

from our viewpoint...

## Senate needs more co-operation, civility

Is our federal government really broken? Maybe, maybe not. Former Sen. Bob Dole argues that the Senate needs more co-operation and more civility, less name-calling and partisan hardball. In his day, to some extent, we had that, and the system worked a little better on routine bills like transportation and budgets. Today, every bill seems to be a battle, every move political. It's not that the parties shouldn't look out for their own interests, and especially, their beliefs. But the hard liners on both sides tend to forget that the vast majority of Americans sit somewhere in the middle. Americans believe in compromise, in getting along, in working things out. The great majority do not want either the ultra-left-wing agenda of the Obama administration nor the far-right destination of the ill-defined "tea party" movement. While both visions are helpful in shaping our debate, neither is likely to prevail. Some argue that slow government is not necessarily bad. They say the founders, including both Hamilton and Jefferson, intended the system to move slowly lest it lay an egg. That's not a bad argument, and 20 to 30 years ago, you could see things that way. Today, when the budget seldom is approved until we are well into the new fiscal year, and when many parts of the government move along with only "continuing resolutions" to authorize spending at last year's levels, their appropriations tied up in hopeless wrangling, you might not. Careful deliberation and gridlock are not quite the same thing. Yet, when the Democrats were in charge and "got things done," they passed a 2,000-page health care bill that many still have not read. The Department of Health and Human Services continues to issue regulations which, if anything, make things worse. "Doing something" often is not the answer, especially when no one understands what they've done. Congressional practices, from holding up judicial appointments to endless delays, do not serve the nation. Both parties have been guilty, and both must change. People don't want burdensome regulations, but often they push for the government to "make things better," and the end result is more regulations, more government control. That is almost never good. Americans tend to expect far too much from government. They expect the president to fix the economy, create jobs and make us safe, when in fact he can't do much. In short, we expect a miracle worker, candidates cater to us, and then we're disappointed when the one we elect can't perform. The parties need to get together and make government work, but in a commonsense way. That could start tomorrow, or even after the 2012 elections, but it needs to start soon. Government shutdowns, a shortage of judges and endless delays do not bespeak good government. Neither do huge bills that no one understands, or reams and reams of stifling regulations. The change that's needed is not in our laws or, for the most part, in what government does. It's in the lack of responsibility shown by our "broken" system and the endless gridlock can, and should, stop. — *Steve Haynes*



## Newspapers remain trusted source

Despite all the doomsayers out there writing obituaries for the nation's newspaper industry, 150 million Americans — two out of three adults — read a local newspaper last week. Newspaper Association of America research from 2011 by Scarborough USA indicates almost 70 percent of your neighbors read either a printed newspaper or its online counterpart within the past seven days. How could that be? Well, it's because newspapers still represent the most trusted source of news in America. I know that's hard to believe when you hear the "mainstream media" criticized at every turn on cable television. But it's true. When citizens want to get the facts, they turn to their newspaper. This is National Newspaper Week, and this year's theme, "Newspapers — Your No. 1 Source for Local News," underscores the importance of the nation's newspapers in the daily lives of its citizens. Newspapers certainly have their competitors



**doug anstaett**  
• kansas press assn.

out there: a hundred million websites, hundreds of thousands of bloggers, Facebook, Twitter, billboards, radio and television. And that competition is formidable. But where does the vast majority of the "authoritative" news coverage originate that other outlets utilize? Simple ... the nation's daily and weekly newspapers. If print is dead, then why do more than 7,000 weekly and 1,400 daily newspapers still open their doors every day and report what is happening in their communities? Because they take seriously the importance of local news. They know those who plunk down their hard-earned cash want their newspaper to cover those events that are unique to each community.

Every day, newspapers in our communities cover the big stories and the routine as well. Editors take to heart the newspaper's role as the most comprehensive source of a community's historical record, so births, deaths, weddings, engagements, business accomplishments, crime, courts, real-estate transactions and a myriad of other day-to-day news events are covered along with important government decisions that affect our lives. Newspapers are the No. 1 source of local news in every city and county in America, because we show up each and every day and cover those stories. It's what our readers have come to expect. And it's what we do better than any other news source in America. Doug Anstaett is executive director of the Kansas Press Association and president of the Newspaper Association Managers, representing association managers nationwide. As publisher of the Newton Kansan, and later at the Topeka Capital Journal, he was an award-winning editorial writer.

