

Tuesday's ramblings...

Rush Limbaugh better watch out. The self-proclaimed leader of the Republican Party will now be butting heads with Michael Steele, the newly elected National Chairman of the Republican Party. Chairman Steele, who was all over the networks over the weekend is a no-nonsense kind of guy. He's got one heck of a challenge before him: to put together a party that has lacked leadership, has lost seats in the US. Senate and House of Representatives and in November lost the White House. Mr. Steele is the Republican Party's first African-American chairman. He's a straight talker and appears not to be one of those shoot-from-the-hip kind of guys. He's a breath of fresh air on the political landscape.

• The Grammys were handed out Sunday night. Really, I tried to watch it, but there was just too much noise for these old ears. I'm assuming it was another success.

• Gov. Kathleen Sebelius is still being mentioned as a favorite for Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). You'll recall that President Obama's initial pick, former Sen. Tom Daschle, withdrew when news surfaced that he forgot to pay some back taxes. Boy, what an embarrassment. That revelation was kind of an eye twitcher — the former Senate Majority Leader forgetting to pay some taxes? The Sebelius camp is quiet on this past weekend's reports that she just might be the one to get the president's call.

If you recall, she was an early supporter of then-Sen. Barack Obama.

• The only thing the stimulus plan is stimulating at this time is a tug of war between the two parties. Supposedly, the Senate is nearing some kind of compromise. If that is reached, then the Senate and House will need to iron out their differences before the bill can be passed on to the president's desk.

What do you think about the stimulus plan?

• John and Janet Rothrock, write: "The conversations coming out of Washington concerning stimulating the economy, emphasize putting cash in the hands of the people. We wonder how much our Kansas economy would have profited if their 60,000 Kansas Public Retirees had received a cost of living increase these past ten years."

• A Hays reader hit the nail on the head, so to say. We were talking about rotary phones and that sort of stuff a while back, and then the old wooden crank-type phones entered the conversation, which prompted Jon to observe: "Those were the original crank calls!"

• Boy, you needed to check your calendar closely Monday morning. It was 50 degrees at 6:30, and it was raining. Feb. 9?

Got a quick comment about something? Tell us about it.

—Tom Dreiling



To... the young men, who put their football game on hold to help me look for a lost little girl on Thursday afternoon. You guys are awesome. (brought in)

To... the Norton Community High School Scholars Bowl Team, for qualifying for state. Good luck! (combined with a called in and e-mail)

To... the two little girls, who insisted I needed help crossing the street over by Jamboree Foods on Saturday afternoon. Thank you so much for your care and concern. (called in)

To... the Wildcats, for beating another Texas team — in Texas! (e-mail)

(E-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654 or drop by the office, with your submission(s). Thanks for your continuing input. - td)

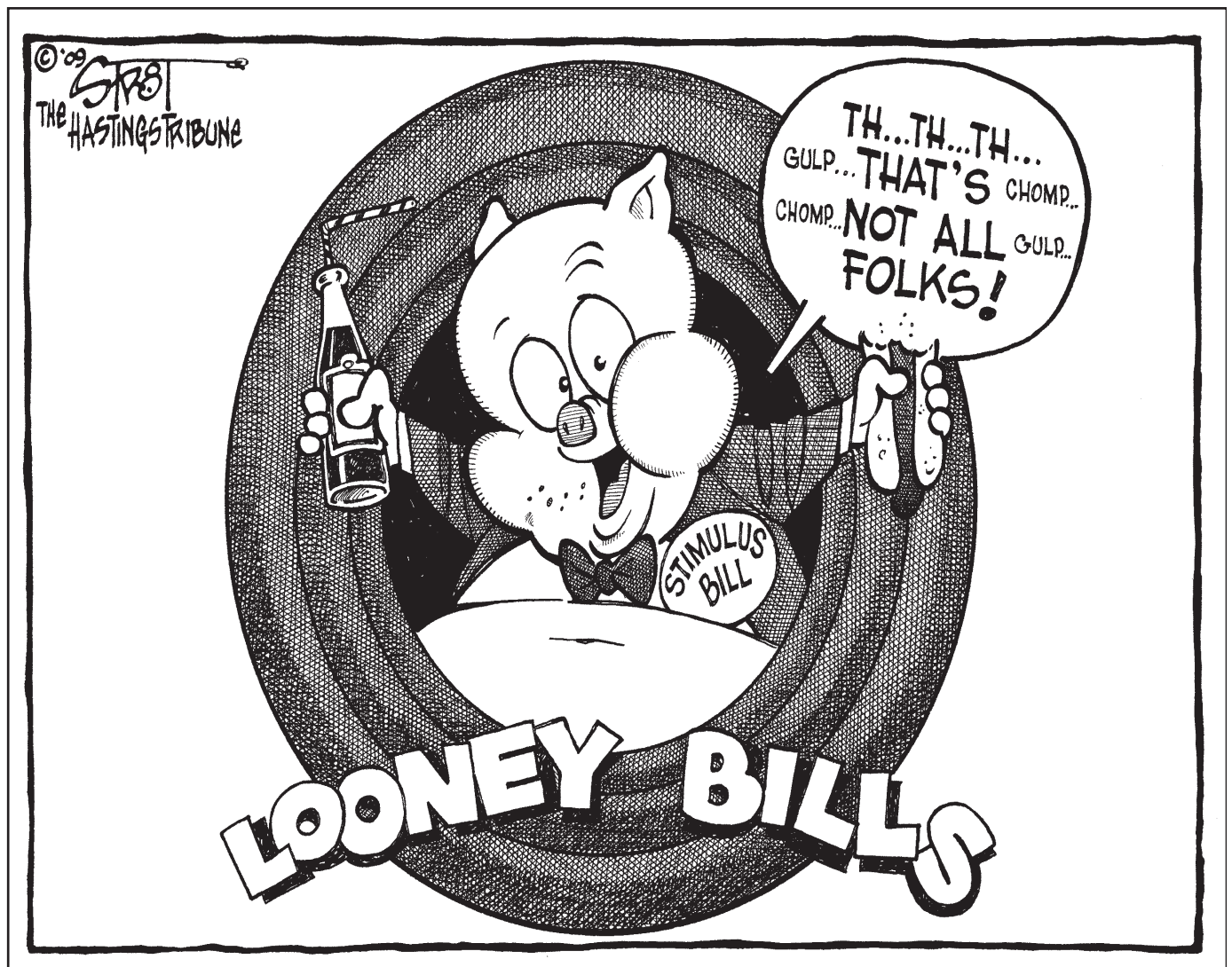
THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail:
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Tom Dreiling..... editor and publisher
Dana Paxton..... advertising director
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jays sports
Brandy Leroux..... reporter
Sherry Hickman..... bookkeeping/circulation
Vicki Henderson..... computer production

