

Write-in candidates get another chance

At least two area men who lost primary elections are seeking office via the write-in route. It makes the November elections a little more interesting.

Ivan Kingham lost in the Republican primary for county commissioner to incumbent Leroy Lang, and incumbent Phillips County Sheriff LeRoy Stephen lost to challenger Paul Wisinger, one of his deputies.

Both men have said they will try again in the general election as write ins.

We don't envy them the work they must be planning to put in, but we don't want to discourage them either.

It is hard, very hard, to win as a write in against someone on the ballot.

Maybe its because we are all creatures of habit, and when someone hands us a piece of paper and says "pick one," we do as we're told.

In a restaurant when offered orange, tomato or grapefruit juice, we seldom ask for V-8 or tangerine. If we do, the people we're dining with us look at us strangely and generally make us feel like freaks.

This may not be right, but it is the way of the world.

Over in Phillips County, Sheriff Stephen lost 1,263-361 to his deputy. That's going to be a tough row to hoe. The sheriff, who has been in office for 25 years, attributed his loss to people wanting a change and his not getting out enough. Whether that was to campaign or to just be seen doing things, he didn't say.

Here in Norton County, Mr. Kingham lost 279-238, a much less daunting 42-vote margin.

Now both men want to have a chance to present themselves to all voters, Republicans and Democrats, in the hopes of winning.

In Norton County, both incumbent commissioners up for re-election found themselves with primary opposition.

Commissioner John Miller beat challenger George Gassmann by a single vote in the Republican primary. Most people expected Mr. Gassmann to ask for a recount, but the expense could have been considerable, and instead the challenger has thrown his considerable backing behind Democratic candidate Robert Clydesdale

Both Mr. Gassmann and Mr. Clydesdale make no bones about the fact that they disapprove of the commissioners' stand on strong county regulations for confined animal feeding operations, saying the regulations are anti-business and anti-agriculture.

Mr. Kingham farms and runs a small non-confined animal operation. He says he is running because he feels the commissioners are micromanaging the county and he also disapproves of the county's attempts to add additional regulations on livestock operations.

Unsigned letters sent to voters in the county accused Mr. Lang of having an illegal feed lot himself, and citizens are in an uproar. While members of the Kansas Livestock Association and Mr. Kingham all deny any connection to the mailings, the letters made Mr. Kingham's quest twice as hard by angering voters and perhaps causing some swing votes to go Mr. Lang's way.

It is not our job to tell the candidates how to run their campaigns or anyone how to vote. We are just glad there are people out there who care enough to get out and run for office.

Voters need to get out and throw their support and votes behind the candidate they think will do the best job for our county.

— Cynthia Haynes

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Pollution comes from more than one place

I would like to make a few comments on Leroy Lang's rebuttal on the CAFO flyer from the "Norton County Environmentalists". I got one too.

We are in the process of putting in a new feedlot at Esslinger Ranch. We are following all the state regulations which begin with registration. The next step is to apply for a permit, which has been done through the Norton County Soil Conservation Office. They have taken the soil samples and determined where the pits will be. After they complete their paperwork, everything is sent to the state.

At this point, all you can do is wait, the state has a backlog of applications. Some agri-businesses have had to wait up to a year before completing their project. During the waiting period, that part of your business is at a standstill, unless you choose to run it illegally.

I wonder why the "Environmentalists" who sent the flyer are only picking on the cattle and hog operations as polluters. A few years ago, Farmland Industries did extensive research on contributors to water pollution.

The results were very surprising. It seems the biggest user of chemicals and fertilizers and water were the lawn keepers of America. The second largest user is the corn grower. The rest of the crops follow way behind.