## New digs appear to be perfect fit

I found it! I FOUND IT! Wow! I was beginning to think it never existed. But there it was. Lots of dents, but what would you expect. I nearly tripped over it. But if you are like me, hampered by less than good eyesight, you seem a bit more aware of your surroundings as you make your way around a given path by foot. I'm generally not an alley cat, as they used to call them, but sometimes your daily walk route may turn you into one, briefly. It was a warm, but not overly uncomfortable morning, as I set out on an 'exploration' walk around parts of my new living environment. It's called the Kentucky Circle Village, Denver. Beautiful place. Filled with caring and accommodating folks. I felt like I was one of them from day one. I was busy the morning of my walk (which included what looked like part of an alley), busy talking with people I had never seen before. Lot of "welcome aboards" led to introductions and I am sure they will turn into lasting friendships. That's how I have this place pegged. When you are my age, somewhere between 70 and 100, you look for people who were born and raised about the same time you were. That way you have much in common, much to talk about. The place I lived at prior to my move on Sept. 28, was very nice; however, it was a huge complex that seemed to cater to the crowd



**tom dreiling**  
• man of the plains

ranging in age from probably 25 to around 48. Lots of young families. Mom and dad work and the kids spent the day in school. There was little contact with that crowd. I felt pretty much alone most of time, except for those very frequent and precious visits by my kids and grandkids. When it was time to renew my lease, I decided not to, but instead to look for alternate housing that had an out-stretched hand for people my age. Someone mentioned Kentucky Circle Village. So, in company with my kids we looked into it. We were all impressed. It didn't take me long to make a decision. The age requirement is 62 and older. Perfect fit! So here I am, sitting in front of my computer, talking about finding something in an alley I thought perhaps never existed. I got sort of side-tracked in the process so I will return to that subject. What I found in the alley during my walk was that tin can the United States Senate and House of Representatives keep kicking down the alley! I think if those Senators and House members would get out of the alley and into their work place, we might have a better result than we are experiencing. They can play "kick

the can" when they go home on their weekend visits with family and constituents. But not on my time! Remember when they were "tossing people under the bus?" Seems like they spend more time dreaming up catch-phrases than dreaming up ways to keep this great nation great! Please join me in contacting your Washington representatives and telling them the only "can" you are going to kick is the one attached to their backside. That should do it! Snippets "If Chris Christie is elected president, Air Force One would have to be upgraded to allow for all that extra poundage! ..." "President Obama is in full campaign mode. Are we to take that as 'running scared' or what?" "... At least Texas Gov. Rick Perry has brought a lot of unintended laughs to the campaign. He's not funny but what he says is. ..." "Run! Hillary! Run! ..." E-mail me your snippets, on any topic. No more than three sentences. Your name will not be used. E-mail to: milehitom@hotmail.com Peace! Tom Dreiling is a retired journalist, now living in Denver. He edited and published newspapers in Kansas and Wyoming during his 44-year career. E-mail is milehitom@hotmail.com

## where to write

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; E-mail address — <http://roberts.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=EmailPat>  
**U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, Russell Senate Office Building, Courtyard 4, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; Fax (202) 228-6966. E-mail address — <http://moran.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/e-mail-jerry>  
**U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp**, 1st Congressional District, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington D.C., 20575-1601. (202-225-2715) E-mail address — <https://huel>

[skamp.house.gov/contact-me/email-me](http://skamp.house.gov/contact-me/email-me)  
**State Rep. Rick Billinger**, Docking State Office Building Rm 724, Topeka, KS 66612. Phone (785) 296-7659, cell (785) 899-4770, home (785) 899-5824. E-mail [rick.billinger@house.ks.gov](mailto:rick.billinger@house.ks.gov).  
**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Rm. 225-E, 300 SW 10th, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785-296-7399; e-mail address — [ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us](mailto:ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us)  
**Kansas Attorney General**, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

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e-mail: [star.news@nwkansas.com](mailto:star.news@nwkansas.com)

Steve Haynes, President  
Tom Betz, Editor  
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N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services  
([nt.betz@nwkansas.com](mailto:nt.betz@nwkansas.com))

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. ([support@nwkansas.com](mailto:support@nwkansas.com))

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