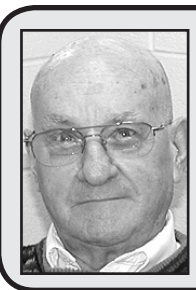


No room found at this inn for a traveler of 'his kind'

It was my hope they had room for one more. Some years ago, I rolled into a small town after sundown, looking for a motel room. I was there to begin work the following morning at the newspaper.



Man of the Plains

By Tom Dreiling
milehitom@hotmail.com

While I drove the streets of what was going to be my new home, I kept an eye out for a motel. I was not familiar with the town at all, so finding a motel was a bit more of a chore than I thought it would be.

Finally, after an hour's search, I spotted what looked like a pretty nice motel. Apparently it was a popular stop for travelers, because there were quite a few cars parked near it along the street.

It was well lighted and had an attractive sign on the front that included a large clock. That was nice, because tired travelers, like me, don't always keep track of the time.

I managed to find a parking spot about a half block away. With my fingers crossed, I walked up to the front door, opened it and just seconds later, a man appeared. "Quick service," I thought to myself.

"Yes, sir, what can I do for you?" he asked. "Do you have room for one more?" I replied. He looked me over and then said, "You're not the right kind."

That comment sort of blew me away. "Right kind?" I asked. "What do you mean 'right kind'?" "Well, for starters," he said, "this is a mortuary."

And he then began to laugh. I was speechless. I told him no offense, but it looked like a very modern, up-to-date motel. He directed me to the area of town where I would find lodging "for the right kind."

As I sat on the edge of the motel bed, giving thought to this experience, the voice in my head started talking. "Hey, stupid," the voice said. "Did you not notice there was no parking lot at or near the place you thought was a motel?"

But if someone tells you sometime that "you are not the right kind," don't feel offended, rather rejoice! It might mean you're still alive.

We are a year away from casting our ballots for president, so it's time for the Man of the Plains to make the following declaration: President Obama will be challenged by former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

The talking heads on radio and television - the bunch that claims they know everything - are struggling with this issue. They are the ones from those so-called exclusive schools of thought who are being paid big bucks to answer what this former student at Fort Hays State University just told you - and I did it for nothing!

Please allow me a few words about the passing of a truly great guy. Ken Haas had more friends than he could ever have imagined. The reason being, Ken Haas was a kind, gentle, considerate soul who drew an incredible following through his years as a school counselor and educator at Kennedy Middle School and principal at Thomas More Prep-Marian High in Hays, as well as an enthusiasm for sports that took him to many venues.

His smile would attract many more. He didn't have to say a word, just flash that smile, and you felt a closeness to him that salted a friendship.

We grieve in silence, but we speak loudly and proudly of this man who fought so hard for so long before giving himself up to the very Creator who brought him into this world. He is now a member of "God's Club."

Thanks, Ken; your footprints will be everlasting. *Tom Dreiling of Aurora, Colo., is a former publisher of the Colby Free Press and Norton Telegram, and a former long-time editor of the old Daily News. He is a life-long Democrat, a curmudgeon come lately and a newly minted Coloradan.*

Thursday will mark Bill of Rights birthday

Last week, our nation marked the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and our entry into the Second World War.

That is a truly significant date, of course. The next day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress, calling Dec. 7, 1941 a "date which will live in infamy." It certainly has.

Another December date is even more important in the history of our nation, yet it often receives little fanfare. In fact, it has become such an accepted part of the nation's cultural fabric that we often take it for granted.

Thursday marks the 220th anniversary of the ratification of the U.S. Bill of Rights.

Eleven score ago, on Dec. 15, 1791, our fledgling nation added the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. As a nation, we stated that the individual rights of Americans had to be spelled out in our most important document.

So, who led the charge and to whom do we owe a debt of gratitude?

It's not necessarily whom you might think, although many of our Founding Fathers, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams and James Madison helped make it happen.

So, who was that masked man? Whom do we credit for making it happen?

It was Virginia's George Mason. Who?

Mason was a Virginia delegate to the Constitutional Convention who had decided not to support the new



Opinion

By Doug Anstaett
danstaett@kspress.com

document because it didn't include a list of the individual rights of citizens. (In our era, though he might be better known for the outstanding basketball team fielded by a university named after him.)

Today, we exercise our freedom of speech, freedom of religion and right to assemble with gusto. Whether it's the Tea Party, the Occupy Wall Street protestors, a Shawnee Mission student tweeter or, yes, even the Westboro Baptist Church placard carriers, we know our rights - and we exercise them.

Those rights, along with many others, shout to the world that we Americans aren't afraid of freedom. We believe in it so much that we're willing to tolerate just about any message short of shouting fire in a crowded theater.

So, what inspired George Mason?

At the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, Mason helped draft a "Declaration of Rights" for his home state of Virginia. Mason wanted the same for the new republic, saying it would be illegitimate unless it listed those inalienable rights.

He played a critical role in the 1787 Constitutional Convention

in Philadelphia, but his proposal for a bill of rights fashioned after Virginia's was defeated. At the first session of the first Congress, future president James Madison, an elected representative from Virginia, introduced a Bill of Rights that reflected Mason's ideas.

