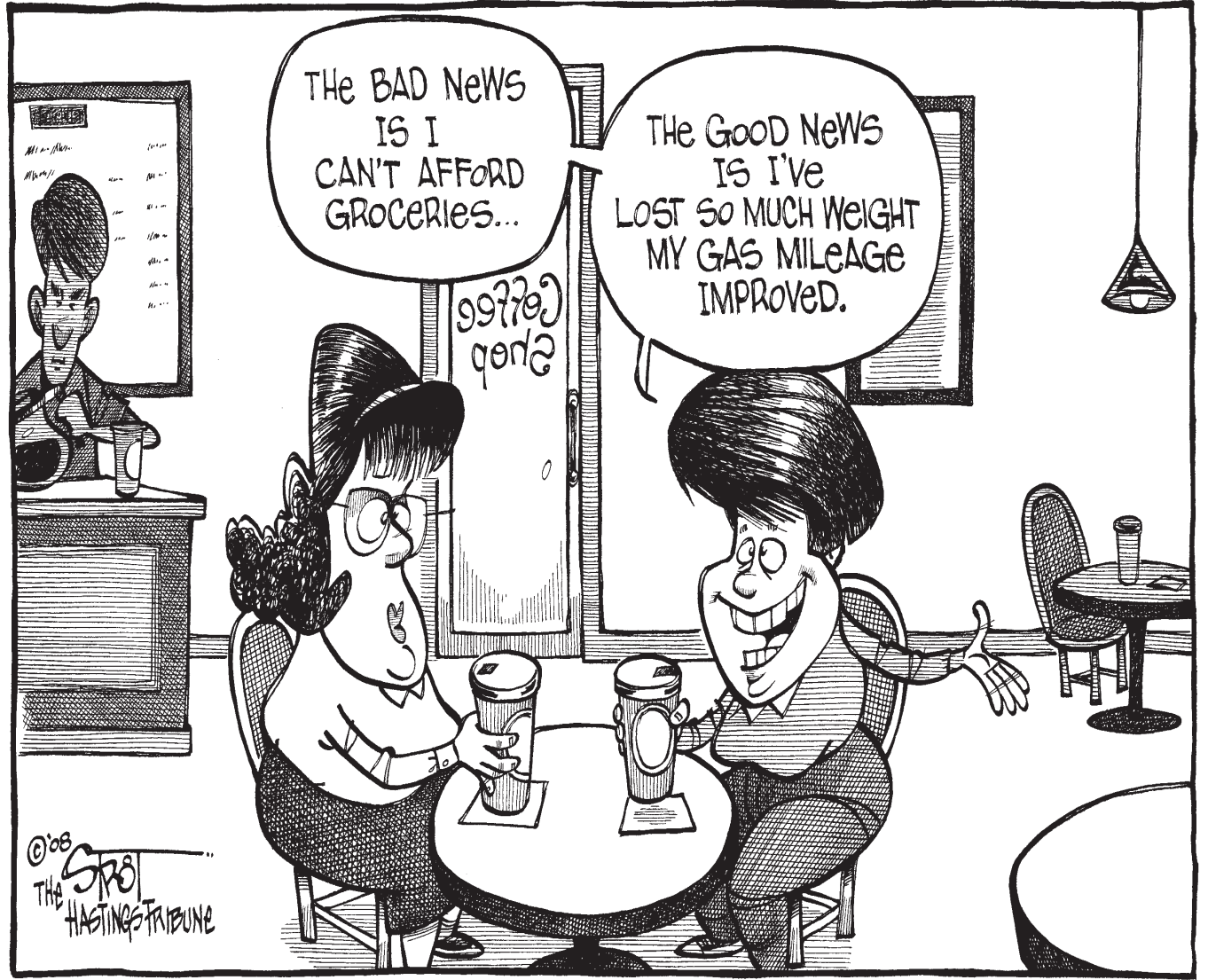


Need your help on this little survey about gas tax

Everybody, it seems, is talking about the temporary removal of the federal gas tax, which is 18.4 cents per gallon. Those pushing for the plan would have it go into effect on Memorial Day and end on Labor Day.

