

Embarking on the next step into space exploration

Everyone has a political axe to grind. Maybe you care the most about immigration, or ethanol subsidies or the Lesser Prairie Chicken.

Simple tricks and nonsense

Kevin Bottrell



Mine is the space program.

I watched the final launch of the Space Shuttle Atlantis in 2011 (on my birthday, coincidentally). Sadly I was never able to be in Florida for a launch, but this one was broadcast live over the internet. It heralded an era where the United States took a back seat in manned spaceflight. As someone who has always been fascinated by space and the exploration thereof, this was a dark time.

For the past three years American astronauts have been forced to use Russian ships to get to the International Space Station. Imagine that, the country that landed a dozen men on the moon now has to hitch rides from the Russians just to get off the ground. We pay huge sums of money for it, in fact. And we have poor relations with Russia right now. Our access could get cut off at any time due to dirt-side politics.

There are things we do well. NASA has probes out there further than anything any human has sent before. There's solar and Earth observation, the Mars rover, Cassini and its pictures of Saturn and many more successful unmanned research missions.

For years I've been advocating that the United States needs to retake its position at the forefront of manned space exploration. And news came last week that makes me hopeful once again.

Orion, the next American manned spacecraft, is getting its first test mission this December.

Orion is a capsule design, very similar to the Apollo spacecraft that took us to the moon. Service and crew modules will be mounted on top of an enormous, multi-stage Delta IV rocket – and later, a brand new and even larger rocket. The service module has the engine, air and water storage and fuel. The crew module seats four and is set up for anywhere from 21 to 210 days of spaceflight.

The agency has been testing individual systems, such as the parachutes that will help the capsule land safely, but the December launch will be the first time the new ship has gone into space.

Its first mission will be an unmanned test that will send the ship into high orbit, 3,600 miles above the surface of the Earth. Doesn't sound very exciting, but you have to crawl before you can walk, especially with something as difficult and dangerous as inter-planetary travel. This test mission will give NASA valuable data about the launch abort system, the heat shield, computers and, most importantly, radiation.

Orion will be heading out far beyond the orbit of the International Space Station, into a region of high radiation levels that surrounds the Earth. The only manned spacecraft to have traveled through this region, known as the Van Allen Belts, are the Apollo missions. Orion crews will be spending a lot more time beyond the Earth's protection, and NASA will have to see what kind of radiation exposure they will be subject to and how well the ship's shielding can cope.