Besides the rights already mentioned above, the document also guaranteed a right to a trial by jury and the right to bear arms, outlawed excessive bail, fines and cruel and unusual punishment and protected citizens against unreasonable search and seizure, among others.

If you "Google" the term Founding Fathers, Mason's name likely won't be listed in the top 10 or 20. But when you hear his story, you come to realize his dogged determination had as much to do with our freedoms today as the individual accomplishments of any other.

Two hundred twenty years later, those freedoms still ring.

So, say a word of thanks today to the Father of the Bill of Rights, George Mason.

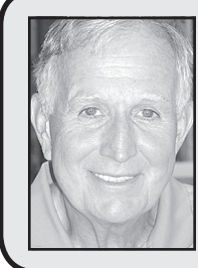
Doug Anstaett, executive director of the Kansas Press Association in Topeka, is a former Kansas publisher and an award-winning editorialist.

State representative ready for second year at the Statehouse

Monday, Jan. 9, I start my second year as state representative for the 120th District.

I was in Topeka last week and I went to the House Chamber after attending some meetings. Trying not to sound too corny, but the feeling I got when I walked into the Chamber is similar to a feeling I got the first time my Dad took me to a major league ballpark. I can't describe the awe and responsibility I feel every time I walk into the Chamber any other way.

One of the most dramatic demographic shifts of the past century has been the transformation of our country from largely rural to largely urban. In 1910, 72 percent of the country lived in rural areas. Today, only 18 percent of Americans are



Letter from Topeka

By State Rep. Ward Cassidy
ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov

labeled rural. Statistics show that the northwest Kansas population is declining even more rapidly.

Working with five counties has given me the opportunity to see and share with each the hard work being done to maintain our way of life. I'd again stress the importance of economic development directors working with those they represent to help each county grow in any and

every way possible.

There are grants available to help, but someone has to work for them and write them. Someone has to have a plan for local wealth to invest in our communities.

The decline of population means less clout at the Statehouse. Laws that uphold the freedom to farm, the right to hunt and fish, water allocation, local transportation, and laws

that allow money to help our schools and hospitals may lose support as fewer legislators are elected from outside the cities.

I have been working to help form a rural caucus of legislators to enlighten our colleagues about our way of life.

This year, I will continue to work for northwest Kansas. I will also be keeping a watchful eye on the state fire marshal's office to see that there are no useless citations ordered. Another state agency I plan to work with is the Board of Healing Arts. I

hope to encourage them to help our hospitals and to find ways to avoid being a roadblock to our getting strong health care. Cooperation would be better than more laws. There are way too many laws as is.

Medicaid and the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System will continue to be an albatross to the state budget. One of our top economists gave the Legislature some very unsavory choices on how to pay for a fix:

- Reduce spending on almost everything else.

- Tax increases.
- Both the above.

Our governor and his staff are working hard on these issues. I pray that they can develop a strong Kansas economy that will provide services without exorbitant tax increases.

Ward Cassidy of St. Francis, a retired school principal and teacher, is the state representative for the 120th District, covering Decatur, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Norton and Phillips counties. Send e-mails to ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov.



Get all the news from Decatur County


Subscribe today!

Subscribers whose mailing address is in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties \$38
Elsewhere in Kansas \$42
Elsewhere in the United States \$48
To order your subscription, fill out the coupon below and send it with payment to:
THE OBERLIN HERALD
170 S. Penn Ave. Oberlin, Kan. 67749

Name

Address


City..... State..... Zip.....



Free Alpha-1 Seminar & Testing

According to the Alpha-1 Association there are an estimated 90,000 undiagnosed Americans living with Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency. Alpha-1 is a genetic condition that can cause serious liver disease in children and liver and/or lung disease in adults. Most with Alpha-1 can extend and improve the quality of their lives through early diagnosis, behavioral and lifestyle changes and through access to treatment to slow the progression of lung disease.

Join Tri Valley Health System and Dr. Susanna Von Essen, MD
Saturday, December 17
9:00am - 3:00pm
Republican River Room
in Tri Valley Healthy Living Center
1305 Highway 6/34, Cambridge
Breakfast & Lunch Provided



Susanna Von Essen, MD, MPH

Those who should consider testing may have had any of the following symptoms:

- Blood relatives of individuals diagnosed with Alpha-1
- Individuals with a family history of lung and/or liver disease
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis
- Bronchiectasis (without evidence of origin)
- Incompletely reversible asthma after aggressive treatment
- Anyone with the skin disease panniculitis
- Adults with C-ANCA-positive vasculitis (anti-proteinase 3-positive)
- Newborns, children and adults with unexplained liver disease
- Early onset of emphysema (age 45 years or less)
- Shortness of breath with exercise or with routine activity
- Wheezing with or without upper respiratory infection
- Frequent chest colds or lung infections
- Chronic cough and sputum (phlegm) production
- Swelling of abdomen or legs
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin

For more information please call Allison Krustsinger at 308-697-1159.

800-732-5505
trivalleyhealth.com