

She's not about to admit mistake

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton isn't about to admit making a mistake. She's calling it President Bush's mistake. At issue is her repeated comment on the presidential campaign trail that if she knew then what she knows now she would not have voted to allow President Bush to invade Iraq.

She was confronted with this "war vote" again in a stop over the weekend in New Hampshire. She never did answer the question. She danced around it.

Sounds like she was for the war before she suddenly decided she was against it. Call it a convenient "adjustment." Sounds an awful lot like Sen. John Kerry's comment, "I voted for it, before I voted against it" in his failed attempt to win the White House in 2004. Sen. Clinton is heading down the same path.

All voters want her to do is admit she made a mistake when she cast her vote to go to war. She's stubborn, that just isn't going to happen.

Sen. Clinton doesn't radiate warmth as a candidate for the world's top job. Her smile is forced, hardly natural. If you look at her closely you see a cold person. Her years as first lady just might turn out to be a liability, not an asset.

Leaders admit mistakes. It took President Bush a long time to finally start admitting some of his. If the New York senator wants to govern this nation, she better confront those mistakes now and move on. If not, she's not going to lead anybody except husband Bill.

Strange how difficult it is for some people to simply say, "I made a mistake."

—Tom Dreiling

Beat goes on in State Senate

SB 29, 50, & 213 — Tax Relief: The Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee is moving closer to sending legislation to the Senate floor after hearing a report from the subcommittee established last week to review a number of tax reduction options. Generally the main areas of tax relief proposed relate to income tax and the potential exemption for Social Security benefits; corporation franchise tax; corporation income tax; and tax credit and tax incentive restructuring. The committee is aiming for a \$15 million package of tax relief that the Legislature should consider for FY 2008. However, if the revenue picture brightens in the near future, additional resources could be earmarked for enhancing the tax relief package.

The subcommittee believes that providing a tax exemption for Social Security benefits should be a priority and recommends there should be an elimination of the Kansas tax on earnings by exempting from income tax altogether benefits received by both single and joint filers with the federal adjusted gross income of \$50,000.00 and below. This would allow for \$5.4 million attributable to a social security tax cut.

Franchise tax relief is being addressed by recommending that the franchise tax exemption be raised from \$100,000 to \$500,000 and computation of the tax starts with only the amount of net worth in excess of the exemption threshold level. This proposal contributes \$10.4 million to tax relief.

The tax credit and tax incentives restructuring recommendations of the governor claimed to be revenue-neutral are still a work-in-progress. The subcommittee finds that some additional changes are necessary to allow small and medium-sized businesses to continue to participate in the programs and this will have a slightly negative fiscal impact. They are still considering several options at this

