

Clinton best keep eye on Pelosi performance

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's success in the presidential arena could easily hinge on the performance of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Huh?! Speaker Pelosi holds one of the most powerful positions in the country. And she is the first female to do so. When you look at the way the blocks are stacked, first comes the President of the United States, followed by the Vice President of the United States, followed by the Speaker of the House.

That's how powerful a position the California woman holds. If Speaker Pelosi performs with purpose and strength, that could bode well for Sen. Clinton's bid to succeed President George W. Bush. But if she is seen as weak and indecisive, that could spell trouble for Sen. Clinton.

Is "America the Beautiful" ready for a woman to occupy the oval office? That question rises each day with the sun. Prior to the Democrats seizing control of both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives at the election in November 2006, the question seemed to be, "Is the country ready for a Speaker who will turn the House upside down — literally and liberally?"

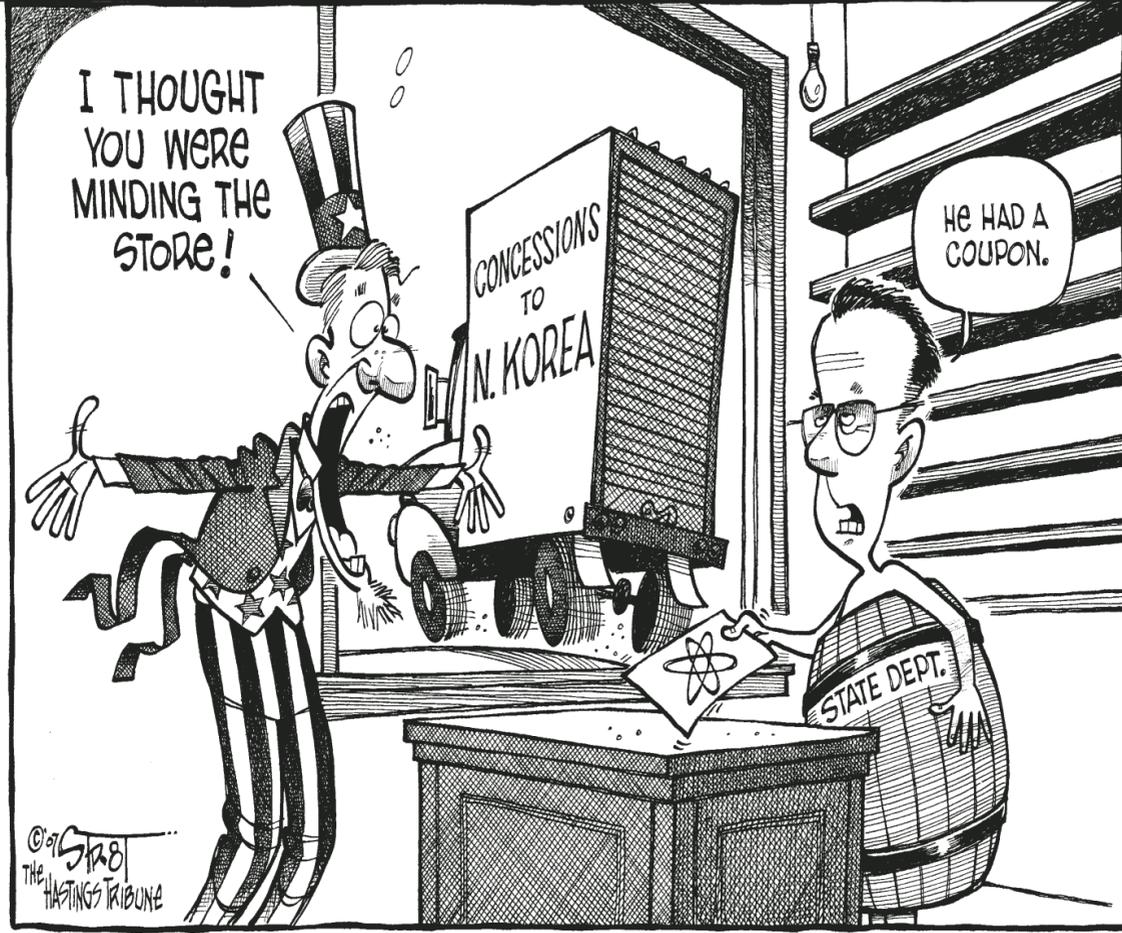
Mrs. Pelosi was painted by her opposition as someone we should fear, not embrace. To date those avenues of caution haven't quite materialized. But she is early in her tenure as Speaker.

