

You house the terrorists, we'll give you the bio-lab

Should Kansas take some of the terrorist detainees from Guantanamo Bay and place them in the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth? Polls in Kansas are kind of surprising. The "no" bunch is around 52 percent and the "yes" crowd around 48.

Something smells in this whole thing, despite Sen. Pat Roberts' declaration that he'll filibuster any attempt to get that through the senate. Our state's Washington delegation is solidly opposed to such a move.

But give this some thought: just maybe — maybe — the billion dollar+ bio-whatever facility to be built at Kansas State University, had some strings attached whereby the state of Kansas would agree to house some of those bad Gitmo guys in exchange for the bio lab.

And just maybe the bio facility, which we felt was a done deal and is now not a done deal, might go to Texas because Kansas is balking at taking some of the Gitmo bunch. Texas wanted this thing at the outset.

Too, maybe there was a wink, nod and shake of the hand tied to x-Gov. Sebelius' cabinet appointment.

Frankly, I don't think it makes any difference because Fort Leavenworth is a federal lockup and the feds will do whatever the feds want to do. Regardless.

This is all just food for thought. Still hungry?

I think the Kansas Democratic Party has its candidate for governor in next year's election. Gov. Mark Parkinson, who served as lieutenant governor under Gov. Sebelius and became governor when she went to Washington, has made it clear he won't run for the post. I have been watching closely the travels around the state of State Treasurer Dennis McKinney. It smacks of a candidate in-waiting trying to get his name before the voters in anticipation of announcing for and seeking the governorship. I think I'm right on this one. Room for a little more?

Then how about the healthcare mess. The senators and congressmen and women are now back home to gauge the pulse of the land. Hehehe! What a laugh! It's all politics, period. Republicans are opposed, Democrats, for most part, are in favor. So depending on what political circus the representatives of the people visit, their oratory will be warmly accepted. That is, however, unless the opposing viewpoint is expressed by 'plants' — people picked by their party to attend the other party's meetings in an attempt to get their voice in the mix.

I have no idea what the healthcare legislation is all about. I doubt anyone on Capitol Hill knows, either. All I keep hearing is "billions of \$'s" involved. I fear the bag into which we are stuffing all these billions of dollars for whatever cause, will soon explode and all our money will be in shreds. Worthless! Cooler heads are needed to calm the waters.

I sure wish they could find some.

