

We don't need any more gambling

There'll be another big push for more casino gambling in the Kansas Legislature this year. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who appointed a special commission to study the issue, likely will get behind the drive. She'll say the state could use the revenue and the jobs, but that's an open question.

Lots of interests are willing to spend big money pushing gambling, and most of them stand to make money. Race track owners have lost most of their profits to casinos; they want slots to boost their fortunes. Suppliers want to open up our state. Others want to start new gambling operations.

There's no denying the appeal of casino games. A glance at state traffic statistics shows that U.S. 75 averages 10,000 cars per day north of Topeka, and just 5,000 north of Holton, meaning that a lot of people exit at the Indian casinos up there.

If casinos out in the middle of nowhere draw like that, imagine what they could do in or near major Kansas cities.

There's money to be made in the casino business.

But the question remains, do we really want or need more gambling in Kansas?

Time was when the state looked on gambling, liquor and prostitution as vices to be suppressed. All of those can be destructive and addictive, especially liquor and gaming.

But we found it next to impossible to get rid of Demon Rum, and there's always been a horse book or a card game going on in this state, legal or not.

Then the state latched onto gambling as a money-making scheme and got into the business itself. The state lottery opened the door for Indian casinos and the Legislature gave us gambling at dog and horse tracks.

The tracks made money for a while, but big "riverboat" casinos over in Missouri have siphoned much of the profit, and the Indian casinos have taken the rest.

But gambling as a business depends on the immutable fact that people lose money. Otherwise, there'd be no profit for the house. Someone has to be paying the casino's bills.

Legalizing gambling puts the state in the position of encouraging vice, not suppressing it. The state's Lotto game is pretty much the same as the mob's old numbers racket, though the mob used to give better odds.

Is that what we want for Kansas?

Now that we're making money off liquor and gambling, should we also consider taxing marijuana and prostitution? Or maybe state-run brothels?

It's almost impossible to win the battle against vice by passing laws, or we'd have made it work during Prohibition. It's another thing altogether to have the state promoting a vice, but with gambling, that's what we're doing.

More casinos?

The \$50 million the state stands to make would be a drop in the budget. We've no obligation to bail out track owners or make big casino firms rich.

From this point, there's plenty of gambling opportunities in our state already, maybe more than enough. The social costs are great.

Let's just say no.

— Steve Haynes

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

★ **Governor Kathleen Sebelius**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-2332

★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

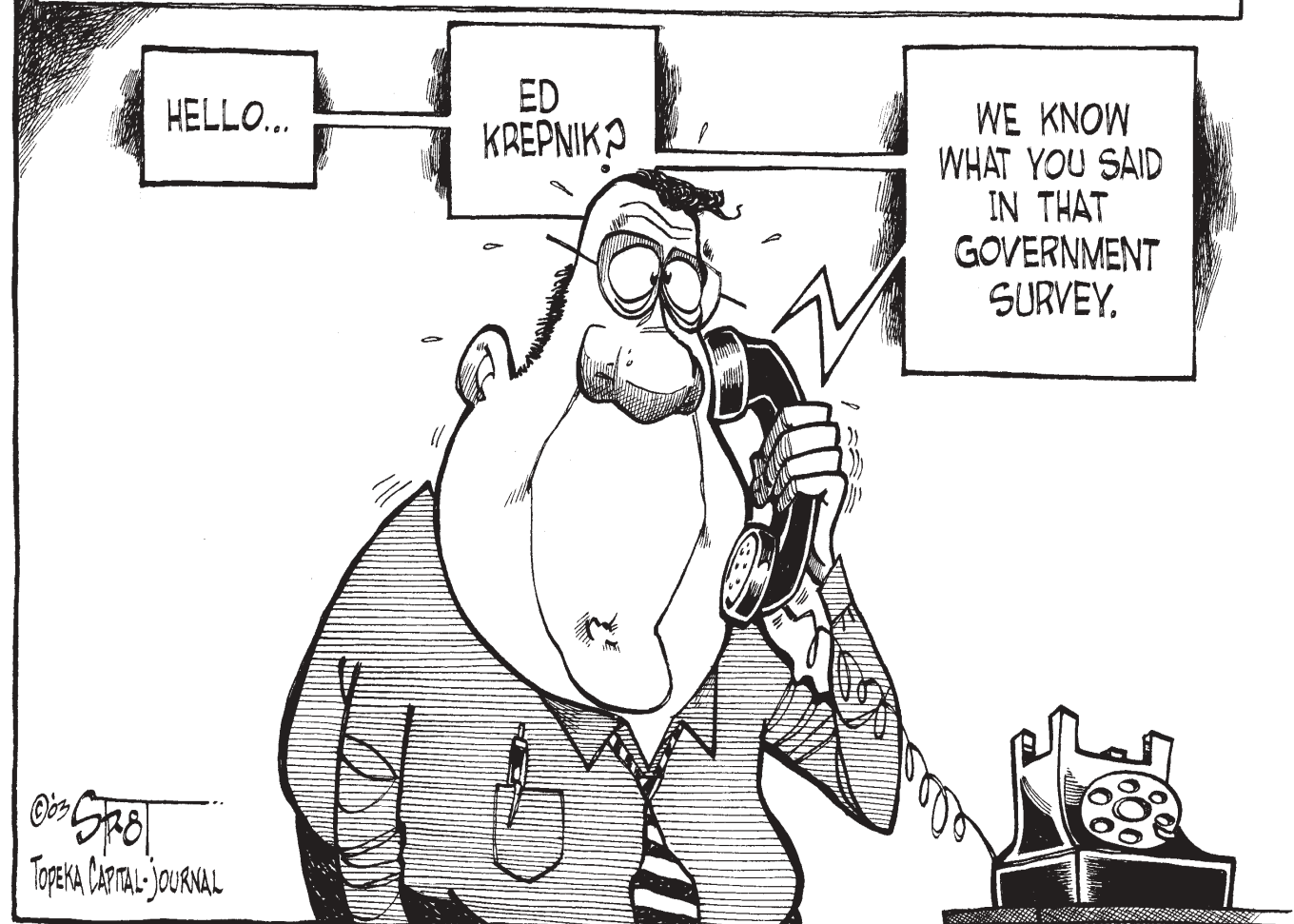
★ **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

