

from our viewpoint...

## Some changes better left to time

Sometimes we just want things to happen too fast. As the Kansas Legislature and those in other states across the country try to come to grips with how to integrate immigrants into society, they are looking at making English our official language.

Bad idea, lawmakers. Laws don't force people to change; social pressure does.

Just give it time, and what you want will be accomplished. Across this country, schools were taught in German, French, Italian, Chinese and a hundred other languages. City council meetings and church services were conducted in the language that the people could understand — Bohemian, Spanish, Irish, Yiddish, German, you name it.

Each new wave of immigrants brought with them their language, religion and customs. They set up communities where they socialized mostly with each other and were comfortable. But their children weren't comfortable. They wanted to move over the hill, across the river, into the next neighborhood. They needed to learn new things, new ways of doing things and frequently a new language.

So they did. They learned English, though many kept their native tongues because they still wanted and needed to communicate with parents, grandparents and friends back home.

Then their children came along. Mostly, they heard English at home. That's what Mom and Dad spoke, so that's what they spoke. They saw Grandma and Grandpa now and then and picked up a few words of old tongue, but without much practice, they didn't keep it.

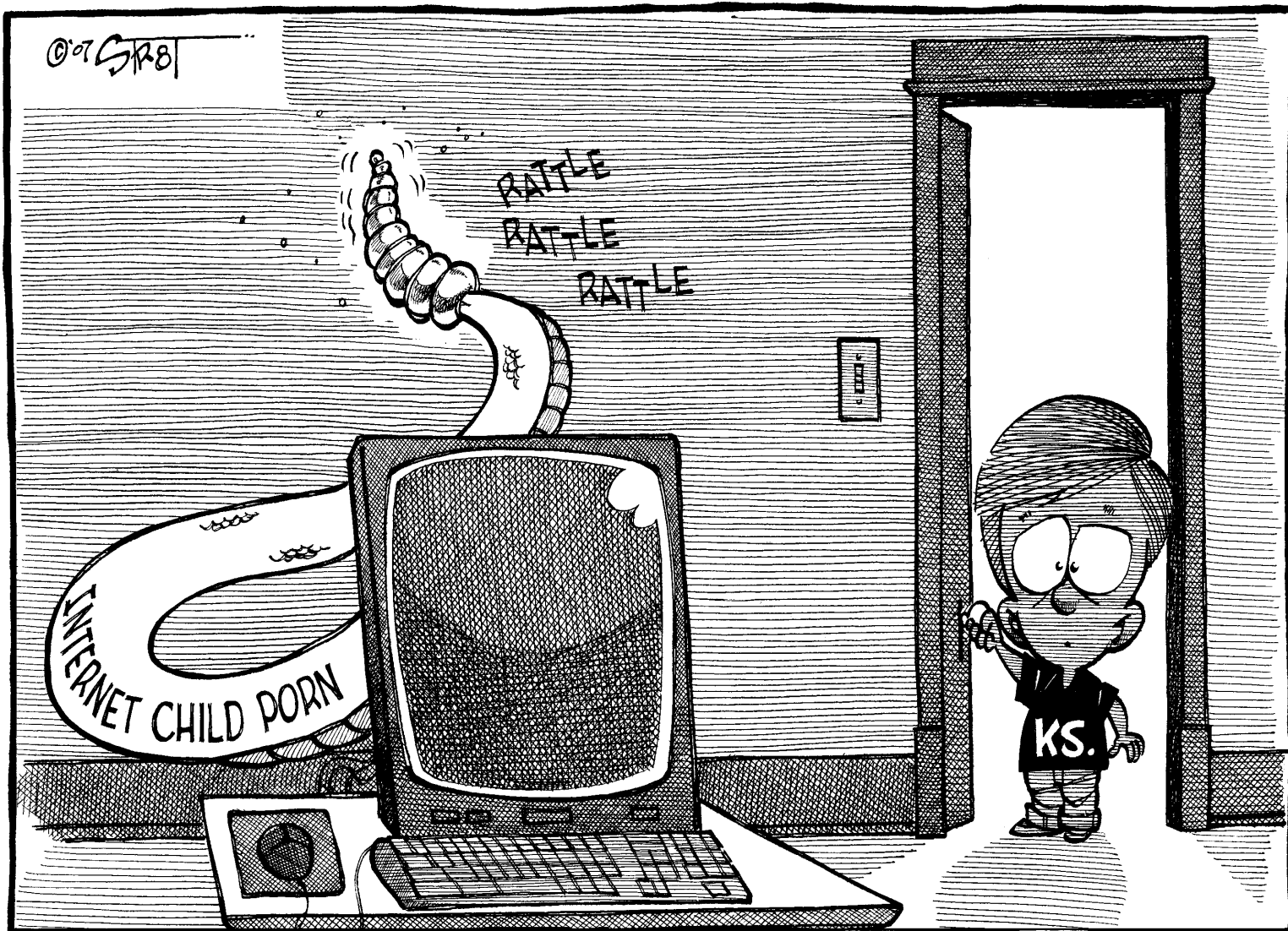
Occasionally, a great upheaval would quicken the process. In Kansas, the Eudora City Council held its meetings in German until the beginning of World War I. It was probably difficult to change, but it was politically expedient to switch to English. Social pressure came to bear.

Today, we see these early waves of immigration through rose-colored glasses. We all want to be Irish on St. Patrick's Day, but 100 years ago, you might have found it hard to get a job if you were Irish — or Polish or Chinese.

Today's immigrants — Mexican, Asian, African — band together and speak Spanish or another tongue. But their children and their children's children will go over the hill, across the river and into the next neighborhood.