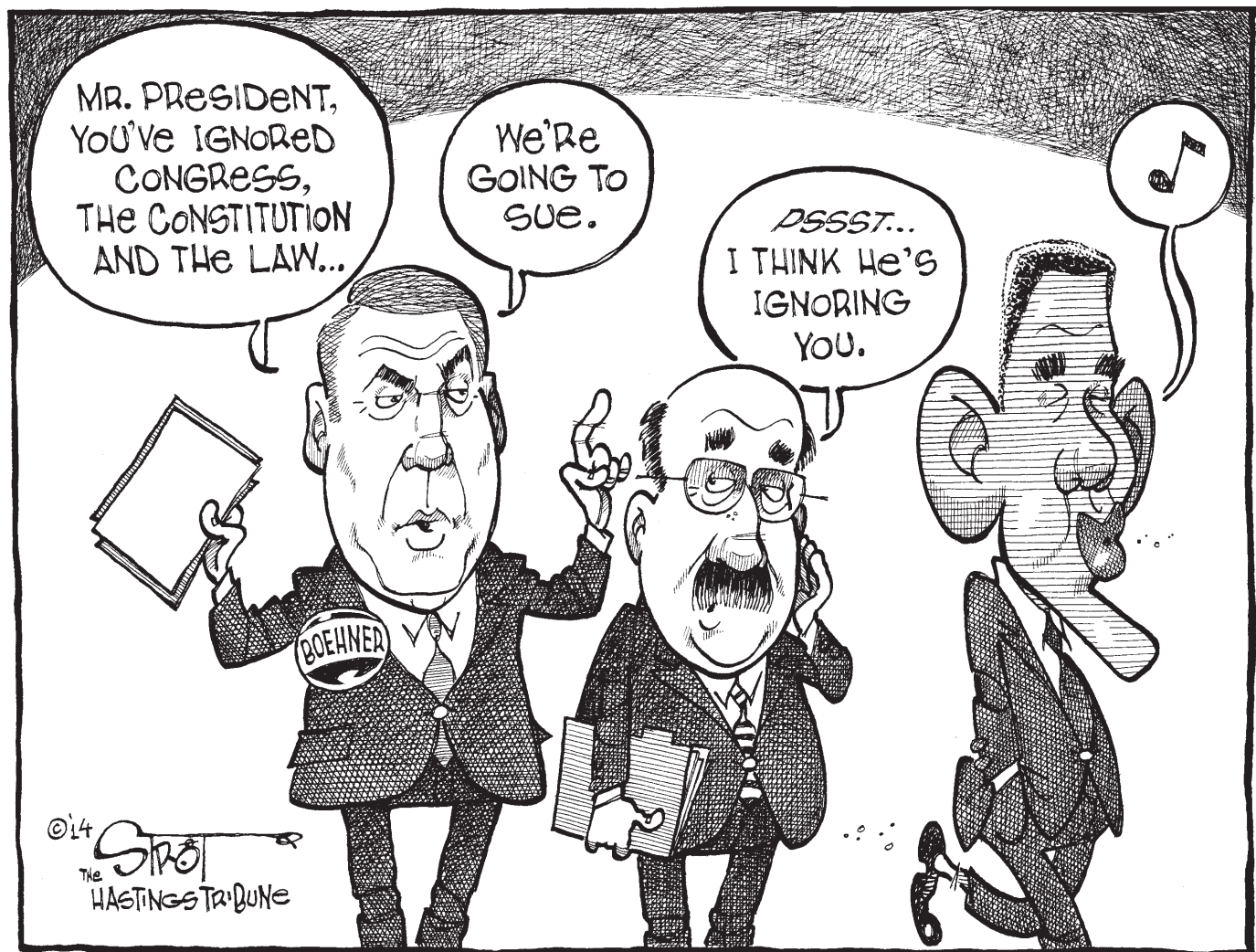
Orion grew out of the ashes of another program, Constellation, which was cancelled by the Obama Administration during a round of budget tightening in 2011. Much of the Orion capsule design was made for that program, and after its cancellation, it was carried forward into the new project.

I understand the arguments against space exploration. It is expensive to be sure, and with this country's problems, there are good arguments to be made that the money could be spent elsewhere. However, I have always believed that government shouldn't just be about taxes, food stamps, welfare and military. It should also help inspire us to patriotism.

I wasn't around for the moon landing. But I can imagine the pride and inspiration that all Americans must have felt to see Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin making those first steps onto another world. We can experience that again, and in an age where so many Americans are so often disgusted with the actions of their government, what could be more important?

It will be many years before Orion is ready to go on its voyages, but I'm encouraged that we are finally embarking on the next step, and that its culmination will be within my lifetime, something I had despaired of seeing. It will, as long as everything goes well, take us further than any human has been. To me, that is the whole point, to go further, to look beyond the horizon and discover things that will change us and our world forever. I believe that any cost is worth the effort when taking those next steps.

After all, although it may sound cliché, I've always felt we should adhere to a saying from my favorite television show, that we should always endeavor to go boldly where no one has gone before.



Weighing in on rhubarb

"Okay, Marge," I said, "I'll swap you three hollyhocks and a cone flower for two rhubarb plants."

"Deal," said my friend Marge and I went home with an ice cream bucket full of my treasured rhubarb starts. For years I've been dreaming of rhubarb crunch, strawberry-rhubarb pie and just plain stewed rhubarb (with cream, of course) over dried bread. At last, I will have my own rhubarb plant.

But now the debate is where to plant it. I want it on the west side of a little storage shed in our back yard. Jim wants it in an east facing corner of our rental property next door. It will boil down to who gets their planting location ready first. Since he's wrapped up in a remodeling job right now, I think I win.

I know it will take a couple of years before I can "harvest" any of the tart stalks, but it will be worth the wait. I almost said "weight." Because, unfortunately, anything you make with rhubarb requires sugar – lots and lots of sugar.

The late Howard Kessinger, former owner/editor of The Oberlin Herald

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



considered rhubarb a noxious weed. For years, he and my mother kept a running debate about the positives vs. negatives of rhubarb. And really, neither cared who "won," because neither was going to change their mind. It was all in fun.

