

Your turn

Tribute to W.T. (Bill) Sharp

To the Editor,

Although he no longer lived here, on Feb. 12 Norton County lost a true friend and benefactor. Bill Sharp, in the sixteen years I worked for him, did more for the City of Norton and Norton County than anyone I know. In a word, he was "Fantastic." He served as a county commissioner and was a founding member of the Norton County Community Foundation. But more than that, he, as they say, "put his money where his mouth was."

Sunshine Daycare Center has been in the news lately concerning a new roof. Bill Sharp bought and donated the building where Sunshine Daycare is located.

The Norton County Hospital has also been in the news concerning their latest remodeling efforts. A few years ago, when the hospital needed to expand to keep their critical care designation, Bill Sharp through New Age donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to ensure the project could be completed.

Bill also donated thousands of dollars to the Norton County Library Foundation when they were having their fund drive for a new library.

Bill, also, year in and year out, made donations to support the BB Gun teams, Norton County Amusement Association (carnival rides), 4H clubs of Norton County, and many other organizations.

Most people weren't even aware that Bill had made any of these contributions, and that was fine with him. But even more than all these, and they are considerable, it was Bill's business sense that has, perhaps, contributed far more than all other gifts combined. Bill took a business that was on the brink of failure and turned it into one of the top foodservice equipment manufacturers in the country. He didn't do it alone, but he was instrumental. New Age Industrial now brings in millions of dollars to Norton each year, and nearly all of it is from states outside the state of Kansas. A lot of those dollars are spent by New Age in Norton County through payroll and other purchases. They are turned over again when New Age's 120-plus employees buy from local merchants and those merchants buy from other merchants. That cycle, which repeats over and over again, has contributed millions and millions of dollars to the Norton County economy.

Bill, in many ways, was a common and humble man, but he was very proud of New Age and his employees accomplishments. In New Age Industrial, Bill Sharp has left an on going legacy for Norton County. We should ALL be very thankful.

Thanks, Bill.

Kent Kearney, Controllor
New Age Industrial Corporation

Energy bill highlights House work

House members resumed their regular legislative schedules last week. For the next several weeks, we will consider bills that have already passed through the Senate. Likewise, the Senate is working the House bills that we passed out over the course of the last seven weeks. The Appropriations committee will also introduce the budget for debate on the House floor before the end of the month.

The big news this week was the passage of SB 327, the energy bill, by a margin of 75-47. Below is a brief summary of the energy plan.

House Energy Plan

Establishes energy efficiency requirements for state buildings and equipment. New and renovated state buildings designed to exceed by 10 percent national energy efficiency standards; requires appliances, computers, etc. purchased by the state to be at least as energy efficient as energy star devices; requires property leased by the state to meet energy efficiency standards.

Creates the Kansas Electric Generation Science and Technology Commission. Requires using the best available control technologies to implement carbon dioxide standards.

Sets a Renewable Resources Standard. By 2012, at least 10 percent of the three-year average peak load of both electric public and cooperative utilities will be from renewable resources increasing to 15 percent by 2016 and to 20 percent by 2020.

Establishes the Net Metering and Easy Connection Act. Defines net metering as the use of metering equipment to measure the difference between the electrical energy supplied to a customer and the electrical energy supplied by a customer;

House Happenings Rep. John Faber



customers would be billed for any excess energy provided in excess of the amount generated by the customer; customers would receive credit applied to the succeeding billing period, at least equal to 150 percent of the avoided energy cost, for electricity generated in excess of that provided by the utility.

Clarifies the roles and duties of those involved in the regulatory process. Creates tax incentives for energy efficient improvements of non-owner occupied housing units. Tax credits would be available in tax years 2008 and 2009, for improvements made to the units.

Requires mercury emission reduction of 80 percent by generating units that began operation after Jan. 1, 2008 and use coal to produce over 10 percent of their heat input.

New Transparency Website. As I reported last week the House Republicans have made budget transparency a top priority this year. I am pleased to announce that, on March 1, the website went live. It can be found at www.kansas.gov/kan-view/. If you have any questions about the site, or if I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact my office at jfaber@ink.org or 785-296-7500.

I would like to thank all of you who attended the meeting at the Town and Country Kitchen last weekend and also to express thanks for allowing us to have access to their fine facility.

