

# Opinion



## Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

## Supporting the local paper

To The Free Press:

I support our local paper. I would like to see it published in such a way that I could receive today's paper today. But I also understand their difficulty in getting it in the mail for outlying areas.

Also, if you want your news in the local paper before it hits the Hays or Salina papers, maybe you need to make sure that information is given to the editor in time for publication.

By the way, for those who thought my last letter to the editor was too long, let me rephrase it in a very short and to the point message.

Why would I vote no if asked whether to unilaterally attack Iraq?

It is because I think Mr. Bush is an officious bloviating egregious demagogue with his comorra having fetal powers with procrustean intentions for the world.

Now simmer down before you call the FBI, KBI, and homeland security folks. Find a good dictionary and you'll find that I have not made any threatening statement that should endanger the president in any way.

Nor does it indicate I am not as patriotic as any one else. I simply do not like his personality, his way of doing business, nor his political philosophy.

**Ken Poland**  
Gem  
(Letter #132)

## Questions for the board, CEO

To: Hospital Board & CEO:

In response to recent decisions implemented by the hospital board and CEO of Citizens Medical Center:

We have always understood that part of your responsibility was to promote harmony and professional backing to the **doctors, patients, and employees** of Citizens Medical Center. Following recent decisions, we feel this has been non-existent with our present administration of Citizens Medical Center.

Dr. Hildyard has been a tremendous asset to our community; both he and Dr. Regier have shown great devotion to their patients here in Thomas County, and surrounding areas, for the last 28 years and counting. They have never threatened to abandon their community, even after substandard treatment from the hospital administration.

Where would our hospital be without patients, who seem to have been very satisfied with the treatment and services they are now receiving?

Are you going to continue to divide the community, or make the hospital available to all patients, regardless of their choice of physicians?

Is this a personal vengeance or a professional decision?

We want to know.

**Max & Katie Melvin**  
Colby  
(Letter #133)

## Addresses of elected officials:

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 302 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774

**U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521

**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715

**State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmmorriso@ink.org web:http://www.idir.net/~jmmorriso/

**State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: sclark@ink.org

## COLBY FREE PRESS

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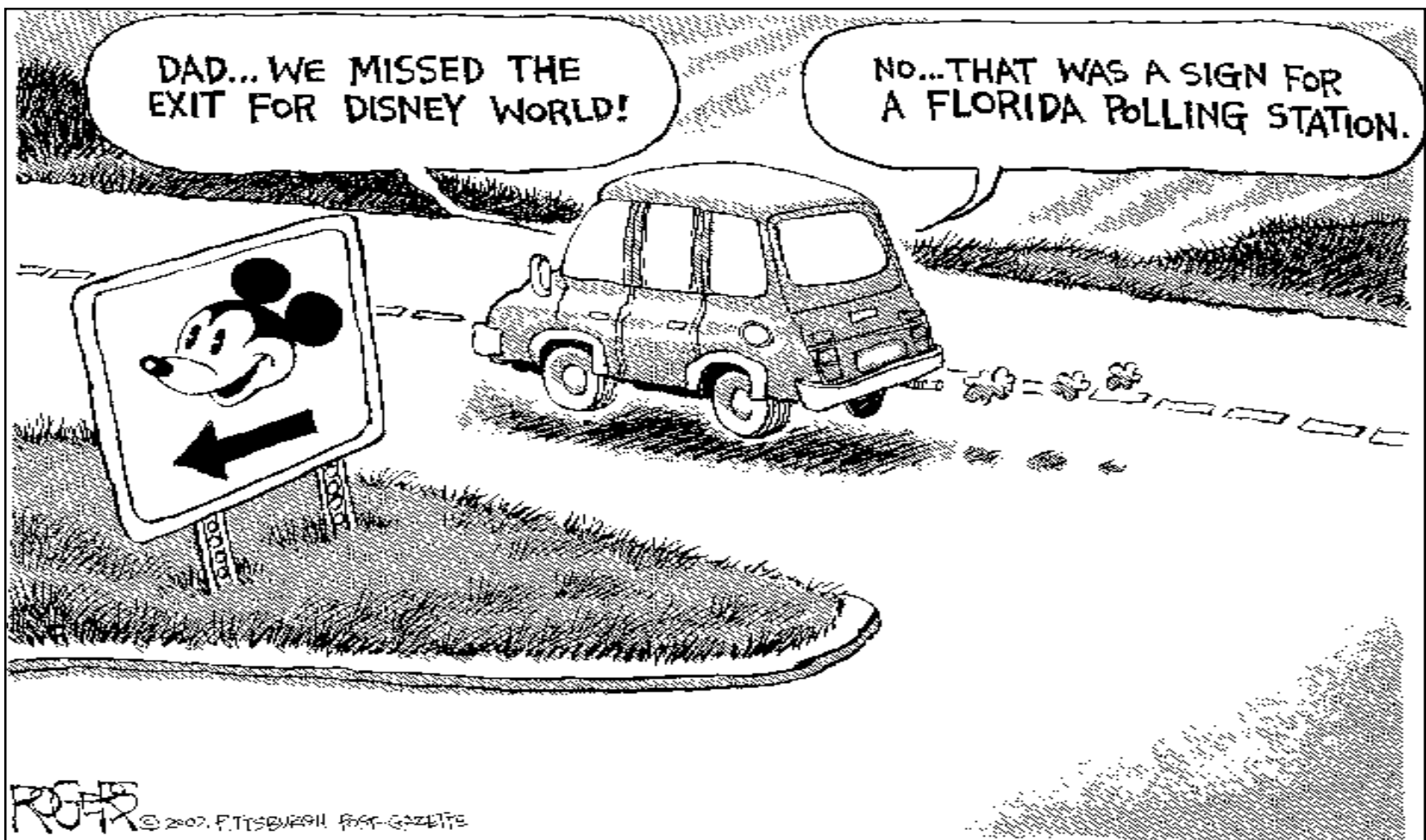
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## Nor'West Newspapers

