

Politically, we'll never clean house

How often have you heard this: "We need change!" "We've got to clean house!" "Toss out the bums!" "They're all crooks!" "He's been back there too long!" And there are other variations that pop up during election years. When you stop to analyze this dissent, you first have to ask yourself, "Who are they talking about?" One thing is for certain, they are not talking about their own elected representatives, but rather wanting to kick out somebody else's.

How many readers of this editorial want to kick Rep. Jerry Moran out of office? How many want to shove Sen. Pat Roberts out? How many want to shut the door on Sen. Sam Brownback?

Probably not very many people at all. When you hear this talk, you aren't talking about defeating your own representatives. But you can easily find fault with congressmen/women and senators in other states, much as those states are finding fault with our delegation.

It's one of those situations where, despite all the yelling, there won't be a general house cleaning ever in Washington. For that to happen, we'd have to grab the brooms and chase out Moore, Boyda, Tiaht and Moran from the House of Representatives and Roberts and Brownback from the Senate. Individually they may meet their Waterloo, but collectively, it just ain't going to happen.

So, next time you hear someone say, "It's time to kick 'em out," ask them to be specific.

-Tom Dreiling

Here are final items for your kit

This is the fourth and final part of a mini-series on preparing a Winter Weather Car Survival Kit. The first appeared in the Nov. 30 *Telegram*, the second in the Dec. 4 paper and the third in the Dec. 7 issue.

Today (Dec. 11) brings these suggestions from David Floyd, Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the Goodland National Weather Service office:

- A small amount of non-perishable food and water in the event you become stranded for any length of time. Gather some food items that will not spoil, such as granola bars, candy bars or beef jerky. Even small cans of fruit will work well if you remember to get the cans that have a pull top.

- Make sure you include water. It is not necessary to buy bottled water, just fill any type of jug or bottle with tap water. Another option is to pack a mug and simply collect snow for drinking water, but be careful if you go this route because the water from the melted snow will be very cold and could actually lower your body temperature a bit.

So there you have it — your Winter Weather Car Survival Kit. Most of these items can be placed in a large plastic bucket or duffel bag, Mr. Floyd says.

He also adds, "Remember to check the latest weather forecasts and road conditions before venturing out."

-Tom Dreiling

Thumbs Up...

- To... **Charles and Mary Jane Hadley**, on your 40th wedding anniversary.
- To... **Tamara Haussermann**, first-place finisher in *The Telegram's* Christmas Cookie Contest.
- To... **Keith and Karen VanSlike**, on your 25th wedding anniversary.
- To... **United Methodist Women**, on your successful Cookie/Candy Walk.
- To... **John Wetter**, on your 80th birthday.
- To... **David Riemann**, overall winner in *The Telegram's* Pigskin Pick-Em Contest.

(To submit a name of names, please e-mail tomd@nwkansas.com, call 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave., or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)

