

United States Senators shirked responsibility

In an attempt to save themselves from crushing defeats, the United States Senate shirked their constitutional responsibilities this week to run home and try to get reelected.

En masse the senators decided to drop what they were doing so they could go to their home states and campaign. It wouldn't be so bad except for the fact that the senate was in the middle of some fairly important negotiations, namely the national budget. Without a budget or a continuing resolution—a temporary bill that will keep government services operating—by today, the government would have been shut down in a "life imitates art" moment from *The West Wing*. Thankfully they remembered to pass the resolution before they skipped town. The vote was 84-14, so it wasn't just a one-party thing.

The budget itself included some increased spending, and nobody wanted to be labeled a big spender in the weeks before the election.

The Senate had been scheduled to stay in session until next week. Now, however, they've put off a whole mess of bills including a decision on whether or not to extend the Bush-era tax cuts, which have been the big bone of contention for the past several weeks. To put that much emphasis on one issue, in effect saying the economic future of the country revolves around it, and then postpone the decision, is just irresponsible.

But never fear, the Senate did get some important work done Wednesday: they passed a bill to require television stations to keep commercials at the same volume as the programs they interrupt. Nothing against this truly vital piece of legislation, but perhaps the Senate's time would have been better spent elsewhere before bolting to their home states.

The political effect of this decision is that important things will stay in a holding pattern until after the election.

To get anything done under this Senate, they will have to have a lame duck session, which is something of a gray area. Continuing to exert power in the short time between when the people vote you out and when the next guy is sworn in, is ethically debatable.

If the electorate is paying attention, the real effect of this will be to only increase the current dissatisfaction with our elected officials and hasten their departure from office.

Kevin Bottrell



Thumbs Up to Norman and Gloria Nelson for all they have done for our community.

A special thumbs up to all those community minded citizens who serve on the City Council and the County Commission. Sometimes it isn't easy to put your money where your mouth is and stand up for your principles. Emailed in.

Remember to send Thumbs Up to: nortontelegram@nwkansan.com, call 877-3361 or mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. There is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community.

Your political connection

- ★ **Governor Mark Parkinson**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

- ★ **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399
- ★ **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

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Moving wall brings memories

The Friday night ceremony was moving, even from the distance I witnessed it. Later in the evening my son, Michael, and I moved slowly along the Wall reading names we did not know interspersed with some I did. The cool night air, the dark sky, the quiet surrounding us and the solitude of both the moment and the space were sobering. As we paused to look at the names, I could only begin to imagine the number of people affected by these losses. Each name had a family, a community, a support system which has mourned that person's loss for all these many years. I remember the turmoil the war caused within our country, the disrespect of celebrities who should have known better and the lasting effects of the loss of over 58,000 young people with the promise of life ahead.

A friend told me recently, "There will always be war," implying that's just the

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



way it is. As I experienced this memorial and remembered the troubled times of the sixties and seventies, I thought of the young lives being lost first in Iraq and now in Afghanistan, and I can only pray my friend is wrong.

I think of young children being raised in these countries. Each day is filled with roadside bombs, tanks and the sounds of gunfire filling the air. It does little to promote peace within a country let alone within a mind. Gunfire does not fill an empty stomach nor cure a disease. After

awhile it doesn't even generate fear, only anger. Children are growing up with war as the norm rather than the exception.

There is no doubt some wars are unavoidable... Pearl Harbor could not be ignored, but then there are other wars; wars with little hope of effecting change. I fear we are engaged in just such a war now, one in which the ripples of change will subside as quickly as the hand is withdrawn. Centuries of conflict are not easily discarded. Some say the true value of the Viet Nam War was in learning how not to fight a war; I pray we do not have to relearn this lesson every thirty years. Perhaps the true loss will never be known, the young person to find a cure for cancer, the wise peacemaker or the gifted musician who will never play another note.

To all who are responsible for bringing the Moving Wall Memorial gift to our community, thank you.

Grammy duty renews sense of innocence

I just returned home after two weeks of "Grammy duty." Our son, a stay-at-home daddy, had to spend two weeks doing his annual reserve time with the Coast Guard. Our daughter-in-law is on active duty in the Navy. They recently transferred to Des Moines and had few choices for babysitting. In August when we visited them for a couple of days, I said I would come if they couldn't find any other options.

They couldn't, so two and a half weeks ago my husband drove me to Des Moines and returned home the next day. I had a day for Annabella to get used to my being around. She is just 22 months old and has only been in the care of someone other than her mom or dad a couple of times.

I may be slightly prejudiced, but she is a beautiful, loving and sweet child. I learned quickly she is definitely a mommy's girl, even though she spends her days with her daddy. When it was time for her mom to leave for work, Annabella and I watched the Disney Channel. (As

Life is Good Rita Speer



a result, I have a new favorite TV show, *Phineas and Ferb*.) When she finished watching television, we usually played together until nap time.

I had forgotten how much fun a toddler has in unloading whatever container I put toys into. She loves being outside, so we took some walks and spent time on the deck. One evening her mom introduced her to sidewalk chalk, and the three of us were down on the front walk drawing pictures.

Annabella is at an age where life is beautiful and full of joy. She communicates when she is ready for a nap, finished with a meal or desirous of going outside.

She has confidence her needs will be met and encounters new people and experiences with positive anticipation. She finds delight in the simplest of things—examining and tossing rocks, jumping up and down, going up and down the stairs to her play area.

I know my being able to be there was appreciated, but I feel I received at least as much as I gave. Since being home I have reflected on what a splendid view of life she has and that it is unfortunate we lose that. Obviously her parents will teach her to be cautious—look both ways before crossing the street, don't talk to strangers—but she has much to teach us.

When was the last time you looked at a flower and saw its symmetry and beauty? When did you shout for the sheer joy of being alive? When did you find the beauty of the day or night to be irresistible? Annabella teaches me those things, and today I share them with you. Be joy-filled and share that with someone.

Kudos to letter writer

Dear Sir:

I'm renewing my subscription and also want to thank you and congratulate you for printing the touching, kind, Christian article letter by Robin Somers. I thought it moving and informative. I have no computer so please extend my plaudits and thanks to Robin Somers.

Yours truly,
Aileen M. Garrett



Thank you!

Dear Editor:
Thank you for sending the papers and printing the article about my brother John.

With appreciation,
Loretta Meitl
Colby

Letters to the Editor:

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or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654