

## Much to ponder on political front

Having a three-day weekend left some time to reflect on things going on in the country. Here are our thoughts on some of those.

- President Bush keeps saying that if we "cut and run," they (the terrorists) will simply follow us back over here. If that were to be the case, then, why don't we just turn around and shoot them.

- Howard Dean, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, has cast aside Sen. Joe Lieberman's independent bid to win reelection in November. Dean knows something about this because just a few short years ago he was cast aside in his bid to win the Democratic presidential nod.

- Secretary of State Rice says she is not at all interested in seeking the Republican presidential nomination in 2008. Looking closely at that comment could mean that 2012 might be a better fit. However, if the Republicans retain control of the White House in the 2008 election, the new president might have someone else in mind to be secretary of state. Or if a Democrat moves into the oval office, Condi's gone. She's probably the most popular Republican at this point in time. 2008 would be her best fit.

- Democratic Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (we could never figure out why she stuck her maiden name in the mix) is, without question, campaigning for the presidential nomination in 2008. Rest assured she is being prompted by the former chief executive, husband Bill Clinton. Early betting is if she wins the nod, she probably won't win the prize. Just the thought of Hillary and Bill back on the trail (again) will cause a flashback of negatives.

- Democratic Sen. Joe Biden is dusting off his presidential tux. He wants that job worse than anything. But the name *Biden* isn't near being household in stature. There's just something about the man that does little to excite.

- Republican Sen. John McCain could be a good presidential fit. But some analysts (those paid experts who many times come across as stupid) are starting to mention his age. The good senator is 70. And what's wrong with that? Maybe we need a little age in the mix. And McCain is, without question, a household word.

- Republican Sen. Bill Frist, majority leader, is strongly considering a bid for the 2008 presidential derby. And as much as he is in the spotlight, it's a good bet a majority of people couldn't tell you who he is if you held a card in front of their face with the name FRIST on it. They would say, "OOPS, you misspelled *frist*."

- The administration's new pitch is, "We're safer, but not yet safe." Explain, please!

- The experts tell us that the Democrats will control the House after the November election and fall short of taking over the Senate. Don't bet your last \$ on those predictions.

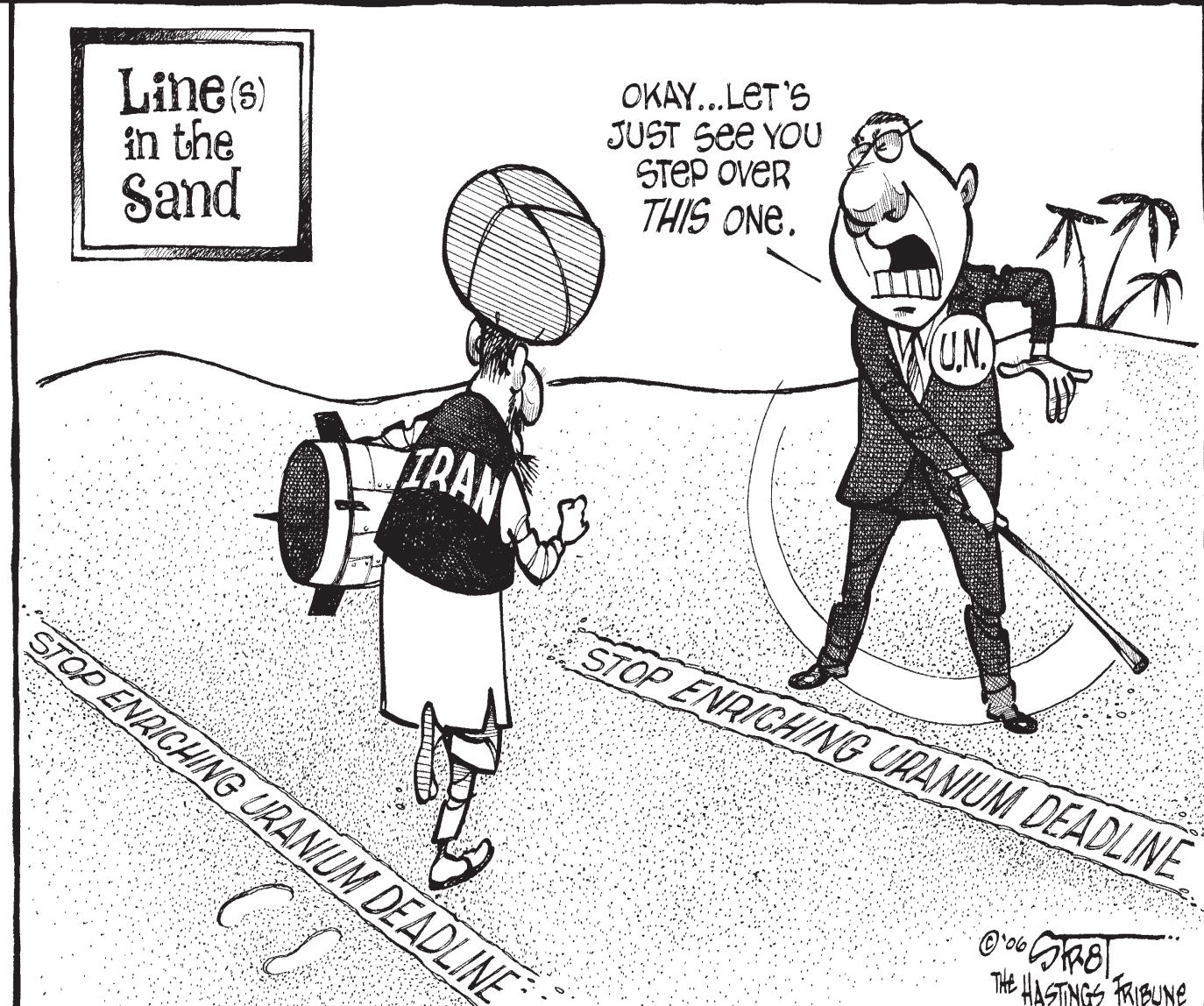
- Will there be an October surprise, politically, in 2006? Some experts think the surprise will be President Bush bringing home some troops from Iraq. Don't think so. Even though the war in Iraq will be a hot issue at the polls in November, look for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and President Bush to strike a deal wherein Rumsfeld will step down. Rumsfeld himself is an issue and his leaving the stage will appease many who blame the defense boss for all the bad that has happened in Iraq.