When we put fertilizer, weed kill and

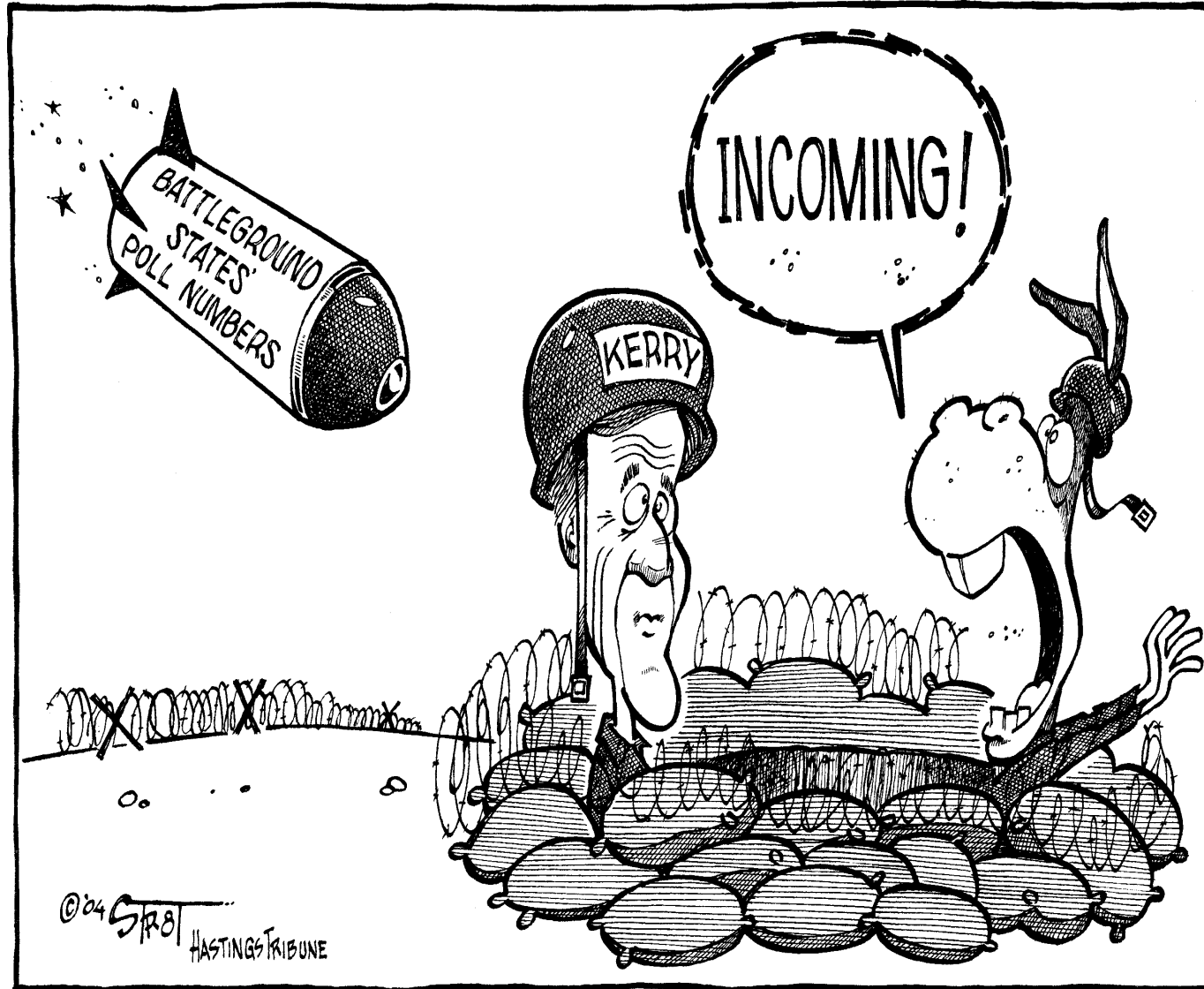
insecticide on our lawns or fields, the water or rain is going to carry the chemicals to the streams by running in or by soaking in. This is polluting.

A certain amount of chemicals and fertilizers are necessary to produce the amount of food needed to feed the world. A responsible farmer will take soil samples before applying fertilizers. The information from the samples shows how much fertilizer is needed and where. Maybe we should do the same with our lawns.

The chemicals created by the animals we eat are natural chemicals, not man-made. They are controllable. The state and federal governments, as well as many other agencies, are constantly researching and applying guidelines to keep us all safe. However, if we, the keeper of those animals, confine them in a pen on or near a stream or spring, without proper protection, we are polluters. It does not matter if it is one animal or 1,000 animals.

I guess what I'm getting at is that we all need to clean up our act, whether we live in the country or in town. We are all guilty. We need to quit pointing fingers at others and all work together to keep our environment safe. We will try to do our part, will you?

