



Other Viewpoints

Sexual assault a 'men's issue' too

Too often, sexual assault is seen as a "women's issue." On the contrary, when the U.S. Department of Justice reports that 20 percent to 25 percent of women in college say they experienced an attempted or completed rape while in college, it should concern us all.

That's why it's encouraging to see a group at Kansas University renewing its efforts to involve young men in the conversation about sexual assault. A recent panel discussion touched on topics such as language choice and risky behaviors. It also urged college men to intervene in potentially harmful situations and be supportive of friends who've been victims of sexual violence.

Unfortunately, the audience at the Kansas Union included only about 20 people. It's a start, but this is an issue that deserves far more attention, especially from young men, who can be either the perpetrators or the victims of sexual abuse.

When a woman reports a sexual assault, the reflexive reaction often is to look at her behavior, whether she had been drinking, whether she had put herself in a risky situation. Regardless of the circumstances, a sexual assault involves at least two people. Men have a responsibility too. That responsibility includes steering clear of risky behaviors that can lead them to make bad decisions. It also means being willing to step in when a situation with someone else starts to get out of hand.

Changing attitudes about sexual assault is particularly important because of the difficulties of seeking legal remedies. Embarrassed victims too often don't report the assaults and, even when reports are filed, it may be difficult to prosecute a case that relies heavily on conflicting "he said, she said" accounts.

It's obvious that men play a role in sexual assault; it should be equally obvious that they need to play a role in preventing it. The recent event at KU at least got that conversation started.

—The Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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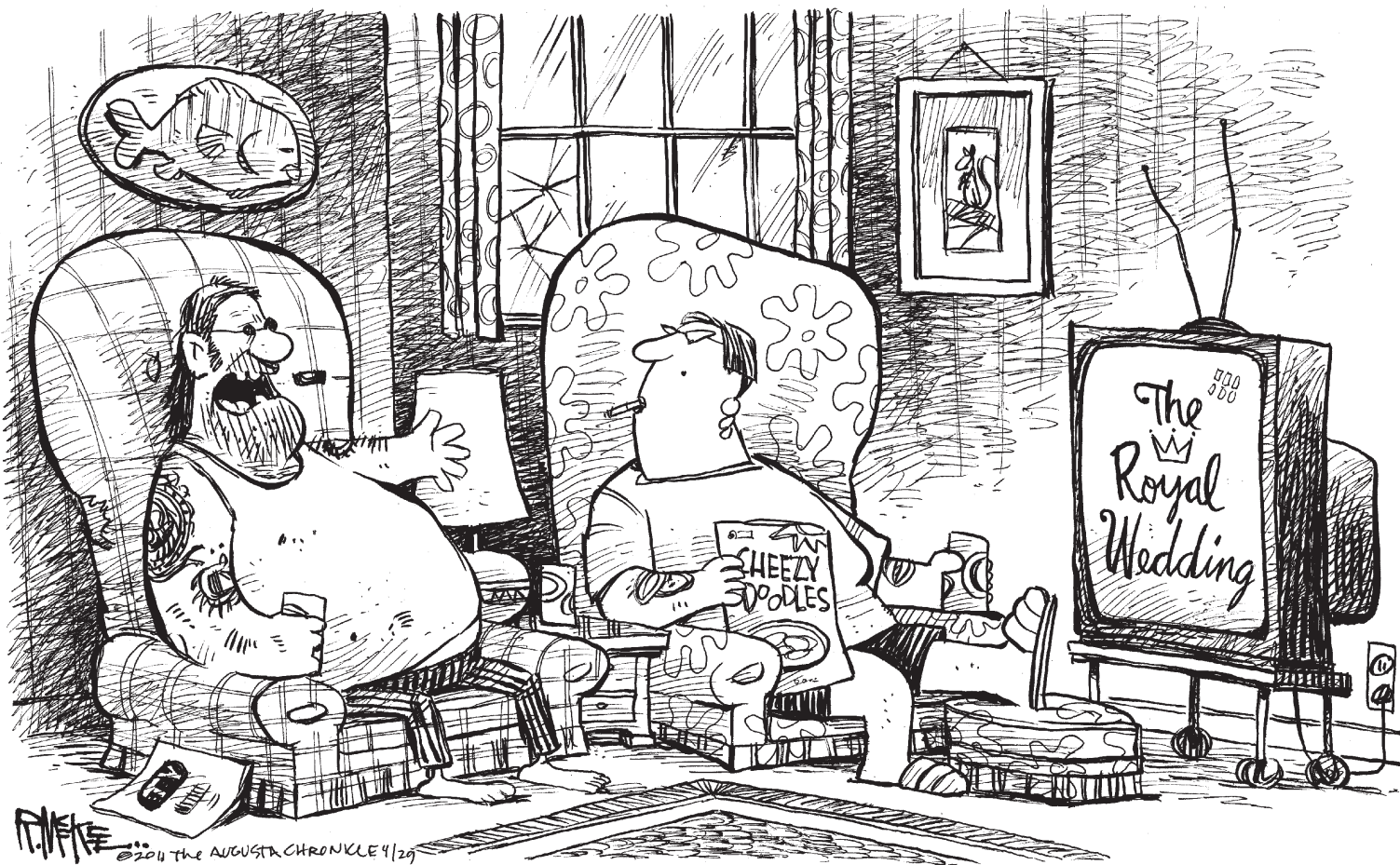
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"A GAL WHO'S BARELY WORKED A DAY IN HER LIFE MARRIES A GUY WHO'S BEEN ON WELFARE SINCE THE DAY HE WAS BORN...? THAT'S US WITHOUT THE COMMEMORATIVE PLATE!"

