

Honors for one lady, while another lady withdraws

Growing up in the '60s, we watched the efforts of the "freedom riders," as they were called, after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Birmingham, Ala. bus.

Parks' courage in staying where she was seated sparked the imagination of hundreds of people who traveled from across the country to ride the buses in the South in defiance of segregation laws. Parks lived to see the day when much of the hate against blacks has been overcome, but there are people today who continue to preach intolerance and racial or religious prejudice.

After her actions, Parks moved to Michigan to get away from the pressures of living where she had taken a stand for her people's freedom. She won, but not without some personal sacrifice.

Having her lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda is a special honor, and shows the highest regard for the actions she took to break the racial barriers 40 years ago.

As we pay honor to Parks for her courage, it is hard for us not to think of the personal sacrifice of another American woman who has been thwarted in her attempt to take a seat on the United States Supreme Court.

Harrier Miers may not have been everybody's choice to succeed Justice Sandra O'Connor, but her withdrawal Thursday came after attacks on her by the religious right and the extreme right wing of the Republican Party. The attacks centered on the fact that, since she was never a judge, there was no way to predict what she would do as a member of the highest court of the land.

Because of the manner of the attacks, the American people will not have a chance to know any more about her beliefs.

We watched as President Bush had to announce the withdrawal of Miers from consideration. Being a loyal friend, she quietly submitted her request and went back to her job as the White House counsel.

The litmus test used against her is the same one that comes up every time. Chief Justice John Roberts found a way to sidestep the abortion questions in his hearing. The difference is, since he had been a judge for some years, there was rulings people could dissect in an attempt to divine his probable leanings.

The religious right is convinced President Bush must appoint a Supreme Court judge who is anti-abortion to give the court the conservative balance to overthrow Roe vs. Wade, the ruling that allowed women legally to decide whether to have an abortion.

Ever since, the religious right has been pushing to reverse this ruling, and they believe Bush owes them this appointment because they helped him get elected.

Miers was an unknown quantity in many ways because she had not been a judge, but she does have extensive legal experience. It is possible she would have brought a fresh approach to the court.

Bush is expected to quickly pick another nominee to fill the court position, and take the focus off the indictment and resignation of Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, Lewis Libby, on charges of obstructing justice and lying to investigators.

Parks should be remembered for the stand she was willing to take and the pressures she faced. Parks will rest in peace knowing she gave it her best, and that the world was changed by her actions. We will remember Miers as the loyal counsel who almost made judicial history.

—Tom Betz

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

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.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:

