



## Newspapers are vital in American democracy

Since this is National Newspaper Week, it's a good time to talk about newspapers today and the future.

Newspapers have been a vital force in American democracy since Colonial times. Their importance in public affairs was recognized by the Founding Fathers, who gave newspapers second billing only to God when they wrote the Bill of Rights.

That has not changed, nor is it about to. Newspapers have been around for nearly 400 years, and they will be here for the foreseeable future.

You may have heard that newspapers are dying, about to be replaced by the Internet. That's hardly the case.

You may have heard that newspapers are broke, about to disappear. That's not true, either.

Many bigger papers, dailies in the cities, are struggling. Several large publishing firms are in bankruptcy. That is only vaguely related to technology or competition.

Larger dailies are under pressure from electronic competition, it's true, but their real problem is the shift to the suburbs which began after World War II and the resulting fragmentation of urban communities.

Most grew up serving a single city with a single mayor, school board and City Hall. Now, dozens of suburbs and suburban schools split the urban pie. There's little sense of community. And city newspapers have struggled to keep up for decades.

The big bankruptcies stem mostly from leveraged takeovers that left newspaper companies unprepared to meet new competition and most of all, short of cash to pay their inordinate debt loads. When a financier, not the founding family, controls the Tribune Co., owner of the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and other major papers, that can't be good.

And it wasn't. Today, those venerable names are part of the parent company's bankruptcy, and with competition and a recession, the papers can't help the firm pay its debt. It's sad, but it's not an indication of health or outlook of the newspaper industry.

Outside the cities, where more than three-fourths of all American newspapers do business, things are going much better. These operations, known as community newspapers, are alive and healthy. Their balance sheets look nothing like the red-tinged reports of the big dailies.

The *Wall Street Journal*, the Associated Press and others have, in fact, reported this, but the good news had been but a drop of ink among the market reports and horror stories about the city press. The National Newspaper Association, which represents community newspapers, has tried to get the word out, but it's like swimming upstream in a flood.

So, what of the future?

We think community newspapers will be around for a long time, because they do something no one else can or will: produce local news about a town or county or neighborhood that people who live there just have to have.

Without newspapers, our towns would be in the dark about public affairs, social events, neighborhood doings. This may seem like slow news to a city dweller, but it's the stuff of community.

You hear talk of websites taking over, but no one has figured out how to make a website pay, at least not the way newspapers pay. They can't sustain themselves. You hear cities and school board talk about putting their public notices on the Internet, but have you ever tried to find anything on a government website? Or even been to one?

One plan would have foundations and government put up money to replace newspapers with nonprofit websites. Without economic justification, though, it's hard to imagine those ever having much punch or lasting long in the market. It's just not realistic, and besides, any news organization that relies on public money can't maintain the independence so necessary to news media in a democracy.

No, newspapers will remain – and thrive. There's nothing on the horizon to replace them.

They may become more electronic – we've succeeded in converting the entire process except the printing on paper to electrons so far – but their basic form and function has proved both enduring and important.

Newspapers have survived other challenges – from King George to radio news to the loss of all their national ads to television in the 1950s – and come out more vital than ever, because we need them.

What will your newspaper look like at mid-century? Hard to say. Things change fast. But we believe there will be one, and you'll be glad to see it, however it arrives at your home.

— Steve Haynes



## Proposed bill would raise prices

Letter to the Editor:

The latest cap and tax proposal introduced by my Senate colleagues from Massachusetts and California might sound pretty good on the coasts, but to those of us that live and work in Kansas and across the midwest, this bill raises the price of gasoline, diesel, fertilizer, natural gas and coal.

If this bill were to pass, Kansans, and all Americans, including those in big cities that depend on

## Letters to the Editor

the food and fiber we grow, are likely to see an increase in our utility bills, transportation costs and basic consumer goods in exchange for little to no reduction in carbon emissions.

It is not in the best interests of the United States to undertake mandatory carbon reductions until developing countries like China, India and Brazil agree to the same.

As a member of the Senate Agriculture and Senate Finance Committees, I will continue to fight against such proposals that limit our ability to compete in a global marketplace, ration domestic energy and result in greater government bureaucracy.

U.S. Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS)

## Sportsman against CRP option

Letter to the Editor:

The USDA has announced that one of their policy options is to drop 8 million acres of CRP, nationwide. As a sportsman and conservationist, I am against this!

It is completely unacceptable! We must push for a 40 million acre cap instead of 28 million.

I would like to see:

• Make safe and Upland Bird Habitat Buffer programs continuous and available to all expiring contract holders.

• Call on USDA to implement a CRP open fields public access program immediately.

• Encourage USDA to enroll expiring/expired CRP into the grasslands reserve and the Conservation Stewardship programs.

If we don't act, we will lose. Email comments to CRPcomments@tecinc.com. To find out more and make comments at www.regulations.gov and your local FSA office. Comments are due by Oct. 19.

Chuck Kribs north of Bird City

## Hangin' With Marge

By Margaret Bucholtz



*margeb@cityofstfrancis.net*  
I am beginning to think there might be something wrong with me.

Since I have been staying at home this past year I have began watching more television than ever before in my life.

