

### Say what you will, but there's no place better

With today being election day, this is a good time to think about what we have in this country, and why it's important to stay involved in the democratic process. It's fashionable at election time to criticize our government, our process, the state of our society.

Candidates, whoever they are, whatever they believe, cry for change. That's how they get attention.

Many times, they are right.

Our system could stand a good overhaul. Our government has its faults. Our nation is far from perfect.

For more than 230 years, we've been searching for the American ideal. We haven't reached that state of perfection yet.

But this is a nation founded on principles and ideas that transcend their imperfect implementation.

America is more than the sum of its flaws. It is, first of all, the best and brightest place to live and think and be free in the history of man. And while that's not a modest claim, it's not that hard to back up.

Other nations may have better health care or better schools or a better bureaucracy. It's easy to find those that excel at one thing or another, and sometimes, these can be a shining example for us to measure up to.

But no other nation cherishes quite so much the traditions of free speech, free thought, religious liberty, equality, diversity and economic freedom embodied in the words of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Mason and a few other forward thinkers of that era in the 18th century.

The ideals that formed the American nation, enshrined in the Constitution and especially in the Bill of Rights, set us apart. Nowhere else would all religions and sects be tolerated. Nowhere else would the idea of the "Melting Pot" mean that anyone who came could become "an American."

It's true, we've seldom lived up to these ideals.

The founders tolerated slavery, subjugated women and minorities, looked the other way at many sins. That does not taint their ideals.

Over the centuries, we've welcomed immigrants and then treated them poorly, from the Irish and the Italians and Poles to the current crop of Hispanics. We gave slaves their freedom, then levied a poll tax and built separate and unequal schools.

The unique thing about America is we keep reinventing our democracy. We change and grow, admit our mistakes and move on.

We'll never reach perfection, but what nation has?

Where, if you sought a better place, would you go?

Where would it be possible to demand change — and get it — as it is here?

And now, your country is calling you to help. Your vote is needed.

The presidential race is as important as any we've seen. In state and county elections, voters face decisions that will affect many lives for many years.

If you choose not to vote, others will make your decisions for you. But that's not what America is about. We all have our duty.

If you want change, or you don't, you have to go to the polls today and mark your ballot.

That's how each of us plays our part in this great tradition of striving for a more perfect America. It really works.

There's still time to vote.

—Steve Haynes

### Your Political Connection

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★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

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★ **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

