

Is the Constitution relevant still today

An essay in *Time* magazine asks if our 235-year-old Constitution is relevant today.

There's nothing new in the question; it's been asked off and on for more than 200 years.

The framers of the Constitution, so the questioning logic goes, knew nothing of airplanes, telecommunications, cell phones, modern medicine. The list is endless.

A century ago, great thinkers talked about modern technology: railroads, steam power, gasoline engines, the telegraph. You get the picture.

Of course, times have changed. The Constitution, in great measure, has not. Oh, it's been amended – we banned, then restored the liquor trade, granted civil rights to all, limited presidents to two terms, but never specified "equal rights" for women.

Overall, the changes have been relatively minor.

Changes in technology don't outmode a system of government. The Constitution sets out an elegant solution to the need for a national government while protecting both the citizens and the individual states that joined to form the Union from that government's power.

If not the Constitution, with its republican system and its balance among three co-equal branches of government, how should we be governed?

By some socialist, liberal dictatorship where those who know best tell the rest of us how to live? Oh, that system has been tried, hasn't it?

By instant electronic democracy? Government by Facebook? Sounds dangerous, unstable.

The Founding Fathers may have known little of railroads, steamships or the telephone. They did know the value of the printing press, essentially the Internet of their day, and they knew human nature.

They had fought to free the colonies from oppression by those across the sea who knew best, and understood the dangers of government granted excessive power. They gave us the framework of a system that could endure many dangers, but they left out the most precious part – our rights.

That omission was soon corrected by the addition of the first 10 Amendments, what we know as the Bill of Rights. And there, with a little tinkering, they gave us the most nearly perfect system of government known to man.

Today we look at the federal government and see that it's bloated, cumbersome, slow-moving, hard to deal with and still harder to change. Perhaps the problem isn't with the Constitution. Perhaps it's with the way it's interpreted and abused.

The framers never intended the government to be a tool for granting favors to big business interests or to social groups. They created a limited government, with limited powers and three branches to watch one another.

Time has, perhaps, corrupted that vision. It allowed the government to grow large, and at times, in its clumsy way, oppressive. Some say the system is no longer responsive to our needs. If that's the problem, though, it can be corrected.

But the framework, the framework is as brilliant today as it was 200 years ago.

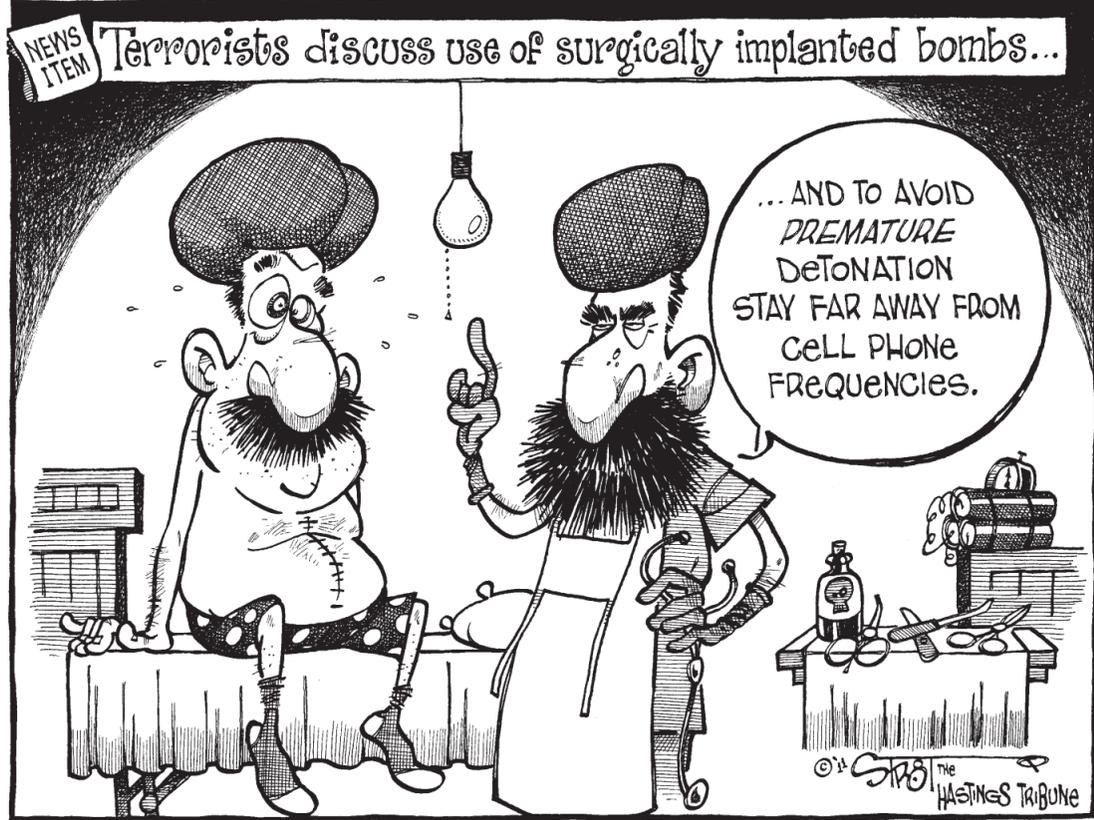
A new Constitution for the Internet era?

Can you imagine? If Congress wrote it today, instead of the spare and simple document we have, it'd run to thousands of pages, replete with earmarks for the politicians and tax breaks for corporations.

The First Amendment might be 45 pages, rather than 45 words, and mention each and every group that might claim a right or two.