- Here in our own state, Jim Barnett and Kathleen Sebelius are about as far apart on the issues as they are in the alphabet. Republican Barnett wants to be governor. Democrat Sebelius wants a second term. In a predominantly Republican state, Barnett would seem a sure bet. But often Kansas has been good to Democrats seeking the state's highest office. Something about moderate Republicans not buying into the conservative babble.

- Attorney General Phill Kline is facing a serious challenge from Democrat Paul Morrison in his reelection bid. Kline has swirled in controversy, and considering the fact he had a tough time winning his first term over an opponent nobody knew, the trip this time won't be any easier. It's a toss up at this stage.

How do you see all of this playing out?

— Tom Dreiling



## There's nothing like a bed after a busy day

Yesterday was Labor Day, so of course, Jim said, "Let's go to work. If we're moving into that house in two months, we better get to crackin'." I can't help him much with construction, but I am the "Queen of Destruction." So while he built bathroom vanities and spread joint compound on sheetrock seams, I tore out the old stairwell leading to the basement.

The whole house was finished with the lath and plaster method. And, it is a dirty job removing it. By the time I finished, all you could see were two white spots where my eyes used to be and blackened teeth from all the dust I had inhaled.

At the end of the day I knew I had overdone it. A hot shower, a bite to eat for supper and I was out. There is no sleep like sleep after a hard day's work. However, I'm not used to going to sleep at 10 p.m., either. My internal clock woke me at 3 a.m. and then I couldn't get back to sleep.

Finally, after two hours of infomercials and public television documentaries, I found sleep, sweet sleep again.

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



When I reawakened at 8:15 a.m., Jim said, "You were gone," accompanied by his not-so-accurate imitation of how he thinks I look when I'm sleeping. You know, the whole eyes rolled back, tongue hanging out, drool, snoring, the whole works.

He said, "I thought I'd let you sleep." If I looked half as bad as he intimidated I looked, I'd let me sleep, too. I would be afraid to wake "it." I must be a glutton for punishment, though. I just asked my boss if I can leave early (like noon) Wednesday. I have a bathroom to paint.

-ob-

For the most part, our blended family has worked. The best part is seeing our

children get together and have a good time. This holiday weekend, Jennifer took her family to Dallas to see Kara, her husband, Adam, and Taylor. Halley, who also lives in Dallas, got in on the mix.

Kara called to tell me what a good time everyone had and how cute baby Annie is. I think having a baby in the house may have given her some ideas about another one. I'm going to use the argument that Annie needs another cousin closer to her age.

-ob-

Had a phone visit with my brother, Don. He sounded great. A big improvement from the raspy voice of two weeks ago after having a tube down his throat for a few days.

He said he feels good and is gathering strength for the final phase of his cancer treatment. The phase where his own stem cells are put back into his body and go to work lenishing themselves.

If you are a praying person, we would appreciate a mention. If you're not, you should think about becoming one.

## One night can 'make or break' a town

How many times do we say, "This is such a nice community," as we drive through a new area or even one we have visited several times? How do we make this evaluation? Generally it is the result of minimal contact with a handful of individuals.

We have spent the last couple of weeks in Rochester, Minn., a beautiful and charming city both visually and spiritually. One incident threatened to change all that and, although we will remember that night, the actions of others will dominate our thoughts.

A terrible storm came through the area, dumping up to 4 inches of rain, spawning tornadoes and leaving parts of the city without power. We happened to be in one of those parts. This can happen and, in and of itself was not a problem, the events which followed were.

Handicap rooms in this motel are on the eighth floor and obviously no elevators were running. We were out to dinner and fortunately for us, the motel shuttle driver ventured out in the torrential rain and re-

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



turned us to the motel. The power was off when we returned. The young people manning the desk did the best they could, however they were poorly trained and equipped and ill-prepared to handle such a situation and the owner chose to be absent and unavailable.

Now as you can imagine, this motel, only four blocks from the Mayo Clinic, houses many of the patients' families as well as those individuals going through Mayo's. Diabetics need food, surgery patients need medicine and many are on crutches or in wheel chairs.

They scurried to find candles, but the

most frightening thing was the loss of lighted exit signs. One group, obviously inebriated, headed up the stairs with an open flame candle...this was a frightening sight. There were only a handful of flashlights, no phone system and sadly no back up generator.

No one expects generators to run the entire complex, but certainly ones to light the emergency exits seem only reasonable.

The night passed with us in the lobby and morning came, none too soon, I might add, but my point is this. Fortunately for us, this was just one night out of 14 and wasn't our only exposure to the area, an area of caring, helpful people.

The realization for me was, all of us are the face of Norton, wherever we are. If people meet us at Mayo's and hear about Norton, their view of our city is framed by their opinion of us. The same holds true for here, one night in our town can, if you will, "make or break" us. And so I have to ask myself, do I put the best face of Norton forward both at home and away?

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**Note: Friday is 'Thumbs Up' day**

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