How do you feel? Something we should do? Nothing more than a gimmick advanced by presidential candidates Sen. McCain and Sen. Clinton? Last time we filled up, the price in Norton was \$3.49. Cut out the federal tax and it drops by 18.4 cents per gallon. But because the price nationwide on average climbed 15 cents in two weeks, removal of the federal tax would not keep the gas companies from tacking on whatever they want during the Memorial Day-Labor Day gas tax freedom period. The other argument is simply: anything that decreases the cost at the pump is acceptable. Today, we are asking you what you think. Please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, give us a call at 877-6908, or fax us at 877-3732. Your identity WILL NOT be disclosed. We await your comment, comments or simple YES or NO. Thanks, in advance.

—Tom Dreiling



When we break the laws, and many of us do, we disrespect authority

It is the duty to obey the law. Now, having said that, I must note exceptions. The Good Book says, in the 13th chapter of Romans, "Let every soul be subject unto higher powers. For there is no power but of God."

My view is that there are moral powers and there are governmental powers. Sometimes they are in harmony, but when they are in conflict the moral power is the higher power.

An example might be the Fugitive Slave Law, which required citizens to assist the government in returning escaped slaves. How could a person return his fellow man to slavery, to be maimed or punished? Surely, laws of immoral governments such as Hitler's need to be resisted. Henry Thoreau carried this idea to the point of not paying his taxes because some of the money might be used to fight what he considered an immoral war.

But exceptions aside, we should be subject to the governing authorities. People in law enforcement deserve our respect and support. Judges represent the civil authority of state or nation when they hear cases and render judgments. Judicial service is a high calling that requires people willing to put service to the public above private gain.

In recent years, there has been a ten-

Citizen Duties

Bob Strevey



dency on the part of many to disrespect those in authority. Comedians often poke fun at our President, which may have a place if properly done. But many people consciously break the law by speeding, by ignoring traffic rules, by taking property belonging to others, by giving alcohol to minors.

Only by setting an example of subjecting ourselves to laws and to those in positions of authority, can we help children understand the importance of obeying the law. Parents who respect their own parents set an example for their children. Teachers who respect their principal set an example for their students.

Those who enforce our laws are serving all of us. They put their lives on the line to maintain public safety and order. Surely good citizens will cooperate when called upon. Also, we need to work for just laws so everyone in society is fairly treated.

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New cat, two calves, and Jim and me

It just dawned on me that I have been sharing my thoughts and my life, via this column, for more than ten years. That is about 520 columns. Who knew I had that much to say.

But then I stop and think of my mom who wrote her column for more than 65 years. That is almost 3,400 columns. Unless I live to be 116, I won't live long enough to write for 65 years. That's one record of hers I'll never break.

I might not even get this one written if a certain black cat named "Missy" doesn't quit bugging me. She insists on being petted and keeps pushing my hand from the keyboard with her nose. She jumps into my lap and steps on keys making a long line of mmmmmmmmm-s before I can get her stopped.

I think she's just a little jealous and feeling neglected. Jim brought home a little fluff-ball last week that we call

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



"Puddin.'" She is at least a half-sister to our other cat "Sammy" because they have the same mother. Tracking paternal lineage in farm cats is not very trustworthy.

The two mature cats act as if they are frightened of little "Puddin,'" cowering and running the opposite way when she comes toward them. At first I was afraid they might harm her but now I know she dominates them. Two other new additions to our little menagerie are a couple of baby calves. At first, our farmer/rancher

friend didn't think he was going to have any "bum" calves this season. Then, overnight, he had one cow die and another got down. That left two, pretty good-sized, calves with no meal ticket.

Jim converted last year's baby chicks brooder house into a cozy, straw-filled lean-to for the calves. They immediately took to the bottles and seem to have adjusted to their new digs. By this time next week, we plan to have them drinking out of a bucket and eating calf crumbles. They will become our automatic grass mowers and fertilizer spreaders.

