

A candidate's job is to represent

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard

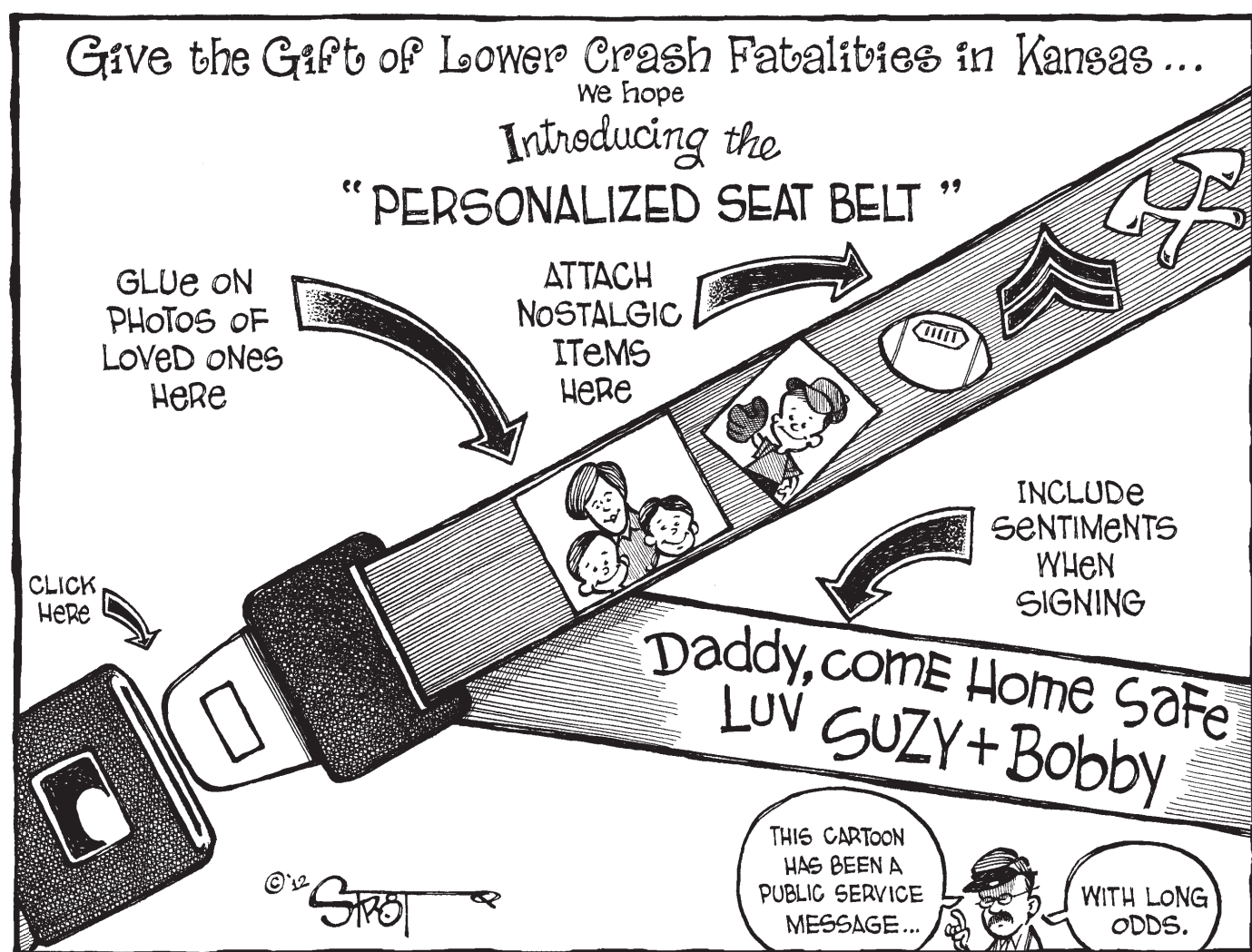


Two questions are remarkably nonexistent in the recent political debates i.e. campaigning for the GOP presidential nominee. The lack of addressing these two in the past, I believe, has contributed greatly to our present day political situation. The recent subject involved abortion, but that is only an example of the underlying problem and these accusations might well be used to target any issue.

Many have said Mitt Romney is, "wishy-washy". The accusation was, he can't decide he's true anti-abortion this late in life. I guess this really addresses two items. I have always found the accusation of wishy-washy to sometimes be a compliment rather than the intended slap in the face. First, there are few things in life which are black and white, with no room for compromise. Being able to see both sides helps avoid the political quagmire we are currently facing. Secondly, is the ability, at any age, to change one's mind. My mother was a wonderful example of someone who could re-evaluate an issue and, age aside, make a decision based on information not on, "but we have always done it this way," type of thinking.

The second unaddressed issue is best reflected in a recent flyer distributed in South Carolina just days before their Republican primary. An attack was leveled against former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, claiming he and his wife aren't "as anti-abortion as they claim to be," or interpreted as, not anti-abortion enough. We all want to find a candidate whose ideas will most clearly align with our own, hence political parties; but having said that we also need to remember that our candidate's primary function is to represent. The representation is to be that of the constituents' ideas and beliefs not representative of the candidate's. The question then is not the depth of the candidate's personal anti-abortion belief, but will the candidate represent the majority regardless of personal beliefs?

