

## A man who stands on his principles

The last couple of weeks, Rep. Tim Huelskamp of Kansas' big 1st District has been under attack for standing by his principles.

From out here in the far northwest corner of his district, we can only shake our heads.

When did it become a sin to have principles?

It's a given that, as with any representative, not every one of us in the district will agree with our congressman, today or even most of the time. You just can't expect that, not when you choose one person to represent roughly 711,000 people with as many points of view.

But this district has elected Mr. Huelskamp to Congress twice, the first time choosing him from a field that included a wide spectrum of Republicans, and then over a Democrat opponent.

No one bothered to run against him the last time around, and you have to assume that most of the people in the district are comfortable with their representative — or they'd have backed somebody else.

We knew what we were getting when we voted for Tim Huelskamp. He's a known commodity, a doctrinaire conservative who believes in less government, lower taxes, fewer regulations, lower spending and a balanced budget. He never pretended to be anything else.

He's also a committed social conservative, a devout Roman Catholic who hews to the teachings of his church. And an advocate for adoption, as well as a loving family man.

Yeah, he's about as far to the right as an American could be, staunchly opposed to abortion and strong on social issues. So what?

The voters elected him. He believes what he believes. Wouldn't it be worse if he sold out? If he gave in to blackmail, even by the speaker of the House?

Yet there's a line of ("What's the Matter With Kansas?") thinking that goes something like this: That people in places like Kansas, who are comfortable standing on principle, often vote against their own self-interest when they stand by their beliefs.

So people here vote for Republicans who stand against abortion instead of Democrats who send us welfare and other government goodies. It's not that simple, but still, are principles that outmoded?

No, Mr. Huelskamp isn't a compromiser. He's not going to lead the House to make whoopee with the Democrats and solve the problems of the day. He's the guy who's going to stand to the side and remind the rest of them what their principles are supposed to be.

There's nothing dishonest or wrong about that, is there?

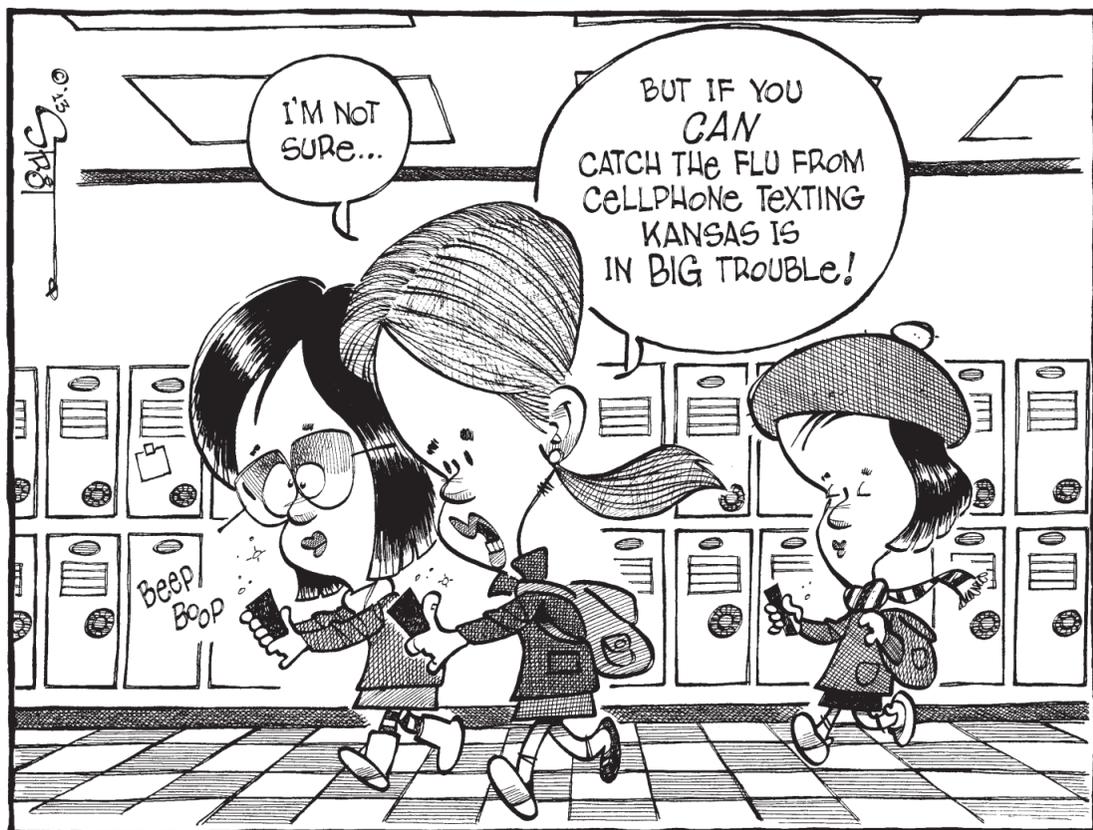
No one expects all of us to agree with Mr. Huelskamp's stands. It's perfectly OK to say he's wrong and call him out. Run against him if you feel that way.