★ **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715

★ **State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building, Room 449-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

★ **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

NEWS ITEM A recent gov't. survey reporting a surge in taxpayers that are OK with cheating, prompts the I.R.S. to increase enforcement...



Casual profanity makes her see red

The following column addresses an issue that may be offensive. If you do not wish to be exposed to graphic language, please stop now.

☆☆☆☆

Between the two of us, Jim and I keep the highways hot going to and from the county seats where we work.

Most of those miles are spent listening to the radio. And even though I worked many years for a country radio station, you will usually find us tuned to a Christian station.

Today we learned that the Federal Communications Commission has granted permission for the "F" word to be used on any television or radio show, anytime day or night. The commission said the word can be used whenever desired except in sexual situations.

Well, duh! A sexual situation is the last place it gets used. That word gets bandied about with such a casual air that it has taken on the meaning of a verb, an adjective, maybe even a noun.

Now you and I both know what I mean

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



when I say "the 'F' word". But that certainly doesn't mean I want to hear it while I'm having my morning coffee or watching television with my granddaughters. The feds have protected us over the years from offensive vulgarities on the airways, but ever so slowly those guidelines have eroded. Proper language has become a gray area.

Liberals will say, "That's the way real people talk. Programming merely reflects the morals of the community."

I say, "Perhaps people talk that way, but they shouldn't."

The way we speak to one another reflects the respect we have for each other and for our society. Your right to say what you want stops where my ears begin.

Problem is most conversations don't come with a warning label (like this column did) to alert the listener as to the content. It's too late after you've already heard it.

You can't "unhear" something. Nor can you forget it. There is nothing positive gained from hearing vulgarities.

Even adults who do use vulgar language don't want their children to use it. I've seen kids get their mouths washed out for speaking the same words they have heard their parents say.

In the early days of television, there were about seven words that couldn't be uttered.

By today's standards, it seems puritanical that pregnant was once a prohibited word. Now, on any given cop show somebody is "kn—ed up"; they aren't merely mad, they are "pi—ed off"; someone isn't stupid, they are a b—head. The line keeps getting pushed farther and farther back.

If there was ever a time when you should write your congressman, this is it.

All it takes for evil to prevail is for a few good people to do nothing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

To the Editor:

As we prepare for our Thanksgiving Day celebrations, it is a special time to reflect on the bounty most of us enjoy every day.

It is a time to remember that our food, and products used to produce our clothing, housing, medicines, fuel and other products used on a daily basis didn't just appear in a store. They got there, thanks to a tremendous partnership of farmers and ranchers, processors, brokers, truckers, shippers, advertisers, wholesalers and retailers.

National Farm-City Week, the seven days leading to and including Thanksgiving Day, has been proclaimed each year by the President, to emphasize the successful partnerships between rural and

urban residents who make our food and fiber system the envy of the world.

"Partners in Progress" is the ongoing theme of Farm-City Week. The key is the interdependence among those who produce the products, those who consume the products, and all those in the production and marketing chain between the producer and consumer.

Farmers and ranchers do not work alone. Farm workers, researchers, processors, shippers, truck drivers, inspectors, wholesalers, agribusinesses, marketers, advertisers, retailers and consumers all play important roles in the incredible productivity of our nation's food and fiber system.

This week, as we gather with family and friends around the Thanksgiving table, it

is fitting that we count among our blessings the vital farm-city partnerships that have done so much to improve the quality of our lives. Rural and urban communities working together have made the most of our rich agricultural resources, and they continue to contribute to our health and well-being and to the strength of our economy.

It is a time to say "Thank You" to all those who make the Farm-City connection so successful.

Charla Sprigg
Megan Mapes
Marilyn Donahey
Women's Committee
Norton County Farm Bureau

Conway Springs salutes Norton

To the entire Norton community and the school system:

I would like to express my gratitude to all of you for what you showed on and off the football field last Saturday in Conway Springs.

From the time you entered into our stadium until the time that the last Blue Jay fan boarded the bus, you showed tremendous sportsmanship as well as common courtesy.

Last year, we traveled to Norton to play a tremendous Blue Jay team and I was completely impressed by your community, coaches, and players. You have much to be proud of in Norton and this year's football team is simply another reason to be proud.

Your band, cheerleaders and fans are also jewels in your crown. In football, there can only be one winner on the scoreboard.

However, on Saturday, I felt like there

were two communities that won.

It seems that in the world we live in, it is important to show others up or try to make it a point to put others down.

I saw none of that from either side on Saturday and therefore, we all win. I spoke with a few of your players as they exited the field and tried to give some comfort in the fact that they had a great

year and that there is no reason for anyone from Norton to hang their head. Thank all of you for what you are as a community and school.

You should be proud and I will forever hold Norton in high regard.

Respectfully,
Clay Murphy -
Supt. Conway Springs Schools

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.