Chew on these bits and pieces

Nevada's conservative Republican senator, with 11 years service, is resigning in midst of sex scandal and improper appointments. Oh my goodness! I thought it was only the liberals who didn't have proper morals and ethics.

Abortion: Why do we use date of birth as when the child begins breathing? Why not conception? How about dating it when the egg and the sperm, separately, became viable?

Artificial contraception is forbidden by some religious groups. It isn't 'artificial' when deliberately letting the egg and sperm go to waste by abstaining from intercourse? Show me where in the Bible that method is approved.

There is a little admonition in the New Testament that neither spouse should deny the other the pleasure of sex. How do you get around that?

Birthers: We accept Hawaii's certificate of birth for everything except eligibility to be President. The following excerpt from an interview: "I'll tell you, people love this issue — especially Republicans," Trump said...."

Yep! Make that the central issue and ignore other immediate issues and problems. Trump names his own trump card when it comes to his game of business and politics. Abstract emotions will trump reality every time.

Just for fun, look up the word "abstract" in a thesaurus. Mine shows about 40 different usages or meanings.

English is a simple, easily understood language? Context changes the meaning of many words. Ignoring the context of phrases in our Constitution can detract from original intent.

It takes an unbiased constitutional lawyer and semantics/etymology expert to determine original intent of our constitution and even for recent legislative productions. Sometimes, there is no reasonable explanation of original



Ken Poland

• Ken's World

intent, especially in today's political climate.

Tea Party Constitutionalists say our constitution was written to limit the power of the federal government. They don't seem to understand why the Constitutional Convention was called.

Wasn't it because the government operating under the Articles of Confederation didn't have any power to maintain the concept of "United States"? Thank goodness, we had statesmen and leaders who could see the handwriting on the wall and realize the system was failing.

Too many people in today's society are unaware of the failure of our first attempt of a national government to make us a viable and enduring United States of America.

When arguing Constitutional intent: please consider the following taken from historical evidence. "Drafted during the years 1776 and 1777, while the colonists were still fighting for independence, the Articles of Confederation created a weak national government with most of the governmental powers retained by the states. The Articles provided no separation of branches.

