

We need to learn to think for ourselves

Now the big boys in the world of communications are pointing the fingers at "exit polling." In 2000, they got took by depending on some other "reliable" source and called some of the early winners so badly their faces are still showing the signs of egg.

In 2004, they are pointing the fingers at this thing we call exit polling. Using the reliable sources of that bunch they had most Americans believing early on that Sen. John Kerry was starting to run the table, so to speak. Well, that proved as wrong as sin.

So they are looking into the television cameras and telling us again that "oops, we goofed again." They will continue goofing until they get away from this "we were first" mentality. I don't care if they were dead last as long as what they were feeding me was not poison.

Even a first grader, if seated in front of a television set and told to watch the colors develop on the screen, could have told his mother that "Mommy, there are more red colors than anything." No exit polling needed to figure that out.

But every four years we sit like a hypnotized body of duds believing everything that Rather and Jennings and Brokaw and the anchors of the less important networks spoon feed us. We should wise up. Watch the map, look at the colors. In the end the color red prevailed.

In 2008, it might be wise to just sit a bunch of first graders in the front of the television set and tell Mommy what's happening.

— Tom Dreiling

Congressman salutes American veterans

Two Kansans exemplify the changing face of the American veteran. The first is a man who graduated from McPherson High School in 1941. The second is a young woman who graduated from the Military Academy at West Point in 2000. One served in the Navy during World War II, the other pilots Blackhawk helicopters for the Army in the War on Terror.

World War II veteran Udie Grant is a man who will be forever revered. Although he died in 2004, he left a legacy of service—both in the military and in his community. Udie came of age in the Great Depression and like so many of his generation, his life was forever changed by the attack on Pearl Harbor. He had just graduated from high school, but felt the need to answer his country's call. The world was changing before Udie's eyes. Gone were the days of an isolated America, replaced with the understanding that our country has a greater responsibility to help our world escape cruelty and oppression.

On Sept. 11, 2001, our world changed again. On that day feelings were awakened in the heart of America. There was bewilderment mixed with anger. People like Hutchinson native Katrina Gier-Lewis felt the need to bring justice to those guilty of the horrific attack. The West Point graduate wanted to ensure that terror would never again grip our nation. Sixty years had passed since Udie's generation took up the cause of freedom, but the passage of time did not dampen America's determination to defend our country and protect our way of life.

If you put their biographies side-by-side, Udie and Katrina's lives are very different. But their values are not. Respect