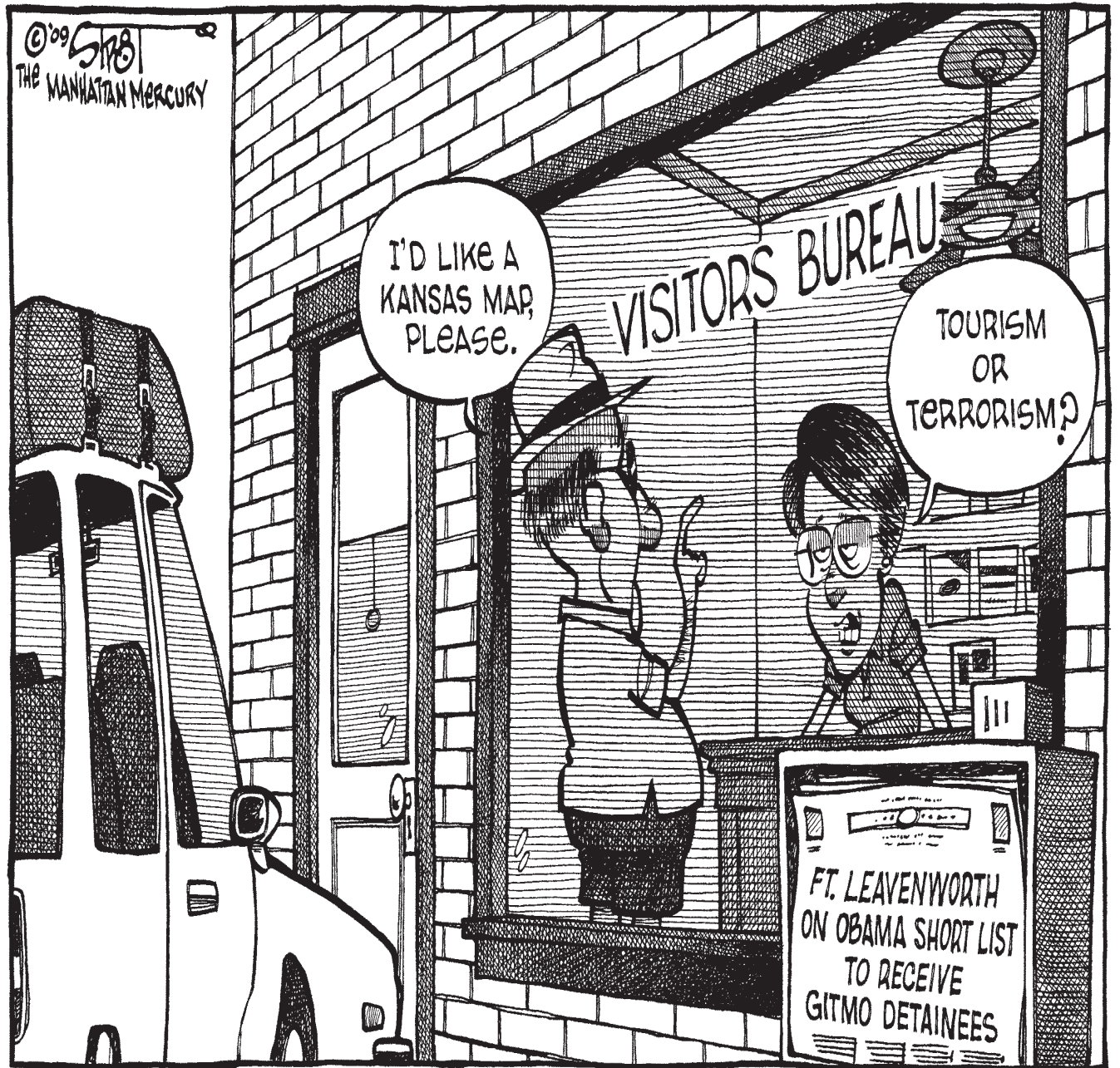
This healthcare mess reminds me of the blonde who wanted to buy a pair of alligator shoes but couldn't because they were too expensive. So, after giving it some deep thought, she came up with a solution. She bought a rifle and ammo and headed to a Florida swamp to catch an alligator. It was a long and challenging afternoon. As she was about to call it quits, there suddenly appeared about 30 feet away a 9-foot alligator swimming rapidly toward her. With lightning speed she turned, took aim and shot the creature. She then hauled it up the slippery bank to place it next to the other six she had shot earlier — all laying belly up. It took her a while to flip this gator onto its back, but eventually she got the job done. She looked it over, slapped her forehead in disgust, and shouted loud enough for people miles away to hear, "Wouldn't you know it, this one's barefoot too!"

Kind of sounds like Washington's approach to things.

I don't know if you caught the report on CNN Wednesday about the switch to home funerals in, I believe, Delaware. Tough economic times were said part of the cause and the other was the personal approach to death. Some folks are even burying their loved ones in their yards, while others use their cemeteries. It was a fascinating report. Some of the things their guest talked about escaped me when I buried my wife, my mother, my father, two brothers and a sister. I guess it's just another sign of the times. Sort of like we newspaper people who always believed the only way to get your news was via the newspaper, and now we find ourselves offering it online. Yep, just another sign of the times.

Have a good evening! And at the church of your choice this weekend, closely observe how many things today differ from yesteryear.

Let's Chat
Tom Dreiling



Health care: there's no need to rush

Despite the big push being mounted by the Obama administration, it seems most unlikely that any plan created in Washington will solve the problems of the American health system.