Let's not take the chance. Let's keep the Constitution and dump those who want to subvert it. – *Steve Haynes*

On the
Prairie Dog
Steve Haynes



The race against time and mother nature

Rain was in the forecast and a dusty haze hung over low lying fields as wheat growers put every available man and machine in the field trying to bring in the harvest before the next rain squall hit. It was a race against time and the rain won. Again.

Harvest 2011 is turning into one of those protracted harvests that goes on and on and on. Intermittent rains keep combines out of the fields and farmers in the house. Maybe not, literally, "in the house" but, at least in the shop doing maintenance or in the parts house picking up repairs. Anyplace but where they want to be. And, that's in the field.

Then, the sun comes out 'scorchin'; dries things up and the race is on again.

-ob-

Friday will find us on the road to Dallas. My daughter, Kara, called to say her daughter, Taylor, had made the decision to be baptized. We, of course, are thrilled.

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



And, since this is the most important decision she will make in her life, we wanted to be there to witness the occasion and share the day with her.

Taylor had been considering baptism for a long time; discussing it with the preacher at the church she attends and with her family. A week at church camp solidified her decision and she came home ready to take the next step. It's our understanding that 10 people from the congregation will be baptized in a local lake and there will be a picnic following.

This week Taylor is on her first mission trip and won't return until Saturday night. She and the youth group from her church went to New Orleans for the day, on re-habbing houses and cleaning up neighborhoods still untouched since Hurricane Katrina. Mission trips have a way of changing people. I'm positive Taylor will come home a different person than the one who left.

Another of our girls, Jennifer, and her two daughters, Alexandria and Aniston, are going to come to Dallas for the day. So, it will be a mini family reunion of sorts, too. The icing on the cake is that we get to bring Taylor home with us for a two-week stay.

I've already planned a pizza party for her and some of the young ladies she has met over the years. Throw in swimming at the pool and a county fair and I don't think I'll have any trouble entertaining an almost 13-year old.

Consumers worry about safety of their food

Insight

John Schlageck

The conversations are endless. Consumers want and some demand to know the origin, safety and nutrition contained in the food they eat or feed to their families.

Little more than a decade ago, seemed like most people could give a hoot about their food. Heck, 20 years ago the only time the media paid any attention to food was to tell consumers when prices went up.

It's obvious farmers, ranchers and other people who want to sell food want to tell the public about their product. But are they being heard? Does their message resonate with today's savvy consumer? Or is it being sidelined by well-funded, well-managed and strategically placed ads and social media?

During the last several years, agendas championed by some environmental groups have been less than kind to agriculture. Some have flooded the public with figures on soil losses, pesticide-related mishaps and alleged failed attempts at using pesticides to reduce infestation.

Technology has often been labeled the number one environmental enemy. But here's the flip side of that coin and one agriculture must tell over and over again.

For food producers, farmers and ranchers technology is viewed as the application of knowledge. As humans, we survive by adapting the environment to our needs.

Someone much wiser than me once said, minus technology, we would be just like other primates – confined to tropical

regions and subject to extinction due to environmental changes. To survive, we must disturb the environment, conserve resources and continually create them.

Resources are made not born. Land, ores, petroleum, etc. – the raw materials of this planet – are not inherently resources. They do not inherently further human purposes.

We as humans must determine what is useful and how to use it. Topsoil becomes a resource when a farmer tills the soil and plants wheat seed for example. Ores become resources when metals are extracted from them.

During the past two centuries, technology has been creating resources more rapidly than humans have been consuming them. By every measure of price and availability, resources have become more abundant.

Without science and technology, today's farmers and ranchers would be unable to feed the masses outside the agricultural industry. Farmers use technology responsibly. They constantly use new farming methods and practices. Their minds are like the fertile soil they farm – always ready to embrace new ideas.

But new ideas and new farm technology is costly. It is in the best interest of farmers to use it carefully and sparingly. Misuse would add to production costs,

which would result in an even lower return on investment.

Food produced in the United States is safe. More than 40 years of Food and Drug Administration testing has shown the majority of our fruits and vegetables have no detectable pesticide residues. This underscores that American farmers use pesticides properly.

Every year billions of dollars are spent to support food and agricultural safety and quality inspection, according to the General Accounting Office. The private sector, combined with state and local governments, spends an estimated \$7 billion on similar activities.

Farmers and ranchers support efforts to evaluate and enhance the current regulatory and food monitoring system. Agricultural producers are willing to work with others to maintain safe food, but this industry must avoid policy changes that are based on fear, emotion and public manipulation.

Decisions affecting the course of agricultural production are critically important and will have far reaching implications on our quality of life. We must be careful when determining long-term policies.

Farmers and ranchers must continue to maximize their production capacity with an ever-watchful eye on food safety, quality and the environment.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.



Thumbs up to Cale Patterson for being a helpful neighbor and a kind young gentleman. Brought in.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumps Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

OFFICE HOURS:
8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

STAFF

Dana Paxton..... General Manager
Advertising Director/
email: dpaxton@nwkansas.com
Carleen Bell..... Managing Editor
cbell@nwkansas.com
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
Brandi Diederich..... Intern/Society Editor
bdiederich@nwkansas.com
Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production
Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager

Kansas Press Association



Your political connection

- ★ **Governor Sam Brownback**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. roberts.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-4774
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, Russell Senate Office Building Room C-4, Washington, D.C. 20002. moran.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-6521
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 300 SW 10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612. ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us (785) 296-7399
- ★ **Congressman Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. huelskamp.house.gov (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124
- ★ **State Rep. Rick Billinger**, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka, Kan. 66612 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov (785) 296-7659
- ★ **State Rep. Ward Cassidy**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Topeka, Kan. 66612 ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov (785) 296-7696