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## Graves finally does it

John Hanna

- Kansas Politics

Moderate Republican Gov. Bill Graves is acknowledging that a sense of partisan duty compelled him to endorse conservative GOP gubernatorial nominee Tim Shallenburger.

Graves said that party loyalty was the "primary motivating factor" pushing him to declare his support for Shallenburger against Democrat Kathleen Sebelius in the Nov. 5 general election.

The endorsement came six weeks after Shallenburger won the Aug. 6 primary, following a few meetings between the two men and discussions between their staffs.

Graves tried to minimize the significance of the delay but acknowledged he and Shallenburger have become "the public face" of a moderate-conservative split that has bedeviled the Kansas GOP for decades.

And at least a few moderates still aren't endorsing Shallenburger, including Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer.

"We're talking about the future of the state, and I just don't think the folks who are his core supporters see the state the way I do," Sherrer said. "Integrity comes before unity."

Sebelius hopes to exploit the long-standing tensions within the GOP to pull moderate Republican votes.

Political activists in both major parties believe she needs to do so because registered Republican voters outnumber registered Democrats by about 272,000.

Graves and Shallenburger had a joint news conference in the governor's Statehouse office last Thursday. Also present was GOP State Chairman Mark Parkinson.

"The treasurer and I could find several things we probably are not going to agree on," Graves said. "This endorsement is about those things that we know we do agree upon, and principal among those

is our commitment to the Republican Party."

Shallenburger said he is confident that most Republicans will vote for him and welcomed Graves' support.

Graves said he didn't put any conditions on his endorsement and is willing to participate in Shallenburger campaign events and help him raise money.

Shallenburger said: "The governor is the leader of the Republican Party in this state and has a lot of good will out there, and so we appreciate him throwing some of it our way."

Democrats reacted to Graves' endorsement with amusement.

"I think the really big news is that it's taken six weeks to happen," said Democratic State Chairman Tom Sawyer. "That speaks volumes."

The governor's slowness in endorsing Shallenburger became notable because other moderates, including U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, were quick to declare their support for the GOP nominee. Graves skipped a "unity" breakfast in Topeka the morning after the primary.

Graves suggested that news organizations arbitrarily had decided an endorsement should come quickly. He said he's never liked having unity breakfasts "when the headache hasn't even worn off" from primary night.

"Asking folks to just show up and be happy campers is a hard thing to do," he said.

He also said he should get credit for being thoughtful about making an endorsement.

"I wanted to make sure, when we stood here before you, we were doing so having fully agreed that I was going to offer a meaningful endorsement," Graves said.

One sticking point for some moderate Republicans is education funding and Shallenburger's promise not to increase taxes in the face of the state's financial difficulties.

Sebelius has stopped short of making a no-tax-increase pledge but has promised to initiate an agency-by-agency review of state government to find efficiencies.

Graves said he is comfortable with Shallenburger's statements that he does not intend to cut education funding, despite his promise on taxes.

"I'm confident that Tim Shallenburger's prepared to be as supportive of public education as he can possibly be, given these difficult situations," he said.

