

### Politics getting in way of growth

Isn't it about time to stop playing politics with our future? Gov. Kathleen Sebelius is holding up construction of two relatively clean coal-fired power plants in western Kansas to support her political ambitions while 18 old, dirty plants spew pollution into the air in eastern Kansas.

A couple of power plants may not seem like much to eastern Kansas, where jobs are plentiful and growth is the norm. Out here, 200 jobs is major economic development.

No one says these plants should be allowed to degrade the air. Proponents say the plants are as clean as you can get, but if they need to be cleaned up some more, by all means, let's do it.

Since the state has no standards for carbon dioxide emissions, though, it's hard to meet them. That's what the governor and her minion, Secretary of Health and Environment Rob Bremby, seem to expect.

Sunflower Electric Power Corp. of Hays, a "generation and transmission" cooperative owned by rural electric co-ops out west, hopes to build the plants to supply its farmer and municipal customers, and similar cooperatives in Colorado and the Texas panhandle.

The plants would be state of the art, much cleaner than any operating in Kansas. The administration has laid down a challenge here, saying the state essentially won't allow them to be built because they would produce a lot of carbon dioxide.

Even an experimental plan to grow algae to soak up the carbon hasn't bought the plants any credibility. Opponents claim the scheme won't work, though they all believe in the magic of wind power.

What we know is that the rural electrics do need the power, and rural customers across five states the plants would serve likely will pay a lot more for out-of-area power if they are not built.

A reasonable position on the plants would not fit well with the governor's higher political ambitions, though. She's running hard right now for vice president, no matter how modest she makes out to be.

People are starting to see her as a rising star, and that star is firmly hitched to Barack Obama's coattails. It's pretty obvious the reward for supporting Sen. Hillary Clinton could be no higher than a cabinet post, but with the Illinois senator, No. 2 does not seem unreasonable.

Out on the Plains, though, people will be paying higher electric rates to finance this ambition. It's a shame.

What Kansas needs is the jobs and power the plants would produce. What the governor needs is environmental credibility.

The issue is complex. The threat of global warming may be real, but there's really no alternative today to coal plants. Wind power is undependable at best, and solar needs years of research.

Developed eastern Kansas may not understand this, any better than the Front Range understands the needs of rural Colorado. It's unlikely the plants will produce any more pollution than the General Motors plant in Kansas City, or the cars it produces.

Some argue that the power will go mostly to other states, but so do the cars. The jobs belong here in either case, and we doubt Wyandotte County wants to give them up to save the earth.

A reasonable compromise would see the plants built with strict regulation, but it'll surprise us if that happens. Not until after the elections, anyway.

— Steve Haynes

### Thumbs Up . . .

To... the Norton Community High School **Forensics Team**, and **coach Erin Hill**, for winning the Mid-Continent League Championship on March 3. (e-mail)

To... **our city leaders** for contemplating a "Safe Ride" program. The need is there. (called in)

To... **the Blue Jay Ladies** and **coach Kevin Jilka** and assistants **George Rossi** and **Joan Bolt**, for winning the championship of the Class 3A Substate Basketball Tournament held here last weekend. (called in)

To... **The Norton County Commissioners**, you never know whose lives those new defibrillators may end up saving. (e-mail)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, telephone 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654, or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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