Capitol Views

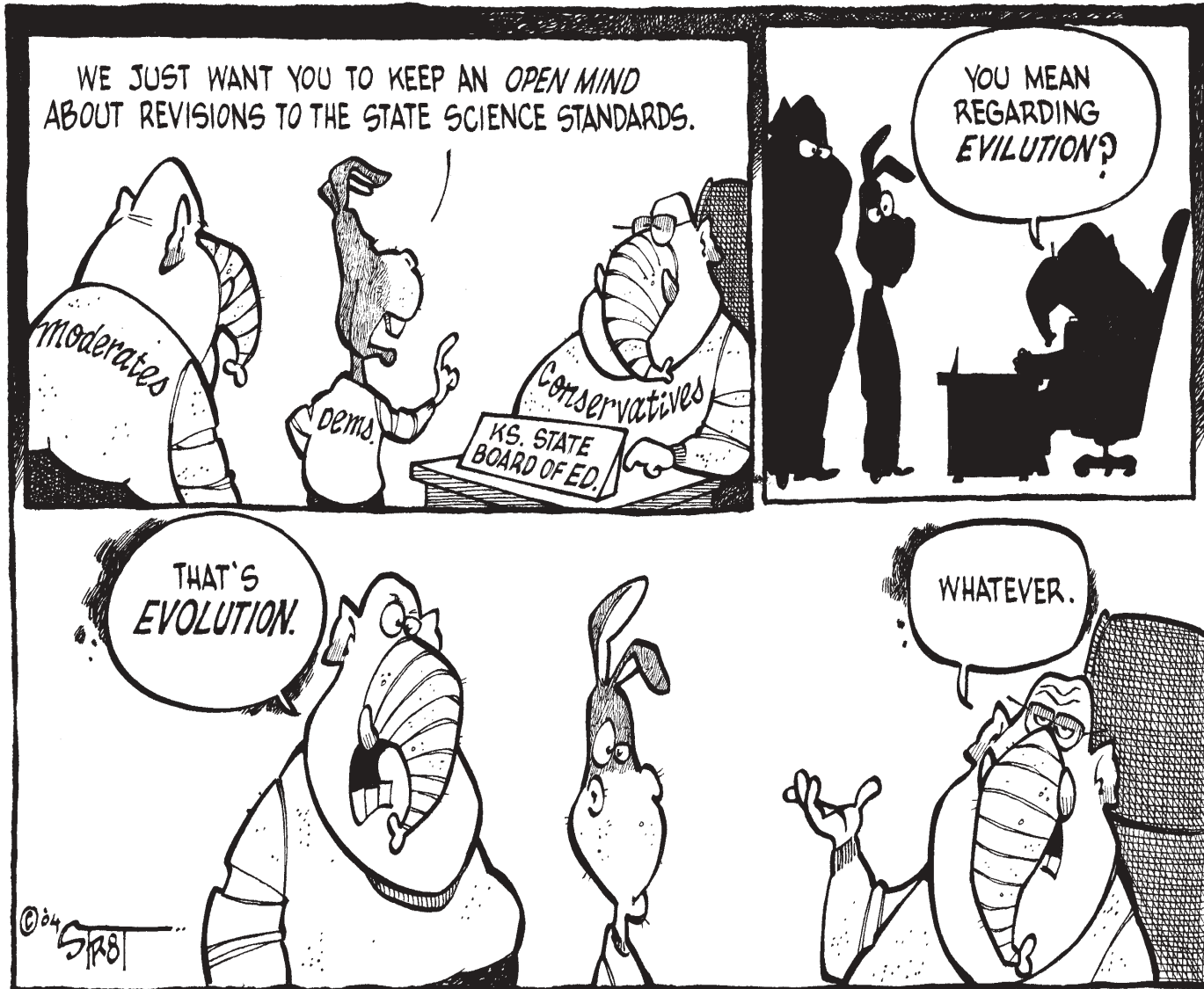
Rep. Jerry Moran



of country, love of freedom and sense of duty. Katrina, and so many others of today's generation have stepped forward to answer the call to serve.

In June, I joined many invasion-day veterans at Normandy for the 60th anniversary of D-Day. On the sands of the Normandy beaches, I tried to imagine what it must have been like for those young men, so many years ago, to disembark from their ships and charge out across the sand. Once again, young men and women are charging across sands, but instead of a beach, it is a desert. At Normandy, many young people gave up their chance to grow old, and instead sacrificed their lives. The same thing is happening today in Iraq and Afghanistan. I thank God for the men and women who sacrifice the precious gift of life to protect the rights of others; their families, neighbors, and folks they never knew. I hope today that our reasons for living are as good as theirs were for dying.

Across Kansas, we gather on this Veterans Day to honor all soldiers: those of World War II, those of today, and those of the wars and conflicts in between. We gather to send the message that we remember, we are grateful and that we will never forget their sacrifice. May God bless them and the country they served.



Frugality is not the same as cheap

As I was trying to squeeze the last drop of toothpaste out of the tube the other day, it occurred to me how saving we can be.

In this land of Styrofoam cups and paper towels, where every pill we take comes in an individual plastic holder, and even screws at the hardware come in unopenable cardboard-and-plastic packages, we are really cheap. We save in small, strange ways.

Who can throw away a shampoo or conditioner bottle without adding water and shaking it to get the last little bit out of the bottom?

When was the last time you saw someone use half of a packet of sugar or artificial sweetener and throw the other half away? How about those little things of liquid creamer?