It is always easier to argue those issues we view passionately but at the heart of passion for these candidates should be representation. Human nature pushes us to constantly try to convince others of our point of view, one would hope with the goal of compromise not far behind. Secondly, being able to understand, interpret and represent your constituents' ideas, is the job description. As we search for the perfect candidate maybe we could spend less time on personal issues and more time on their ability to compromise and represent. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net



A child's place on the family farm

We're farmers. So I have a bias. I think farming is an excellent way of life.

I grew up on a farm but never drove a tractor until I was married. However I did get abused a little. And yet I have pretty fond memories of my childhood.

When our girls became old enough to "work", we had work ready for them. I worried. I trusted the hubby but also knew the dangers.

We all know. Know farmers missing limbs, dead. Know of children----

I'm bringing this up because the Department of Labor wants to rewrite the Child Labor Laws to prevent farm children from being "robbed of their youth!"

In our family the hours our daughters spent with their dad were a positive thing.

They learned responsibility, work ethic, problem solving and how to be a role model.

It may have held them back because when they began filling our job applications the only work experience they could list was the farm. On more than one occasion they felt the employer discounted the claim that they actually "worked" for Dad!

There is no room on any job application to relate all they learned working for Dad. The oldest expressed it well in the Father's Day card she sent last year. "Dad, I will never forget many of the things you've told me. Or understand them or do them, really. But I'll remember them."

Because farming is not only our occupation but a way of life, we feel threatened when we attract negative attention from a regulating body. Rather than take it personally consider: perhaps it is a symptom of the risk adverse society we live in.

During the holidays we were regaled with some work related mishaps that illustrate how silly we have become.

"A global aerospace, defense, security

This Too Shall Pass
Nancy Hagman



and advanced technology company" (description taken from their website) had an issue with staplers. The plastic casing of a stapler broke and cut a worker's hand. All employees had to turn in their staplers and the entire company had to work without staplers until a "safe" model was found.

At the same company a bat that was dive bombing workers on an assembly floor could not be destroyed because bats are protected. The supervisor was advised to find a route of "egress" and "encourage" the bat to leave! I'm not making this up! I read the memo, they used the words egress and encourage!

In another company safety goggles were required. Many of the guys preferred tinted goggles because much of the work was performed outside. One day a guy goes "into the hole" (a dark place) and pushes his tinted safety goggles up on his forehead to see, resulting in an eye injury. Happily there were no lasting effects to the eye. The company was not so lucky.

When the dust all settled it was pronounced that no tinted goggles would be allowed on the work site. What about UV ray protection????? Isn't that dangerous? Why not just rule the guys need to have a clear pair available for when they go into the hole?

Mike Rove of Dirty Jobs says this "In the jobs I have seen thus far, I can tell you with certainty, that safety, while always a major consideration, is never the priority."

"Never. Never, ever. Not even once."

"Is it important? Of course. But is it more important than getting the job

done? No. Not even close. Making money is more important than safety – always – and it's very dangerous in my opinion to ignore that. When we start to believe that someone else is more concerned about our own safety than we are, we become complacent, and then, we get careless."

Rowe goes on to say "-----ultimately, the only one responsible for my own safety is me." In the case of children the lack of the cognitive skills to decide what is or is not safe is a central issue.

The most important thing we can do to make the farm a safe place for children is think of them as extensions of ourselves. Supervise their activities and set good examples. We are never going to eliminate all the risk. One of the most troubling statistics is deaths of children under five on farms. The Department of Labor cannot legislate this away.

Our youngest daughter is the only one who ever suffered a farm related injury that required treatment from a doctor. She was a 20 year old college student when it happened. She has a small scar. She also has an excellent job that requires many of the skills she learned from her father on the farm. Practical stuff. Stuff her coworkers are amazed she knows. Even that scar injury taught her something.

If nothing is at stake what is the point of getting up in the morning? Perhaps that is why so many people suffer from depression and live such aimless lives.

Part of raising children is to protect them and part is about letting them go. Assume risk, take responsibility. If I was an employer I'd take one farm kid over ten city kids and I think you'll find a lot of employers who would.

I hope the Department of Labor reconsiders their new mission. Farm accidents involving young people dropped 48 percent from 1998 to 2009. No one wants kids to be hurt. Go find some real villains!

Your political connection

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- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. roberts.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-4774
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- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 300 SW 10th St., Room 262-E A., Topeka, Kan. 66612. ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us (785) 296-7399
- ★ **Congressman Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. huelskamp.house.gov (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124
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Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the community for the gracious giving for our annual kettle drive and bell ringing for the Norton County Salvation Army Chapter. Without the continued dedicated support from our local businesses and residents of Norton, this Salvation Army chapter would not be able to assist those in Norton County during that one time moment in life where the unexpected has hit them hard. Just in the last year we were able to assist 15 people during their time of hardship. Most of these individuals were families struggling. I am proud to be a part of such a giving community and my gratitude cannot be truly expressed by words. Again, thank you to all.



Letters to the Editor

Sincerely,

Penny Otter, Chairperson
Pam Menagh, Treasurer
Norton County Salvation Army

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002



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