We know Washington needs compromisers and negotiators and log rollers. That's how deals are made at the end of the day. But someone has to stand on principle. There are days when we'd be better off if more of our leaders did, on all sides of any issue.

As for Mr. Huelskamp, well, you know where he stands. The voters put him where he is, and they could, we suppose, change their minds. Meantime, deal with it. He is who he is.

— Steve Haynes

### On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



## Making better use of our money

"It's real simple: no budget, no pay," Speaker John A. Boehner of Ohio told the House before the vote for a three month suspension of the borrowing limit. The vote now states the pay of lawmakers will be docked "if one of the chambers of Congress fails to pass a budget blueprint by April 15."

The 27th amendment, proposed in 1789 and ratified in 1992, states, no change in compensation for Senators and Representatives can take effect until "an election of representatives shall have intervened." Whether this action is even constitutional remains to be seen and hopefully we won't waste precious time debating its validity.

No one party can be blamed for the national debt, nor take responsibility for pulling us to our feet financially.

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



Both parties have much to offer in this debate. That isn't the problem. The problem is with listening and compromising.

To be sure, budgetary discretion is critical, but there are commitments we must remember and honor. Whether you are speaking of the returning Afghanistan veterans who may need lifetime disability or the Vietnam veteran who has aged into Medicare. These were commitments we made. As

a government, to our people.

We entered into two wars to the financial tune of over \$1 trillion which doesn't include any of the long term costs for disabled veterans or include interest on the borrowed money which, by some estimates, will raise the amount to over \$3 trillion.

"The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities has estimated that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, together with the Bush tax cuts, will account for almost half of the projected \$20 trillion debt in 2019."

Closing loopholes which allow for welfare, tax and congressional fraud is critical. Let's begin there and work toward a more functional and responsible use of our money. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

## Looking at the past gives insight to the future

A letter Viola Hagman, my husband's Grandmother, wrote July 30, 1946 is making the rounds. Even the envelope is there: a three cent stamp commemorating 100 years of statehood for Texas. The simple address: Mrs. D. H. Hobbs, Colfax, Iowa.

9:30 a.m., it was 90 degrees. Viola had already picked green beans for dinner and made a shelter for her lambs.

She talked about her garden: 200 sweet potato plants, half a bushel of onions already harvested, no tomatoes yet. "But if it doesn't rain soon it will all burn up."

"No wind our stock tanks are about dry and we need rain."

She tells of the family. Her husband was feeling better after having his teeth pulled, then the intestinal "flue". Her colorful description brought laughter!

Of her son, the hubby's Dad, she says: "Gene has his (car) paid for and is buying furniture and linoleum, for his home, as he is getting married in August. Dittmers brought them a bedroom set also a kitchen set. They sure have a lot more than we did to start on."

They had been "down to visit mother the other evening she is about like usual. Has out a large garden and works to hard she only weighs 103 lbs." Viola was 53 in the summer of 1946, mother would have been in her 70's.

Viola and I share the same birth date. I live in the house she lived in. She loved a little boy, who grew into the man I love.

### This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



Other than that I have little in common with this Kansas farm wife of the 40's.

Clearly she had no spelling or grammar check. She used "to" rather than "too". In another place she used "two" when it should have been "too". Next time I find myself trying to be the grammar police I will try to remember Viola. Such mistakes are not new or a harbinger that the world is going to hell in a hand basket!

It surprised me that she spelled Dettmer incorrectly. Gene's future bride lived little more than a mile away.

Then there is the declaration "They sure have a lot more than we did to start on." Besides being the self-appointed English police, I obsess over what it takes these days to start a couple on the road to wedded bliss (or a couple of good years before an acrimonious divorce).

The average wedding costs \$25,000 today, not including the bedroom set! Or the trip to Las Vegas for the bachelorette.

From my mother-in-law's perspective she didn't have much when she was married either. It's certainly true she did not have an expensive wedding

(but she did have that dining set).

The starkest contrast would be in the amount of work the 1940's farm wife did every single day.

Ken Root's (The Root Zone) column in the High Plains Journal, recently discussed the changes in life style due to mechanization. He says, "The reality is that a capitalistic society will do whatever it has to do to exploit the least expensive form of labor. At our current level of scientific advancement, we have the prospect to end human drudgery and elevate our citizens to a higher plane. The question for me, is what we will do up there without jobs and without means to support our lives? The next step has to be socialism where all people share the profits made by the companies who employ the robots. Some people will find work in academic and esoteric professions but the option of sitting on a couch and playing video games for a lifetime grows ever more likely."

My life in Viola's house is probably beyond her wildest dreams. The life Root describes is easily comprehensible to me.

How wonderful to have this glimpse of her life. It seems purposeful; rich and full.

Insight into the future is more problematic. Are we defined by the work we do? What will life mean when there is no more work? Are we evolving into something greater or lesser?

The most troubling question of all and for all times: When will it rain?

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