Do you throw the bar of soap away when it gets so thin it breaks in two, or do you put the two halves one on top of the other and keep scrubbing for another week?

Who throws away the crusts on bread, even when they don't like the crusts and leave them to the end?

Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



Do you change the bag on your vacuum on a schedule, or when it gets so stuffed that the machine won't suck up one more speck of dust?

Do you try to empty that disposable bag and reuse it?

Were you the one who jumped up and down on the trash to get a little more in because trash day is tomorrow, and you didn't want to waste another bag?

Do you try to use those last two sheets of toilet paper on the roll, even when you know it's not enough to do the job?

Are you the one saving used dryer sheets, paper towel and toilet paper cylinders, empty thread spools and old newspapers because you just know you'll have a use for them sometime?

Do you try to straighten bent paper clips and safety pins?

When a knife can no longer get anything out of the soft margarine or cream cheese tub, do you get a flexible spatula? How about the peanut butter, mayonnaise and mustard jars?

Americans are really frugal if you judge them by the half packages of stuff in their basements and garages — partially used cans of paint, glue, bug spray, carpet cleaner.

Up in the cupboard, you'll find spices that were bought for one recipe that flopped 10 years ago, diet food for the diet that died on the second week, crackers that weren't as good as they looked, baby food and the "baby" is 10 now, plus boxes and jars of stuff we don't quite know what to do with but can't bring ourselves to toss.

Sure, we've all grabbed an envelope or napkin to write on, but I think that is more because we're too lazy to find paper, or don't have a clue where the note pad is.

So next time you add water to the liquid soap to get that last drop out — remember: you're not cheap, you're frugal.

New radio is magic to his hears

I have a new toy. No, not a new truck. Just a new radio. My truck came from my uncle, who died a couple of years ago.

He bought it new in 1997, and when I got it, it had just 23,000 miles on it. He didn't drive much.

The only thing wrong with the truck, a nice black Ford Explorer, was the back bumper.

Uncle was a pretty careful driver in his final years. He drove to and from the country club to have lunch with his old golfing buddies. But apparently they had some wicked steel posts along the parking lot there, and he kept backing into them.

Both sides of the bumper are bent and pushed in. My friends, when they finally notice the bumper, always ask me what I hit.

I just blame my uncle. So there's the bumper. And the radio. It's the worst radio I ever have had in a car.

Most cars have good radios. They all pick up AM and FM stations with great range and reception.

Most cars.

On the Prairie Dog

Steve Haynes



This truck had a terrible radio. I could hardly pick up ballgames, day or night, and you know how I love to listen to the Rockies.

So after fighting declining reception and last-inning fades all summer, I threw in the towel and went to get a new radio.

It was a good idea. I get nearly-clear reception on stations 200 miles away and I'll never have to strain my ears to hear a game again. It's the best reception I've ever had in a car.

While I was buying the radio, the salesman mentioned that they had a special on satellite receivers. He had me when he mentioned that next season, they'll have all the baseball games.

I was hooked, even if I'll hardly use the NFL package, which is free with the regular monthly service.

These people have so many channels, they don't just broadcast a game. They offer a choice, home or away announcers, for each game.

The same thing applies to college football. The next Saturday, I listened to the KU broadcast, but I could have had the Iowa State announcers. Might have been better, too.

Music comes through loud and clear. The only thing that stops the signal is the metal roof of the garage.

The sound is worth cranking up, though the unit has enough power to blow my speakers clean out of the truck. The highest I've dared crank it is about half power.

Plus, if I ever get bored with all that, it plays CDs and MP3 files. What more could you ask for?

Well, simplicity, maybe. This thing has more buttons than you can shake a stick at. I read the manual, and I still can't run half of them. It took six tries just to set the clock when Daylight Saving Time ended.

But I keep working at it. I think pretty soon I'll have the menu functions down, as soon as I figure out what they all mean.

And all I wanted was a good AM radio.

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