

Bush Presidents seem to get 'cold shoulder'

There is something sadly missing at the many rallies around the country featuring Sarah Palin and others associated with the Tea Party movement. Maybe *missing* isn't the proper word, maybe it should be *ignored*.

But even in the recent presidential campaign this problem existed. Organizers continue to dig up President Ronald Reagan from his grave. Mr. Reagan was a great president, make no mistake about that, but he — like all other presidents — had faults. That said, it's hard to understand why the two living Republican presidents are treated as though they never existed.

President George Herbert Walker Bush was an honorable one-term White House occupant, while son George W. Bush served two terms. They each achieved despite some very trying times. But history isn't going to dump them as irrelevant like some of their beloved Republicans seem to be doing.

Maybe a little "Bush Mix" in the most recent presidential campaign might have helped Sen. John McCain win out over President Barack Obama. Who would have ever thought the "skinny black guy with a funny name," as he used to describe himself, would become president. The Bush ingredients were there for the Republicans to use, but they stubbornly declined, denying a true American military hero access to the White House.

Odd as it may seem, Sen. McCain has decided to take the flawed route again — Palin Avenue — in his attempt to win re-election to another term from his native Arizona. He is in a tough primary fight with J.D. Hayworth, former Arizona congressman, and polls aren't giving the senator much breathing room. Sarah Palin was unable to garner enough support to put McCain over the top in the presidential run, so why is he using her again? While she drew huge crowds in the presidential campaign, those didn't translate into votes. Obama drew huge crowds, also, and those did translate into votes.

President George H.W. Bush served one term, losing his re-election bid to youthful William Jefferson Clinton, who went on to serve eight years. President George W. Bush served eight years, beating former Vice President Al Gore and then Sen. John Kerry, respectively. He certainly had something going for him to win the White House twice. So why are the two Bush presidents kept at arm's length?

Pundits, for what they are worth, point to a somewhat wrinkled GOP spread that might unravel in 2012 if the short-term Alaskan governor is given the nod to take on President Obama. We can see youthful Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty winning the GOP nomination and perhaps turning President Obama into a one-term commander-in-chief. We can't see that happening with Palin heading the ticket. Of course the Democrats have their fingers crossed that Palin gets the nod. The stage is being set. And if the Republicans want to include everybody in their tent — everybody — they better reach out and usher in their two living presidents. —TD

Christ-like quality in everyone

I remember how shocked I was a few years ago when I overheard a teacher say, "Children who are bullied want to be bullied." Basically she was saying they asked for it. I could not believe someone entrusted with the well being of our young people actually believed this. As I watched her though I began to realize she was very unaccepting of anything out of her closed circle. It was more comfortable for her to believe everyone could be just alike if only they tried. A little bit like the lecturer who handed a student's glasses to another student and instructed him to read the chart. When the other student said he couldn't see it, the lecturer told them to try harder. It was easier for this teacher to teach sameness rather than diversity whether that diversity was exhibited in culture, race, gender, sexual orientation or simply social functioning. There is never any excuse for bullying.

