know how it is — eating, coffee and conversation seem to go together.

-ob-

Hard to believe, but my mom died 10 years ago this month. Time has a way of softening memories. But, there is scarcely a day goes by that I don't quote her or remind myself of her. She impacted my life more than any other person. I'm who I am because of her. And, I'm okay with that.

Newspaper needs to 'investigate' rumors

Your turn

To the Editor,

I like to deal with reality in my life and in life in general as genuinely and honestly as possible. That means enjoying the blessings and good times as well as confronting the difficult times with courage and integrity. No glossing over. No duplicity. No hiding. Take the bull by the horns and move forward.

I wish *The Norton Telegram* would do the same. I love our town and our paper. But I have noticed an "everybody be happy" and "don't do a story that might offend our customers and advertisers" kind of mentality.

I'm a city girl. I'm used to reading the news in the newspaper and not hearing it rumored in church, at the local restaurant or from my children's friends from school. I've never heard so much gossip and rumors in all my life as I have since I moved here 13 years ago. Almost none of it is printed in the Norton paper.

Unfortunately, most of the rumors proved true. I've read more of 'dirty laundry' about our town in the Hays and Salina papers than I have in the Norton paper. As a community, we should fess up and own our own mistakes and wrongdoings instead of letting other communities do it.

In a small town, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. That is the job of the 'investigative reporter.' I'm hearing lots of rumors these days. These are things people have done that affect our com-

munity at large, especially our children. Our newspaper ought to have the courage to bring forth good and BAD news of our community's leaders, especially those that attend a church.

We have the old, 'Clinton/Monica' argument in our little town. I firmly believe that certain 'sins' or moral failings ought to be acknowledged by those persons in our community that have a responsibility towards our children as moral leaders.

Why? Because leaders have an impact on their community. Their moral failings need to be acknowledged and admitted to show this community their own sorrow and to apologize to the community as their behavior has caused sorrow and grief for many. How actual restitution is made is between them and God, their church, their families and their employers.

This paper ought to have guidelines on how far and their reasons for 'getting the real story' on illegal or improper behavior in this community. I can suggest a few: If the offender has any influence within this community, professionally and religiously (especially to our young people), then they will be held to a higher standard. That is the cost of leadership...you affect other people's lives.

Adultery, drug abuse, domestic violence, and alcoholism are just a few. Sexual impropriety with subordinates is

grounds for legal investigation where I come from. Why it is not reported here, I can only guess.

I understand exactly what I'm asking. I know that the offenders have hurt many people, especially their family's...who are innocent and must bear the embarrassment and shame. My suggestion to bring these matters 'out in the public' must sound heartless. Well, they are already 'out there' in rumorland. Publicizing the facts will dispel the gossip and begin the process of healing. I'd like to know exactly whom to pray for and who to grieve for and who to be angry with. And I AM grieving for your pain, as is the heart of God. But I didn't do this immoral thing that has hurt so many. I'm only asking for public clarity and accountability, because their actions have affected us all.

When moral accountability is brought to bear against the failings of upstanding community members, it will eventually serve to deter such things happening in the future. Gloss it over, gossip about it on the phone in hushed tones, and sweep it under the rug, then it will continue to happen in greater measure. Families will continue to be broken, citizens will continue to be discouraged and disillusioned and we will be less of a community for it.

With tears for the pain so many are suffering,

Humbly submitted,

Robin Somers
Norton

To... **Sgt. Jason Brannan**, for your demonstrated concern for the children in the Iraqi schools. (-td)

To... **the Norton High C-team girls** — 76 points! Super! (called in)

To... **Jay Kurtz**, welcome aboard! (Telegram staff)

To... **Norton School District board**, good luck with your search for a new principal. (e-mail)

To... **the Haneses**, for a fine arts, crafts and miscellaneous sale at their West Washington Street building. (called in)

(To submit a name, please email tom.d@nwkansas.com, call either 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or stop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. - td)

Thumbs
Up...

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Office hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Tom Dreiling..... editor and publisher
Christie Anderson..... advertising
Veronica Monier..... staff reporter
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay sports
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