

## Debates may not change minds

The presidential debates this year have been tense. You can see the pressure in the performance of both President George Bush and challenger John Kerry.

The 90-minute shows are followed by at least half an hour of commentary by the various spin doctors, and then the polls take their turn. The ones from last Sunday indicated very little change in the race, and it remains a close contest with the election three weeks from today.

Watching the debate last Friday, we were interested in the discussion about the possibility that the next president will have a chance to appoint a new justice to the Supreme Court. What surprised us was that President Bush said he would not appoint someone who would make rulings based on their own opinions.

"Another example would be the Dred Scott case," Bush said, "which is where judges years ago said that the Constitution allowed slavery because of personal property rights. That's a personal opinion. That's not what the Constitution says. The Constitution of the United States says we're all ... you know, it doesn't say that. It doesn't speak to the equality of America.

"I would pick somebody who would not allow their personal opinion to get in the way of the law. I would pick somebody who would strictly interpret the Constitution of the United States."

In 1845, Dred Scott and his wife Harriet filed suit for their freedom in the St. Louis Circuit Court. After 11 years, the Supreme Court took up the issue and, in a landmark decision, declared that Scott must remain a slave.

The court ruled in March 1857 that provisions in the Constitution established that slaves were personal property. The decision did much to solidify the positions of the slave states and the abolitionists. It was three years after the decision that cannons began firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, opening the Civil War.

It took the 14th Amendment plus the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s to repeal slavery and change the way blacks were treated. This was one of the few things the founding fathers got wrong in the Constitution over 200 years ago.

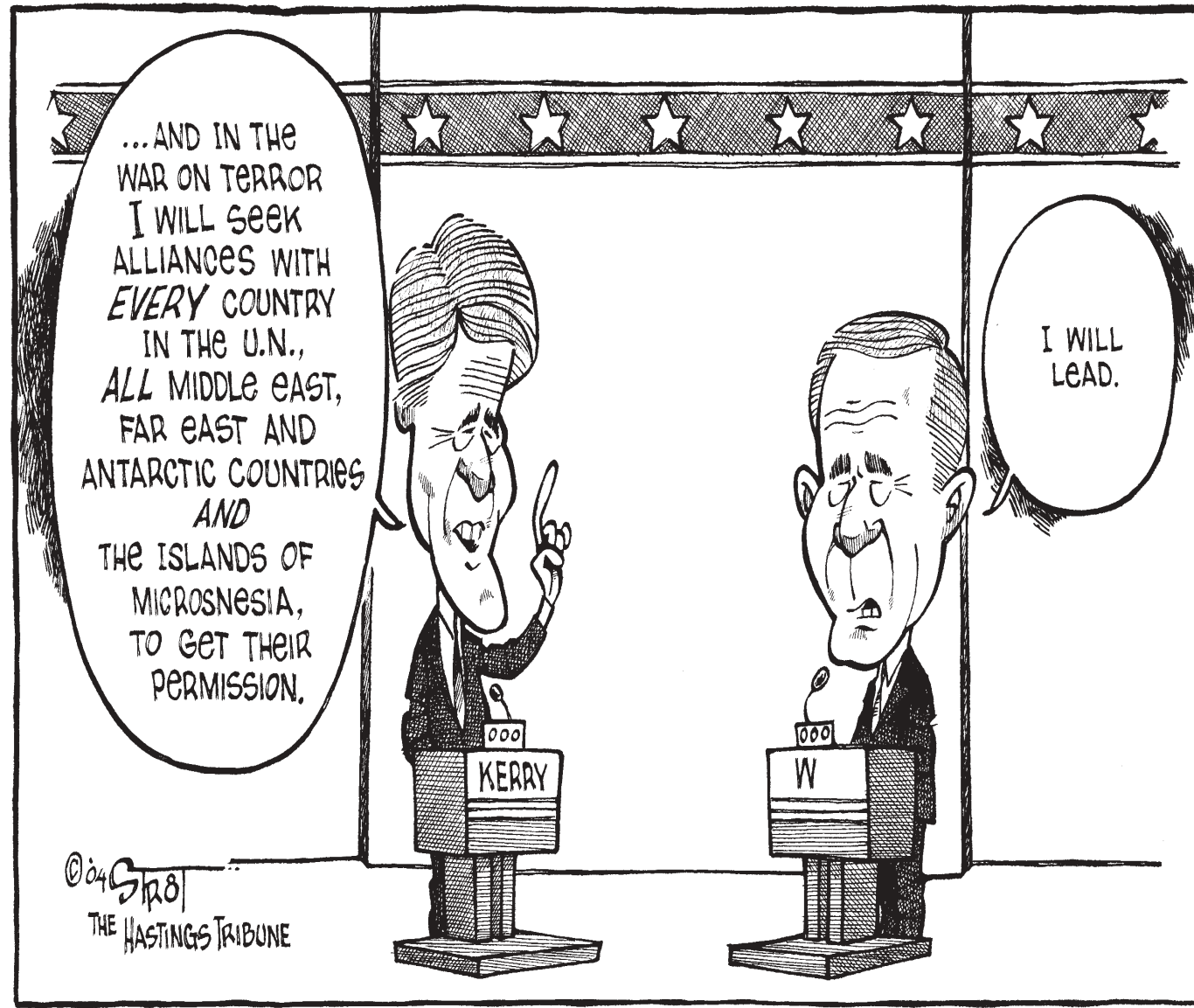
Human rights have come a long way, but President Bush is wrong to think that the judges make decisions based solely on personal opinions, and he should brush up a bit on the Constitution before he brings up slavery to try to make a point about how judges make decisions.