There are too many problems, their causes are far too diverse and the government itself is at the root of so many of them, that the so-called health care crisis does not lend itself to simple solutions.

At the root of the crisis is the federal government, the biggest problem the health care system has. Government has been muddling the health-care system since the 1960s, and the result is a mess.

Where once doctors accepted the responsibility of doing a certain amount of unpaid work, today most insist on being paid by someone. Where once hospitals were considered charities, run by churches, religious orders and local governments, today they are big businesses, giving allegiance to the bottom line.

Government created this monster by taking over as the insurer for the poor, the needy and the elderly, and by pumping money into the system. Government forced hospitals and health care providers to learn how to play its game.

On the Prairie Dog
Steve Haynes



And when they were hooked on government payments, then Congress and the legislatures realized how much money was going into health care and demanded cuts. That meant paying hospitals and doctors, pharmacists and other providers less than their normal rate, often less than their cost, to "save" the government money.

So who, then, pays the rest of the cost if the taxpayers won't? Why, the people who can afford it, those who pay their own bills and those with private insurance.

Is it any wonder that few can afford either medical insurance or medical care today?

And what about the uninsured, the working poor who can't afford insurance and can't afford to be sick?

No matter what the rules say, the first question they will hear at the emergency room is, "How do you plan to pay for

this? Do you have insurance?" And they know that the hospital or doctor is liable to sue them for the bill, taking whatever little they might have, so they stay home.

The system is broke, yes. And as much as anything, the government made it that way.

While the simple answer would be to get government out of health care and let people figure out their own solutions, it's not that easy.

Four decades of government money and government interference destroyed the old system. Vast increases in medical costs make it nearly impossible for individuals and families to handle their health-care costs without insurance.

And insurance has gotten so expensive that many cannot afford it.

No, whatever is done — if it is to do more than simply make this mess worse — will require careful planning, attention to the details of what will work and what will not work and consideration of nongovernmental solutions, something that gets no play at all today.

Can we expect that from Congress?

The first order is to avoid the impulse to rush, no matter what the White House says.

It's time to have a chat with the ladies

Okay, it is official. I am old, cynical and critical. Now you must realize I am a product of the 60's, the free thinking, bra burning, women's liberation and hope of equality for all era.

Where has all that effort and desire to be seen as an individual rather than a sex object gone? As I watch more and more cleavage appear on the cooking channel, home and garden TV and even the weather channel, I fear the cause has evaporated. Some would say men don't have to look, but most men and frequently women will look. There is a reason schools set dress codes and an absence of cleavage is one, because it is distracting.

There is more substance to this complaint however than just cleavage. It reveals (pun intended) a need to be noticed by men. Women were supposed to be subservient to men for so many years. This was the result of patriarchal family styles as adhered to by fundamentalist religious sects. It was dictated

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



not just in the Christian mind, but also adhered to by fundamentalist Islam and Jewish branches.

Women have been (and in many cases still are) underpaid and undervalued. At a time when we should have progressed to equality for all, have women, particularly young women, become their own worst enemy? Has their attire flaunted their need for attention for all the wrong reasons?

Recently, Jimmy Carter resigned after six decades of membership from the Southern Baptist Convention citing the lack of women in significant roles within the church. True some of this prejudice is the result of men's desire

for superiority, but if women are to achieve significant progress they have to promote themselves not as an object of attention but rather as an equal partner of achievements.

I know there are many young women who dress appropriately and I admire them for that. Women have accomplished much in the almost five decades since the sixties, but it came with hard work and a determination to be valued as a person.

Have they earned the right to expose their cleavage and other body parts? Perhaps, but does it send the message of achievement and success one wants to impart, or does it rather promote their sexuality in an environment where professionalism is expected. There is a time and place for everything, so perhaps it is time to review both the time and place.

For a copy of former President Carter's letter please email me and I will forward it to you. (mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net)

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