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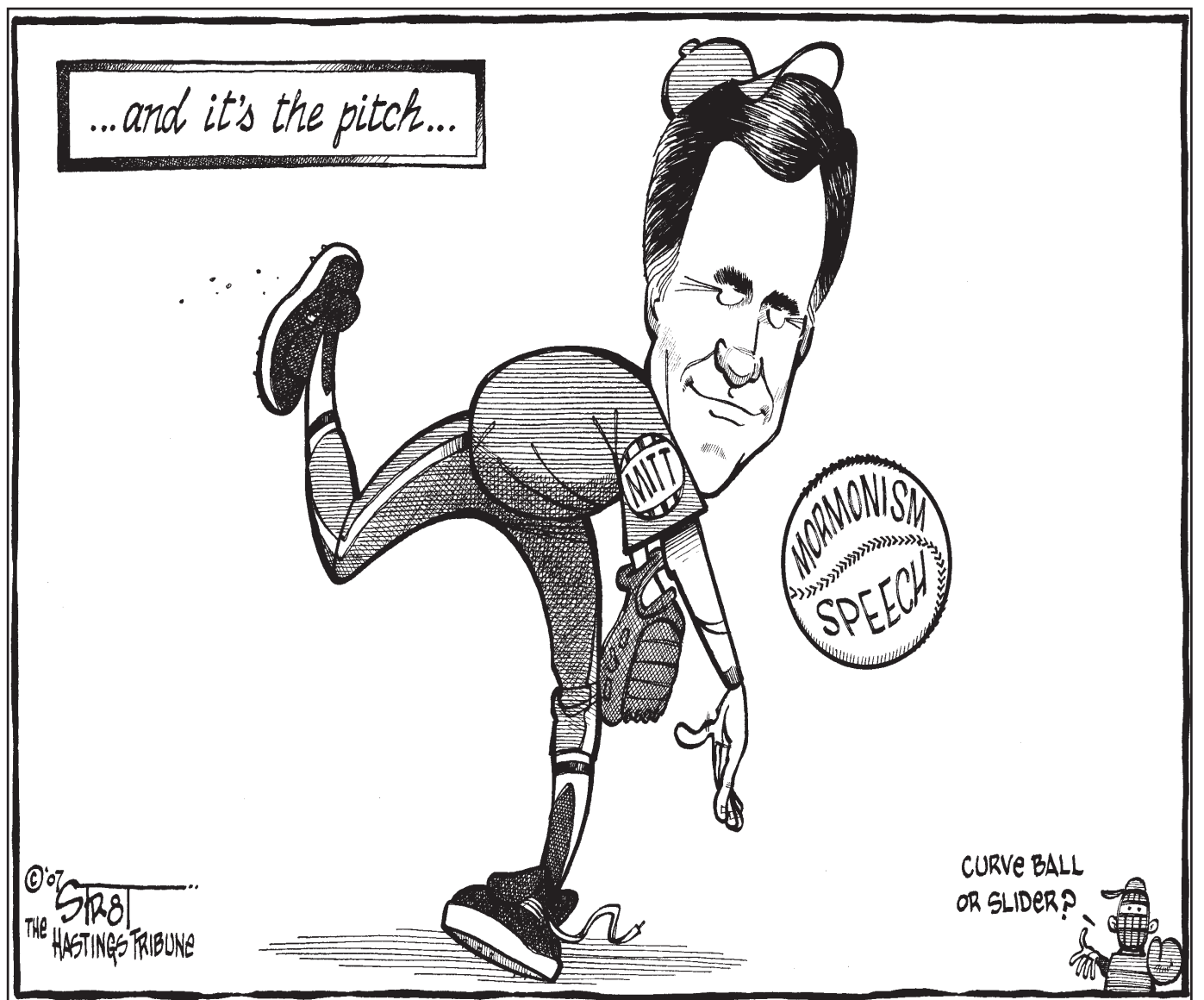
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Our pet cemetery now numbers three

Jim and I buried another friend last night. I mean, literally, buried him. Our white kitty, Pete, had to be put to sleep. He had an infectious, and untreatable, lung infection. It was a decision we hated to make, but when man was given dominion over animals it meant we have to be responsible for them. Sometimes that means we have to end their suffering.

He was having so much trouble breathing, it was painful to watch him. It was only going to get worse and there was nothing the vet could do.

Our little pet cemetery is growing. First Snuggles, then Max and now, Petey. Jim dug his grave and we had his funeral last night. All we could say was, "He was a good cat."

-ob-

We're planning a trip to Texas later this week. Planning is the operative word because weather may alter our plans. Today's forecast for most of Kansas, all of Oklahoma and parts of Texas calls for freezing rain.

We're pretty brave when it comes to

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



travel, but we're not crazy. We want to take the pickup and pull a trailer with some of our daughter, Jennifer's, belongings that we've had in storage. Road conditions will determine whether that happens or not.

-ob-

Saturday night I remembered that Sunday was Fellowship Dinner after church. I keep a pretty well-stocked pantry but I wasn't in the mood to bake a pie or a cake. I wanted something different.

I read cookbooks like some people read novels and I have quite a library. I pulled out an old cookbook and started leafing through the pages, looking for something unusual. A recipe simply called "Noodle Dish" caught my eye. But, frankly, I

couldn't decide if it was a dessert or a main dish.

The recipe called for a pound of cooked noodles. While they were boiling I mixed two packages of cream cheese, eight eggs, a teaspoon of salt, six teaspoons of sugar, four tablespoons of melted butter and four cups of scalded milk. After the noodles were done, everything was combined and poured into a 9 X 13 pan. A topping was made of one cup crushed corn flakes mixed with two teaspoons sugar and one teaspoon cinnamon. The eggs and milk made me think it was a custard but the noodles leaned more to an entree.

