

# Opinion

**Free Press  
Viewpoint**

## Bill Clinton's book steals the headlines

(drumroll) "And now, ladies and gentlemen, William Jefferson Clinton!"  
His book, "My Life" has been born and he's on the book signing circuit in a big way.  
He's also all over the television screen.  
And on radio.  
You can't escape the former President of the United States.

It's a big book, 900+ pages, and people were literally lined up by the thousands to buy the thing and have him sign it.

The price is somewhere around \$37.  
Wife Hillary's book was cheaper — and not nearly as big.

But President Clinton had a lot of say.  
Apparently.  
And about a lot of things, even his affair with "that woman, Monica Lewinsky."

We watched some of the televised interviews, which, in our estimation, were too long and boringly repetitious. But each of the interviewers focused on the same chapters in his life.

The only way each of us will know firsthand what he had to say is to buy the book. If you think President Clinton is worth \$37.

Clinton haters and Bush bashers are one of a kind. Doubtless those who had little regard for Mr. Clinton when he was occupant of the White House will shell out \$37 for the book, and if they do they will be like Kansans who sneaked into liquor stores to buy booze when this state went semi-wet back in the late 1940s. They'll purchase the book on the sly.

So, Clinton has again won. He has shoved more important domestic and international events off of front pages and out of nightly news headlines. Media again melted in his arms.

Ah, boy. All this over a book. But then, wasn't President Clinton a book in his own right?

*Tom A. Dreiling  
Publisher*

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**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

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## Nor'West Newspapers

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## Don't be bashful...speak up

**WHAT** you see on page 3 today is what newspapering is all about.

It's not about me and my so-called liberal views — views that many Democrats here are quick to say doesn't place me in their party. Views that hardly fit the Republican mold. Views that Ralph Nader would call "too much of a left/right mix."

They are all correct. They are my views. No-body else's.

That said, I'll get back to my opening thought: What you see on page 3 today is what newspapering is all about.

**You.**  
And what **you** think.

And those writers appearing on today's "Letter" page deserve a round of applause for sticking their necks out for what they believe.

You see too many of us have our own perspectives on the issues up for grabs. But we don't want to put our necks on the public block for fear of ridicule, which is no big deal. That's what you **should** be doing.

I have been called some pretty nasty things because I publicly share how I feel on things happening right here at home. But when something pushes a certain button, I respond. Say what you want but at least I get it off my chest, much like Josie, Pam, Robin and Doug are doing on page 3 today.

Two of the three letters take issue with our very own Tish Cox over her column on gay marriage. A third letter takes Ken Poland over the coals for his recent column on the so-called moral majority.

These folks are well aware that their opinions aren't going to be 100 percent acceptable. But that's not why they wrote. They did so because two columns in the *Free Press* rubbed them wrong. And they wanted to set the record straight as they saw it. That's how it should be done.



**Tom Dreiling**

• My Turn

Why keep your feelings closeted? Share them. You just might be surprised how many readers share your feelings. And that's always a thing of comfort to get a phone call or two and hearing those voices say, "I'm with you. Thanks for saying it!"

Someone asked the other day if I ever thought of doing as another circulated daily in our area does: provide a call-in number whereby readers can vent briefly and their venting appears in print without a name attached. I told the gent I've thought about it and it may become a reality. I'm not always sure that's the solution. But if that is what it will take to get you — I mean **you**, yes the one looking me squarely in the eyes — to comment, maybe it would be worth the investment. We'll see.

But even though that other paper provides that service, they still get their share of letters for publication duly signed.

-td-

**SOMEONE** was out of chewing tobacco a while back over a cartoon that appeared on the Opinion Page the day that former President Ronald Reagan was buried. He thought it was offensive, in poor taste. Didn't like it one bit. Of course he chalked it up to this "liberal" publisher. But he was barking up the wrong tree. You see, my editor (I don't think she is of my political faith) downloads the cartoons for the Opinion Page. She places one each day in the Edit

Page folder for my use — or rejection. I've rejected only about a handful since I've been publishing the *Free Press* well into my 7th year. The cartoon in question sort of caused one of my eyebrows to flip a bit, but I thought if it was okay with her, I could live with it, too.

But I must also be quick to point out that I, and only I, am responsible for all content of this newspaper as publisher. That's part of the publisher's responsibility. Of course in that role I can't possibly read every little thing that goes into the columns of this newspaper so I depend greatly on the editor and reporter to keep me out of the doghouse.

Sometimes it just doesn't work out and when it doesn't I accept the hits rendered. And that is as it should be.

-td-

845.

