

from our viewpoint...

Cutting speed limit idea from back east

Another great idea from those people back east who've never been west of Topeka:

Let's drop the speed limit on state freeways to 65 mph. That came up in a list of ideas at a Kansas Energy Council meeting last week, though one member, state Sen. Janis Lee of Kensington, said the speed plan had "no chance" of passing the Legislature.

The idea was in a laundry list of recommendations before the council for its annual report. It probably came from someone who never ventured out of the eastern third of the state.

The council itself is heavily weighted toward the Kansas City-Topeka-Wichita axis, with only three members from the western half of the state. (Ken Frahm of Colby serves as co-chair, and Sen. Lee is one of two legislators from the west.)

The council staff estimated that dropping the speed limit on Interstates and expressways would increase fuel economy 7 to 23 percent and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Those estimates seem wildly optimistic at best. Twenty-three percent?

Roads affected would include the freeways, plus expressways such as U.S. 81 north of Salina.

The speed ban seems likely to get some traction, however, when you figure that most of those making the decision live in Kansas City or Topeka and seldom venture out into the hinterlands.

Many states east of Kansas still cling to 65 mph or lower speeds on Interstates, but distances are shorter and traffic heavier than out west.

We suffered under the yoke of similar do-gooder thinking for a couple of decades after the "first" energy crisis, when gasoline prices soared over \$1 per gallon in the 1970s. Gasp.

Despite doubt, the council retained the idea on its agenda. Lt. Gov. Mark "I'm a Democrat now" Parkinson was quoted as saying, "I guess I'm going to vote for this just as a way of advancing the public discussion. Gas has never been \$4 a gallon before. We're in a different environment."

This newspaper stands for any legitimate way to reduce fuel consumption and oil imports. It's vital for our economy and our national security.

But we think it wrong to saddle westerners with this burden. Anyone who votes for it should be sentenced to drive from Kansas City to Liberal and back, nonstop.

Besides, conservation measures work best when they're voluntary. The speed-limit changes come coupled with a 50 percent increase in fines and a cut in the 10 mph "break" the law gives drivers before they get a moving violation to just 5 mph.

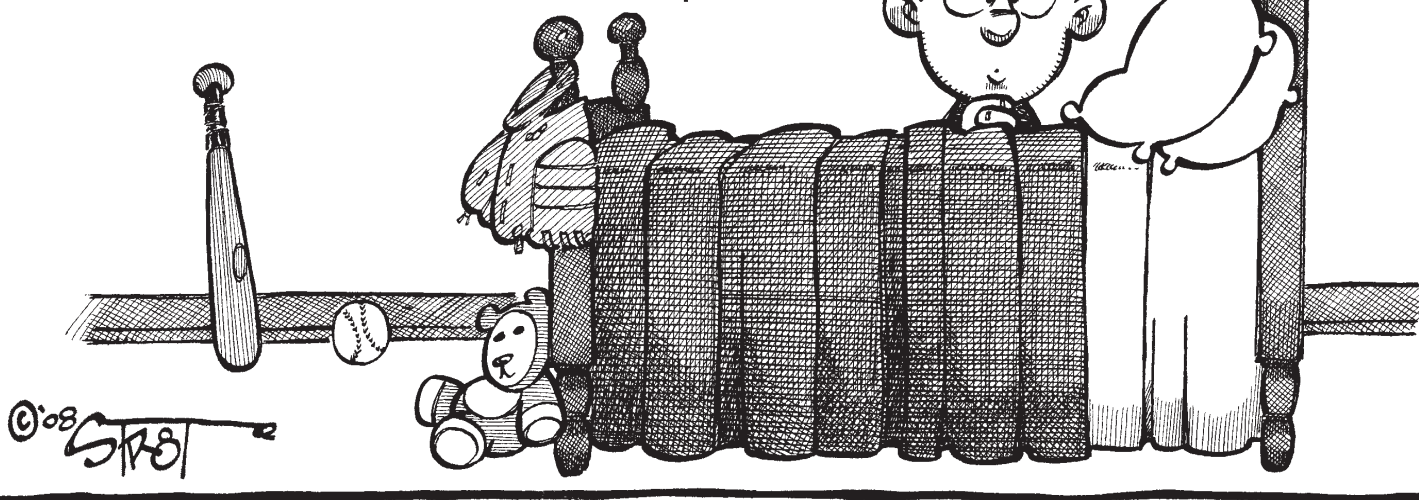
Estimates of how fast people are driving seem exaggerated as well. Secretary of Transportation Deb Miller said the average speed on highways posted for 70 mph was 78, and on two-lanes posted for 65 was 75.

When you're out there driving, say, 68 and 75, though, there just aren't that many people passing you. Not out here, anyway.

This idea may be a nonstarter. We hope so.

But just to be sure, when the lieutenant governor next ventures out to Goodland, we think he should leave the state plane behind and drive himself both ways. — Steve Haynes

Now I lay me
down to sleep.
Kansas schools've started
will the teachers they keep?
It's tough to learn
science and math
when teachers leave
for lucrative career paths.



What is a typical 'cat's day'?

I saw a cartoon last week depicting a cat's day. Each hour was shown in a tiny panel. Two panels showed the cat trying to wake up a sleeping human, two showed a food bowl and one showed a person's legs. The other 19 panels were black.

Being a cat person, I thought the cartoon was completely understandable, if not totally accurate.

Just last Saturday, April Alice decided that I was oversleeping, so she started to knead my chest at 7:30 a.m.

I was not amused. I gave her a shove and tried to turn over to go back to sleep. No such luck. When a cat really wants you up, you get up. Even if you got to bed at 1 a.m. and had hoped to catch up those lost zzzzs in the morning.

