

Time Spitzer drops out of news cycle

Are you getting just a bit tired of the 24/7 coverage of the fall from grace of former New York Governor Eliot Spitzer? Good, so is most of the country, but try telling that to the major media. Those Yahoos never know when enough is enough.

Spitzer's personal problems as they relate to prostitutes has no impact on the rest of the country. He made some stupid — really stupid — choices in extra curricular activities. And now he must pay for this in whatever fashion he and his wife and three daughters choose. But that's their problem, not the nation's.

It is difficult to understand why MSNBC, CNN and FOX continue to cram that ugly story down our throats. Bet there are millions of Americans who never heard of the name Spitzer before he got caught with his pants down. But those three loud-mouthed cable networks won't put it to bed (no pun intended).

And they have the gall to sound apologetic every time the Spitzer story is rolled out before the eyes of millions of Americans. Shame on them.

But such is the situation since the creation of the 24/7 news networks. And don't expect anything to change. Those characters are fighting one another for viewers. Forget responsibility.

If anything, those three networks have given prostitution the advertising they can't buy. And plenty of it. And it's free! Every time Spitzer's face and the face of the 22-year-old beauty appear on your home screen, the bells on the cash registers of that illegal activity ring — loud and clear.

The past few weeks most of us have started receiving spring catalogs prepping us for the coming outdoor garden and lawn season. We aren't getting such catalogs from the ladies of the night. But the cable networks are serving the same purpose — for that enterprise.

— Tom Dreiling

Simply put: Go forth and be at peace

There is no doubt all eyes are on the Democrats to see if they can really make this work, a woman or a black man as their presidential candidate. Neither has been helped this week by their so called "supporters" i.e. Geraldine Ferraro and Pastor Jeremiah Wright. With friends like those who needs a Republican opponent.

I felt as if Ferraro's comment about Obama having made it this far because he was black could have equally been directed at Hillary. She would never have made it this far if it wasn't for Bill.

Stings, doesn't it?

The most amazing thing about this whole fiasco was when Ferraro turned it around to say the Obama camp should apologize to her. Can you believe that? Unfortunately comments such as these reflect the stereotype of a woman, petty, whining and the victim. I expected more of the former vice presidential candidate. I have to chuckle just a bit when so much emphasis is placed on the comments of Rev'd Wright. Obama had begun distancing himself from the man over a year ago and last month said Wright was "like an old uncle who sometimes will say things that I don't agree with."* We've all had those kind of relatives if we just admit it. The other side is how many of us believe 100 percent of what our religious lead-

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



ers say in the pulpit. If we all walked out when a pastor spoke something we didn't agree with it would look like the trek to acceptance in reverse.

A concern I have always had in politics, religion or just life in general is the "all or nothing" philosophy. When we turn things into black or white, no pun intended, we will be disappointed. We disappoint ourselves sometimes, others disappoint us and sometimes we think we understand when in actuality we really don't. There are people who judge others by the company they keep. Don't forget Jesus kept company with Mary Magdalene and twelve men, one of which is accused of one of history's greatest crimes.

Each person in our lives brings something to our development. The strengths of one individual may be another's weaknesses and that is the beauty of our life on this earth, to go forth and be at peace.

*www.washingtonpost.com

Thumbs Up . . .

To... the Norton community, for your support of the Norton girls basketball team at state. (called in)

To... the Natoma Corporation, on your tremendous award. (called in)

To... John Hawks, you are a big plus for Norton Community High School. (regular mail)

(To submit a name or names, e-mail tom.d@nwkans.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. - td)

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Good week to let the sun shine in

After a long winter, it seems everyone is in the mood for some sunshine. It couldn't be a better time to be celebrating National Sunshine Week, a time for the citizens of Kansas to recommit themselves to the ideals of open government. National Sunshine Week is March 16 through 22.

Why should Kansans care about this? Because, unfortunately, there are dozens of incidents where public officials have fallen far short of what state law requires.

The Kansas Press Association's 240 member newspapers try to do their part to make sure public bodies are following the law, but they need your help. Citizens who take their democratic form of government seriously can provide effective oversight when they attend meetings, seek records or simply observe their governmental officials in action.

Do your local public bodies give proper notice of their meetings? When they do meet, do they discuss policy issues in public or do they seem to have their minds

Guest Commentary Doug Anstaett

made up when the meeting begins? Do they resort to executive sessions and discuss issues that aren't allowed under the Kansas Open Meetings Act exclusions? Do they ever vote outside the meeting room?

