



Free Press Viewpoint

Media bias shown in ‘shutdown’ hype

It’s fascinating, watching the world – the Democrats and their hand-fed national media – blame the Republicans and the Tea Party for the impending government shutdown.

Commentator after commentator opines that the Republicans are making a big mistake, that the public blamed them in 1995 and 1996, when then-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich forced two shutdowns under President Bill Clinton. It’ll be the same this time, they say.

And President Clinton himself chimes in, telling President Barack Obama to stand his ground and let the GOP take the blame.

No one seems to care that the Republicans won a big majority in the House even as Obama was being re-elected, with many members running on a platform that included repealing the president’s new health-care law.

It’s as if it’s wrong for them to be against the massive, and little-understood, health-care bill. Or to try to block its implementation.

One writer said the Tea Party “just hasn’t accepted it as the law of the land.”

In our view, the threat of a government shutdown is overblown. Essential services, such as the FBI and the military, won’t close. The Weather Service will keep on warning us of storms. Airports will stay open.

True, the administration has some power to make the shutdown more painful by choosing what to cut off. Processing of Social Security and Medicare applications, for instance, apparently will halt. National Parks will close, the Smithsonian will be padlocked.

But will we really miss the government for a few days, or even a few weeks? The effects will be hyped, but what’s the harm?

The government shut down several times under President Ronald Reagan, and no one seemed to notice. Two shutdowns prompted by Speaker Gingrich during battles with President Clinton turned the tide, as the president won the propaganda war and put all the blame on the Republicans.

Those longer shutdowns set the stage for this year’s budget battle, entwined as it is with the drive to repeal or block Obamacare.

It seems the Republicans have every right to campaign against the health-care law and its possible consequences for businesses and the economy. Potentially huge costs frighten small-business owners and put a damper on already-slow job growth.

At this point, though, unless they win some major concessions from Mr. Obama, the Republicans appear likely to lose the propaganda war and the political battle. The president says he’s not about to give up on what he sees as his greatest accomplishment.

Cooler heads might advise the GOP to back off and wait for a better shot, but of course, that may not come.

It’s the president who’s refusing to negotiate right now, but he’s still liable to come out on top. By the time you read this, you may know who won and who lost, but it’s likely the GOP won’t look so good. — *Steve Haynes*

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail colby.editor@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

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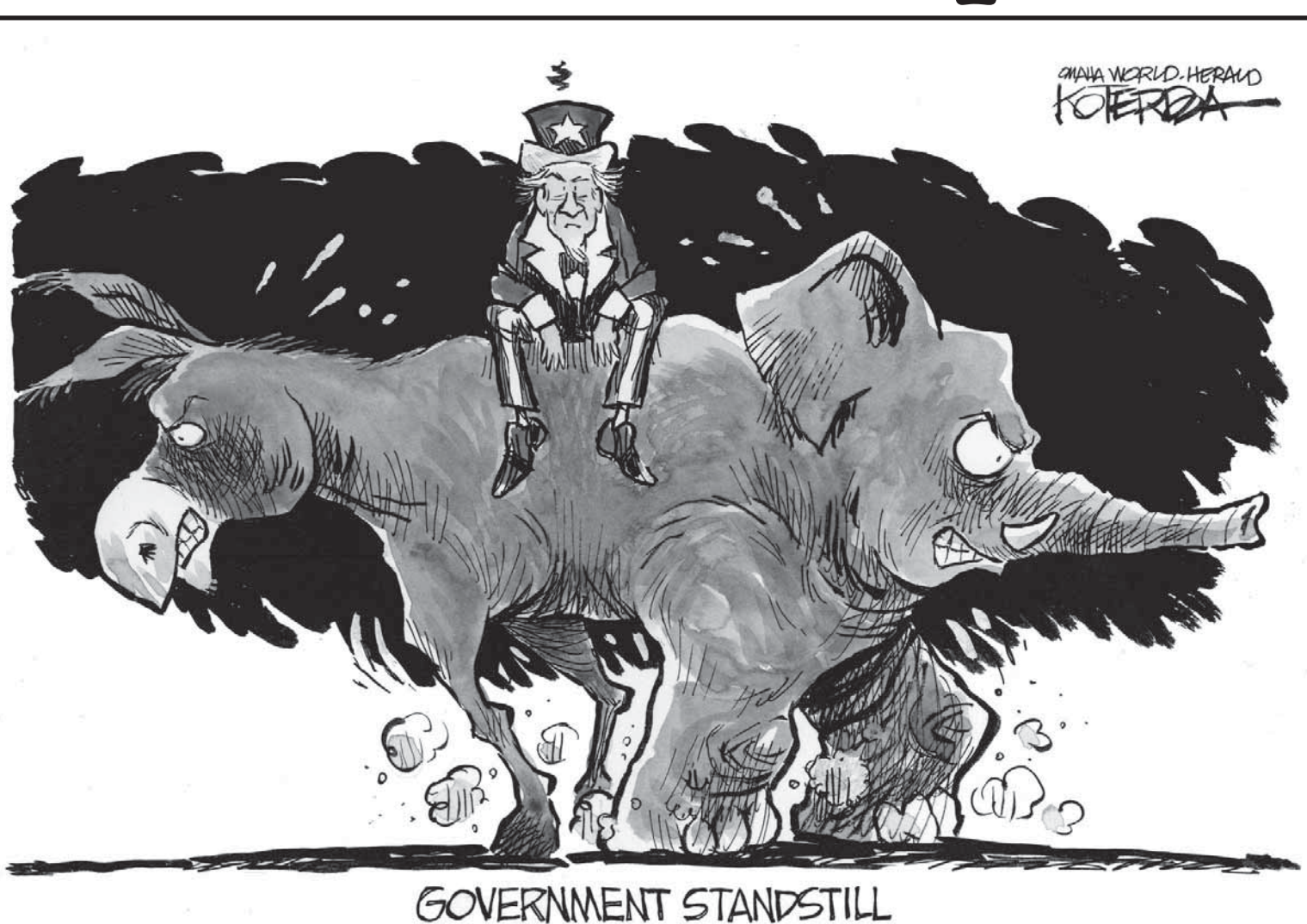
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Bird feeder traffic has let up some

I carefully filled my hummingbird feeders when I got to Colorado last week, and just as carefully poured all that sugar water down the drain five days later.

