

from our viewpoint...

## Veto of plants sends wrong message

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' veto of the "energy bill" on Friday means the Legislature will have to try to override, and while the Senate should have little problem, it is a different matter in the House.

The bill would allow Sunflower Electric Power Corp. to build two 700-megawatt power plants at Holcomb. Those power plants are needed to respond to the power needs of the state and the surrounding region.

Opponents of the plants have been campaigning to encourage Kansans to tell their legislators to support the veto.

In a campaign against an issue, state laws governing political ads mostly don't apply. It is not necessary to practice "truth in advertising" and the opponents have made a few claims in their effort that are a bit outrageous, if not entirely untrue.

The first is it is not a good idea to build the two power plants because a lot of the power will be sold out of state.

Taking that to an extreme, the state should not export anything — cattle, wheat, corn or even airplanes, autos and helicopters. Most of what we make and grow here goes somewhere else.

Exporting things to other states makes money for Kansas people. The two power plant would put the state in a power-plus position. Without the plants, the state might have to import electricity in the future, despite claims we can provide all our power needs with wind energy.

The state may have wind generation possibilities, but we think most of the hot wind is found in Topeka between January and April. One critical fact is that except in Topeka, the wind does not blow all the time. Power demand runs around the clock.

The second claim was that the power plants would harm Kansas with all the pollution they would create.

The fact is, the cleanest operating power plant in Kansas today is the Sunflower Electric coal-fired plant at Holcomb. The other operating coal-fired plants — all in eastern Kansas — create far more pollution because they are not operating as cleanly as the one out here.

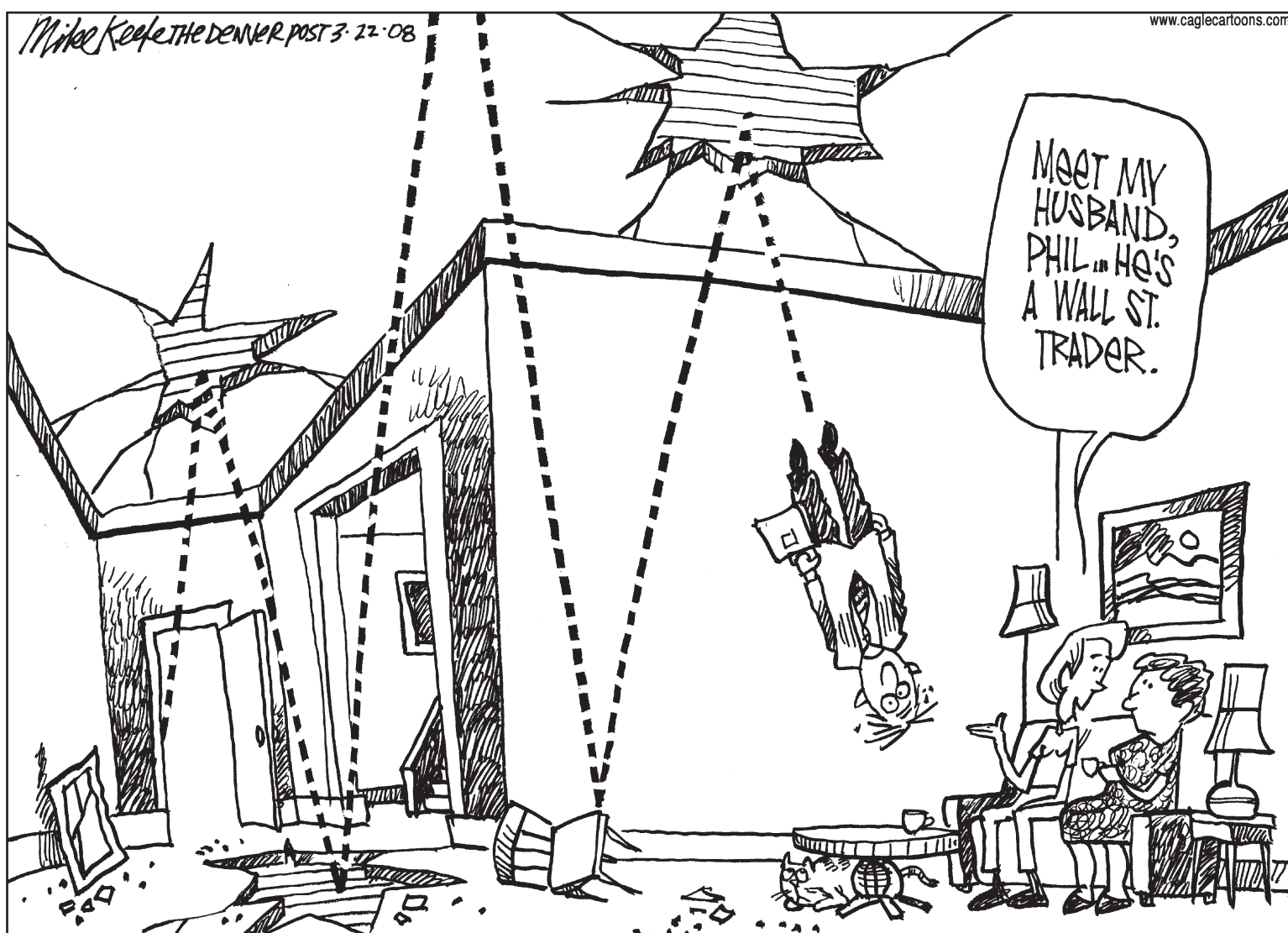
The two new plants at Holcomb would improve on existing clean air standards, and be even cleaner than the existing plant. If there is a pollution problem, it is with the outdated plants in the eastern part of the state. (See reference to hot air above.)