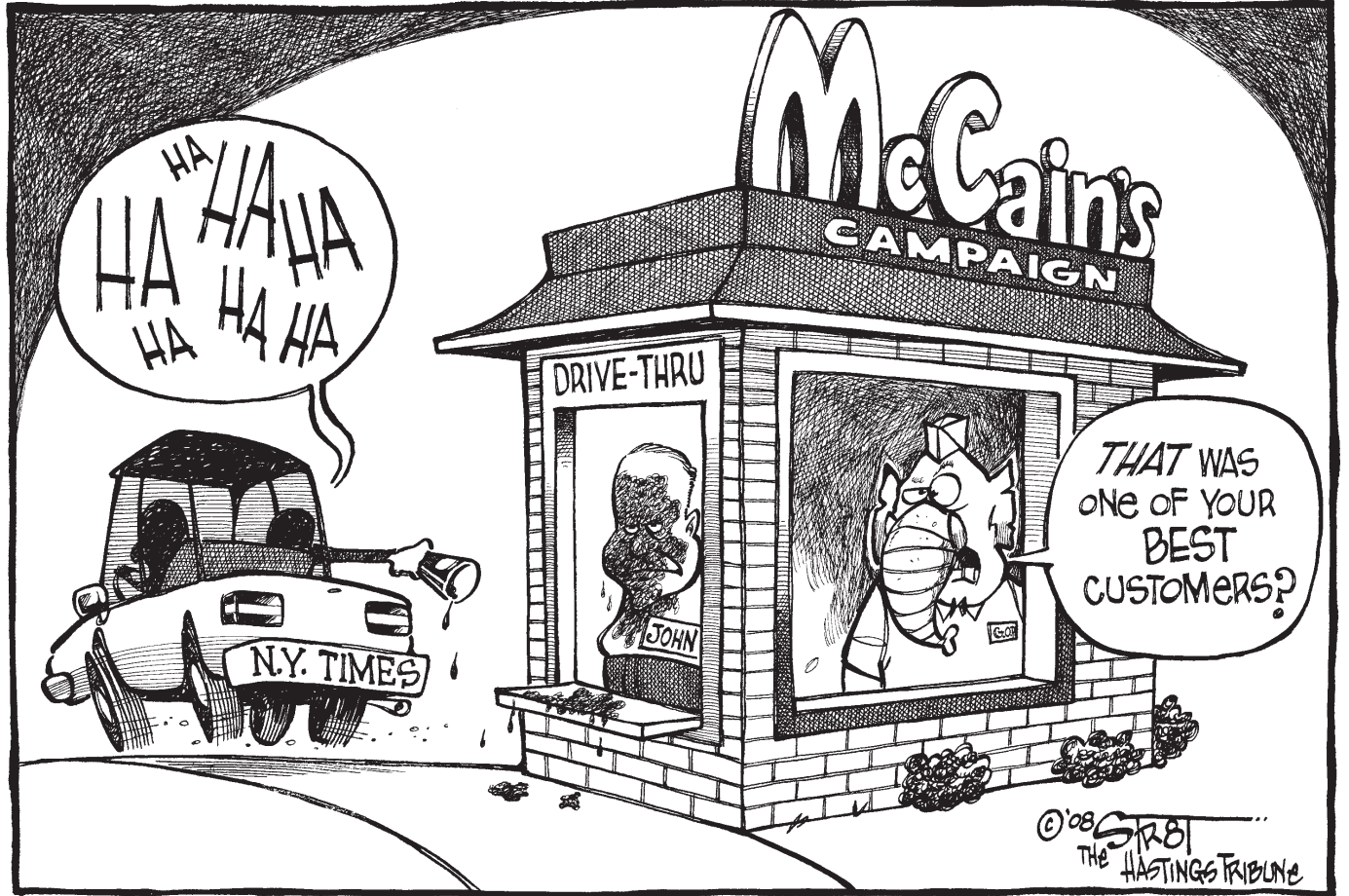
Nor'West Newspapers  
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd  
Publishers, 1970-2002  
Incorporating the Norton County Champion  
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor



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### Could this election bring a third 'first'?

We are always talking about the potential FIRSTS that are shadowing this year's run for the White House. You know how it goes, the first woman president or the first African-American president. Well, there could also be a third FIRST. And I'll get to that in a moment. But this will happen only if the Democrats are the victors on Nov. 4. If the Republicans win the White House, no firsts as Sen. John McCain fits the mold of the presidency ever since there's been such a thing.

OK, you say, what's the third first? Read on.

I suppose many of you have seen Sen. Hillary Clinton's fear-mongering television commercial that says in effect, "It's 3 a.m. (and the camera scans bedrooms showing sleeping children). The phone in the White House rings. A world crisis is brewing. Who do you want to pick up the phone?"

If Sen. Clinton is elected president and the phone rings at that hour, my worst fear is the following conversation (and this will blow your socks off): "Hello. This is the President." The voice on the other end says, "Hi, this is Monica. I'm returning Bill's phone call."

The third FIRST then could be the divorce of a sitting president.

Might sound silly. But haven't we heard that song before?

Additionally, the Clinton commercial is disturbing because the phone continues to ring. It's ignored. Whatever the crisis, it would be all over before the phone is picked up.

And the clips of the sleeping children in the commercial are bothersome, although the premise is she would be the best bet for our children's safety. How safe are they if the phone rings at 3 a.m. and rings, and rings, and rings, and rings, and...?

I give the commercial no better than a C-. Using children to scare voters is absolutely out of bounds. It smacks of the atomic bomb commercial used back in the 1960s.

