

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Stop fibbing, get back to work

By Steve Haynes
Politics.
Honesty, integrity, the truth.
Draw a line between those two sentences, because one seldom mixes with the other, especially in Kansas this year.
It's nothing unusual in this country, but candidates seem to think they have to shade the truth to be elected.
Maybe no one is exactly lying, but it's hard to catch anyone telling the unvarnished truth. It's enough to make a voter run screaming from the booth.
Take the governor's race.
Please.
Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who seems a shoo-in for re-election and beyond that, maybe somebody's running mate, likes to brag about the money "she's" gotten for Kansas schools, "all without a tax increase."

The truth is she pushed for a \$350 million tax increase which Republican legislators turned down. Her claim is technically true, even if it's not credible. The governor stayed behind the scenes through most of the school battle, coming out after the dust had settled to claim the credit.

That's not the kind of "truth" daddy would have let us get away with as kids. Who knows, though. Her daddy was governor of Ohio.

Her opponent, Sen. Jim Barnett of Emporia, is no better. He's running on a no-tax-increase platform, though in the heat of the school finance fight, he backed a \$250 million increase.

Maybe voters are supposed to listen to today's "truth" and forget the candidate's record.

Then there's the attorney general race, where the challenger, Democrat Paul Morrison of Johnson County, claims he's leading Republican Phill Kline.

One thing we're supposed to forget is that Morrison was a Republican until he saw a chance to unseat Kline last year. Morrison maintains a "truth squad" which fires off press releases claiming that Kline lies. These call his statements "Phill's fibs."

And while there's no doubt the attorney general has stretched and bent the truth to suit his needs, Morrison has shown he can fib it up with the rest of them. His latest television ad shows doctors working on records and claims that Kline wants "your medical records" in the hands of government.

In fact, Kline's office tried to get a limited number of records from two abortion clinics involving underage girls, hoping to file statutory rape charges. Kline says he's just looking for lawbreakers, but the fight really is about abortion. Morrison knows that, too.

None of this is new in American politics. It's gone on since the founding of the Republic, the dark and disgusting underbelly of democracy.

Much as we claim to hate mudslinging, Americans decry a clean campaign. We go to sleep when candidates debate real issues. Dirt attracts attention. Lies become accepted truths. Exaggerations become reality.

Not a pretty picture, but there you have it.
Wouldn't it be nice if they all stopped fibbing and got back to business?

— Steve Haynes is owner of Nor'West Newspapers including the Colby Free Press.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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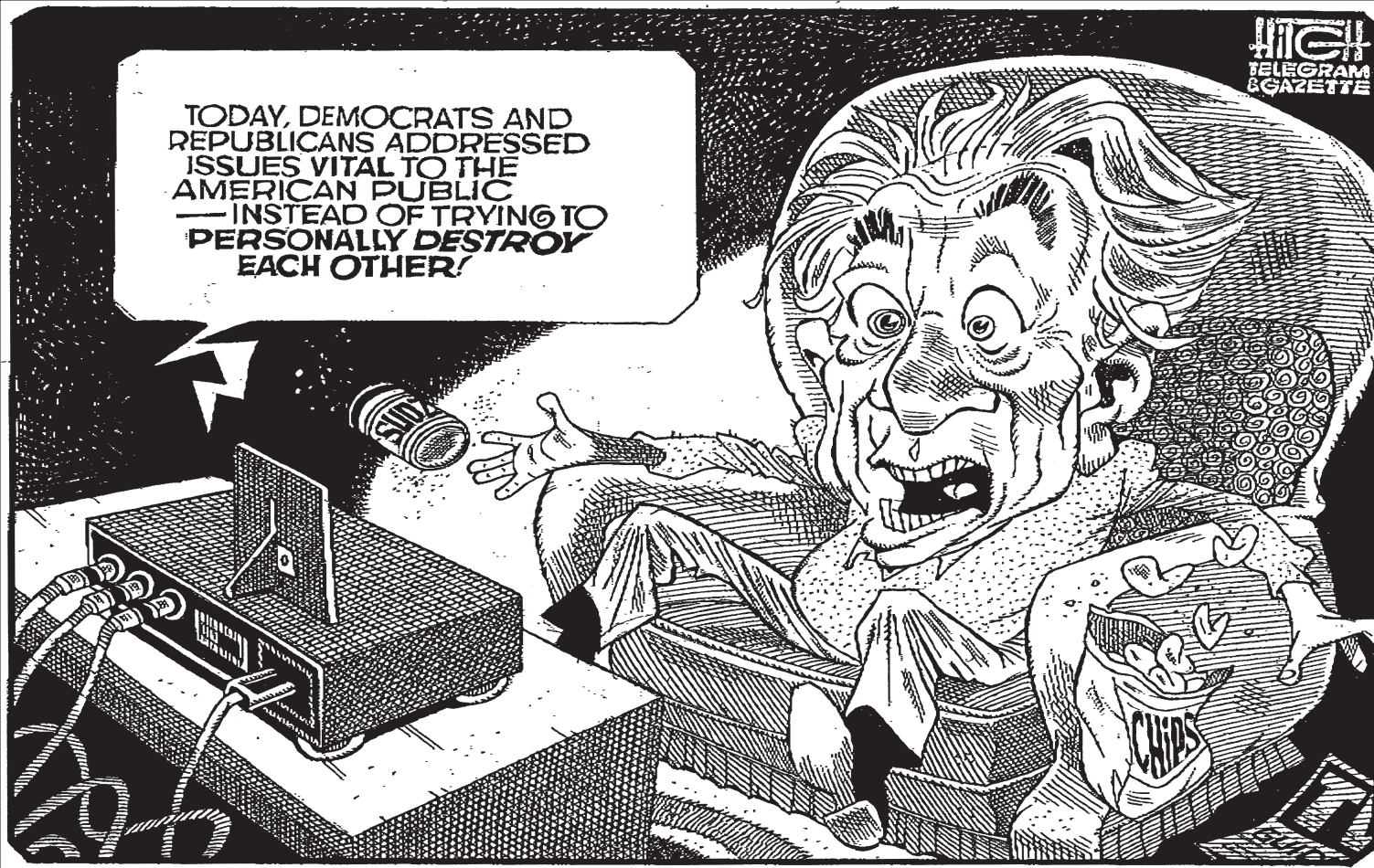
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THE *REAL* OCTOBER SURPRISE