They will learn English and speak it to their children and integrate into the social structure, not because the government tells them to, but because of social pressure. If you don't speak English, you don't get the good jobs, you can't do business with people in other communities and the world.

But it takes time and no one, especially the Legislature, wants to allow enough time for natural social change to occur. What's the rush? It'll all work out. — *Cynthia Haynes*



## Who's blocking what?

Aside from the fact that it is patently untrue that Senate Republicans are blocking any debate on the current state of the war in Iraq, the hypocrisy of the Democrats on the issue boggles the mind.

If you believe what you read in the media (a very foolish thing to do nowadays when the boys and girls in mainstream media have finally bowed to reality and abandoned any pretense of being nonpartisan), the GOP leadership is hell-bent on preventing any debate on the Senate floor about the planned surge of troops and the president's new strategy of cleansing the strife-ridden streets of Baghdad and neighboring Anbar province.

That's flat-out untrue, but sticking to the truth is not one of the things for which the Democrats and their media allies are best known.

According to CNN News on Wednesday, top Senate Democrats called on Senate Republicans to "stop blocking a debate" on President Bush's plan to send additional troops to Iraq.

"Before sending another 48,000 young Americans into battle, the Congress owes it to our troops, their families, and their communities to have an honest and open discussion about their mission," the Democrats said in a news release.

Oops! The President is sending about 21,000 new troops, not 48,000; but then, as noted above, the Democrats never let the truth get in their way when playing the demagogue game. After all, 48,000 sounds scarier than 21,000.

Anyway, the Democrats are busy trying to



**michael reagan**

● making sense

convince the public that in blocking a vote on the "no confidence" Warner resolution criticizing President Bush's troop-surge and pacification strategy, the Senate Republicans are trying to block any debate on the matter.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid rants that Republicans "did our country a grave disservice" by "blocking a debate" on the Iraq war.

The fact is that the Senate GOP leadership insists that they do want a full debate on the issue, just not one limited to a single no-confidence vote on the president's surge strategy.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky says the U.S. mission in Iraq is the most important issue facing the country.

"And this means, of course, that the men and women of this body have no higher duty than to express ourselves openly and honestly on this issue — to take a stand on where we stand."

And, adds McConnell, the best way to do that is for the senators to "express themselves on whether to fund or not fund the war in Iraq."

By blocking a vote on the war-funding resolution, McConnell charged, Democrats are blocking a vote on the "essential question.... Do we oppose this war to the point of action, or do we simply want to make a point?"

The Democrats, he said, "do not want to vote

on whether troops should be funded. Period. There is no more critical question at this moment. We have the duty to take it up, and we'll continue to fight for that right."

According to *The Washington Times*, McConnell — who previously insisted he won't "allow a vote on the resolution of no confidence" without a vote on two other resolutions — has modified his stance.

One of the resolutions, by Sen. John McCain, "would endorse the 'surge' plan but set benchmarks for Iraqi self-governance," and the other sponsored by Sen. Judd Gregg, "would promise not to cut funding for the war."

McConnell now offers to allow the Warner/Democratic resolution to go forward in exchange for a vote on the "no funding cutoff" resolution only.

But according to USA Today, Reid told McConnell to go fly a kite, saying "negotiations are over."

You have to be amused by the Democrats' antics — after all, these are the same people who made a career out of blocking up-or-down votes on the confirmation of hordes of constitutionalist nominees to the federal courts.

And now they are back at it, blocking a full debate on the war and the vital issue of funding our troops in harm's way and having the gall to say it's the Republicans doing the blocking.

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## On Lent and examination

To the Editor:

On the church calendar, the Lenten Season is, for a majority of Christians around the world, a time of individual examination. Examinations are both challenging and revealing.

In Ephesians 2:8 the Apostle Paul writes, "For by grace are you saved through faith; this is not your own doing, it is a gift of God...."

There are two outstanding sources that remind Christians that salvation is God's gift:

One source is the law and commandments of God. For the poet of the 19th Psalm, they are a paradox: He praises and gives thanks for them because they bless him: They revive his soul, make him wise, rejoice his heart, and are more to be desired than gold. They also warn him showing that he has hidden faults (commits nonintentional trespass) and presumptuous faults (does deliberate trespass). They both bless and show him he misses the mark with God. Doing the same for us, they show that God is our God who cares about us, blesses with eternal truths, and gives wisdom for living. The law reveals that by God's standards and requirements we fail. As Paul states in another place, "All-fall short of the glory of God."

We can do the traditional examination in the light of the cross: The poet of a Christian hymn writes, "Twas I Lord Jesus, I, it was denied



from our readers

● to the editor

thee, I crucified thee."

Most of us have trouble seeing ourselves the way the poet sees himself, as having a hand in the crucifixion of Christ. How can this be? We were not there when it happened! Let's notice the words, "...I, it was denied thee..." No doubt he had Peter's denial of the Lord in mind. He sees the same denial in his own actions. Can we see Peter's denial, or Judas' betrayal, or Pilate's failure, or the mob's activity in our own

lives? If we can see in our own lives the motives and actions of the people who did the crucifixion, then we can also understand our relationship to the cross and Christ's sacrifice which meets God's standards on our behalf and reconciles us to the Father. We do not stand before the throne of grace on our own merits.

The law and the cross are mirrors which remind us that we fail to establish ourselves in God's favor. But they reveal the truth that by faith we stand in a forgiven, redeemed relationship with the Creator and can look forward to the victory of Easter.

Earl Martell

Retired Lutheran minister

Goodland

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