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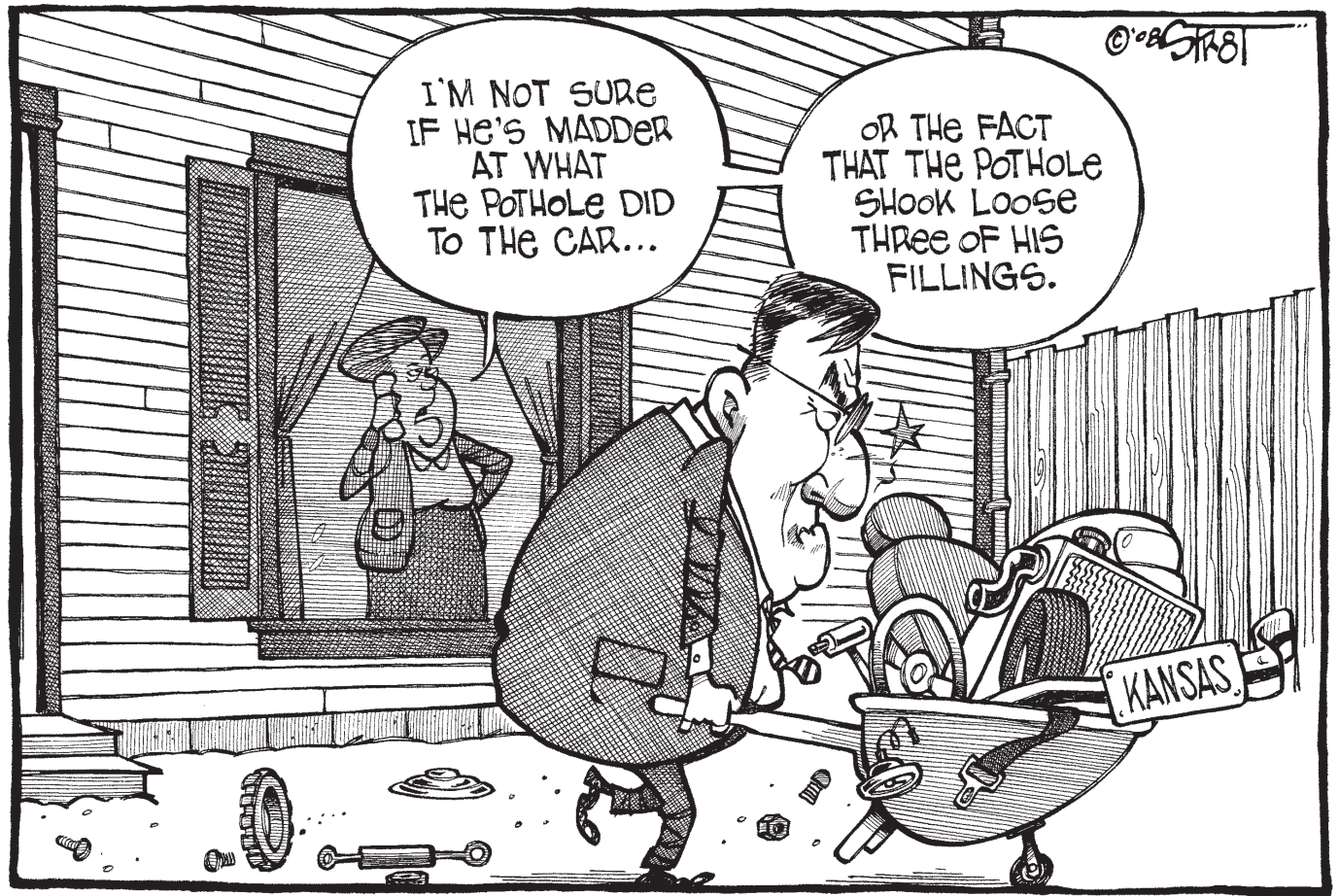
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How long are former First Ladies protected?

While back we were talking about Secret Service protection for former First Ladies. How long are they protected after leaving the White House? Or, in fact, are they? I came across the following while doing research on the Secret Service, when it was formed, its mission, etc. Under the heading, *Protection of former Presidents and First Ladies*, it reads:

"In 1962, Congress authorized the Secret Service (Public Law 89-186) to protect a former president and his or her spouse during their lifetime, unless they decline protection.

"In 1997, Congress enacted legislation that limits Secret Service protection for former presidents to ten years after leaving office. Under this new law, individuals who were in office before January 1, 1997 will continue to receive Secret Service protection for their lifetime. Individuals entering office after that time will receive protection for ten years after leaving office.

"Therefore, former President Bill Clinton will be the last president to receive lifetime protection, and President George W. Bush will be the first to receive protection for only ten years."

Barbara Bush, Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Clinton, Betty Ford, and Nancy Reagan continue to receive lifetime protection as former First Ladies.

I admit to not being clear on this topic until I decided to look into it. Glad I did. This could be a Saturday morning coffee topic.