The hope is the House will be able to find the two or three votes needed to override the veto, but Gov. Sebelius is confident they will fall short.

A compromise needs to be found to allow the plants to go forward for the future of the state, and development of the network of transmission lines needed for the power plants and the many wind-power projects being planned.

Time is running out, and if the governor and Legislature cannot find a way, the state will find itself importing expensive power within the next 10 years.

We need these plants now, and having the power will give the state a big stake in economic development both in the state and the region. — Tom Betz



## A way to remember the preamble

Washington, city of museums and monuments.

Every year when visiting the capital, I try to see some of the sights, along with more politicians than you can shake a filibuster at.

This year, I got the opportunity to visit the newly renovated and reopened Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery — two, two museums in one.



**cynthia haynes**

open season

I saw an Andy Warhol of Marilyn Monroe, paintings by Mary Cassatt and Thomas Hart Benton, posters, statues and photographs of famous and not-so-famous Americans.

But the one piece of artwork that took my fancy the most was a compilation of personalized license plates from all 50 states and the District of Columbia in alphabetical order on a solid green background. I was really proud when I realized I could not only read it, but knew what it was.

I loved this piece so much that when I got to the gift shop and found it on a T-shirt, I just had to have it. However, it looked like the message was on the front and I wanted everyone to read it. Let's face it, no one in their right mind is going to come up to my chest and start reading a complicated message. So I bought the shirt for Steve.

Only after the purchase did I realize that the

message is on the back.

So, read my back.

And, by the way, do you think I look fat in

this XL T-shirt?

(Steve wisely refused to answer that one.)



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## The twists and turn of presidential politics

Snippets from a week in Washington:

With Hillary back in the race, Bill Clinton isn't taking any speaking engagements, not for money and not for old friends. Ol' Bill is out on the campaign trail.

One report is that the Clinton campaign can't keep the bumper stickers in stock that say, "Run, Hillary, Run."

Seems the Republicans get them for the front of their cars.

A political cartoon in the conservative *Washington Times* claims to sum up the Obama campaign: The crowd is shouting "Yes we can." A couple is walking by.

"Can what?" the wife asks.

"Take all our money," the husband replies.

Like it or not, though, there's a very good chance the Illinois senator will be your next president. Him or Sen. Clinton. And everyone is talking about how remarkable that is, that the Democrats will nominate either a woman or a black man, something that was only a dream a few decades ago.

Everyone compares Sen. Obama to John F. Kennedy.

Theodore Sorenson, the old Kennedy speech writer and advisor, does not reject the "black Kennedy" label. He revels in it, telling assembled publishers and editors at the National Newspaper Association's Government Affairs Conference that he's been out campaigning for the senator.

Though his eyesight is nearly gone, he flew down from New York to talk with us, shuffling to the rostrum, but speaking in clear and certain tones. There is no doubt who he is backing, and no love in his voice for "the Clintons."

Norman Ornstein, a conservative scholar known as a Sunday morning "talking head," regales us with campaign stories. He's not counting anyone out of this race, but whoever wins the Democratic nomination, he notes, it will be one of the two most liberal senators.

No one, he said, is really focused on that. It



**steve haynes**

along the sappa

means, among other things, that the supposed "conservative base" will have to rally around Sen. John McCain this fall. They'll have no choice.

While far the oldest candidate, he thinks McCain will show strength. He cracks that the Arizona senator may have made a mistake by denying an implied affair with a young, beautiful blonde lobbyist.

"If I were McCain," he says, "I'd say, 'No, it's true, and there were three or four more.'"

Well, then again, maybe not.

Orenstein also predicted a reaction by the national press to allegations that *The New York Times* was unfair in dredging up Sen. McCain's alleged nonaffair. An article in the next day's *Washington Post* detailing President Clinton's financial dealings with some questionable stock donated to his foundation bears this out.

It wasn't much of a scandal either, but it led Page 1. The national press, he said, will be falling all over itself to prove it can be unfair to every candidate.

Much is made of the split vote among minorities, with African Americans backing Sen. Obama in the Democratic contest while Hispanics heavily favor Sen. Clinton.

Janet Murguia, the Kansas native and University of Kansas graduate who heads the National Council of La Raza, notes that Sen. Clinton has strong ties to Hispanic causes and a history of working with Hispanic groups. But, she notes, Sen. McCain has a good record on Hispanic issues and on immigration, a touchstone for Hispanics. Many who are long-time Americans feel threatened by the anti-immigrant feeling in the nation.

The meaning of the deep divide between blacks and Hispanics remains unclear. It could be pivotal in the fall if McCain faces Sen. Obama, wiping out some of the party advantage Democrats have gained among Hispanics.

It also might mean Sen. McCain will run better than expected in many areas, but we'll have to wait until November to see.

## where to write

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