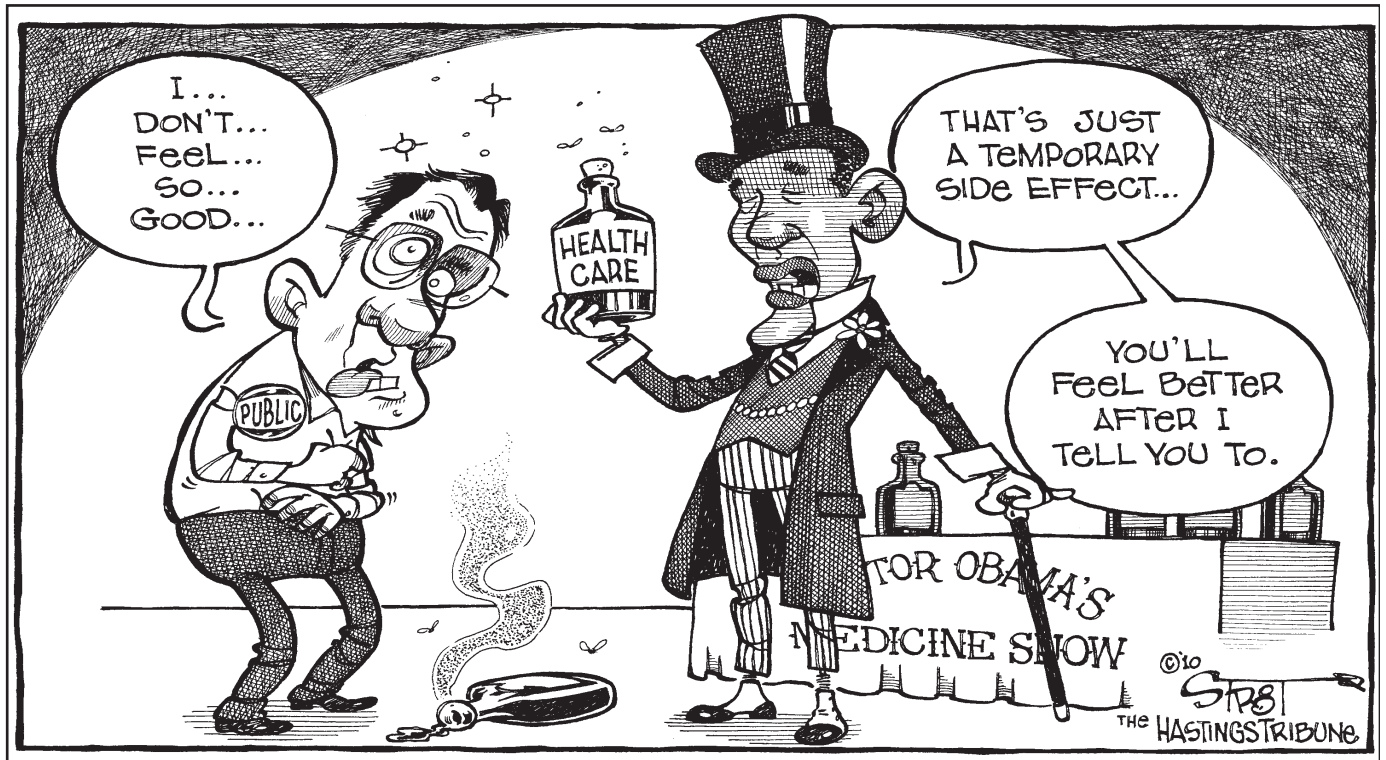
The young Irish girl in Massachusetts who committed suicide last month had endured a multitude of "beatings" from fellow classmates. It is becoming clear as parents, grandparents, teachers and communities, we are failing our youth. I sometimes think we let girls get away with the abuse more than boys because they don't usually get as physical, but it is still abuse. This young girl's parents talked with school administrators and alerted them to the problem on at least two occasions. Some teachers were aware of the bullying, and I have to wonder if they believed as the teacher I overheard did.

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



It is always easier to believe the victim is responsible. We did it for years in rape cases. The nine students thus far charged in this young girl's suicide committed tormenting acts against her since September. She had not lived in this country long enough to build a strong support system. Had she had an opportunity over the course of time to become a part of a community she might not have become so despairing as to take her life, but we will never know.

What we do know is that anyone of us who has sat back and allowed a child or adult to make fun of someone else is guilty. I imagine we all have things we have said or done we wish we could change, I know I do. I can't change what has been, but I can work to try to be more accepting in the future. There is a message for us all in this. We don't all have to think alike, learn alike or act alike, what we do have to do however is to realize the Christ-like quality which lives in everyone...Christian, Muslim, Jewish or agnostic, we are all children of God. May the hope of Easter manifest itself in all of us. Amen.



Senate recognizes dedicated resident

It was my honor and pleasure to officially recognize Sonny Weinhardt with Senate Resolution 1845 before the full Senate on March 18. As many of our home folks know, Sonny spent 56 years officiating Kansas State High School Athletics. Of those years, he officiated regular season 26 years in football games, seven volleyball and all 56 chasing high schoolers down the basketball court. In addition, Sonny worked the post season tournament games at all levels (regional, sub-state and state) 36 years of basketball, seven years of football and three years of volleyball. The basketball years also included officiating at the one and only Grand State Boys Basketball Tournament in 1975-76. Sonny also officiated 20 years at Special Olympic basketball events.

Sonny helped the Grinnell Town Team qualify in the middle 1950's to play in the American Baseball Conference Tournament in Wichita, as well as his being an all-star pitcher that played on numerous all-star teams. He was later drafted by a minor league team in El Paso, Texas.

Sonny has served the community in numerous capacities. He served terms as mayor, and on the city council. He was a member of the voluntary fire department and served as fire chief for a number of years. He was the maintenance engineer and coach for Grinnell public schools, coached little league baseball, served as a member of the Grinnell After Harvest Committee and was a founding member of the Cow Paddy Golf Course in Grinnell. The Grinnell Credit Union benefited by Sonny's serving as a board member. He was also one of the original members of the Grinnell Pride program.

It is always a pleasure to present our home town people to the Senators in the Chambers, but this was a very special event for me. Sonny's achievement in professionalism and durability will leave a lasting impression. There may be someone else in the United States who can top his years of officiating service, but no one can think of who it might be. Sonny certainly holds the official record according to the Kansas State High School Activities Association.

During the past week, we have had four pages from Oberlin Community High School, three of my grandchildren from Grinnell in to page and all 33 members of the Quinter Football Champions as

Senate Doings

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



guests in Topeka. With the addition of numerous drop-ins from the 40th District and the multitude of phone calls, it has made me feel a little closer to the home folks. I very much appreciate that.

