

Why can't McCain and Obama meet in Norton?

Sen. John McCain's plans to have town hall meetings with Sen. Barack Obama has some merit. SOME merit. We phrase it that way because we wonder what kind of towns they are talking about.

Shortly after Sen. McCain issued an invite to Sen. Obama to travel together and stage 10 town hall meetings between now and August's Democratic Party's convention in Denver, guess what TOWN was the first to offer its facilities: NEW YORK CITY, courtesy Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. ABC-TV jumped in to be the network to carry the town hall meeting live.

Town and New York City don't quite go together.

We would hope Senators McCain and Obama, if they can agree on arrangements, would bring their town hall meetings to towns in rural America. Norton would be a good place to stage one of those.

Our dictionary defines town as "larger than a village but smaller than a city." That pretty much describes us, and it certainly doesn't describe the likes of New York City.

It would be interesting to learn how they will choose the audiences for these town hall meetings — if they materialize. And if they hit a snag on stage, who will be the referee?

The experts tell us that town hall meetings will definitely favor Sen. McCain. Maybe so. Perhaps they can alternate between town hall style and rally style, which would, of course, favor Sen. Obama.

Whatever they choose, I hope they choose Small Town, America. We are also voters, and if the general election will be as tight as early predictions indicate, it just might be a Norton, Kansas that makes the difference.

OK, so our chances are none. But it doesn't hurt to toss our hat in the ring.
— Tom Dreiling

Governor of Colorado needs to explain why he signed this law

My respect for Gov. Bill Ritter (D-Colo.) plummeted last week when he signed off on Senate Bill 200 to do away with separate sex public restrooms and locker rooms. Ritter supported a new law that puts young girls and boys in a dangerous situation in churches, shopping malls, restaurants and even their schools.

The new "transgender nondiscrimination" law makes it illegal to deny anyone access to public restrooms and locker rooms based on gender identity or the perception of gender identity. The senate bill is part of the expanded discrimination prohibitions which say a person's "sexual orientation" means "a person's orientation toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or transgender status or another person's perception thereof."

The new law means that a woman is no longer safe in public restrooms from a man just walking into the room on the pretense of relieving himself, yet stooping to assaulting or raping her. The shoe will also be on the other foot for men, who before May 29, could stand in front of a urinal and be relatively sure no woman would walk into the room. That's over. Now, Colorado public restrooms and locker rooms are open game to whoever wants to use them.

No longer will there be men's and women's restrooms, only public unisex restrooms.

I can't believe Ritter would do this to not only Colorado residents, but anyone who passes through his state. Ritter, formerly the District Attorney of Denver, was instrumental in setting up and overseeing the Colorado Juvenile Justice programs. He was also an instructor at a class I took a few years ago pertaining to youth crime. What on earth was he thinking in signing this law?

Ritter knows all too well that such an action will have life-changing effects on children, as well as adults, but he buckled to something. That something, while I have yet to prove it, was probably some special interest group with tons of money.

Colorado is no longer safe in what should be one of the most private settings.

Sure, there are restrooms out there that have doors that lock, but I'm concerned about the ones that don't.

Women are now, more than ever before, prey to sick people who might find a public restroom a good place to attack them. I'm not so naive to think that only the new law brought on this situation, but it certainly enhanced opportunities for sexual predators to act on their desires. How sad.

Making matters worse is the fact the law was passed with no provision for its repeal, and anyone who violates it is subject to only a year in jail and a fine of \$5,000.

In addition to Ritter, how dare Colorado legislators think they are helping society by supporting and passing this law. And, what's scary is that this type of law tends to creep out of the state where it's first introduced and makes its way across America.

Kansas women better wake up and smell the sunflowers and arm themselves by communicating with their state legislators or we'll find ourselves in the same pot as Colorado ladies.

Mrs. Ackerman writes for the Colby Free Press

Guest Commentary Jan Katz Ackerman



A 'light lunch' for husband Jim, it wasn't

Jim headed out the door bright and early today. He is building a new garage for some friends of ours and was anxious to get started. Framing is one of his favorite things to do and he expected to have a big day.

It's been awhile since he has taken on a project like this and I wanted to send him off with a hearty lunch. He said he just wanted a light lunch but by the time I packed a cooler with ice, soft drinks, iced tea, hard boiled eggs, crackers and cottage cheese he could barely lift it.

He said, "Woman! What are you trying to do? There's enough food in here for me and two other guys."

-ob-

We did something fun Sunday evening. These friends that Jim is building the garage for invited us out to their place for an impromptu supper. Nothing fancy, just good food and good conversation. Their grandchildren were there so the house was jumping. Folks don't do

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



My daughter, Kara, and I are trying to coordinate the time when her daughter, Taylor, can come for her annual visit. In the past, Kara and I would rendezvous in Wichita (about half way for both of us), stay the night in a motel with a pool and then each return to our homes the next day. Me with Taylor for two or three weeks and she to some private time with her husband, Adam.

Kara and I have been discussing the possibility of Taylor flying to Denver where I would be waiting for her when she gets off the plane. I even promised to go out the night before so I could be waiting in the airport terminal before Taylor got on the plane in Dallas.