A new meaning for bluetooth surfaces

Winter is just around the corner but that does not mean northwest Kansans has to become house bound. While I'm the first to promote enjoying ones own state, once in a while a person just has to venture out into the great wide world.

Having not been anywhere more than 100 miles away in 11 months, my husband and I ventured to Denver last weekend.

What a fun trip that was. Not only did we eat at our two favorite restaurants, but we got to play with his 3-year-old granddaughter for a few hours.

Part of our time with her, and her parents, was a trip to the new Bass Pro Shop located north of Interstate 70 where the old Stapleton Airport used to be. That store is a destination in itself, all 186,000 square feet of it.

The new store has some 15 different departments for the avid sportsman and outdoorsman. For those not so inclined for rugged adventures of NASCAR racing, hunting, 4-wheeling, boating, rock climbing and hiking, there's more the calm departments like camping and fly fishing.

And, still more relaxing is an area of benches adjacent to a huge aquarium with fish swimming about as one sips a cup of Starbucks, also located inside the store.

While on our fall foliage trip, a roadside sight captured my attention just outside of Parker, Colo.

That's where I spied a row of unique looking vehicles in the parking lot of a business. Short of slamming on the brakes and making a U-turn in the highway, I asked my chauffeur, aka my husband, to turn around and take me back for a closer



Jan Katz Ackerman

• From Where I stand

look.

The bubble shaped, three wheeled cars and pickups called Zaps are imported from China and they are totally electric. Costing less than \$10,000, the little vehicles are estimated to reach speeds up to 40 miles per hour and have estimated driving ranges of 40 miles.

OK, stop laughing. No, you can't run down Interstate 70 in either the cars or the pickups, and you'd have to recharge before making a return trip to Hoxie or Oakley, but these cars just might be the thing of the future.

Classified as a 3-wheeled motorcycle, the overall dimensions are 10-foot long, just over 4 and one-half-foot wide, and 5-foot tall and are advertised as having zero emissions. Radios and CD players, as well as leather seats are optional. Running on a lead acid battery, the little pickups seat two people and the sedans seat up to four - that is as long as all four weigh less than 500 pounds.

To learn more about these little critters visit www.zapworld.com

Speaking of critters, my little four-legged crit-

ter, Katie, spent her first night away from home this past weekend. I'm not sure whose weekend was more traumatic, Katie's or my daughter's since she graciously took on the challenge of caring for my terribly spoiled beagle.

Maybe the word spoiled is a bit harsh, but Katie's at least set in her ways. She's got her own routine, and if adhered to, she's no problem.

Any way, the weekend resulted in only one phone call to the vet to see what to do for a dog which had just munched on a package of mouse bait. Fortunately, both Katie and my daughter weathered that storm.

And an afternoon trip to rural Thomas County proved to be exciting for Katie and she even got to participate in a paint ball match. Fortunately, the blue paint ball Katie tried to eat was retrieved from her throat before any damage other than blue teeth and a blue tongue could take place.

Before leaving Saturday, I told my daughter watching Katie would be much like caring a 2-year-old in that it might be difficult to decipher what she wanted and when she wanted it. But upon our return, my husband and I wiped tears from our eyes while listening to the pet sitting report, all the while trying to contain our laughter.

While our much needed time away was great for us, I'm not sure if my daughter will ever pet sit again. That's yet to be seen.

— Jan Katz Ackerman is reporter for the Colby Free Press.

Your turn

Thanks for helping Iraqi children

Susan McMahan Brewster

In April my husband, Master Sergeant John McMahan, was deployed to Iraq. Upon his arrival he was taken back by the war torn area and what the children had to endure.

I started a fundraiser to help him help the kids in his area. I thought it would just go for a month or two. My goal was to send 15 boxes over there.

Since then, it's the middle of October and I am still getting donations. I can only ship through January of 2007 so I am winding down the collection of items. I am so amazed at the generosity of people in our area. The words of support, prayers and thoughtfulness of many have really helped our family.

I need to thank everyone who donated items

to our fundraiser and to be accountable for their generosity. By the time I ship the last boxes in January, we will have sent over 40 boxes from our area. Then there were another 10 boxes from Colorado.

John has been to the sheik's house several times for tea. Every time a big shipment comes in from us, he calls John to his house for tea to thank him for everything he has done for his people. What we are doing is making a huge difference in that town!

I could not have done this without the help of the *Colby Free Press* newspaper telling John's story; Brewster Community Church and other private donations for paying for all the postage. The Colby Post Office enduring and helping me with all the packages.

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