Not a hummer had shown his beak.

I’m not surprised, really. Looking around, few wildflowers, or flowers of any kind, were out in the mountains this late in September.

A friend who lives here told me that she took her feeders in at the first of September because she wanted the little hummers to get their tail feathers out of town and begin their long migration to wherever they go down south.

I guess she’s right.

My regular birdseed feeders, however, are getting some activity, even if the hummingbirds have left. I’m not sure what is enjoying my largess, but I know its birds and not the local deer, which have been known to enjoy some bird seed now and then.

When Bambi comes to visit, she doesn’t leave until the feeders are empty. This time out, it took a couple of days for the little birds to find the feeders, but they have been pecking away since then, because the seed level has gone down a couple of inches.



Cynthia Haynes

• **Open Season**

I say little birds, because when the larger ones come to visit, the jays and blackbirds, it’s really obvious. The redwing blackbirds don’t come in ones or twos, either; they come in flocks and families.

In August, we had several families of redwings draining the seeds out of the feeders. There were the fathers with their glossy black feathers and showy red and yellow patches on the wing. Then the mothers and fledglings came to try the snacks. They were duller, but pretty close to the same size.

The fledglings were a little uncertain. Once they got on a perch, they didn’t want to leave, even when one of those big human things came out of the house. Flying was tough, and hanging onto those little perches tricky; they

didn’t want to have to do it all over again.

I had to fill the feeders a couple of times a day that week, but it was worth it to watch one of my favorite birds in a family situation.

Mostly, I see the male blackbirds sitting on some tall weed or fencepost, watching over their nests, in Kansas. They always seem so vigilant and paternal. I love it. And they’re pretty, too.

But this week, it’s just little sparrows or whatever. I see small birds fluttering from tree to tree but, I don’t see them on the feeder. However, the seed is disappearing, so I’m sure they’re getting lunch and a snack as they get ready for winter.

And I don’t blame them. I always wish I could fly south with the birds, especially when February rolls around and spring seems so far off.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com

Join in campaign for 40 Days for Life

The Fall 40 Days for Life prayer campaign began last Wednesday and will end on Sunday, Nov. 3. This year’s campaign is being held in 306 cities from coast to coast in North America and in eight countries around the world.

Please join all of these prayer warriors in praying for an end to abortion. For information, go to www.40daysforlife.com

Joan Albers, Colby



Free Press Letter Drop

• **Our readers sound off**

Prisoner finds flaws in jail

To the Editor:

I read your paper everyday and I feel like the Thomas County Sheriff’s Office needs to be looked at for unlawful and illegal activity. I am not from here, and where I come from, the police are respectful and actually abide by the law.

There is not even a law library here where we can research exactly what we are accused of.

I am sitting in jail because my friend is accused of going 3 mph above the speed limit! That is not even a moving violation in Kansas, but the dirtiest part of this story is the way the police force themselves into people’s vehicles.

They gave my friend who was driving a warning and walked after they said he was free to go, then they came back, reapproached the vehicle and ask if there were any weapons, bombs, drugs or large amounts of cash in it.

If you say “no,” as any normal person would,

they ask if they can search the vehicle. If you deny the search, they call in a dog unit. And they will walk the dog around the car and say the dog got a hit in the back of the car, where it is not visible for you to see.

No matter what you say, they find a way into your vehicle and a way to pull you out and search you. More than half of the people who walk in (to the Thomas County Jail) tell the exact same story.

All the cops are doing this little trick to get their way. I have been here since June 30 and have not been able to contact my family or to communicate with anyone because they took my phone and my emergency contacts. I was due for surgery in Denver, and they didn’t even care. I’ve written about 15 grievances and not one response.

My leg is bleeding from a gunshot wound and not a thing has been done. I could catch an infection and they do not even give me my orthopedic shoes prescribed to me by my surgeon. But if I could tell the people of Colby

anything, I would want them to be aware of this setup that the police are doing.

When the officer gives you a ticket or warning, just drive away and ignore him if he reapproaches the vehicle. This amounts to illegal search and seizure. They are profiling people and forcing their way into people’s vehicles. Do not fall for it, people, because I sit here unable to get out and the county attorney will not agree to my release because I am not from here.

It is unfair what is going on, and every day they get away with it. Please warn the public. I am a professional tattoo artist from Denver. I made a drawing for you guys I thought you might like but I am not allowed to send it for some odd reason.

If you need info or details, I can provide actual legal documents to prove my accusations. I do not want to say names due to the treatment I already receive, but I would appreciate it if you made an article about it. Thanks again for hearing me out.

Peter Burgos, Denver
Inmate at Thomas County Jail

Editor’s note: The Thomas County Sheriff’s Office declined to comment on the specific allegations contained in this letter. But Under-sheriff Marc Finley stated all inmate medical issues are treated immediately, and officers perform traffic stops and searches within legal guidelines.

Where to write, call

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roberts.senate.gov/public/

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Mallard Fillmore

• **Bruce Tinsley**