The Kansas Open Meetings Act and the Kansas Open Records Act say that meetings and records of public bodies should be open to the public. And, in the vast majority of cases, elected and appointed officials carry out their duties conscientiously.

Yet there are some who don't believe they owe the public anything, that they can meet when they want, where they want, often without telling their constituents about it at all.

They are wrong. While newspaper staffs would love to have the resources to cover every meeting, often they cannot.

That's where you come in.

When you attend meetings, seek public records and question those in authority about how they are conducting themselves, you help keep government open, accessible and accountable.

"Sunshine" is a perfect description of how government should operate. It means that the public's business is discussed thoroughly in public, with the public's participation, and it means decisions are never made behind closed doors without the public's knowledge or input.

"Sunshine Week" is an annual reminder that smoke-filled rooms and secret meetings are simply anti-American and betray our heritage of self-government.

Please do what you can to make sure your local governmental bodies are playing by the rules.

Doug Anstaett is executive director of the Kansas Press Association.

Holcomb plant expansion top tour topic

The past three weekends were spent touring the 40th District with State Representatives Jim Morrison, Virginia Beamer, John Faber, Larry Powell, Dan Johnson, and Gary Hayzlett. We heard many concerns and opinions on issues facing Western Kansas.

The Sunflower Energy Plant expansion project was by far the most popular topic on the minds of my constituents. An overwhelming majority of people support the construction of the plant and encourage lawmakers to over-ride the Governor's veto (if that happens). My constituents have done their homework, and they are very informed about both sides of this issue.

People agree that natural gas is far too expensive to rely on in the long run, and they also agree that we need to continue to pursue renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power to supplement our energy supply.

In addition to the jobs and property development tied directly to the power plant, there are numerous other opportunities that will fall into place once the plant is up and going. Our electric rates are quite a bit higher in Western Kansas than the rates paid in Eastern Kansas. All we can hope for is to keep rates from rising even more out of control. The Holcomb

Senate Doings Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



trucks and pickups on our state roads, but I do believe as farmers, we realize our responsibility.

Another issue that caused a lot of good debate was SB-458, Illegal Immigration Act. I realize we must move cautiously on this issue, but if nothing can be solved on the Federal level, then all States will be forced to set standards.

This bill has had convincing testimony on both sides of the issue. The Fed and State Committee worked this bill, but unfortunately it was totally destroyed and came out of committee as a substitute bill removing the term "illegal" from the heading. It will be interesting to see if we get the original language back in the bill when we work it on the Senate floor. Nobody has any issues with immigrants that enter this country using the correct procedures. Most concerns are with those who are in this country illegally.

I traveled somewhere around 720 miles while touring my 40th District these past three weekends. The remarks were good and I appreciate the good debate and questions. Most importantly, I thank you for your support.

—Ralph Ostmeyer, Senator, 40th District

power plant expansion project is the right thing to do. Even as we wait there are improvements being made to ensure that this project will be state of the art, efficient, and very safe.

There was also a lot of debate on the KCC trucking regulations. The first tier of regulations is designed to exempt most farmers if all they are doing with their trucks is hauling their own grain and livestock.

One thing that KCC is wanting to enforce is the placarding requirements for hauling fuel and fertilizer. We can only hope that KCC will find compromise with farmers over this.

Another issue that is a problem for far Western Kansas farmers is crossing state borders with the movement of livestock and grain. I whole-heartedly support laws that will regulate the safety of farm

Well, we are in Mexico once again

Pardon me if there is enchilada sauce spilled on this, but I'm writing between courses of Huevos Rancheros (eggs with salsa) and chili rellenos grilled pablano peppers with queso (cheese) on a flour tortilla. Yes, we are back to El Paso/Juarez and happily eating our way through the cities.

I'm writing this Sunday morning in a little Mexican restaurant we found Saturday on our first day in town. That's why we came back — it was so good.

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



ter nine years though, the landmarks had changed and we never found the home of Eduardo and Marta.

We did find a burrito stand, so it was all good.

Church starts in a few minutes, so I will keep this short. Besides, the news will be on the other side of the next few days.

Friends and neighbors are caring for the cats and chickens in our absence.

So, until we're back stateside, it's "hasta la vista," (until I see you again.)