8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361

Fax: (785) 877-3732

E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

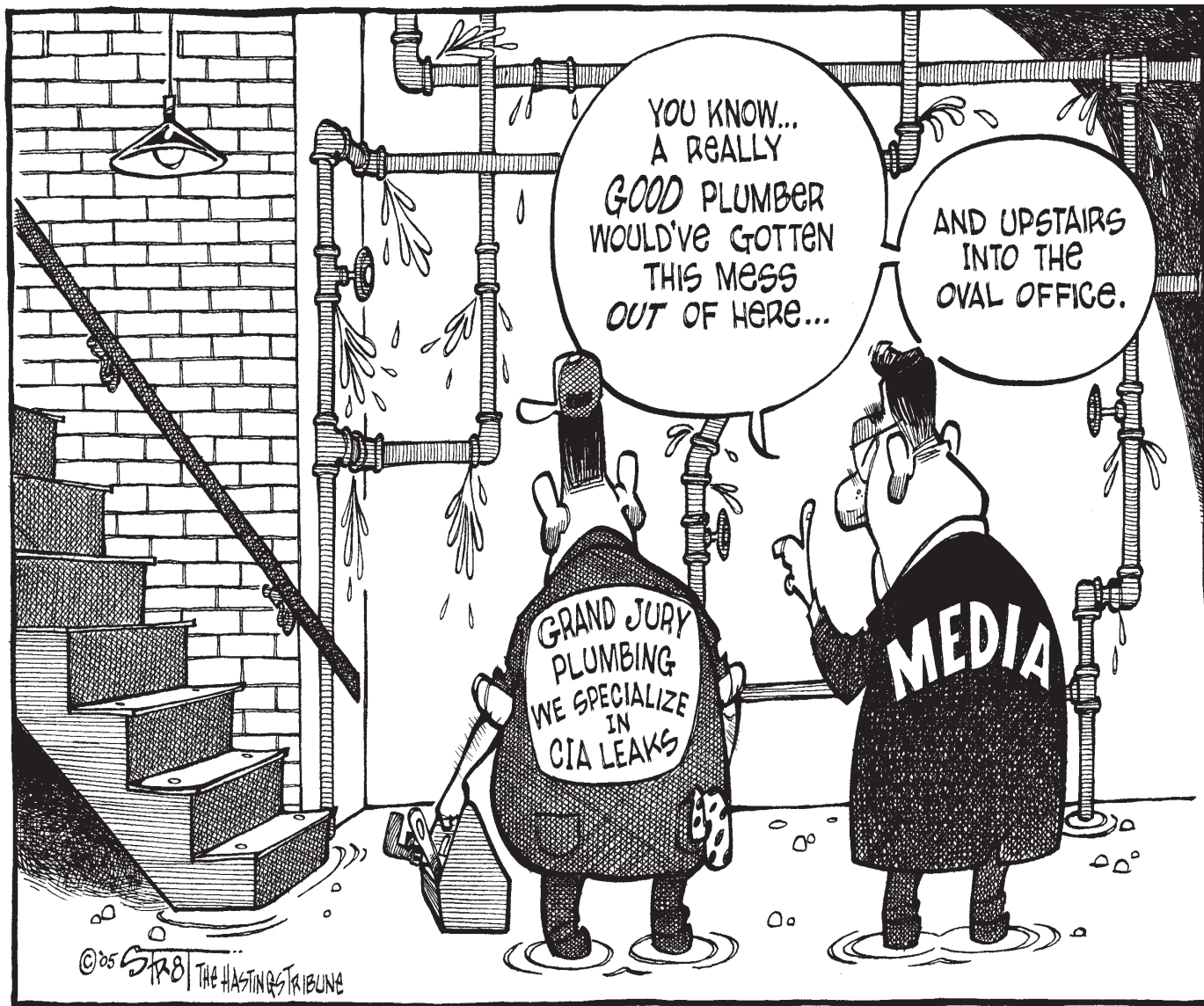
Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman circulation
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Sonya Montgomery bookkeeping

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



NINA
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Department of Transportation working on snow closings

To the Editor:

We are writing in response to your recent editorial about the Kansas Department of Transportation's policy on closing Interstate 70 and other highways during snow and ice storms.

Before the ink dried on your recent editorial, our agency had already met with local law enforcement personnel, emergency preparedness managers, troopers from the Kansas Highway Patrol, and our own employees from all the communities from Hays to Goodland along I-70 to discuss this very issue. On Oct. 20 and 21, we discussed our policies and heard comments from the local officials on how these policies affect each community.

You pointed out the frustration of local residents not being allowed through our snow gates in order to get home or work during a storm. Though it has never been our policy not to sort traffic, we realize some of the setbacks that have occurred in the past due to shortage of manpower or intense weather conditions. We addressed this situation during the meetings mentioned above. As a result of our discussions, troopers now have access to open the snow gates. In the future, the patrol and our local highway crews will make a coordinated effort in sorting local

traffic.

Still, there may be isolated incidents when the gates will be locked and unmanned. It might be due to "white out" or blizzard conditions where no one — including the traveling public and our employees — could safely travel on a roadway. Or, it could be because of a shortage of manpower, due to our crews plowing, working, and clearing other roadways involved in a storm. But it would never be because we would "put up a sign and go home."

