

Nit-picking not helping the cause

Well, the road to the White House stops today in the state of Pennsylvania. Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton have had their say — negative as it was — and now the voters of that grand place are making their decision.

Polls had Clinton far ahead a month and a half ago, and as the march to the polls got underway this morning, polls show that Obama closed the gap and it's anyone's race.

Can you believe some people are pointing to Obama's disaster at the bowling alley as a reason not to mark his name in the booth, while others are faulting Clinton for her boozing at a Pennsylvania bar? Still others say they will take note of what pin Obama has on his lapel as to whether or not he gets their vote.

Something is missing in this mix. Something like real bread and butter issues, the likes of which have taken a back seat to nothing more than nit-picking.

On a personal note, gas at the pump is an issue. How are the two Democratic presidential candidates handling that issue? I (the publisher of this newspaper) want to know in no uncertain terms. When I filled up my vehicle here in Norton to go to Denver on Friday to visit my kids and grandkids, it cost me \$45.59 cents (I did have some gas in the tank). When I departed Denver on Sunday and filled up my vehicle, it cost me \$49.00 (I did have some gas in the tank). The total gas bill to run out to Denver and back was \$94.59. I paid \$3.45 here and \$3.69 out there.

That kind of (gas) tab is an issue. I wonder what families do when they travel, with many driving more than the 280 miles one way I traveled. Do they stop to eat, or do they pack a lunch and eat en route to cut down on the expenses?

Neither of the two Democratic candidates have ever said anything significant as it deals with the price of gas at the pump. They mumbled something incoherent on this matter but were never really detailed on what their strategy would be. And what bothers us are those words "what their strategy would be." Because both Obama and Clinton are United States Senators, what have they been doing about gas prices? They don't have to wait until they are sitting in the Oval Office to come up with a solution. They should have been working on a solution long before now.

Doubtless the result in Pennsylvania today will change the face of the race. Clinton is behind in the popular vote and in delegates. The so called experts say she will win today, but the experts have been so wrong so many times this campaign that their predictions (via polling) are nothing short of laughable. Example: Sen. John McCain. Remember what category they put in him last summer? And where he is now?

Stop bowling. Stop drinking. Get down to business!

— Tom Dreiling

Help available for psychiatric needs

When someone is experiencing a medical emergency such as a heart attack or stroke, family and friends would not hesitate to call 911 for help. In those situations, the physical signs are readily apparent that something needs to be done quickly. In the field of mental illness, emergency situations are also very common but are not always easy to recognize, nor are most people trained in how to respond.

A psychiatric emergency can take many forms. Often a person's symptoms intensify such as an increase in depression, anxiety, or hallucinations. They may display a sudden or erratic change in their behavior or personality. Some individuals lose the ability to take care of themselves and fail to meet their daily needs.

When a psychiatric emergency occurs, there can be a fair amount of confusion for those involved. If the person in crisis recognizes the need for help and seeks it willingly, most psychiatric emergencies can be quickly addressed.

However, because of the nature of some mental illnesses, there are times when the person does not recognize or accept that they need help quickly. In addition, family and friends can be confused about how to react, or not even sure that they should respond. There is also hesitation on the part of the larger community to become involved in a private or family matter, or that they might make the situation worse.

High Plains Mental Health Ken Loos

When there is concern for the personal well-being of someone with a mental illness, the extended family should be notified. If the person refuses help or treatment, then a spouse, parents or other responsible family members can file a mental illness petition through the local county attorney, with the result that the person can be hospitalized for psychiatric treatment.

To accomplish this, it helps for those involved to have current information about the person's changing behaviors and to know the reasons why others are concerned. If the situation is potentially dangerous to the person in crisis or to anyone else, law enforcement should be contacted immediately. Law enforcement officers are trained and responsible for bringing the person in crisis to the attention of the mental health system, and can do so in the safest way possible during an emergency.

Just as help is available with a call to 911, there is also help available for psychiatric emergencies. If you have concerns, contact your local physician, hospital or mental health center for assistance.