-td-

**I'VE** got some rather exciting news to share with you, but I can't do that until after it is officially announced Thursday. It's a personal thing and it brought me a great deal of pride. I'll let you in on it in Friday's column.

-td-

**I WAS** very impressed with the military's involvement at the concluding ceremony at Sacred Heart Cemetery for Paul Wintz last Thursday. Those young men and women were very sharp in dress and manner. From the gun salute to the folding of the American flag and presentation to Paul's wife Judy, and the playing of Taps — it was a thing of emotional beauty. It was so quiet you could have heard a leaf touch the ground. That was a memory I took from the gravesite to place on my mantel of thought.

-td-

**HAVE** a good evening.

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*Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press.*

## Those fighting Republicans

Do Republicans ever stop fighting in Kansas? Often, the answer seems to be no. The feuding continues even though the conflict perpetually lifts the fortunes of otherwise downtrodden Democrats.

Rank-and-file Republicans are now being treated to the spectacle of a regional GOP leader suing the state chairman over a decision to allow unaffiliated voters to participate in the Aug. 3 Republican primary.

Litigants on both sides insist the battle is not about giving one faction the advantage. Yet, like nearly every other dispute among Kansas Republicans, the latest one has become a symbol of the never-ending conflict between conservatives and moderates.

"Once again our party has managed to air its dirty laundry on the front page when it's not necessary to do so," Sen. Derek Schmidt, a moderate from Independence, said during a recent interview.

The latest fight started with a 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision in April to strike down an Oklahoma law. That law allowed unaffiliated voters to participate in primaries, but blocked members of one party from voting in another party's contest.

A three-judge appeals panel said states cannot tell parties who can vote in their primaries without violating party members' right to associate with whomever they please. The appeals court said the parties themselves must have the choice.

The 10th Circuit ruling wasn't surprising. In 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Connecticut law requiring closed primaries for the same reason. In 2000, the high court also invalidated a California law requiring parties to open their primaries to any registered voter.

Kansas law has mandated closed primaries since 1908. However, Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh, the state's chief elections officer, concluded the Kansas statute wouldn't with-

**John Hanna**

• Campaign Chatter

stand a court challenge and asked the GOP and Democratic state chairmen what their parties wanted to do.

Both chairmen opted to open their primaries to unaffiliated voters. Democrats had a vote of their state executive committee first, while GOP Chairman Dennis Jones made the decision for his party after consulting other Republicans.

Jones said the decision wasn't about helping one faction or the other but about wanting to involve more voters in Kansas elections.

"The right to vote and the right to be judged by a jury of your peers are the two most fundamental parts of our democracy," Jones said in a telephone interview. "The right to vote should be as inclusive as possible."

But Republicans in the state's congressional delegation opposed the move, as did Attorney General Phill Kline. Also, the state GOP's constitution and its by-laws are silent on how the party determine who votes in its primaries — the Kansas law having made the issue moot for 96 years.

Susan Estes, the GOP's 4th Congressional District chairwoman, sued both Jones and Thornburgh. She contends that if Republicans want to permit unaffiliated voters to participate, they must call a state convention to amend the party constitution.

The legal battle comes ahead of elections in which the balance of power in the Legislature's GOP majorities and the party hierarchy is at stake.

There are 62 contested Republican primaries for legislative seats, and dozens of party precinct committee members, who influence the election of party leaders, will be chosen.

While Joe Aistrup, head of Kansas State University's political science department, thinks few races will hinge on whether unaffiliated voters are involved in the primaries, he acknowledged that the perception among many Republicans is different.

"The conventional wisdom is that by opening it up, you're marginalizing conservative votes, because the people coming in are moderates," Aistrup said.

Indeed, in its 2000 decision striking down California's "blanket" primary law, the U.S. Supreme Court noted that backers of the system believed opening the primary would "ease the way for 'moderate problem-solvers.'"

Republicans suspended hostilities enough in 1994 to give GOP nominee Bill Graves an overwhelming victory in the gubernatorial race.

But conservatives soon became disillusioned with the moderate Graves, particularly after he ridiculed a conservative party platform.

In 1998, state GOP Chairman David Miller, a conservative, challenged Graves in the primary. Graves spent more than \$1.6 million, setting a record in a determined — and highly successful — effort to crush Miller.

"Since then, there's just been a lot of paranoia on both sides," said House Speaker Doug Mays, a conservative from Topeka. "I wish we could all sort of agree that we're all Republicans and move on."

Other Republicans in both camps share Mays' desire, but the dispute over who votes in this year's primary probably guarantees continued conflict.

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*Associated Press Political Writer John Hanna has covered state government and politics since 1987.*

## Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