On some social issues, most notably abortion and gun rights, Graves and Shallenburger are far apart. Graves generally has a record of supporting most abortion rights positions, while Shallenburger repeatedly has voted for new restrictions.

Shallenburger supported legislation to license Kansans to carry concealed weapons; Graves vetoed such a bill in 1997.

But Graves said they aren't "defining issues" in running the state.

"They're important and I don't want to minimize that, but this election is about fiscal management," he said.

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John Hanna covers Kansas politics and the state government for The Associated Press.

## Our criminal injustice system

Hugh B. Price

- Another Viewpoint

Let's be clear. I have no tolerance for crime. I want America's neighborhoods and the people who live in them to be safe. I want predators, violent criminal gangs, one-man and -woman crime waves, and drug dealers who prey on children off the streets.

But we must also be clear-headed, and smart, about how to fight crime. For years our politicians have scrambled to upstage one another in showing how tough they could talk about revenging crime. The trouble is they've squandered billions of taxpayers' money in this macho game. They've boasted about passing lengthy prison sentences for nonviolent offenders, sentences that have produced the two-decade-long explosion of new prison construction in state after state.

Now, that spending spree has proved a drag on the fiscal health of numerous state budgets, and on the economic development of the larger society. We've locked people up in greater numbers than ever before, while eliminating prison rehabilitation, education and job-training programs.

No wonder the ability of ex-offenders to even be in a position to pursue legitimate work when they are released can be summed up, as Paul Street of the Chicago Urban League writes in the current issue of *Opportunity Journal*, as bad and dismal. "No wonder, then," he goes on to say, "that U.S. recidivism rates hover around 60 percent for ex-offenders."

It makes no sense to pretend that the large majority of those sent to prison will not be released from prison someday. Nor to pretend that the various "three strikes and you're out" laws are nothing but an idiotic public policy that has needlessly locked up tens of thousands of nonviolent offenders who'd be better off in community-based treatment programs and supporting their families — as some states are beginning to realize.

Equally important, the nation's wrongheaded approach to criminal justice has far too often compounded the tragedy of a crime being committed with the tragedy of an innocent person being nonetheless swept up in the criminal justice system. And, needless to say, the further tragedy of the actual perpetrator of the crime not being brought to justice at all.

Two recent incidents, one in Detroit, the other in New York City, starkly illustrate some of the things wrong with America's criminal justice system. In Detroit, after having spent 17 years in prison for the rape and murder of a 16-year-old girl, 54-year-old Eddie Joe Lloyd was set free on Aug. 26 — because DNA testing had proved that he couldn't have committed the crime. In New York over a recent weekend, 23-year-old Bradley Gumbel, a son of Bryant Gumbel the television personality, was set free after spending 20 hours in custody under suspicion of snatching a woman's purse.

The wrong done to Eddie Joe Lloyd is by far the more egregious. Lloyd, who has long suffered from mental instability, was in a mental hospital and on medication when, he "confessed" to a crime that had horrified Detroit. However, his attorneys have charged that police detectives fed Lloyd details of the

gruesome crime in order to entrap him and have called for a U.S. Justice Department probe of the case.

Bradley Gumbel was arrested because of mistaken identity. A mugger tackled the victim late at night on New York's Upper East Side, snatched her purse and ran. Seeing him from the back, she described to the police a tall, thin black man with close-cropped hair and a white T-shirt. A short time later, while canvassing the area in a police squad car, she pointed to Gumbel, who was walking down the street. Fortunately, Bradley Gumbel had an alibi. He had just dropped off his date for the evening, and she could vouch for his whereabouts. Fortunately, Bradley Gumbel's home was on the Upper East Side, too, and he was heading directly there. Fortunately, Bradley Gumbel's family attorney is one of the city's best. Fortunately, Bradley Gumbel has a good job, and has never been even remotely in trouble with the law.

As for his matching that description of the mugger, *Newsday* columnist Ellis Henican put it best, writing, "Sure he did — he and a few hundred thousand other innocent individuals in the general vicinity of New York." With his resources, Henican went on to note, Bradley Gumbel was out of jail and trouble quickly. "But the question still needs to be asked," he reminded us: "How often do people, especially young black men, get swept up in one of these one-witness identifications, then end up in prison for crimes they didn't commit? What role do the police play in facilitating injustices like these?"

In fact, it's just one of many questions that ought to trouble those who want an effective and fair-criminal justice system, one truly based on justice for all.

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Hugh B. Price is president of the National Urban League in New York City.

## Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau