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Sound Off!

Norton is home of so much more than mentioned

Thank you for your consistent support of our community.

In addition to the attributes you mentioned at the beginning of the article, one could easily list some more, such as: Norton is the home of the Northwest Kansas Department of Transportation; Northwest Kansas Library System, with its beautiful facility; the modern two screen movie

theatre; the correctional facility; the many fast food restaurants; the upbeat and informative local newspaper with its resourceful writers who were born and raised in the area; the great football field and stadium; the many well attended churches; Elmwood Park, with all of its facilities and children's playground; the crossroads of three major highways; and

yes, the magnificent view of Norton at night from south of town.

These and more make our city unique. So we really do have much to offer and be grateful for, and I am proud to spread the word.

John Snyder
Norton

Writer agrees with Nancy, Steve and Tom

I agree with Nancy Hagman in her column in Friday's Telegram. We Americans have the right to criticize or comment on the actions of our elected officials. After all, our votes put them in office and we are responsible for keeping them aware of what we want and expect them to do. We are not being racist when we disagree with what President Obama plans to do or does. We are simply being what we are supposed to be: concerned, responsible citizens. So let's do our part of the job in running this country and keep the president and our other elected officials on their toes and aware of what we expect

of them.

I also go along with Tom and Steve on their comments on the big population centers in eastern Kansas wanting to close down our state run facilities out here. I guess they figure a bunch of "rural hicks" don't need this stuff. Remember some years back when the state neglected road maintenance in western Kansas and spent all the tax money on the roads in eastern Kansas? Western Kansas reminded them we were here and suggested they do some road maintenance out here or we would secede from the state. That seems to have

gotten their attention and they started to do some long over due road repair.

I'm not suggesting we secede, but we could swamp the governor and any other officials with letters, phone calls, and e-mails to let them know what we think of their attitudes about "rural hicks." Of course, we could also place two or three of our prisoners in each of the homes of those who want to close our jail. Beats letting the prisoners free to bother our folks out here again.

June Prout
Norton

Financial picture not too encouraging

State General Fund Update: Receipts through January were a cumulative \$57.1 million below November Consensus Revenue Estimates. Contributing to the shortfall were tax collections, coming in \$68.4 million below projections. For the year, tax only receipts are \$100.3 million below collections from FY 2008. Although total FY 2009 SGF receipts are currently \$193 million above FY 2008 receipts, two large transfers from the State General Fund occurred during the 2008 fiscal year for the Keeping Education Promises Trust Fund and the Statewide Maintenance and Disaster Relief Fund.

2009 Rescission Bill Alert: The House approved Substitute for SB 23 and the conference committee was expected to begin meeting on Feb. 5 to begin work on a compromised version of the bill.

Senate Bill 3 - Confirmation Oversight Committee: The bill increases the membership of the Confirmations Oversight Committee from six to seven members. SB 3 passed 38 to 2.

Senate Bill 11 - Community Colleges: SB 11 requires the State Board of Regents to establish service area boundaries for community colleges. The bill also allows community colleges to acquire land and improvements in both the community college district and the newly established community college service area. SB 11 passed 40 to 0.

Senate Bill 29 - Licensure of technical professions: The measure amends existing law by allowing the Board of Technical Professions to expand who they issue authorization certificates to by including limited liability companies and partnerships and corporate partnerships or other

Senate Doings Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



residents vote in support of the sale. The bill has no fiscal impact on cities. SB 80 passed 40 to 0.

Senate Bill 102 - Automated External Defibrillator: The measure would hold any individual who uses an automated external defibrillator harmless by striking the definition and requirement that only a qualified person be allowed to operate the defibrillator. SB 102 passed 40 to 0.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1604 - Kansas Sesquicentennial: SCR 1604 expresses the support of the Kansas Legislature to the Kansas State Historical Society so they can begin fund raising and preparing for the Kansas Sesquicentennial celebration. SCR 1604 passed 40 to 0.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1606 - Relocation of Guantanamo Bay detainees: This Resolution strongly expresses the Legislature's opposition to the relocation of Guantanamo Bay detainees to Fort Leavenworth and other potential sites in Kansas.

It encourages President Obama and other members of the federal government to remove Kansas from consideration as a relocation site due to the substantial negative impact it would have on the economy, safety, and security of Fort Leavenworth and the State. SCR 1606 passed 38 to 0.

(Please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached by writing to Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Street, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612 or call 785-296-7399. My E-Mail address is ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us.)

Ralph Ostmeyer
Senator, 40th District