An hour later at 350 it had puffed up and browned beautifully. I couldn't wait to taste and scooped out a sample. Funny thing is, I still couldn't decide if it was main dish or dessert. It had a bland sweet taste. After conferring with the "kitchen ladies" at church we agreed to call it a casserole.

It wasn't bad, but it wasn't really good, either. Let's just say it was one of those recipes I probably won't be trying again.

Best gift for yourself: 'Be Happy!'

The hubby watches an assortment of news in the mornings. I don't pay a lot of attention but there is a lot of fluff on. Even CNN has pretty young women who say a lot of inane things.

I don't consider early morning to be the best time of the day, but if you have to be up and around it is nice to have good "news." Call me a pessimist but the day will undoubtedly get worse as it goes on.

Recently, CNN did a story on the happiest states. The most depressed states were Kentucky and Utah. The happiest: Hawaii, South Dakota, and New Jersey. As I understood it, the rankings had to do with what proportion of a state's population takes anti-depressant drugs.

The anchors giggled about New Jersey making the list. One allowed that she had never been to Jersey. The other defended Jersey. "It's pretty. You don't have to pump your own gas."

I've never been to New Jersey either but I did know that you don't have to pump your own gas! (It has something to do with safety.) There are days that alone would be enough to make me happy.

I suppose Hawaii would be a pleasant place to live, except in 100 years they will be under water if we don't do something about global warming, right?

I've been to Utah and South Dakota but I can't see why people would necessarily be happier one place than the other. I looked the study up on line and discovered Kansas was 29th on the list.

Nebraska is a relatively happy state, number 13. I bet if they did the study the day after Nebraska football coach Bill Callahan got fired they would have been number one!

Kansas does better than the rest of its neighbors. Colorado comes in at 34, Missouri 44, Oklahoma 46. I wonder if we

Back Home

Nancy Hagman



would be happier if our neighbors cheered up. Lucky 13 Nebraska borders on fifth place Iowa and South Dakota.

I read another story about happiness on line.

Psychologist Michael Hagerty, professor of management at the University of California at Davis, has analyzed decades of studies from around the world. These surveys all asked the question, "How happy are you?" He rated happiness by countries and in the USA by regions.

Denmark is the happiest country in the world. In fact northern Europe is the happiest area in the world with the three happiest nations (Denmark, The Netherlands and Norway). Although we tend to think of these countries as dreary places with inhospitable climates, Hagerty says Denmark has "very high income and they're small and homogeneous. People there have a similar world view and a similar religion, so that it's easier for them to communicate and to understand each other's motives. They don't have race problems, they don't have crime problems and they have political freedom."

He finds that the happiest areas of the United States are rural. His data says the happiest area is the TVA, which includes Kentucky. Remember how Kentucky did not do well in the other study? Maybe they are taking enough anti-depressants so when you ask them they say they are happy! But Utah is definitely rural; and

they are getting drugs so why aren't they happier?

The second happiest area is the "heartland," which includes South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa. I knew it had something to do with the company you keep!

Hagerty's conclusions rather confuse me. He points to the expansive social services provided in northern Europe as a reason people in this area are happy. He complains that the United States is doing poorly in this area. Yet the USA ranks fifth in happiness among all nations. Hagerty admits this baffles him also.

He concludes there is a "close correlation between one's happiness and the richness of one's personal relationships." Stable families are happy families.

And while it is important to be financially secure, "Above the poverty level, money does not add much to happiness."

Cartoon character Ziggy muses, "Sometimes the key to happiness lays in not assuming it's locked in the first place."

Here's another thought, "Why does happy only have an hour?" I wish I knew!

We can always find something to be grumpy about: the rising sea levels, getting up early, too much rain, too little rain. Days get grimmer and grimmer. At least until HAPPY HOUR!

Abraham Lincoln said, "Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." History portrays Lincoln as a brooding man subject to bouts of depression. If we could ask him if he was happy what would he say? Would he be taking anti-depressant drugs?

'Tis the season to be jolly! Surround yourself with people you love, work on your relationships. No matter where you live, give yourself a little gift this Christmas season: Be happy!