Now, I know lots of people who feed their cats twice a day. I don't. I don't even feed them once a day. I put out a huge bowl of cat food and check it about twice a week. When it gets low, I refill it. Yes, there have been a few times I've let it get completely empty, and let's just say, it wasn't pretty.

Now April Alice probably visits the food bowl a couple of times a day. Jezebel also is



cynthia haynes

• open season

a once- or twice-a-day eater. Molly Monster, however, feels that she needs to be in constant communion with her source of nourishment.

Steve says he thinks she's bulimic. And, I have to admit there are a lot of times when she runs to the bowl, stuffs herself and then leaves a mess on the carpet.

The water bowl works in a similar manner at our house. It is strategically placed near the sink so that I can fill it when needed. It has a handful of marbles in the bottom. When I spot a cat playing with a marble, I know I've forgotten to fill the water bowl.

The legs in the cartoon could mean either of two things.

"Pet me." Cats love to rub up against your legs. This is a signal that they will accept your homage and a good scratch.

"Oops! I was here first. Didn't you see me

underfoot and just why are you lying there on the floor looking at me like that. No, I don't have fingers and I can't call 911."

The 19 panels of black represent sleep, which is what a cat does most of the time.

Actually, a cat doesn't sleep for long periods. The term cat nap seems accurate. A cat sleeps a lot in small intervals interspersed with movement — sometimes languid, sometimes frantic.

If you walk past a sleeping cat, it will generally open its eyes to look at you. That look is either annoyed, as in "Why are you bothering me?" or pitying, as in, "Poor thing. Can't you just relax and take a nap?"

Most of the time, if a human is in the horizontal position, a cat will feel it is its duty to lie as near to that human as possible. This is especially nice when the temperature is somewhere in the high 80s or 90s.

Which reminds me, Why do cats want to go outside when the thermometer hits 100 and refuse to go near the outdoors when it gets less than 50? They have fur coats. They should enjoy cool weather, not hot.

Oh, but in the winter, they find the hottest place in the house to sleep.

Not all African Americans support Obama

When Obama gives his stadium acceptance speech at the Democratic convention, it will be the night of the 45th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

You can count on breathless reporters waxing dreamy about Dr. King's vision fulfilled that historic night. However, not all African Americans agree. "Barack Obama is directly contrary to many positions and beliefs of Martin Luther King, Jr.," says black author William Owens, Jr. "Obama is trying to make African Americans believe he is the reality of the Dream come true, but he's not. It's a nightmare."

A recent Gallup poll reveals 91 percent of African Americans intend to vote for Obama. Nevertheless, there are dissenting voices trying to reach their community with a warning about the candidate. Dr. Alveda King, daughter of Martin Luther King's younger brother, the late slain civil rights activist Rev. A.D. King, says, "Senator Obama's answer to the ills of society, of higher government spending, weaker national defense, continued tax dollars to Planned Parenthood, and support of gay marriage, are diametrically opposed to everything African Americans truly believe and an anathema to the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."

"It is high time for Black America, White America and all America to stop making their ethnicity such a big deal that we become zealous for our color over being zealous for what is right and what is truth," says Owens.

Owens, founder of Black Americans for Real Change makes it known, "I will not remain silent out of fear of repercussions because it is politically incorrect for Blacks to challenge Blacks." He says one aspect of Obama's candidacy is "intimidation because many people are afraid to scrutinize Obama and speak out because of the race issue."

Owens believes Obama is manipulative of African Americans because "in reality he is not a Black American. His heritage is Muslim — not African American" and calls Obama a pretender and panderer. He points out the candidate's record "does not remotely parallel the values, traditions and struggles of Black America."

Having studied both Martin Luther King and Obama, Owens felt compelled to write a book to challenge African Americans "to look deeper at Barack Obama the man, his voting record, and his position on the important issues facing our country." He urges them not



floyd, mary brown

• commentary

to "put your race before your principles," the truth, your family and your own country. His book, "Obama: Why Black America Should Have Doubts" has one chapter comparing the policies of the two men who are poles apart on many issues. Every American should read this eye-opening book. Owens says, "it is obvious Obama is trying to solidify the Black vote," but he reiterates that any candidate needs to be closely examined.

With Obama's voiced support and voting record for partial-birth abortion and every other pro-abortion bill, Alveda King takes issue with the senator over this topic. From firsthand experience she had before she was "born again" in 1983, King knows the problems a woman can suffer because of abortion. She is now a leader in both the pro-life and civil rights movements. "We can talk about poverty; we can talk about the war; we can talk about teen pregnancy; we can talk about incarceration. However, if we're not allowed to live, we'll never encounter those issues." Although Blacks make up only 14 percent of the population, 40 percent of the abortions in

the country are performed on Black women, thus creating a virtual genocide of African Americans.

King recalls her Uncle Martin saying, "The Negro cannot win as long as he is willing to sacrifice the lives of his children for comfort and safety."

For Alveda King, abortion is a civil rights issue. "Every aborted baby is like a slave in the womb of his or her mother," she explains. "The mother decides his or her fate."

"In the shadow of the famous 'I Have a Dream' speech by my uncle in 1963, as Barack Obama makes his speech in 2008, how can the Dream survive if we murder the children?" asks Dr. King concerning the unborn. "Life was very precious to my uncle and life today is precious."

"Our best interests as Black Americans," Owens says, "...lie in a new direction that reflects our core beliefs and values, not merely a resemblance of someone we look like."

Again quoting her uncle, King says, "...there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right." She passionately adds, "This is not the time to be silent; this is not the time to give Barack Obama a free pass! There is too much at stake."

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