Maybe we are way off base with our Pelosi-Clinton link. But never before have we had a female Speaker, nor have we had a female at the top of the presidential ticket, and both from the same party. Of course Sen. Clinton might not get the nod. That remains to be seen.

Just maybe the Pelosi elevation, while hailed at the time, might end up being a political curse for the other lady trying to make political history.

Stay tuned.

—Tom Dreiling



Columnist praises peer's comments

The Op-Ed column was mistakenly attributed to me in the Feb. 13 *Telegram*. And all I can say is, I wish I had written it and amen, amen, amen. Nancy (Hagman) summed up so many of our problems in this country by focusing on the environment and our own selfishness.

I read an article several years ago about Ron Howard, movie producer and former "Opie" of the Andy Griffith Show. He was successful in his childhood acting career and his adult movie producer one as well and so I imagine his financial capabilities allow him some luxuries. He said his family never flies for their vacations when they can drive and they have just one bathroom. Why, asked a disbelieving reporter? Because, he said, nothing pulls a family together like having to share a bathroom and riding in an automobile on a long trip.

As Nancy pointed out in "our" column, our houses and cars are bigger resulting in increased energy consumption and, I believe, less family togetherness. She alluded to the huge kitchens not for cooking only take-out and I would add the dining rooms where residents seldom gather for a meal.

I, too, am amused at the number of

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



Brazil derives ethanol from sugar cane and is the world's largest exporter of this fuel.*

Unfortunately, at the time (70s) there was not an overriding political reason to aggressively pursue alternative fuel and/or vehicles and so the U.S. did not proceed with becoming less reliant on foreign fuel. Now we are more interested, as the political situation around the world becomes less stable.

Dependence on oil from the Middle East and the strained relationships with Venezuela, also an oil rich country, make our dependence not just economic, but one of national security as well.

Nancy pointed out that although we think we have luxuries, they are peppered with worries. We look to other countries, our government, someone to make it work. Nancy and her husband understand what it takes to make it right. They know because they sense the anatomy of our country. They live, work and have raised their girls in the "heartland." Families like Nancy's and my parents realize what a gift the environment is. When you make your living from the land you cherish its very existence. Thank you, Nancy.

*Monte Reel, Washington Post Foreign Service

Morality cannot be legislated

To The Telegram Editor,

Okay Tom, I'll bite. Mr. Dreiling asked what do we think about the proposed legislation in Washington state making it mandatory for married couples to produce children within three years in order to remain married (which, obviously would bar same sex marriage).

It's obnoxiousness like this that gives Christians and the Church a bad name. Good grief. When will the Christian Right realize they cannot legislate morality. Morality, by its very definition denotes an inner sense of right and wrong that enables an individual to be 'moral.' Laws don't make people moral, the grace of God does for those who choose Him.

I am advocating anarchy? No. We have to have laws to restrain man's inhumanity against man. Laws against murder (including that of the unborn), stealing, lying and injustice must be passed and enforced.

However, human sexuality, both good and bad is a personal decision. The New Testament tells us that sexual sin is a sin against one's own body. Let individuals reap the consequences or blessings of their sexual choices made between consenting adults.

Does that mean I am for homosexual-

LETTER

ity, or adultery, or sex before marriage? For the record, I believe God intended one man for one woman for a lifetime of marriage. That is what *I* have chosen to believe and live. For those who choose to live otherwise, that's their decision. Making laws imposing my beliefs on them isn't going to change their beliefs nor their choices. Quite the opposite. It will make them angry that I have sought to take away that choice from them.

All of us are given by God the question and the decision, "Choose you this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my house, I will serve the Lord."