Senate Doings Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



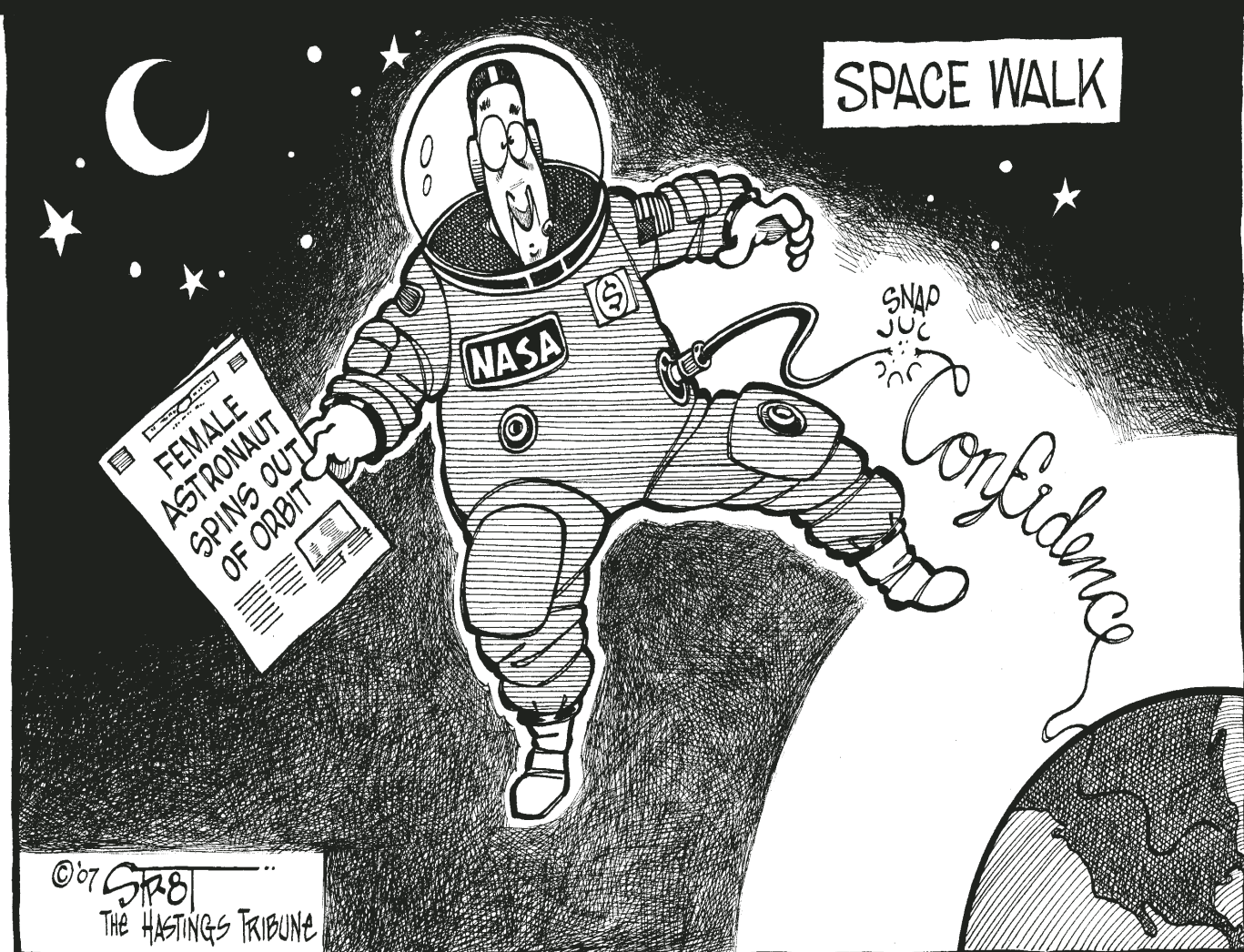
point.

SB 252 — National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility: The Senate acted quickly on all the bills in response to Senator Pat Roberts address to the joint session of the Kansas Legislature on Monday. SB 252 would in effect deed over to the United States government 60 acres on the north side of the Kansas State University campus contingent upon this site being chosen for the new facility.

Sent over from the house this week were HB 2303 and HCR 5009. HCR 5009 pledges the Legislature's support for the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility and HB 2303 would create an interagency working group to support and assist the United States Department of Homeland Security in conducting an environmental impact statement on any site in Kansas selected for the location of the facility. SB 252, HB 2303 and HCR 5009 all passed the Senate unanimously.

SB 131 & SB 135 — Election reform: SB 131 establishes a deadline of two working days before the election for the appointment of authorized poll agents and SB 135 outlines the qualifications by requiring poll workers to be 18 and registered voters in Kansas, reside in the Kansas county or contiguous county in which they are to serve, and wear an identifying badge. SB 131 passed 32 yeas and 7 nays. SB 135 passed 29 yeas and 8 nays.

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We now have wall-to-wall...water

It was late Saturday night when we returned home from a taco supper with friends. We both had our hands full, carrying stuff back into the house. As I came up the sidewalk my shoe splashed in some water. I called back to Jim, "Watch your step. There's been a lot of melting today and there might be ice."

Gingerly, I made my way up the walk and onto the sideporch we have been using to enter the house. Funny thing: I was still walking in water. The closer I came to the side door the more water I encountered. A feeling of dread came over me and I knew what awaited inside the house.

I opened the door to water covering the kitchen floor and the sound of rushing water coming from under the sink. I dumped my armload and headed to the shut-off valve in the basement. More water there — lots more water.

After shutting off the water, we had a little time to access the damage. A pipe ruptured or came unglued in the wall between the closet and the kitchen. After flooding the north side of the house it ran down the foundation to the basement. For

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



some reason the sump pump did not function and water backed up over the entire basement floor.

Jim tackled the pump and I grabbed the wet/dry vacuum. Slowly, we began to get ahead of it. Finally, we decided we had done all we could do. We were exhausted and bed sounded pretty good.

I had a couple of moments where I was angry because we have dozens of boxes of belongings stored in the basement and they all got wet. We don't yet know what damage was done. But, I had to have a little talk with myself. I said, "Self, you've lived without that stuff for more than six years. You must not have needed it very bad in the first place."

