

State has no loyalty to its taxpayers

Who says the world has to make sense? Because if it did, the State of Kansas wouldn't be buying \$14 million worth of Homeland Security supplies from a single New Hampshire contractor.

Fire chiefs have complained that they can't buy from Kansas suppliers. The New Hampshire outfit, Fisher Safety, says it has contracts to supply emergency equipment to 14 states.

Apparently, Kansas officials wanted a single-source contract and didn't try to find local vendors, because it was easier and quicker.

Capt. Mark Bruce, director of emergency operations for the Kansas Highway Patrol, told a legislative committee last week that Fisher allows a "one-stop shop" for fire departments and emergency management agencies using the grant money.

Bruce said the contract's "large-volume efficiencies" allow the smallest department to get the same price as the largest.

He noted that Fisher will buy about 30 percent of the equipment, \$4.2 million worth, from Kansas suppliers which include Nex-Tech in Lenora. While that is laudable, that leaves \$9.8 million going out of state.

Officials said agencies can use an in-state bidder if the price is the same or less, but the program is not set up to actually encourage that.

You'd think state officials would have more sense, but apparently not. You'd think they'd have a marked preference for buying from taxpayers who support them, but apparently not.

Next thing you know, they'll be contracting to have welfare calls answered in India.

Oops.

They already tried that.

No, Kansas government has no faith in or loyalty to Kansas taxpayers. From call centers to drivers licenses to fire and emergency equipment, it sees no value at all in shopping with those who pay the bills.

And surely there are plenty of tax-paying businesses who can supply these needs, even if the cost is a little more.

The Legislature needs to crack down on state purchasing. Unless we support Kansas businesses, there'll soon be no businesses in Kansas to pay taxes or support the state.

Kansas, as the saying goes, needs to dance with the one who brung her.

And that means a strong preference for buying at home.

— Steve Haynes

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Cooperation needed for good government

To the Editor:

Thank you Laura Craig for the excellent editorial (letter to the editor).

Positive attitude to pull this county together is necessary to be progressive, not deteriorating as Oronoque-Dellvale, etc. has.

"Norton County Environmentalists" if you have a problem, make an appointment Monday with the commissioners and get it worked out. Mudslinging is not a constructive method for settling problems.

United we stand, divided we fall. The buffalo will roam, NOT HOGS, NOT CATTLE, NOT PEOPLE, if Norton County doesn't work as a progressive community together.

Beverly Miller
Norton

Editor's Note: Mrs. Miller refers to a story on Page 1 of this week's *Norton Telegram* about a flyer mailed to some voters and signed Norton County Environmentalists.

Soldiers fighting to keep war elsewhere

To the Editor:

I recall President Bush's prayer at his inauguration that God would give him wisdom in shielding our country from terrorism.

To citizens questioning why our troops are in Iraq, perhaps their knowledge of history does not include the statement of General Dwight D. Eisenhower during World War II, "We are fighting along the Rhine to keep from fighting in New York".

Would we not all agree with that decision — even those of us in the Midwest?