Rather, the Church would do better to challenge the culture with their own lives lived by the grace of God; reflecting godly, loving marriages; healthy, well-behaved and generous children and helping the poor, the infirmed and the orphans. The very real Love and Life of Jesus Christ is what changes people, not the law.

In flight,
Robin Somers
Norton

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Remember, Friday is 'Thumbs Up' day

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Franchise tax repeal would be a plus

Insight
By John Schlageck

Production agriculture remains one of the most capital-intensive industries in this country. Hours of operation are long, intense and the window of opportunity is often short and fleeting.

Profit margins are razor thin. Producers continually monitor the markets, look to forward contract their commodities and seek to find an edge that will keep them productive and profitable.

One such measure that has the potential to help some farmers is the repeal of the Kansas franchise tax. This is a .125 percent tax on net worth above \$100,000 that goes through farms and other small businesses, such as limited liability corporations and limited partnerships. Net worth less than this amount is exempt from the tax.

With many farms and ranches operating on narrow margins when compared to investment, absorbing this franchise tax can often be a real burden to the bottom line of these family businesses — much more so than to large publicly-traded companies.

In agriculture today, the rule rather than the exception remains increased production. With increased production comes increased operating costs including fuel, fertilizer, seed, herbicides, insecticides, etc. Increased production also means additional machinery and land.

The Kansas franchise tax is essentially another form of property tax on Kansas landowners, farmers and ranchers. In order to be in the business of farming, there must be land. This land contributes to net worth and as a result another tax is levied on that property needed for making food, fuel and fiber.

For business purposes, many agricul-

people who regularly shop out of town to "save money." You have to do a lot of shopping when gas is over two dollars a gallon and you are driving an SUV.

I have not seen the movie "An Inconvenient Truth", but I hope to soon. I do believe our selfishness and greed is, and will continue, to cause irreparable harm to our planet. The answer is not to look elsewhere for the answer, but rather to look inward.

Many have faulted former President Carter for his energy proposals and yet had we continued our furor at being held hostage by oil companies in the 1970s where might we be now? Perhaps in Brazil's "shoes." At that time, Brazil became dedicated to the ethanol industry and now is a main player in the world biofuel technology. More than 70 percent of vehicles sold in Brazil are flex-fuel models. They will run on ethanol or gas.

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tural operations are organized under this structure of limited liability and limited partnerships. They have to be to grow and prosper. Many Kansas farming operations have multiple crops, sometimes several farms and often support two or even three generations of a family. Each is subject to this franchise tax — each subject to this additional tax burden — each tax is unfair to capital-intensive businesses.

No one would argue that it's in our state's best interest to have a healthy, vibrant economy — one that encourages creation of jobs, income and wealth. It is counterproductive to impose a tax that discourages growth and penalizes accumulation of assets.

This franchise tax appears to be nothing more than an annual bill for the privilege of doing business in Kansas, unrelated to realized income, profitability or productivity.

The Kansas franchise tax is an economic disincentive for businesses who may be contemplating expansion or locating in this state. Many other states do not have such a tax. Simply put, it's a bad tax for small business, farming, landowners and Kansas.

As our Kansas legislature wrestles with the budgetary challenges, it is fair to ask how the state can withstand lost revenues by repeal of this franchise tax. Farmers, ranchers and landowners believe elimination of this tax will have a beneficial fiscal impact. With a more favorable tax

policy, Kansas has the potential to attract new businesses. Elimination of this deterrent to growing assets can stimulate new economic growth and increased opportunities in a state desperately needing them.

Last week the Kansas House of Representatives passed (91-28) HB 2031, a measure that repeals the Kansas franchise tax which calls for a phase out of the tax during a three-year period. It's now in the Senate. Contact your Senator and ask him/her to repeal the franchise tax.

The 40th Senatorial District is represented by Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer. His office number is (785) 296-7399.

(John Schlageck has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.)

LETTERS ENCOURAGED

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. The address and phone number are not published, they are for verification only.

We do not publish anonymous letters. Form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area won't appear. Letters will not be censored, but 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.

Tip: The shorter the letter, the better it is read.