-ob-

The countdown is on. Club is at my house in little more than a week and my attempts at getting ready have been pretty feeble. So many things I wanted done are only getting a "lick and a promise." All my pretties on top of the kitchen cabinets won't get that bath I promised them, nor will the cabinets themselves get that good Murphy's wash either.

I'll be doing good to get the stack of magazines and papers off the din-

ing room table and the canning jars off the kitchen counter. I will close, and maybe lock, the office door to hide that mess. While I'm at it I better close and lock the closet door.

Haven't decided what to serve for refreshments. Something cool and refreshing. Perhaps fruit with some cookies or cake.

I don't know why I worry. Our bunch of ladies don't come to judge each other's homes. We come for the friendship and conversation. I love club day, because once a month, I know I will have a relaxing afternoon with women friends. There is a very short business meeting then we talk about what women all over the world talk about. Our husbands, recipes and children. Perhaps not in that order, but those are our main topics.

I asked my mother why, at community get-togethers, did the men congregate on one side of the room and women on the other. She said, "Because that's the only time they each get to be with others who want to talk about what they want to talk about."

I guess nothing really changes.

Feeding peace around the world

Television, newspapers, magazines and the web are filled with images of starving children – skeleton-like figures crouched like dogs on their haunches while their mothers wail in anguish. Sometimes these pictures from such far-away places as Sudan, Ethiopia or Somalia also include children eating bread, bowls of rice and other staples that may have come from food produced on the fertile land of Kansas farmers and their counterparts across the United States.

The idea for food aid for these hungry people originated 60 years ago in Kansas. Named Food for Peace, this program started as an outgrowth of our country's foreign-aid policy.

Here's how it all began. A few years after the conclusion of World War II, the United States implemented plans to help countries devastated by the war. The Marshall Plan in Western Europe became the cornerstone of this newly emerging program.

While some of the funding was used for reconstruction, other monies were used to help feed starving people left homeless and unemployed by the war. During this same period, the United States enjoyed bumper crops and began stockpiling huge commodity surpluses.

In September 1953, Cheyenne County Farm Bureau – in northwestern Kansas – held a countywide policy development meeting. In that meeting, Peter

Insight

John Schlageck



O'Brien, a young farmer and rancher, suggested that it would make more sense to give aid in the form of food items than in the form of money.

Cheyenne County Farm Bureau drafted a foreign-aid resolution that called for exporting grain to other countries. The northwestern Kansas farm leaders believed that if underdeveloped countries were able to secure food they would become major buyers of U.S. commodities once they became more prosperous.

The Kansas farmers also saw this as a "sure-fire" method to help reduce grain inventories and increase shipments of U.S. agricultural products that could generate more business for American processors, packers, shippers, railroads and ocean vessels.

The county Farm Bureau resolution became a state resolution at the Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting and later part of the official policy of the American Farm Bureau Federation. In 1954, Kansas Sen. Andy Schoepel sponsored legislation known as Food for

Peace that passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law by Kansas' own native son, President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Since its beginning in Cheyenne County, Kan., Food for Peace has gone through many changes. It remains, however, a key ingredient in our overseas plan to aid countries with food rather than money.

Food for Peace has worked in more than 150 countries and provided food assistance to more than 3 billion people since 1954.

In 2013, Food for Peace provided approximately 1.1 million metric tons of food aid valued at approximately \$1.4 billion in 46 countries. It also provided \$577.6 million in grants in 29 countries for local and regional purchase of food commodities, food vouchers and cash transfers under the Emergency Food Security Program.

Using food for humanitarian relief programs helps everyone. Without Food for Peace and the output of Kansas producers and their counterparts across the United States, millions of people will continue to go hungry.

It is only fitting we pay tribute to the Farm Bureau leaders in rural northwestern Kansas for planting this fertile seed that has grown to feed people and peace around the world.

Call Dana for your next ad. 785-877-3361!

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ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

Kansas Press Association



Thumbs up to Jeff Burton for completion of his masters in Criminal Justice. Congratulations!! E-mailed in.

Thumbs up to the BB Gun team for holding a great car wash and for all the hard work they did. Called in.