Now I have the assumption that women watch HGTV, DIY, and soap operas. Not me! I watch Headline News, Law and Order-Special Victims Unit and NCIS.

Why? I really don't know. The only thing I can think of that in a prior life (which I don't really believe in), I was either a bad person or a policeman.

However after this last week, I think I am going back to keeping the television off and reading, writing and learning how to run programs on my computer.

On Saturday Kurt asked me to go to the farm and help him move the drills home so he could finish planting wheat. When we left the house I didn't bother to check to see if we had locked the door, but it really isn't a big thing in this wonderful neighborhood.

When we got home Kurt immediately went to the field and I went out into the yard to finish up a few things. After that, I went in the house to take a bath.

It was then that I found spots on my carpet in the hallway. Immediately NCIS jumped into my brain.

I first tried to remember if I had been in there in the last few

minutes. (It's just that I don't remember too much). After carefully going through my mind of what I had been doing, I came to the conclusion that I hadn't been in there.

Then it has to be a crime! I got down on my hands and knees and checked the spot that looked wet. Sure enough, it was wet.

Someone had to have been in the house while we were gone and maybe possibility still is in there.

I went to the field and asked Kurt if he had spilled anything in the hallway or used the bathroom in any way since we had been home. This was not only to play the NCIS role, but in case someone was in the house he would have every opportunity to get out.

Kurt, thinking I was losing it, just looked at me and shook his head "No." (He is kind of my Gibbs, as you don't bother him while he is doing something important.)

I went back to the house and with a shaking body and a sharp eye, I took my bath.

By the time I got out of the tub, my knee was hurting and was swollen like a watermelon, so I took a pain pill.

When Kurt came in from the field I went to bed thinking I was safe.

That is when it happened.

There was a man standing over my bed. I couldn't see what he looked like, I didn't know him and I certainly couldn't scream. He had a mask over his face and he was reaching across the bed holding something in his hand.

Just as his hand was coming down, I tried one more time to scream. At that moment I woke up.

So now you know why I am giving up TV!

GOD SAYS  
Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.  
Matthew 7:12

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Lezlie McCormick ..... Production  
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## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



*scmcormick@nwkansan.com*

Nothing frustrates me more than hearing about a U.S. veteran being disrespected. When I'm told about a soldier who has come home, having to fight another battle with the government to get health care, it just drives me nuts. The deal was this: they took care of us, so now let's take care of them.

But every now and then someone gets it right. Last Saturday I had a few minutes to surf the television channels before we left for a volleyball tournament. I came across a show on ESPN2, a sports station, which was called *Grateful Nation*.

This episode featured Sgt. First Class Greg Stube. A veteran Green Beret medic, he was injured in September 2006, fighting Taliban forces on a hill named Sperwan Ghar in southern Afghanistan. While manning the turret of a special forces truck, a bomb blast practically tore off his right leg and caused a gaping wound in his side. As intense machine-gun fire continued he was dragged to safety by Staff Sgt. Jude Voss.

Sgt. Stube was the guest of Sawtooth Outfitters of British Columbia, Canada. Though it took some work, the soldier rode horseback into the mountains to bag a Shy-

rus Moose and Mule Deer buck. His Army training didn't hurt his shooting skills.

It was obvious that both the hunter and his guides came back with a memory of a lifetime. I say it couldn't have happened to a more deserving soul.

*Grateful Nation* is scheduled to run through December on ESPN2. If you are into hunting, or just want to see something good happen in someone's life who has paid their dues, tune in on Saturday morning.

**Church of Christ**  
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424  
502 W. Spencer  
Norman Morrow - Minister  
Bible Class 11 a.m.  
Morning Worship 10 a.m.  
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

**United Methodist**  
Church Office 332-2292,  
Church 332-2254,  
512 S. Scott  
Pastor Morita Truman  
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.

**Seventh-Day**  
Adventist Church  
785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams  
Pastor Jerry Nowack  
Sabbath School 9:30  
Morning Worship 10:45

**St. Francis of Assisi**  
**Catholic Church**  
625 S. River • 332-2680  
Fr. Roger Meitl  
Sunday Mass 11:00 a.m.  
Weekday Mass 8 a.m.  
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

**Salem Lutheran Church**  
332-3002  
Pastor Chris Farmer  
Sunday School 10 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11 a.m.  
Communion 3rd Sunday

**Solid Rock**  
**Baptist Church**  
412 S. Denison  
Welcomes You!  
Pastor Allen Coon  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30  
Prayer Meeting, Wed  
7:30 p.m.

**First Christian Church**  
Pastor Jeff Landers  
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster  
Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m.  
Church Service 10:15 a.m.

**First Baptist Church**  
2nd & Scott • 332-3921  
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday Evening  
Service 6:30 p.m.,  
Wed. AWANA Club  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

**St. Francis**  
**Community Church**  
332-3150  
204 N. Quincy Street  
www.sfccfamily.com  
Pastor: David Butler  
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.  
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.  
Potluck & Communion -  
Every 2nd Sunday  
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

**Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC**  
202 N. College  
Pastor Ken Hart  
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday Eve. Bible Study 7 p.m.  
Communion 1st Sunday  
of the month

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*Praise the Lord*