

Let's see if they stick to their guns

Wow! We wonder if these people fully understand what they are doing. We figure they don't. This all stems from an email received Friday called "List of Fools." Recipients were urged to send this email to every one they know. Here is the guts of the communication:

"These are the senators who voted to give illegal aliens social security benefits. Regardless of political party, these politicians need to be defeated in 2006, 2008 or 2010 whenever they come up for office. Send this to anyone you know in any of the states listed. The entire population of the United States need to know this information. That is unless they do not mind sharing their social security with foreign workers when American citizens are being left out."

That's a mouthful. The "List of Fools" contains mostly Democrats, but there are some Republicans also included.

Let's take a closer look at this thing.

Scenario #1:
Arizona Sen. John McCain is on this hit list. Let us say that in 2008, he wins the Republican nomination for president. And this is a very real possibility.

Let's say that former Vice President Al Gore (who seems to be awakening from a long sleep), slips in the back door and wins the Democrat nomination. That possibility exists.

If we take the advice of the email, then on election day in 2008 we would, without any thought, mark our ballots for Al Gore. Sure..

Scenario #2:

Let's say that Sen. McCain wins the GOP nod and the Democrats pick Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is also on the "List of Fools." On election day in 2008 we go to the polls and vote for neither, allowing a third party candidate to waltz into the White House. Sure.

Scenario #3:

Our own Republican Sen. Sam Brownback is on the list, so if he would end up being the compromise candidate to break a deadlock at the convention in 2008, we would have to discard his nomination and vote for the Democrat if the Democrat was not on the "List of Fools" — regardless who it is. Sure.

After reading the email, we have concluded that some people need to get a life, a job — or something.

What say you?

—Tom Dreiling

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- **Governor Kathleen Sebelius**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124
- **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399
- **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

LETTER POLICY:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author. We do not publish anonymous letters. We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Letters will be read for clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue. Generally, you can expect to see your letter in the next issue of *The Telegram*. The best read letters are short. Long letters many times lose readers. Letters can be sent by regular mail to: *The Norton Telegram*, 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton 67654, faxed to (785) 877-3732, or emailed to tom@nwkansas.com. If you care to discuss your letter, please contact the editor at (785) 877-3361 or (785) 877-6908.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:
8 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

- Tom Dreiling editor and publisher
- Veronica Monier staff reporter
- Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
- Carolyn Plotts society editor
- Sherry Hickman bookkeeping/circulation
- Vicki Henderson computer production
- Susie Marble computer production
- Hypatia Day advertising

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



Details needed to judge the judges

If you get a speeding ticket, you might have to pay a fine, go to court and pay a little more for auto insurance.

In many towns, you'd also find your name in the newspaper.

Suppose you're arrested for drunk driving.

You'd be taken to the county jail, booked and photographed. You'd go to court. You'd pay a really big fine. You might lose your license.

And your name, in many towns, would be in the newspaper.

No one wants their name in the paper — at least not in connection with a crime — and sometimes people will do almost anything to keep it out. They beg, they plead, they cajole. They ask the police not to release it. They pressure the editor.

But under our system, that's part of the price you pay for making a mistake. Our court system is public. Part of the penalty is having everyone know you blew it.

You were speeding. You were drunk. You were wrong.

That is not a bad thing. If the threat of having your name in the paper keeps just one person from driving drunk, then it is a net benefit to society.

This standard does not apply to one se-

On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



lect group in Kansas, though.

Judges.

Though most are selected by committees in a distinctly non democratic process, and appointed by the governor more or less for life, judges who make a mistake often escape public scrutiny.

The Associated Press found that just eight of 65 cases involving violations by judges in the past six years had been made public.

It's like, if you're a member of the club, and a gentleman, then a slap on the wrist is sufficient.

No need to alarm the public.

Though it is our job, as voters, to approve or disapprove of judges' conduct and vote on them every few years, we don't get much information.

Even in those cases which did become public, in most, little information was

given out. Even a doctor accused of medical violations faces more public scrutiny.

Yet judges must stand for election, and voters are supposed to make informed decisions on whether to keep them.

In the cities, and for the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court, judges are appointed and usually serve until they retire. They must stand for a "yes-or-no" vote on retention every four to six years, but no Kansas judge has been voted out of office in our memory.

Generally, in statewide races, judges win by landslide numbers. That may be because voters don't know why they should not vote yes.

In rural areas, by contrast, district and magistrate judges still run for office. They can face a challenge every four years. Sometimes, if another lawyer has the gumption, and voters are fed up, there is a change. Not often, but the threat is there. It keeps courts in line.

With the current scandal involving a Supreme Court judge meeting with legislators and discussing the pending school finance lawsuit, we need to take another look at this system.

If we are supposed to judge the judges, shouldn't we know when they mess up?

Memorial Day brings sense of pride

Memorial Day always fills me with a sense of pride. When I hear taps I have to swallow hard to hold back tears. When I see former military men still able to wear their uniforms, I see the handsome young men they were.

And, when I see an Avenue of Flags, I remember each one represents a fallen soldier. Perhaps they did not die in battle, but they served their country.

A news story this weekend reported the fact that the Tomb of the Unknowns has developed a crack. A businessman from Colorado has volunteered to replace the entire crypt, at a personal cost of almost \$60,000.

Yet, the decision to accept his offer remains "in committee." And has been for almost six years. It shouldn't be that hard to donate something to this country.

The reporter pointed out how important the preservation of this national monument is. He said because of DNA testing, there will never again be an Unknown Soldier. Amazing, isn't it?

This was Jim's 45th high school class reunion. By all appearances, he and his classmates had a great time. I know I had

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



a good time watching them.

Everyone laments the disinterest of the younger classes. Perhaps when they have been out of school for 30 years it will start to become important.

After the reunion and the class members had left to get ready for the evening banquet, I was helping clean up the kitchen and refreshment table.

There was one lone piece of a huge sandwich left and I accepted the offer to take it home. I wrapped it up in the foil it came in and tucked it into a carry-home bag.

The next day Jim was scavenging for something to eat and found the sandwich. As he unwrapped the sandwich he said, "In memory of your mother, I am going to save this foil." There must have been a yard of tin foil covering that little sand-

wich. Anyone who knew my Mom, knows she would have been proud. A piece of foil was never thrown away with only one use. It had to bake a potato (maybe two), cover a cup of milk or wrap a piece of cheese. By the time Mom threw away tin foil it was wrinkled, cracked and brittle.

-ob-

One more of our children has relocated herself to Texas. Oldest daughter, Halley, has left the Washington, D.C. area and moved to Dallas. She said she began to realize how much money she was spending to visit her Texas friends, so figured she might as well just move there. Hopefully, a job will present itself soon to make the move profitable.

Her resume' looks pretty good. Several years on the White House staff, a degree, experience as a consultant and the ability to tell a really funny story.

Halley is the funniest person I know. If Jim hears me talking on the phone and laughing so hard I cry, he says, "You must be talking to Halley."

She can take the simplest situation and put such a spin on it that you wouldn't recognize it. That's why I was certain she had a future in politics.

Why didn't we think of this before?

From the Capitol Sen. Pat Roberts



Communications Commission to evaluate and analyze the costs of calls to and from official duty stations, evaluate methods of reducing rates including deployment of new technology such as Voice Over Internet Protocol, or other Internet protocol technology and encourage

phone companies to adopt flexible billing procedures and policies.

As a former Marine, I understand the importance of this legislation and will work with my colleagues in the Senate to pass it.

Share your thoughts with a Letter to the Editor