Dean Esslinger
and the Esslinger Ranch Families
Norton



Finger pointing leads nowhere good

Dear Concerned Citizen:
I just received your letter. Or mailing? I am not sure it really is a letter. Letters are generally signed by an individual. I find it hard to take very seriously correspondence from someone who is afraid to state his or her name — even the witness protection program requires you declare your name before you point the finger.

I think there is too much "mothering" in me. This feels much like fights my children would have and the need for me to find creative measures to handle them.

Honor and trust are important parts of argument resolution and neither is available when the finger pointer declines to be identified. If we feel strongly enough about something we are willing to risk our reputation, the loss of friends and even humiliation for the cause. When one refuses to claim a correspondence I cannot help but feel it is because of lack of honor and trust of themselves.

No one doubts the emotion you feel for

Phase II

Mary Kay
Woodyard



your subject or the reasons. And I certainly am not qualified to declare your accuracy about it, but I do know it sounds much more like sour grapes than genuine concern.

If Mr. Lang weren't a county commissioner, would you be as concerned about my water?

I must admit the description you give of Mr. Lang's operation does give rise to a wonderful information gathering scenario of an elderly, overweight gentleman lurking around in feedlot foliage while trying to appear somewhat professional,

and always elusive.

If one is to look around Norton and see the things that could pollute our water supply, I become much more concerned about the water supply.

Mr. Concerned Citizen have you looked at Sebelius Lake recently? Even the pelicans and blue herons are canceling reservations due to lack of water.

Once again in an area where we are fading and fading fast, the "if you don't play my way, I'll take my marbles and go home" attitude may be the death of us.

Democracy is about majority rule even when we don't like the results and we won't many times. That doesn't mean we can't complain, that doesn't mean it is unpatriotic to oppose an issue and it doesn't mean we must avoid legal action, but anonymous letters only create division and mistrust. And there is no place for them in the community that I have known to be above all of that nonsense. And now children, it is time to put it all to bed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Commissioner responds to concerns, letter, and survey

To the Editor:
It is time to pull the county together to work in unison with one another. The Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) regulations that were proposed and organized were done so at the request of the general population of Norton County to protect the water and other natural resources.

Nobody wants extra regulations to rule over us. However, when the purity of the water and natural resources are threatened, someone has to take a stand.

Almena is drilling four miles out of town because the nitrate level is so high in their water that it is nearly unsuitable for use. The City of Norton is searching 12 miles outside of town for suitable water. Since the state has regarded the CAFO rules out of line, it is now the responsibility of us as individuals to preserve the water for the future of Norton County's natural resources or threaten destroying them for future generations.

To Mr. Muehe's letter to the editor about the ambulance barn, Norton County does not own the ground south of the ambulance barn. However, the reasoning for the facility expansion is to better accommodate all of the ambulances and promote easy accessibility for quick response.

Also, it will provide an area for classroom and teaching to help both citizens and emergency services workers. The other reasoning would be to help expand storage for the county with the continuous overflow of paperwork that must be saved, filed, and stored.

Mr. Clydesdale has sent out a survey that needs to be responded to. The biggest asset to Norton County are the people that reside here. Our people have a great environment, which produces our economic development. As long as we utilize our natural resources with intelligence, they will help produce economic development for years to come.

In regards to having an economic devel-

opment director, the city and county officials are negotiating to share expenses to hire an effective director. Let me emphasize that "the city and county officials" are working together.

The new airport board was planned quite carefully by all parties involved. The airport manager and Gail Boller are familiar with the airport functions. Eldo Graham is a taxpayer and an outside businessman who will contribute from another business standpoint. The county commissioners, city supervisors and councilmen are entitled to take care of business instead of being figureheads showing up at the office once a week.

Norton County people elected these people to do their best to manage business and money of the taxpayers. The airport is a vital resource of Norton County and

must be maintained effectively.

Norton County has very good department supervisors who report once a week to the commissioners about the activity in their department. The supervisors run their departments but communicating to the commissioners serves as the idea of checks and balances to the individual departments. The supervisors hire their employees according to the procedures established and only brief the commissioners on the applicants. The organization of the county government has been formatted by the "Employee's Handbook" just as Robert's Rules of Order.

To the people of Norton County lift your heads high for you have a lot to be proud of and thankful for.

John Miller
Norton County Commissioner

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