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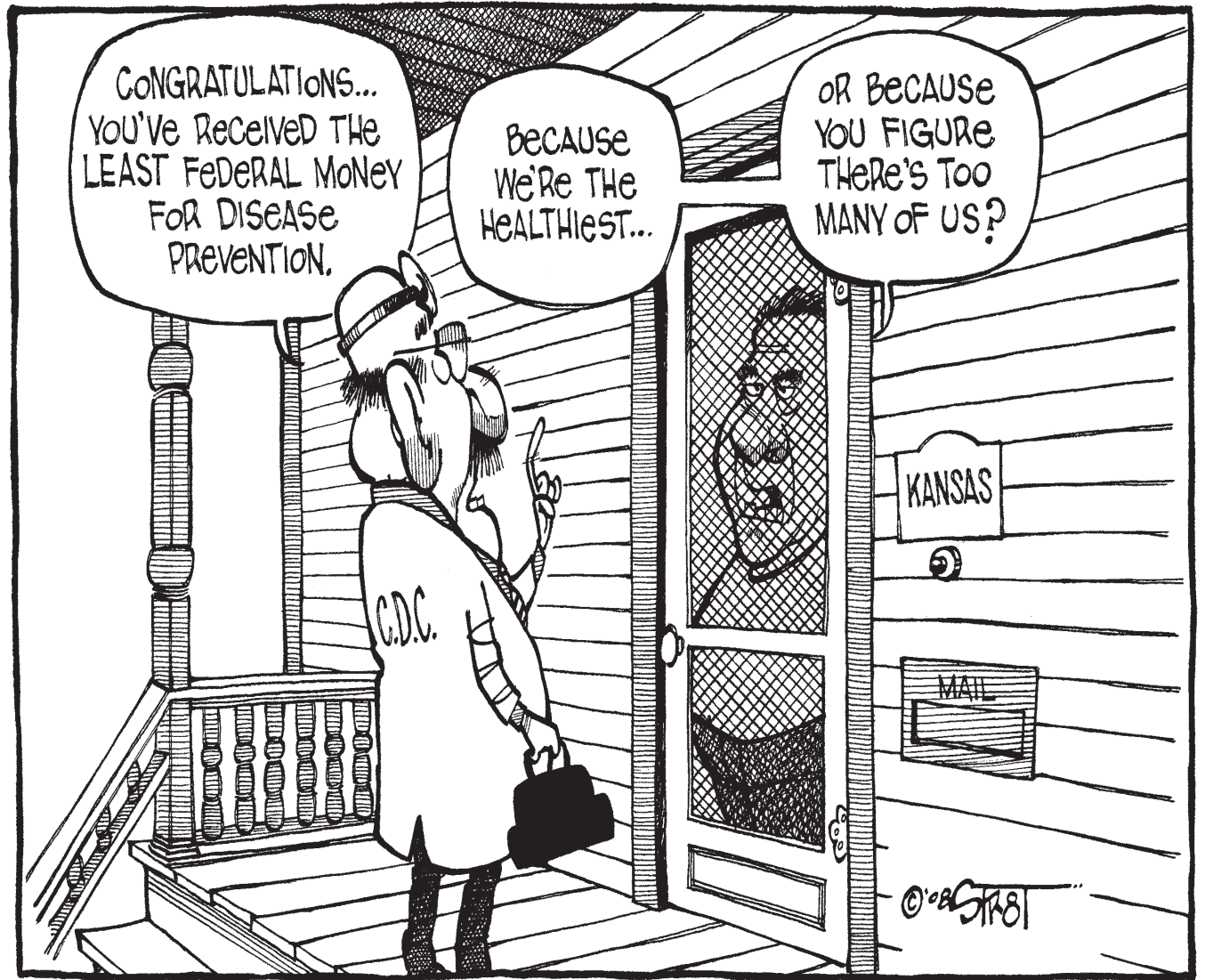
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Our moving mission now completed

We're home, we're home, we're home! After a week on the road, the old homestead looked pretty good. Last Thursday, we rolled into town with my cousin, Barb, her husband, Art, and their dog, Valentino. Friends and one of their new neighbors met us at their house and we had them unloaded in record time. I'm afraid we left them with only a trail through the boxes, but a day later, they had made significant progress.

They had cleared enough floor space for the dog to lay down (he's a big dog) and they had the kitchen pretty much in order. Enough so that when we stopped over after church, Barb had just pulled a cake out of the oven. She sent it home with us for an after supper treat.