What we lack are names. I think I'll take the digital camera out to the calf pen and get a picture to send to our granddaughters Alexandria and Taylor. They have always helped us name calves in the past. We'll see what names they can dream up — without meeting the calves "in person."

Thanks Ben, thanks Tom, let's celebrate

Who discovered electricity? Was it Ben Franklin? I know Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. In my book, these guys are true heroes. Why don't we have a national holiday for them or something?

Perhaps because in our new "green" world their accomplishments have become rather suspect. Old Tom's light bulb has fallen out of favor. How long before we decide to do away with electricity altogether?

How does that Native American proverb go: We did not inherit the land from our ancestors; we are borrowing it from our children? I hope our children realize we were just doing the best we could.

I try. I got some of those fluorescent light bulbs. As the old ones burn out I'm putting them in. The fluorescent bulbs cost more but they are supposed to last longer. I'm helping the environment. Everyone wins!

Maybe----
There are just a few little problems with being "green." One fixture in our house has two bulbs, one is still incandescent. When I flip the switch that bulb lights up and five, four, three, two, one — behold the fluorescent bulb lights up. It's annoying, but anything for Mother Earth.

We have a pendant fixture with five bulbs. The one fluorescent bulb is so dim, every time I look at it I go scurrying for a replacement bulb, thinking it is burned out. By the time all five bulbs have been replaced it won't put out enough light to make it worthwhile to even turn the thing on! I thought maybe the fluorescent bulb

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



was a smaller wattage but it is not. I think I read that halogen bulbs are "green." They put out lots of light. The problem is each is so unique to the fixture it goes into. Buying replacements is expensive and consumes more fuel than you are ever going to save as you drive from store to store trying to locate identical bulbs.

Halogen bulbs also put off a lot of heat. I'm thinking any savings in electricity for the bulbs are more than offset by the increase in air conditioning. Although many a long winter's evening I have enjoyed sitting in front of my computer, warmed by the halogens at my desk. (All the while praying the wall cabinet they are mounted under does not catch fire or my fancy flat screen monitor does not melt down under the glare!)

How did we ever live without electricity? Our REC was doing some work in our yard early last week. They had to shut the power off. I shut down the computer and started looking for something to do.

Finish the wash? No. Cook? Gas stove but electric ignition. Finish my sewing project? Only if it was hand sewing. Hand sewing? It was a cloudy day, the light was not bright enough. Clean? Once the water

in the lines was drained — well you get the picture.

I couldn't watch T.V. or listen to the radio. The mail came. I sat down by the window and read. I day dreamed awhile. Get up and do something I told myself. But what?

Friday, I got home from work and got everything together to begin a new sewing project. The electricity went off. It was a very windy day. I figured the power lines got crossed up somewhere. I unloaded the dishwasher and did some picking up. After a while I called the electric company. All our fancy cordless phones do not work unless there is electricity either, but fortunately we still have one you plug in.

I called expecting them to say they were working on it. They were mystified. No one else had called, but they had someone in the area and they would get them on it.

The mail came. I read it. I daydreamed. I decided I had enough light to cut the sewing project out so I started on that.

The hubby came home for dinner. The phone rang, it was our REC suggesting we look out the window. The crew in the area was very close indeed! It seems they did not finish the work they began earlier in the week and were in our yard finishing it.

I felt more than a little foolish. However we went out for dinner (cause I couldn't cook) so it worked out pretty well!

Electricity is a wonderful, wonderful thing! Thank you Ben, thank you Tom. Let's have a holiday!

Thumbs Up

To... **Julie (Juenemann) Niles**, on being named Nebraska's Hygienist of the Year. (e-mail)

To... **Stefanie Sloan**, for helping children with developmental disabilities. (e-mail)

To... **Hansen Foundation** scholarship

winners, good luck as you go forward. (e-mail)

To... former Nortonite **Shelly (Mapes) Cruz**, on your fund raising efforts for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. (e-mail)

To... **Reva Benien**, for your good ex-

ample of recycling. Good job! Let's all join her now. (e-mail)

(To submit a name or names for this column, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call 877-6908 or 877-3361, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Avenue 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your input. -td)