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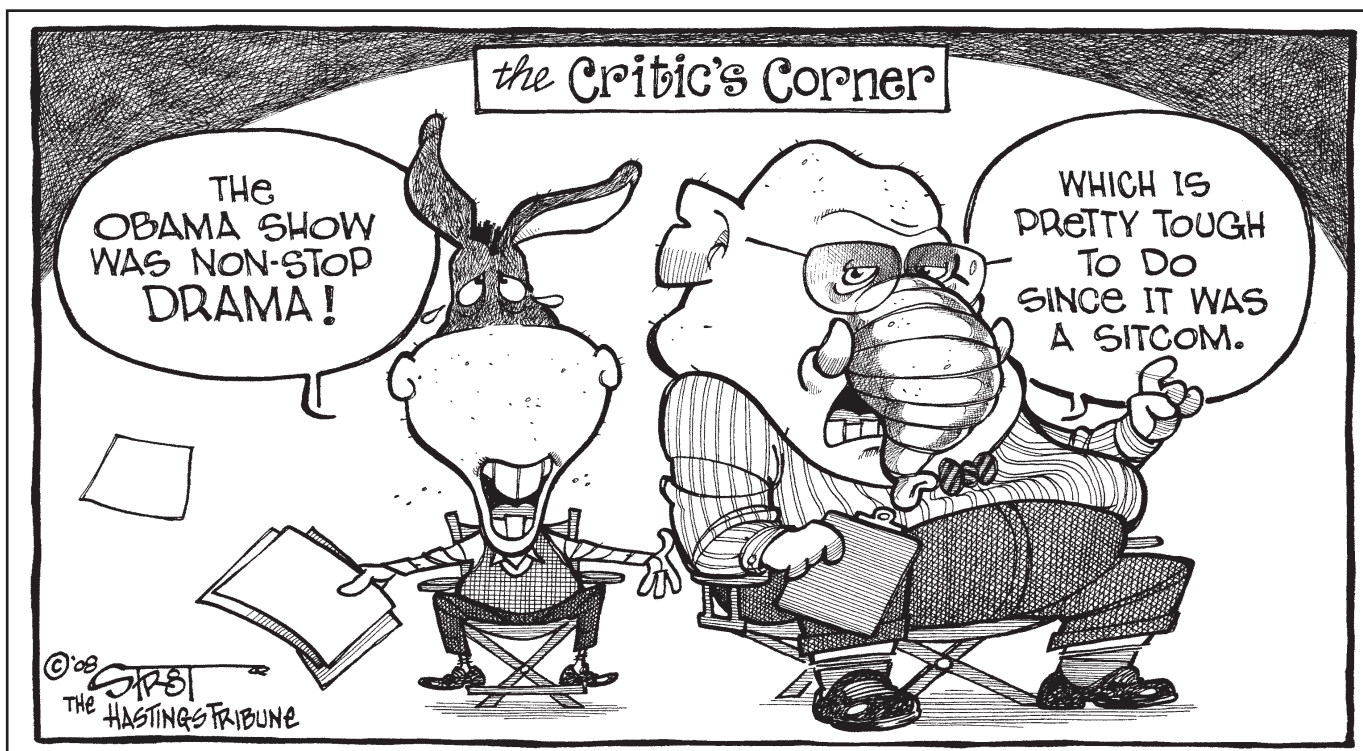
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### Recycling bin arrives in our town

The county's sanitation engineers assigned to our little town will be looking at a much lighter work load from now on. A recycling bin has been placed on the grounds of the former school building, and I, for one, intend to use it. From what I've heard around town, a lot of other households are also planning to.

I have always talked a good game. Saying things like, "If it were easier to recycle, I would." And, "I really want to help the environment." Now, it's time to put up or shut up. With a recycling container right down the street, what could be easier. I have no excuse.

It's amazing. I have only been separating real garbage from recyclables for a few days and I already have three containers ready for recycling and haven't even filled one trash bag for the trash men. Can you imagine the enormity of what just our little town could do. Then, think about places like New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and Dallas.

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



If everyone only sent one little bag of mostly biodegradable trash to the landfill each week, we could keep up with the problem. I wonder how many acres of land are taken out of production each year to accommodate landfills. This is something that every American should be concerned about. If we, you and me, don't do something about it, who will?

-ob-

Wow! Where did that soapbox come from? Probably where I keep all my other soapboxes. In addition to pollution I could get really wound up about: bad table manners, chewing gum in public, people who

don't vote, little girls wearing make-up, boys wearing baggy pants, abortion, girls with hair in their eyes, prejudice, cruelty to animals, concrete yard ornaments, donating blood, credit card debt, smoking, parents who don't discipline their children, children who don't mind their parents, volunteering, gas prices, the economy, terrorism, vulgar language, defending America, wearing white shoes after Labor Day, the right to bear arms and letting children sleep in your bed.

Like you, I have an opinion on just about everything.

-ob-

By the time most of you read this, we will have a new president. I have been praying that the silent majority will not be silent this election. But, no matter how it turns out I will remember I Timothy 6:15.....He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of lords.

That means He is the President of presidents. God bless America.

### Try canvas bags when shopping

Some months ago I received and forwarded on to everyone in my address book a pictorial essay about the negative impact plastic shopping bags have on the environment. At the time I did not check it on Snopes although I questioned a couple of things about it.

They have made biodegradable garbage bags from a corn-based derivative for many years. Perhaps this technology has not been used for shopping bags but it could be. Rather than calling for a ban on plastic shopping bags why not change how the bags are made?

I did finally check the story with Snopes. I could not find anything so either all the ghastly claims are true or it has not been fact checked. But it seems true. Several years ago a friend who traveled in Africa reported seeing blue Wal-Mart bags with yellow happy faces blowing across the savanna. How did they get there? I have seen a similar situation in Oklahoma where apparently there are no anti-littering laws on the books.