Now, about Sen. McCain. He and I are about the same age and I have never had a telephone wake me up during the night in my *advancing* years. I sleep sound. I assume the senator does likewise. But he has a back-up system, called wife Cindy.

### Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



ticktock...

-td-

If you aren't doing anything between 1:15 and 2:15 p.m. Saturday, why not come out to the Town and Country Kitchen where Sen. Ralph Ostmeier and Rep. John Faber will conduct a town meeting. They will present information on issues being discussed by the Legislature, and seek your input on how these will impact you. Also, this would be a good time to let them know of anything you might have on your mind. Everyone's invited. And it's free!

-td-

The old gentleman ordered one hamburger, one order of French fries and one drink. He carefully unwrapped the plain hamburger and cut it in half. He placed one half in front of his wife. He then carefully counted out the French fries, dividing them into two piles and neatly placed one pile in front of his wife.

He took a sip of the drink, his wife took a sip and then set the cup down between them. As he began to eat his few bites of hamburger, the people around them kept looking over and whispering. You could tell they were thinking, "That poor old couple, all they can afford is one meal for the two of them."

As the man began to eat his fries a young man came to the table. He politely offered to buy another meal for the old couple. The old man said they were just fine, they were used to sharing everything.

Some of the people noticed the little old lady hadn't eaten a bite. She sat there watching her husband eat and occasionally taking turns sipping the drink.

Again the young man came over and begged them to let him buy another meal for them. This time the old woman said "No, thank you, we are used to sharing everything."

As the old man finished and was wiping his face neatly with the napkin, the young man again came over to the little old lady who had yet to eat a single bite of food and asked, "What is it you are waiting for?"

She smiled and said, "The teeth!"

-td-

Have a good evening! And this weekend share your smiles with everyone else in the church of your choice.

No problem there.

And Sen. Barack Obama would probably hear the phone before it rang. And at 46 (or is it 47) he is older than Bill Clinton when he was elected president. And Mr. Clinton entered the White House with no foreign policy experience at all.

In politics, you might not be able to fool all the voters all the time, but you can fool enough of them to pick up a lot of votes, which Sen. Clinton did Tuesday night to win in Rhode Island, Ohio and Texas. Obama took Vermont, and still holds the delegate lead.

The Republicans have their nominee — Sen. McCain, who surpassed the needed 1,191 delegates to nail down the nomination on Tuesday night. He can now prepare for the fall campaign.

The Democrats might be finding themselves in a bees nest. If this Clinton-Obama test continues to allow an exchange of sharp, bloody jabs, and he is leading in delegates and she in the nation's largest states, the convention in Denver could turn ugly.

I said many, many months ago that a Clinton-Obama, or Obama-Clinton ticket could be a possibility, but after watching this primary season unfold, I wouldn't push for it. To me, however, it all boils down to this: Bush (4 years), Clinton (8 years), Bush (8 years), Clinton (?). Explain to me where any *change* enters the picture if she wins it all?

Sorry, I hadn't intended to ramble on for so long, but there are some things about this presidential run that really bother me.

Now it's your turn to shoot darts in my direction.

-td-

Reminder: turn your clocks *up one hour* before going to bed Saturday night. The change to Daylight Saving Time officially ticks in at 2 a.m. Sunday. Yes, I meant 'ticks' — you know, ticktock,

### Our examples influence future leaders

In 1642, the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law requiring parents to teach their children to read. In 1647, they passed another law establishing the first public schools in America. The law required every village with 50 families or more to start an elementary school. These schools were designed to teach children reading, writing and religion.

As the colonies grew into a nation, public schools developed secondary schools or academies and universities. For a long time most secondary schools were primarily for boys. Even into the early 1900's many areas of study were closed to women.

Now our public schools are open to all. Public schools give students a shared experience that seeks to make everyone, be they immigrants, handicapped or of any religious faith, part of the American community.

As a parent, I always felt it was the duty of parents to help their children with the basics, especially reading and math. Also,

### Citizen Duties Bob Strevey



forced truancy laws and provided Normal Schools to train teachers. They also helped administer the required 8th grade exams which had to be passed to be eligible for high school.

Now, tests are administered to determine if schools are providing an adequate education. Once we taught civics and the responsibilities of citizenship. Now, each school sets its own standards as to what will be taught and picks the textbooks to be used.

Unless our children are taught the value of freedom and understand how the government works, our system will fail. A democracy is only as strong as its citizens. A key duty of all citizens is to see that our youth are taught our country's values. As young people are called upon to provide leadership and support for our country, they will depend on the examples and instruction of previous generations.

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