We believe the debates are providing a clear division on some of the major issues, but there are enough points to give both sides plenty of spin room to try to convince the undecided voters.

As the campaigns move into the final days we will await the tabulations with great interest.

Voter registration in Kansas closes on Monday, so if you're not registered, do it now.

— Tom Betz



## Entertaining yourself is key to field work

You can tell how desperate things are on the farm by who the husband gets to help do field work. This week it was my turn; so things are pretty bad.

I'm sure from his viewpoint the most difficult part was over once he cajoled me into it. But I could see the difficulties were just beginning when his instructions included the term "skinny under the electric fence".

Skinny!  
I'm pretty sure I gave up skinning a few years ago. At this point it is more like a crawl. And while I can get down, getting up is more of a problem. How fortunate it is that this field is in the middle of a section so there were no witnesses.

The girls always complain that driving a tractor gives you too much time to think. That's certainly true, especially when the radio in the tractor doesn't work. Not that a radio helps much in our tractors. For some reason every radio my husband has is permanently tuned to KRVN. No matter what you do you can't change the station.

I amused myself in the first two fields by checking out scenery as they were fields I had never worked before.

I had a seagull checking things out in one of them. How lost was he?

These fields were quite level and square. I like to be creative when I farm so I looked forward to moving on to terraces.

### Back Home Nancy Hagman



Supposedly, terraces are scientifically designed to prevent erosion. I guess they work but they tend to look like a drunken sailor laid them out.

Sometimes you get started on one and it twists and turns going on and into a sort of twilight zone. Especially scary when it is actually getting to be twilight, you don't know how to turn the tractor lights on and you still have to get back to where you started and "skinny" under the fence.

But after you get those terraces worked you can be creative. It is like a puzzle. How do you best cover the space with the fewest turns?

For the record: creativity does not work when swathing hay. The idea is to keep a window going for as long as possible so the baler can be constantly fed. This is the reason Patricia doesn't get to run the swather anymore. She made some cool crop art that will forever be unappreciated.

Or maybe she just outsmarted her father. If you do a job badly enough you will never be asked to do it again! Hmmm — now there's an idea.

Speaking of hay, in his instructions the hubby says, "Don't get into the bales."

"Those bales?" I asked pointing to the row of 50 big round bales.

Geez, he must think I'm blind just because he needs glasses.

Speaking of glasses, how I wish he would get some glasses and wear them.

A friend of mine, who cannot read anything without glasses yet still refuses to wear them, complains how hard it is to adjust to glasses after having perfect vision all her life. I've worn glasses since fifth grade so you can understand how hard it is to summons up much sympathy.