Having somewhat of a social conscience I decided to track down all the canvas bags around the house and throw them in the car for use on my shopping excursions. Among my collection are a couple from Sunshine Day Care (those were the days!), a pretty little bag that originally had Sunday School materials in it and a Wichita State University bag they gave us "FREE" when we enrolled the middle daughter!

As I did my fall cleaning I found more; then I went on a Quilt Shop Hop and

### Back Home

Nancy Hagman



won a bag! Though that one is not cotton canvas; it is probably petroleum based so I'm not sure I can use it and still pose as a "greenie!"

Good intentions don't always save the day! I keep forgetting to take the bags into stores. When you are in the 20 items or less line with 23 items it's frightening to think of the consequences if a person were to wink at the cashier and ask if she could just run to the car and get her canvas bags! Many times I'd end up driving something other than the Rendezvous or I was riding with someone else. Every time I came home with another dozen or so plastic bags I'd be kicking myself. I console myself with recycling; unlike some people who seem to think it is acceptable to just throw stuff out their car windows or back doors.

Finally, as I stood in line at the day old bread store and looked at the plastic bags they were putting purchases in I remembered: My canvas bags were right outside the door! As there was nothing I could do that could possibly make that cashier any slower; I ran out and got my bags.

Then we went to Wal-Mart. Everything fit in the remaining bags. It was great.

I felt so very virtuous (except for the whole shopping at Wal-Mart part!) Ah, well, sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do!

The canvas bags set up nicely for the trip home and the bread wasn't crushed. The handles don't break, spilling stuff all over! It will be interesting to try at the grocery store. I know they are trying to be helpful but truly I'd rather pack my own groceries.

Some of the help where I shop need to go back to "Packing 101." Why would anyone put all the glass jars in the same bag with nothing to absorb the shock except maybe a carton of eggs?

Not to change the subject, but our recycling place no longer takes glass. What's up with that? I thought glass was very recyclable. So look around your house, if you don't have canvas bags, take the plastic bags you got on your last 100 trips, ask them to pack your stuff in them. Or ask for paper, at least it is a renewable resource.

We'll take on Wal-Mart, with their non-union labor force and unfair employment practices, and work on the boycott of unsafe products imported from the evil polluter China later!

In conclusion: Do you know why it is handy that the Oklahoma State University's color is Orange? The fans can wear their vests to games on Saturday and to their jobs picking up trash the rest of the week. I'm kidding of course — they don't pick up trash in Oklahoma!

(gneph@yahoo.com)

### Now comes the 'real' test for winner

Today may be election day, but it's also the day we should begin the healing process. And there will be many wounds needing attention. After the votes are counted tonight we will have a new president-elect, someone who will move into the Oval Office on Jan. 20, 2009 as our 44th president.

Be it Sen. John McCain or Sen. Barack Obama, the winner will face a monumental task, a task of their own making. It was their respective campaigns' decisions to go negative, get down and dirty, stretch the truth, push the envelope. Unfortunately, those decisions have now come home to haunt them.

We are assuming this election will be close, despite the 24/7 poll numbers that have been showing otherwise. And if it is

### Good Evening Norton

Tom Dreiling



as close as indications of the last 48 hours seem to hint there will be about as many people disappointed as there are people rejoicing at the end result.

Those in the disappointed ranks aren't going to just simply blend in with the victors. They will need soothing, soothing as only a compassionate presidential victor can render. And because of the historic

nature of this election on both sides of the political ledger, President McCain or President Obama will have to reach into the neighborhoods throughout this vast and great experience called the U.S. of A., to calm the political waters. And that will take time, but hopefully not as long as it took to finally conclude the 2007-2008 presidential campaign. That was crazy!

So, as we close the curtain on this latest political experience, I won't ask God to bless us, because if truth be known He probably ran for cover at the first shot back in '07 and will probably remain there until we straighten out a really messy situation.

Enter:  
President McCain.  
President Obama.