Polly Bales
Logan

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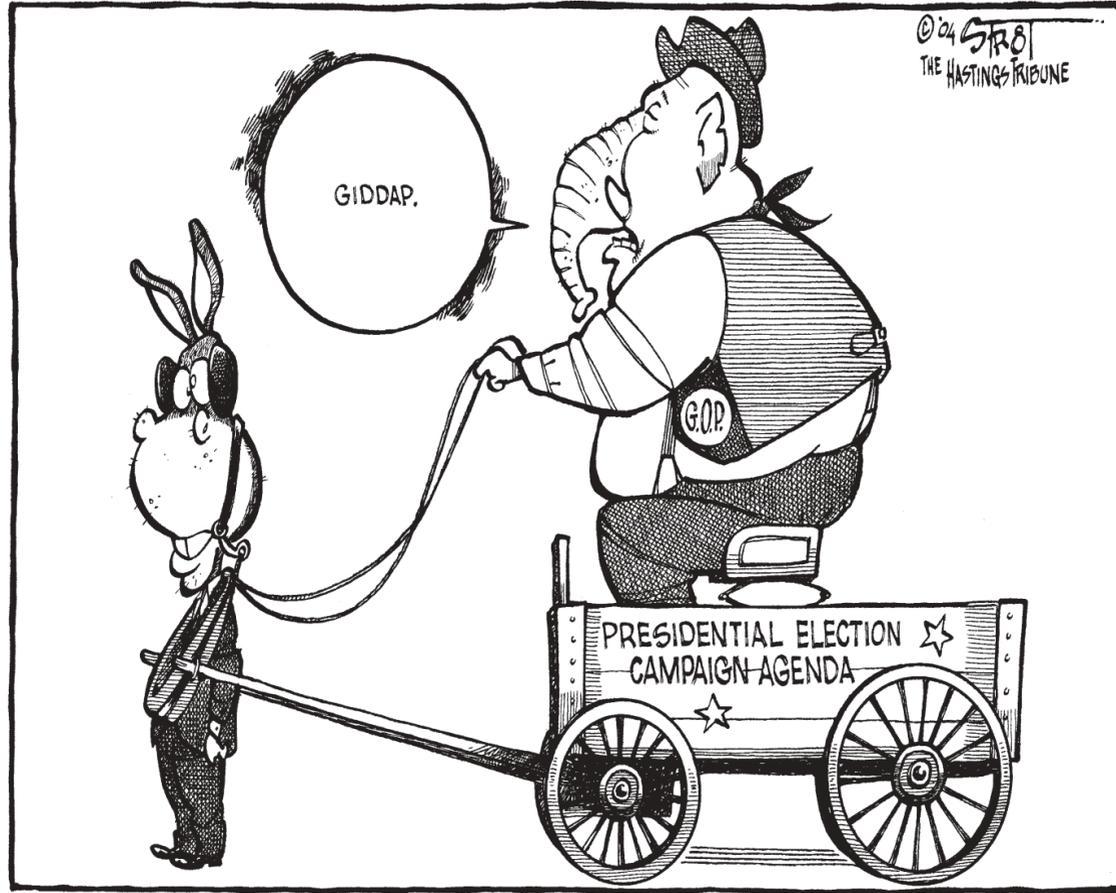
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It's good to have a multi-task hubby

When Jim goes to work (at least for the past few weeks), he steps out the back door, crosses 30 feet of lawn, and goes in our other house next door.

Since finishing his last house-building job he has been working on ours. The new kitchen space has been sheetrocked, textured, painted, the cabinetry started and lighting installed.

But just because Jim is working on our place doesn't mean he isn't "working." He is the king of multi-tasking. If he doesn't have about three different projects going at the same time, he thinks he's being lazy.

During the past week, he has built doors for my cabinets while making doors for a friend's cabinets. He has rebuilt the motor on his belt sander, made banners for the church, worked on his sermon, overhauled my vacuum cleaner, preached a funeral, took our calves to market, taught Sunday school, installed doors at our daughter's house, made a pot roast dinner,

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



and probably lots more stuff I don't even know about.

No need to wonder when he sits down at night and says, "I'm as tired as if I worked all day."

—ob—

As a news reporter, you're supposed to maintain a "professional distance." You are not supposed to get involved in a story — just report it. Saturday, I covered a story that would challenge any hard-core reporter to stay distanced from.

A young woman from a small town in a neighboring community, who was in the Ready Reserves, had been recalled for active duty. That's interesting, but not the

real story. The real story is that she had to leave not only her husband but her 4-year-old and 4-month-old sons. I had a hard time keeping the tears out of my eyes long enough to focus the camera while this family bade each other farewell, for how long they do not know.

You can debate the rightness or wrongness of this young mother going off to war. But the fact remains: she did. And, more importantly, she did it honorably and proudly.

She said, "This is the hardest thing I've ever done. But I have to. The Army wouldn't have called me if they didn't need me. I want my sons to be proud of me."