-td-

This is supposedly a true story about a fourth grade girl who asked her mother what a cactus was. Her mother explained that it was a desert plant with a lot of

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



needle-like points all over it that can cause a lot of pain if touched. "Are you studying desert plants in school," she asked. "No," the little girl replied, "while watching television they were talking about how primaries were good for Mrs. Clinton and cactus was good for Mr. Obama. If they hurt, how can that be good for him?" After the mother was finished explaining what a cactus was, the little girl then asked, "Where do primaries grow?"

-td-

While listening to the radio late Tuesday night, a discussion on the possible paths the Democratic National Committee could take to re-do the primaries in Florida and Michigan took the spotlight. The thing that most bothered me was the cost involved, like many, many millions of dollars. And the attitude that raising that kind of money for this purpose is really no big deal.

The comment, "no big deal," poses still another question: If forking over many millions of dollars to re-stage a primary election is in fact no big deal, I wonder just how many of those same people would fork over those sums of money to help the various needs, healthwise and otherwise, in their local communities and their states? Sometimes we're pretty lousy with our priorities.

This political mess was not the fault of the Democratic voters in those two

states. It was the fault of the Democratic leadership in those two states and the punishment should fall on their doorstep. What kind of punishment? I would suggest they strip the leaders in question of their super delegate status. That would bring them down a notch or two. After all, it was their decision to ignore the rules set by their national committee, not the innocent voters' decision.

Maybe the solution for communities all across this land — when it comes to raising funds for worthwhile causes — would be to enlist the services of these political pickpockets who know which pockets to pick and how deep to go.

Just a thought.

-td-

Guess who forgot to turn his clock up one hour before going to bed last Saturday night?

-td-

American Idol is up and running for another season. So is judge Simon, who again isn't winning any popularity contests. But he's not supposed to. In fact Tuesday night he was quite testy, and even took a poke at the audience. He knows what he's talking about, something I can't say for Paula, who came across as incoherent, really bad. And Randy was pretty much in character. Ryan, the guy who introduces the performers, was way off base taking issue with Simon. But you know what, all of this is the reason millions of people tune in each week to watch the show. If they ever replaced any one of the four characters, it just wouldn't be the same.

-td-

Have a good evening! And remember when you attend the church of your choice this weekend, there is only one judge you need to please.

Here are things needing our attention

In the midst of all the political news, the headlines explaining the new policy being enacted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) may be small, but the story is one which will affect the lives of us all. Beginning in October, Medicare will no longer pay for treatment needed because of hospital error. In other words, if you enter the hospital for a heart attack and end up with bedsores due to lack of proper care, they won't pay and neither will you, as the hospitals cannot bill patients for the treatment either.

There are eight types of errors which are covered, ranging from objects left in a patient during surgery to infections.

In the past, medical treatment has not required the same accountability as other service occupations. Bills have been paid regardless of any mistakes. You may choose not to pay your plumber for a poor job, but the same response is unacceptable in the medical community. Short of a medical malpractice suit, an individual

has had little recourse. Taking legal action is extreme and frequently leads to more upset than resolution.

Accountability is a necessary aspect of all of our jobs, however it is important to clarify certain things. Each of us makes mistakes in our jobs. Medical workers have the same flaws we all do, we are human.

The action is meant to address negligence, arrogance and continued inferior care. Mark Hall, a Wake Forest University professor in health-care law, said, "The movement to limit reimbursements for medical errors is part of a larger shift to pay-for-performance in health care."

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



It will force hospitals, convalescent homes and their boards to take a closer look at the happenings in their institutions, and even more importantly for the public to become involved in who serves on these boards. In too many cases an uninformed board may cause incredible turmoil and actually threaten the sustainability of the establishment.

How big of an effect this will have on rural hospitals remains to be seen. In many of the hospitals in this area, Medicare is a large part of the income and as our nation "grays" it will become an even greater issue.

Our part in this must be good communication with our medical personnel, including administrators, board members and health workers. We mustn't fall for the line I was given, "the public really shouldn't be coming to our meetings unless they have a specific issue."

These are our hospitals and care facilities, we need to pay attention to their health.

Thumbs Up ...

To... Ray McElroy, for your inspirational and informative talks. We needed that! (e-mail)
To... Norton's BB Gun Team, good luck in defending your state title on Saturday. (called in)
To... Busy Beavers 4-H Club, for the nice tray of goodies. (Telegram staff)
To... the Hospital and Telegram, for printing the physicians schedule. (called in)
To... Brian Cook and Joe Dawson, for the wonderful San Pedro food on Wednesday. (called in)
(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, phone 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)