Kara said Taylor had been listening to her end of one of our conversations and said, "But, Mom, if I fly to Grandma's we won't get to spend a night in the motel." And, here all we were thinking about was gas and time.

enough of that sort of thing anymore. Neighboring back and forth. My folks used to have company in for supper and cards or we would go to a neighbor's house all the time. I think we're all too busy or too concerned about how the house looks. I know there are times I would die if anyone saw the state of our house. But, I still shouldn't let that stop me from being hospitable. I know I don't give anyone else's home the white glove test — I should assume they don't do that to mine.

Nothing we enjoy more than visiting with friends or making new ones.

It's a lot easier just hanging around home

How does the song go? "I don't get around much anymore?" Or in my case ever. The latest offerings from a catalog of travel products reinforce my, "There's no place like home!" philosophy!

It's amazing what it takes to travel these days. They have thought of something for everyone and their various neuroses! Even if one weren't neurotic to start with by the time you got done looking this array of gadgets over you would be.

First, did you know many credit cards and passports are now imbedded with RFID (radio frequency ID) tags? So the well equipped traveler has to have a wallet that blocks them. There are money belts of course. Portable safes. Camera straps with steel wires and lock mechanisms. All sorts of purses and bags equipped to thwart thieves.

There are Travel Security Administration (TSA) approved locks, labels, straps, etc. of all sorts to make your luggage stand out and make it tamper proof.

Packing aids of every description and purpose. Not that you would need them if you would just purchase the high tech luggage offered on pages 12 to 23!

There are sound machines to help you sleep, door alarms to wake you up, heating coils for soup, tea or hot chocolate, and one cup coffee makers. Hand held devices to aid in translation, iPods, DVD players, head phones, cameras, and extra batteries so they will operate. Of course

Back Home Nancy Hagman



light "spoon." Another UV gadget kills 99.9 germs on any surface. How interesting! I seem to recall a huge controversy about irradiating fruits, vegetables, and meats here in the good old USA. If you ate the stuff it was feared you might grow a third eye on your chin or something like that. However if you are on vacation it is fine to just zap away!

Walking sticks, portable seats, walking sticks with a seat, sun block, bug spray!

Cushions for the plane, anti-viral spray and personalized air filtration systems so you won't get sick from breathing the air up there! Pills for motion sickness, jet lag, it just goes on and on.

They say that vacations are major points of stress in our lives. It is best to allow yourself time to relax before returning to work if you have taken a long trip!

But they are necessary because once you figure out how to pack all that stuff in a bag that weighs less than 40 pounds or whatever the limit is you are going to need a vacation badly. (If you can't figure out how to pack, don't worry they sell a book for \$20 that explains it all.)

Maybe that is why I'm content to just sit at home and look at this stuff. Some of it could be useful even if you never leave home. But seriously, does anyone really think that umbrella that's guaranteed to never blow inside out works?

Come on, we live in Kansas?
Have you been outside today?
NO WAY!

they have adapters for curling irons, hair dryers, hot rollers etc.

Just so you won't enjoy yourself too much and pack on a few pounds you can take a 9x6x1 inch travel scale!

The personal care items really get interesting. You can purchase hand sanitizer, travel toilet paper, disposable toothbrushes (no toothpaste required). Shower shoes so you don't pick up a fungus. Instant wash clothes in case your hotel doesn't provide them.

Somehow I'm thinking if I traveled to places that don't have wash clothes I would probably choose not to eat much. I could definitely leave those scales at home!

There are various products that help you wash your clothes out at night. Clothes steamers and wrinkle free spray that removes static cling and odors. They also sell clothing that resist wrinkling and washes out with ease. News flash: if there is no toilet paper do you think anyone will really notice if you are wrinkled or smelly?
You can purify water with an ultraviolet

Five ways to reduce child abuse, neglect

Experts agree that most child abuse and neglect is the result of parents and adults who are not necessarily bad people, but who are isolated, overwhelmed, uninformed or distressed. Five protective factors have been identified as necessary in reducing child abuse. Those factors are:

Nurturing and Attachment: For a child, being loved and nurtured is necessary when creating a bond with a caregiver. A healthy bond affects all aspects of behavior and development. Safe, secure, and predictable interactions with a caregiver helps the brain and nervous system develop in a healthy way and creates the foundation for such traits as impulse control, empathy, and compassion.

Knowledge of Parenting and of Child/Youth Development: Interactions with a child, including discipline, will go

Plain Sense Ken Loos

smoother when parents have a good understanding of child development including specific behaviors associated with specific ages, and the limits of the child's abilities.

A great deal of frustration occurs for a child when a parent expects too much.

Parental Resilience: Resilience is the ability to successfully handle everyday stressors, as well as recover from occasional crises. A parent with a positive attitude, flexible problem solving skills, and an appropriate sense of humor will find it easier to cope with problems and

challenges, and be less likely to respond in an abusive manner.

Social Connections: Connections to other people provide needed encouragement and assistance when difficulties occur. Research has found that social isolation and perceived lack of support frequently leads to child maltreatment. Some of the best support comes from other parents and adults who have already been there.

Concrete Support for Parents: For some parents, just providing basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter is difficult.

Since all of these factors affect a family's ability to care for their children, contacting such agencies as SRS, the local Ministerial Alliance, or the Salvation Army for assistance can be an important step in being a good parent.

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