My husband actually had a pair of glasses about 10 years ago.

I thought they made him look very distinguished. Now he has fold-up magnifying glasses he carries in a pouch on his belt.

The other night we stopped to get a pop from a pop machine and he had to get down on his knees to see which button to push. Would wearing glasses make his life more difficult?

I'm not really complaining.  
My husband Jr.'s Aunt Blanche (age 89) once told me she thought farming was a great way of life because it was something husbands and wives could do together and it made families strong.

I agree and I really don't mind helping out by running the tractor. Just don't tell Jr. I'll hide his glasses when this column is printed and he will never be the wiser!

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Man feels new commissioners needed

To the Editor:

With a heavy heart, I write this.

My family and I have been accused of "Taking sides and supporting large livestock operations". Since when has having a difference of opinion been taking sides?

I cannot criticize the commissioners when I would not accept that responsibility myself.

I am certain that the present commissioners have acted in the manner that they felt best for the community. I also feel that they were led or misled by some very powerful organizations that could care less if Norton County continues to exist.

True, they have spent an awful amount of tax dollars proving where the authority on such matters actually lies. The judges rightly ruled. Can you imagine the confusion that would exist if each set of commissioners in Kansas were allowed to write

such far reaching and restrictive laws.

It would be very difficult for the present commissioners to rule in a fair and unbiased manner on any matter brought to them by "OUR SIDE".

We have a perfect opportunity to say "THANK YOU" for the many hours the commissioners have spent. Let them step down in honor and allow someone with new ideas and perspective take the responsibility.

With election only weeks away, we have the perfect opportunity to write-in some very capable candidates. I feel this would be a good start in healing the feelings that have existed for far too long. Bev Miller was right when she stated, "Divided we fall".

Sincerely,  
Allen E. Braun  
Norton County

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Hill City man thinks trade treaty is unconstitutional

To the Editor:

Our country is in peril! If Congress can't be turned around, we have lost our country, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights! Is there any way that you can get the bigger newspapers to inform their readers?

Someone MUST tell the people they are headed for a Hemisphere Government of 34 nations. The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) is not free trade — it is the taking over of the United States and our lives.

This treaty will be submitted to Congress after the election. Congress is primed to pass it. It will be approved by Bush and we will be in a new government by December 2005. It is an unconstitutional treaty, but what difference does that make?

Sen. Sam Brownback has heard about the opposition. The article and letter, which I have faxed to him, might change his mind. He has voted yes all the time to free trade bills. If you can get someone to circulate the petition and mail it, Brownback will have to declare himself.

We have until election to solicit the vote of senators and representatives. Then it is all over, and no one I can see on the horizon will question it. It would take a revolution to get out of this treaty. The new government will pick up all firearms. (That is why the liberals didn't try to reenact the "assault gun ban"!)

The reason Bush has not cut off the illegal Mexicans is that he knew that the Free Trade Area of the Americas Treaty would open the borders of the U.S. anyway. Won't that be a mess when millions from all of the Americas can legally migrate to the U.S.?

I hope that you will do all you can to get the word out to the people. They must

send thousands of letters to Congress.

Tell people to forget the storms and football for a few minutes and attend to the nation's predicament. Refer them to [www.stoptheftaa.org](http://www.stoptheftaa.org).

Kenneth Clark  
attorney at law, retired  
Hill City

## Candidate responds to letters

Letter to the Editor:

I am writing in response to the anonymous letters about Mr. Lang's feedlot. I feel the writer(s) have either a genuine concern about the feedlot, or are just being vengeful, or are trying to keep our attention focused upon animal confinement instead of upon more important issues in this county. The confined animal rules have been decided in the courts at a great cost to the county with the ruling being

that the state's confined animal rules are above the county's rules.

We should now spend our time focusing on issues such as ambulance, fire department, airport, roads, economic development, and county environmental response to biological terrorism to our livestock. Let's quit beating this old issue and get onto more pressing issues.

Ivan Kingham  
Norton County

## WRITE:

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

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