We were so tired, it ended up being supper. Not that Jim minded, it had chocolate frosting and he had a bowl and a pint of table cream.

Before arriving in town, Art had been talking with a potential employer about a part-time job. When they met, it turned into a full-time job involving all the things

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



he likes to do: parts, motors and cars. Barb has an interview this morning (if she can find her clothes) and their new life is off and running.

The weather has been beautiful for them and Barb is soaking up the sun. We'll see how she likes the sun in the middle of July, but for now, it is a nice change from the cloudiness and humidity of Illinois.

-ob-

Sunday night I watched a Home and Garden TV show about the 25 most common real estate mistakes people make. Number five on the list was never buy a house sight-unseen. I'm glad Barb and Art never saw that show, because that is exactly what they did — they trusted me

and the pictures I sent them to buy their new home.

The day before we got them home, I started to have some qualms. What if they didn't like it, what if it wasn't big enough, what if, what if, what if. I was feeling the pressure of the enormity of what I had done.

On my say-so, they had uprooted their lives and took a leap of faith to come where life might be more enjoyable for them.

My fears were relieved when, upon walking into their home for the first time, they both said, "This is great. The pictures didn't do it justice. It's bigger than we thought." Whew! I breathed a sigh of relief.

I'll try not to "bug" Barb too much, but it's going to be so much fun having family right in my back yard.

Maybe I should have warned her that living in my proximity makes her and her life "fair game" for this column. As Jim would say, "Welcome to the gold fish bowl."

Loves her hubby, but hates his shirt

Back Home Nancy Hagman



Finally we have daffodils! I picked all that were open and put them in a vase. How sweet the smell! How happy I am to finally see a sign of spring. According to the 10 day forecast on the web, morning frosts are a thing of the past!

The girls mowed for the first time over the weekend. Not that I am so thrilled about mowing but it's a sign of spring! The March winds are a month late, but it's a warm wind! Things are looking up!

It's been a long, long winter. I tried hurrying spring by sending my coat to the cleaners. I gave another to the Salvation Army! I don't even remember what I did with my gloves. There have been several mornings I wished I did! I began thinking I ought to go pick up the cleaning just so I could have the coat! But then I would have had to have it cleaned again. So it is just as well.

As I put my winter clothes away I did as the experts advise: tried things on, got the things that needed repairs to the sewing room, made sure garments I was putting away were clean, made a pile for charity, etc.

The hubby had the misfortune of leaving his favorite shirt out to be washed that day. I love the hubby, hate the shirt!

What is it about men and their clothes? Just because it looked good sometime

in the previous century doesn't mean it should see the light of day in 2008!

As I sacked the charity clothes that ugly blue and red mismatched plaid shirt started begging me to put it out of its misery. "Please, please let me go!" it whined. It started out softly but got louder and louder. I told it "no" about fifty times. Suddenly it was like the thing was possessed. It flung itself into the bag. Not only that, it burrowed its way to the bottom so the Hubby would not see it when he carried the bags to the car. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

It was over a month before the Hubby missed the thing. Sunday we have one of those potluck, family dinner things. He's dressing. He laughs (thank heavens), "I see one of my shirts disappeared."

"Which one?" I inquired. Truly, I had forgotten the incident. Then I remembered. I told him what happened. I don't think he believes me.

At the dinner we were discussing his

difficulties with getting dressed that morning. His cousin said his daughter and wife cut up his powder blue polyester leisure suit.

They had been taking his clothes to the local Thrift Store until one of his shirts showed up on the back of the daughter's father-in-law. At that point the women on both sides of the family decided more drastic action was needed. They started making quilts.

He continued his tirade against the fashion police by lamenting the loss of a couple of pair of bell bottom trousers and his white disco stack heeled loafers. He seems to think those items are coming back into style any day.

Perhaps they are. As I looked at the spring fashions for women, I have experienced some bad flashbacks to the 60's and I never even took drugs! Thank heavens I don't have the urge to go there again. Some of it is cute on the young girls but no one wants to see me in it and I sure don't want to see Junior's cousin in red polyester bell bottoms.

Suddenly that ugly plaid shirt suddenly doesn't seem so bad! But it's gone! Don't worry ladies unless your husband shops at the Salvation Army in Manhattan, it won't be coming to your house.

Just a warning however, those disco shoes aren't far away!

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