As we wind down the session before the break, few things have changed regarding budgets and tax increases. There is a lot of anxiety about where tax rates will be increased and even if taxes alone will fill the voids. I feel there will be a decisive mode during the veto session, toward the end when we have received the most current budget projections. Through the process, many votes will be made and until the final budget with funding is developed, there will be many highs and lows. I ask for your patience and prayers.

SR 1809- Greenhouse Gas Regulation By Rulemaking: SR 1809 requests the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) withdraw its ruling declaring greenhouse gasses a toxic pollutant so the economic impact of the decision can be further studied. SR 1809 passed 34 to 3 on Tuesday, March 23.

HB 2509- Cause of Action for Child Pornography Victims: HB 2509 creates a private cause of action for victims of child pornography that may be pursued through private counsel or by the Attorney General. To bring a civil action in state court against a producer, promoter or knowing possessor of child pornography, the plaintiff must allege and prove they were a victim of a sexual offense listed in the bill while under the age of 18 and a portion of the sexual offense was used in producing child pornography. The plaintiff must also prove they suffered personal or psychological injury as a result of the production, promotion or possession of child pornography. The measure allows prevailing plaintiffs to recover actual costs and damages and provides for a minimum recovery of \$150,000. If the action was taken by the Attorney General, all damages would be

awarded to the victim but the Attorney General may seek reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

In addition, the bill establishes a statute of limitations to the provisions of the bill and requires the suit to be filed within three years after the conclusion of a related criminal case, upon notification of the victim by law enforcement of the child pornography or if younger than 18, within three years after the victim reaches the age of 18. The measure provides a civil cause of action may not be filed against law enforcement officers, forensic examiners, prosecutors or child advocacy organizations for acts done in the performance of their duty. HB 2509 passed 39 to 0 on Wednesday, March 24.

HB 2582- 911 Services, Fees, Charges, Collection and Distribution: HB 2582 enacts new law relating to 911 that applies to all modes of services (telephone, cell phone, VoIP) capable of contacting a public safety answering point (PSAP). The measure imposes a prepaid wireless 911 fee of one percent per retail transaction in Kansas, effective January 1, 2012.

The bill establishes a 911 statewide coordinator and 911 Coordinating Council to develop and implement 911 policies for the state. The bill allows the process for moving towards next generation or NG911 that is internet based and capable of receiving text messages and digital images and will allow the state to keep better pace with changing technology. HB 2582 passed 40 to 0 on Wednesday, March 24.

HB 2585- Reporters Shield Law: HB 2585 creates a journalists' privilege for certain disclosures of information by clarifying that a journalist is not compelled to disclose any previous undisclosed information or the source of the information while acting as a journalist until the party seeking disclosure establishes the material is relevant to the controversy for which the disclosure is sought, cannot be obtained by alternative means and is of compelling interest. HB 2585 passed 39 to 1 on Tuesday, March 23.

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer of Grinnell represents the 40th District of northwest Kansas. Contact him at Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov or call (785) 296-7399.

'Crippled' since Texas

We've been home from Texas for a week, now, and I am just starting to feel up to walking across the room. My lower back is my "achilles heel." And, the Friday before we left Texas I either turned wrong or lifted wrong. I've been "crippled" ever since.

The 24 hours spent behind the wheel probably didn't help it much, either. We've been home a week, and I've been chair-bound the entire time. Finally, though, I think I've turned the corner and am not experiencing pain with every step. Getting up and down out of a chair is still a little tricky. Jim has taken good care of me. He's not afraid to do a load of laundry. Although, I'm a little fearful of the results. He's taken care of meals if I didn't think I could manage, and he's gone to work every day, too. This must be part of that "in sickness and in health" fine print.

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



Since our return home, I've talked with my daughter, Halley, every day. She's the one that had the surgery and she says she is getting better and stronger. She also said she sure likes her naps every day. She's going to have a hard time going back to work.

We had a nice surprise waiting for us when we got home last week. Well, actually, I was the only one surprised because Jim and son, James, were in cahoots the whole time. During our remodel, the front porch had become a "catch-all" for tools, sup-

plies and building materials. It was an eyesore, but, one I accepted as part of the process. You can imagine my thrill when we pulled up in front of the house to see the entire porch, totally clean.

James had moved everything, with his dad's permission, to one of the sheds. When the weather warms up a little, I am looking forward to having my morning coffee on the front porch.

In addition, he finished the library room. He primed and painted the walls and painted the old floor. He even decorated with an over-stuffed chair, a side table and lamp and an artfully placed throw blanket. I have my little reading nook. How perfect is that?

We love to travel and see our kids. But, pulling in to our little town is always a relief. Jim stood in the kitchen, clicked his heels together and said, "There's no place like home; there's no place like home; there's no place like home."

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