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is the caliber of young people that will be the leaders of tomorrow. She, unselfishly, put the demands of her country above her personal desires. I believe she and her family represent the best of what makes this country great. We, as a country, should offer a collective and heartfelt, "Thank you."

The kitty as an alarm just doesn't work

Cats make lousy alarm clocks. I usually get up between 6:30 and 8 a.m. My preference is 8 a.m., but sometimes, duty calls.

Tuesday mornings, I usually go to Norton to help put out *The Norton Telegram*, but I had gone over Monday night so that I could leave for Denver on Tuesday.

Theoretically, I could have gone to Norton on my regular schedule and still finished in time to leave for Denver at 11 a.m. Practically, I knew that wouldn't work. There are always people who want, need, have to talk to you as you are trying to walk out the door. That's just life.

So we did the Norton paper Monday night and I drove home in the early morning hours to fall into my bed, exhausted.

By 8 a.m., though, April Alice had started to worry. The human on the right side of the bed always leaves by then. She thought there must be a problem.

She moved from her comfortable position at our feet to my head and gave me a couple of wakeup licks. Then she kneaded

Open Season Cynthia Haynes



my shoulder with her clawless paws. Finally, getting no response, she curled up by my chest and started to purr loudly.

Mostly, though, she purred herself back to sleep. It's tough being a cat and trying to be an alarm clock. They're just not made for the job.

Before I left for Denver, I tried to figure out whether the cats had learned to use their new pet door. We had it put in an inconspicuous basement window.

So far, I had been able to push April Alice through from the outside and had tried to push Molly Monster through with no success. Molly is a big, muscular cat. It's hard to get her to do something she

doesn't want to do.

I figured the cats would still hang around the back door most of the time to wait for us to let them go in and out and in and ...

Still, it would be nice to know that, if one got caught outside when we were gone, it could get back to the food and water bowls.

I had already put a pet door on the garage and had equal success, or lack thereof, getting the cats to try it.

I had thought of putting cat food on the inside near the pet door to entice them in, but decided I might entice more than cats. There are plenty of raccoons, opossums and skunks around, and I don't need another pet.

I'm not sure if April Alice has yet figured out the magic door but Molly, for all her stubbornness, has it mastered. We put her out each night and each morning I find her sleeping in the middle of the dining room table — where she knows she's not supposed to be.

She doesn't even pretend to be an alarm clock. She's more of a paperweight.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Norton man thinks facts should be known about editorial

To the Editor:

I read with disgust and dismay, your editorial concerning John Kerry and Larry Thurlow.

First of all, it would not be too difficult to get some background on either person. Instead, you chose to say they are calling each other liars, and prefaced your comment with "Who Cares!"

I feel that it is the responsibility of every citizen in this country to care. The apathy of many fine people in this country has led us down a road that causes everyone to complain loud and long. No one cares at crunch time. They moan after the fact.

Let's look at a few facts. I have personally known Larry for about 16 years, and

he has been a quiet and concerned citizen all the time I have known him. I helped coach his son in Little League baseball... that's how we met. Never did any of the people who know him accuse him of lying.

He has made the statement that while in Vietnam, Mr. Kerry asked to fill out the reports, and all the rest of the Swift Boat Commanders let him, because they didn't like paperwork. Now Mr. Thurlow says he is sorry that happened.

Now, let's look at what we know about Mr. Kerry. His voting record is available to anyone who wants to look. For example, Kerry voted against funding the Bradley fighting vehicle; against the A1 Abrams tank; against every aircraft carrier laid down since 1988; against the F-

15 fighter plane; against the B-2 stealth bomber; against the B-1 bomber; against the Patriot "Anti-Missile" system; against the F117 Stealth Fighter; against body armor for our troops.

He voted for cutting funding of the FBI by 60 percent, for cutting funding of the CIA by 80 percent, and he also voted for increasing funding to The United Nations by 800 percent!

These are facts that were not hard to find, and I would recommend that as a news person, you spend a little more time researching, and a little less time wondering how you will fill space with an apathetic "WHO CARES"

Bill Eckhart
Norton