We understand the frustration you and other citizens and business owners feel when travel is temporarily affected due to our road closures. Please keep in mind the safety of the traveling public always has been and always will be our top priority in every storm and road closure situation.

This year's snow situation arrived on Oct. 10 and ushered in an early winter storm, dumping two feet of snow between Limon and Denver. While some may think that this storm should have been Colorado's problem by allowing traffic to pile up in Colorado, our policies and common sense suggest otherwise.

As a neighboring transportation agency, the department has the responsibility to make sure motorists are not al-

lowed to travel into a situation, such as being stranded along the road in a blizzard, in which their lives could be at risk. We must balance traveler inconvenience with the potential risks of traveling into a serious weather situation and the likelihood of finding food and shelter along the way.

Although snow was not a factor in Kansas during this particular storm, travelers who were headed west on I-70 would eventually run into a closure in Colorado. When we know the roads will be closed on any portion of I-70, a coordinated public message is relayed to the media, local officials, and we strategically place variable message boards as far east as possible. This allows the traveling public plenty of time to pull off the road, use an alternate route, and seek a room, since motels could be filling up further west along I-70.

Chriss McDiffett, Norton District 3 engineer
Kansas Department of Transportation

Capt. Kelly McGuire, Hays commander, Troop D
Kansas Highway Patrol

Visiting mother upset about Norton's conduct

Dear Editor,

I spent most of my life growing up in Phillipsburg, so I know that Norton is a competitive town filled with community pride. However, after the game between Phillipsburg and Norton on Oct. 28, my outlook changed.

The game was a good one, both teams played hard. It was after the game that I saw what poor sportsmanship the coaches from Norton showed. The town members also acted child-like.

Almost every game I have been to, the teams, coaches, etc. congratulate the opposing team. I did not see the Norton coaches do so. That was disappointing and made me feel the reputation of Norton being sore losers might be true.

Then the windows of many Phillipsburg vehicles had obscenities written on them with soap (thank goodness), and lots of windows were covered with soap. Now I know it was close to Halloween, but it seemed childish to do this to an opposing towns' windows during the game.

I really find it sad that a town with pride in their teams is letting its coaches and some of its townspeople act as such.

Joy Lackey
A Phillipsburg Mother

Booster thinks sportsmanship was good

To the Editor,

It was recently brought to my attention that several Phillipsburg Panther fans had a poor experience at the recent football game between Norton and Phillipsburg.

Several accusations were made, in a letter to the editor much like this one, regarding the conduct of the Norton coaching staff and fans and I would like to respond.

It was said that the Norton coaches did not congratulate the Phillipsburg coaches following the game. This surprised me because I know that Coach (Bruce) Graber has the utmost respect for Coach Covington and has expressed that respect publicly at many of our Booster Club meetings.

When I discussed the allegation with Mr. Graber he denied it and a member of our club verified, with Coach Covington personally, that indeed Coach Graber and several Norton fans did meet and congratulate Coach Covington on the field.

In regards to the soaping of windows, I ask that you please don't feel like Phillipsburg fans were being singled out as the Norton fans had their windows soaped as well.

Since this vandalism happened during the game I am asking that you consider that all windows were soaped, not by fans, but by people who take no pride in their school or community and who could probably care less about the outcome of the game.

In closing I would like to wish The Panthers continued success in this season as they represent Phillipsburg and the Mid-Continent League in the playoffs.

Kurt Mann, president
Norton Blue Jay Booster Club

'Voice' appreciates honor given to him at recent football game

Dear Editor,

I appreciate the opportunity to share some things with the community.

I can't tell you how grateful I am for the wonderful welcome home I received at the TMP football game and the signed helmet.

Believe it or not, I'm actually kind of speechless about all this, so I'll keep it pretty short and sweet.

When Terri and I moved to Norton in 1979, we were welcomed with open arms from the first moment, and Norton has been home ever since. No matter where I go, Norton will always be my home. Thank you all again.

Larry Black
former "Voice of the Blue Jays"