Congress was the only branch of government. Laws required unanimous votes. Members did not vote as individuals, but as states. While Congress did have some powers, it could not enforce its laws on states or people. States were permitted to coin their own

money. There was no regulation of commerce between the states, and states could even enter into treaties with foreign nations and declare war, "with the consent of Congress." Congress could not tax the states or the people; it could only request "funds to run the government."

The Democrats are guilty of ignoring common sense by raising the national debt limit. Never mind that in G.W. Bush's eight years, the limit was raised eight times.

We worry about leaving a legacy of debt, but we have no qualms about leaving them a fouled nest through environmental pollution.

We object to graduated tax schedules on the grounds they're intended to redistribute wealth. But we have no problem with using the Social Security trust fund to support other national endeavors. Most have contributed a percentage of our total income to the trust fund while the wealthy have not paid beyond the limit (about \$106,000 a year) against wages, and all their other income is exempt. Who benefits from redistribution of the Trust Fund? Those in the higher income tax brackets?

We complain about the 45 percent of our population who pay no federal income tax. I venture to say they pay a higher percent of their disposable income in sales tax, gas tax, Social Security tax, property tax and the like than the majority of the rest of us.

Even those on welfare are recirculating our tax money through these various tax structures. Talk about "double taxation." We are paying double with our income tax being used to pay these taxes, via the welfare system.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rwinc@cheerful.com.

Ranchers must reclaim their position

The real issue — or mission — for livestock producers today must be to reclaim their rightful position as a noble profession. To reclaim this position, farmers and ranchers must continue to take care of their animals and preserve their freedom to operate and maintain successful animal agriculture here in Kansas and across this country.

To do so livestock producers must understand how consumers think and feel. Get inside their heads, if you will.

Today, consumers consider farmers responsible for the humane treatment of farm animals. In recent consumer surveys, people rated animal well being higher than the care and well being of workers in the food system. It did not rank as high as food safety however.

It is not science, technical capacity or ability that drives trust. Instead, it is whether consumers believe agriculture shares their ethics and values.

Livestock agriculture needs to talk about our commitment to doing the right thing — our commitment to values and ethics not just science. Our industry is strong in science. We have plenty of evidence to demonstrate we're doing the right thing, but we rely too much on that language. We need to reengage the public on a values basis.

The most important job is to communicate in a way that helps people have trust in what we say and do. Too often livestock producers take for granted that rural neighbors know and



John Schlageck

• Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

understand who they are and what they do.

Agriculture can no longer take this for granted. Agriculture continues to change and evolve and most of the people in the United States today are not involved in farming and ranching.

Americans know very little about where their food comes from today. What they want is permission to believe that what we are doing is consistent with their values and ethics. Telling our story to consumers may move to the point where we have to show people what is taking place on our farms. Unfortunately the perception is that when we don't show them — we're hiding something.

That said, there clearly remain legitimate reasons, from disease prevention to biosecurity, not to allow unfettered access to farms and ranches.

Livestock production or animal agriculture in the most affluent country in the world is faced with special challenges and opportunities. Among those challenges is that Americans spend such a small percentage of their income

on food that they can demand food where they want it, when they want it, in the proportion they want it.

Many food stores and food retailers have announced implementation of third-party verification measures to ensure the animals from which food products are derived were treated humanely. In the near future, customers will demand third-party verification and if it doesn't exist, the store providing the food is not going to be credible with the public.

Agriculture can win this battle for the hearts and minds of consumers. Farmers and ranchers must remember whom they are trying to influence. Customers and consumers need to hear from livestock producers.

It is not productive for the agriculture community to attack activist groups. Instead, agriculture must retake its rightful position as the people in charge of ensuring the humane treatment of animals.

Agriculture must inform people we share their concerns and we work hard every day to make sure our animals are treated fairly and humanely. Follow that by sharing with them how we meet our obligations to the humane treatment of the animals on our farms.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