Yes, it's only stuff. I don't even re-

member what all is there. And, except for my grandmother's butter molds I don't suppose there is anything I would really miss. Perhaps it's a good lesson in not making "stuff" too important.

—ob—

Did you hear about the retiree who looked for fun where he found it?

He had been in a downtown store for only a few minutes when he came out to find a cop writing out a parking ticket.

"Hey, man," he said. "How about giving a retired person a break?"

The policeman ignored him and kept writing. The retiree called him a "Nazi"

The policeman started writing another ticket for having bald tires.

The retiree called him a "doughnut eating Gestapo".

The cop started writing a third ticket, then a fourth and so on for about 20 minutes. The more the retiree abused the policeman, the more tickets he wrote.

But, the retiree didn't care. He had ridden the bus downtown. And, the cop was writing tickets on a car with a "Hillary in '08" bumper sticker.

Anna Nicole Smith: How TV fails us

You would think that Mother Teresa had just died all over again the way the media "especially television" is covering every nuance of the life and death of Anna Nicole Smith.

FOX News Channel has labeled it a "tragedy," while devoting a portion of their website to a photo essay of her life. The Today Show ranks it ahead of their reporting on government corruption and cover-ups in the Libby trial. The LA Times provides readers with a timeline of her life, such that it was. The Houston Chronicle has printed a eulogy of sorts "thoughts from her friends" (Playboy's Hugh Hefner being one of them) on her untimely death.

But it is an exotic dancer-turned-model that the media is turning itself inside out to glorify: a stripper who met an octogenarian billionaire at the topless bar where she was working, subsequently divorced her hometown husband in order to marry the oil tycoon, only to become a widow a year later and spend the rest of her life fighting over her inheritance and using her notoriety to win a place in the tabloid media spotlight.

Pure and simple, Smith was a creation of the media, a porn star personified. Playboy Playmate of the Year in 1993. Guess jeans girl for a season or two. Producer and headliner in several movies that went bust. Star of a TV reality show that dwelt on the absurdity of her life. Spokesperson for diet pills. Mother of two: a son whose death at age 20 reflected a fast-track culture of drugs and a baby whose paternity is being challenged by two different men.

Anyone who dies deserves a certain amount of sympathy (to quote John

My Point of View John Whitehead



Donne, "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in Mankind.") However, what I find offensive is the way the media has fallen over itself in its eagerness to glorify someone who left little behind except nude photos, a handful of lawsuits and a 5-month-old baby girl who may or may not be an heiress.

The media's obsession can be chalked up to the white goddess syndrome. Smith was a tall, buxom blonde who positively smoldered with eroticism and sex, but she had no redeeming social or moral value other than as the object of the media's devotion. As author Neal Gabler said, "She had no talent. She couldn't sing. She couldn't dance. She couldn't act. She was attractive. Anna Nicole Smith's job was to live a cinematic life, which could then be broadcast by the media and entertain us. So she's an entertainer in this new art form, which is life itself. The only value she had was doing things that had narrative components that would then show up in supermarket tabloids. That was her life."

The true tragedy in all of this is not that Smith died but that the media continues to fail the American public. First, they fail to give us the news. The death of Smith is not news. Very little real news is to be

found on television anymore — instead it's newzak. Nearly all the news shows have shifted into entertainment formats; otherwise, they would not draw an audience in our entertainment-driven, non-information, low-content society. Most of the content of news programs now largely consists of inane entertainment items.

Second, the media has lost its way. The world is being devastated by crisis, war and the deaths of noble, courageous people.

Yet seldom are their names even mentioned in the news. They have become mere statistics. However, this former stripper's death has already been given more coverage than the death of former President Gerald Ford.

Lest we forget, the media has a moral obligation to tell us what's going on in our society and the world, even if we don't like it. It's what we used to call the truth. They need to show us what's really happening. They need to challenge us. Instead, the media simply titillates the American public. Why? For the sake of ratings. That explains why they publicize their own media creations like Anna Nicole Smith.

Sadly, American society is essentially an extension of television. Some might even say that television is America's God. It holds tremendous sway over people's minds.

Maybe it's time to turn the television off.

Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. He can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. His column will appear occasionally in The Telegram.

Here's a suggestion for Norton County Commissioners

To The Telegram Editor,
Norton County will not repair the street in Edmond, because it would take work away from a private contractor.
Suggestion: Norton County can give

Edmond a grant to pay a private contractor to repair the street.

Art Shelton Oberlin

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ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

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



LETTER