

Opinion



Monday's Salute

Thumbs to...

✓**Harold Lefmann** — for sharing your cousins' experiences in the recent wave of Florida hurricanes.

✓**Cathy Gordon and Sheila Frahm** — on your "Booked for Lunch" political presentations. Democrat Cathy will give hers on Wednesday noon at Pioneer Memorial Library. You're all invited. Sheila's date will be announced later.

✓**Coach Steve Lampe** — on your latest and most deserved honor. Lampe is wrestling coach at Colby Community College.

✓**Sue Evans and Diane Stithem** — and all others, for the very fine "It's OK to say NO WAY" program. Sue is executive director of the Regional Prevention Center and Diane is coordinator of the "NO WAY" campaign.

✓**Dr. Keith Coplin** — on your book's ("Crofton's Fire") latest nomination. Coplin is a teacher at Colby Community College.

✓**Harriet Demaree** — on that very nice honor.

✓**Janis Schulte** — for sharing your periodic book reviews with this newspaper's readers. Janis is a teacher at Colby Community College.

✓**All Homecoming Kings and Queens** — in our reading area.

✓**Brian Olson** — for that somewhat optimistic fall crop report.

✓**School Bus Drivers** — for being the ones who start and end the school day, probably as important as any job in our districts.

(This column is prepared each Monday morning early by the newspaper's publisher. To submit a name, names or group, e-mail td@nwkansas.com, call him at (785) 462-3963 or fax 462-7749. Deadline is 9 a.m.)

Where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
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 Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web:http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison
State Sen. Ruth Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: rclark@ink.org



First step is to register

I was reading CD reviews in one of my favorite magazines when I was floored by something I saw. There, in a magazine that is so remotely not political was a teeny, tiny little bit of politics in a place I didn't expect it.

It's not the first time it's happened in the past six months.

Segments of the population that aren't normally political are starting to let their voice be heard.

In the same period of time, I've been accused of being liberal and biased because I'm a member of the media, and to borrow from the CD review written by a guy named Leigh Ramsdell who lives in Greenville, N.C., "I'm not here to say what's right and wrong."

That's what democracy is about, what it means to be an American. We have the right to change what is within our power to change.

If people don't get out and vote this year, they only have themselves to blame if the candidate of their choice is or isn't voted into the White House.

I'm not here to bag on Bush or defend Kerry. Too much mud-slinging and name calling has been done already.

Being American isn't about everybody being the same. It's about our freedom to choose.

People are unhappy with the current political situation. There's no need to name names. Republicans don't want a Democrat in the White House and vice versa.

The only solution is to get out and vote.

It only takes a little time and that's it, but it also helps to make an informed vote. It's not a situation where a person can just walk in blind and choose. They can, but what kind of behavior is



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

that considering the future of the country is at stake?

Making an informed decision goes beyond just showing up and casting a vote. It takes a little more time than that and also some research beyond what the media says.

Check out candidate Web sites. Contact your political party, talk, read, research and even watch the presidential debates.

There's no excuse for not voting. Advance voting is a convenience available now and because the polls open early and close late, most people should be able to get out and vote.

However, the first step is to register and then actually go vote.

MTV has its campaign to get young people to exercise their rights. Voter registration is offered online and people can also register to vote when they renew their driver's license.

Even Colby Community College's radio station, KTCC is airing spots to get people to register to vote.

What it will all come down to on Tuesday, Nov. 2 is the individual choice of millions of registered voters. Not John Kerry's Senate voting record or George W. Bush's Air National Guard service discrepancies.

That's history, something no one can change, but this year, I think Americans can make history. Make this an election where everyone who was able turned out to make a difference.

We, as a people, have an important decision to make on Nov. 2. Americans have the freedom to choose the right candidate, and as I said before, I don't care who people vote for as long as they think they made the right choice for themselves.

Voter registration for the Nov. 2 general election is open until 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 18. Voters can register in the county clerk's office at the Thomas County Courthouse, or your courthouse if you are living in another county. The Thomas County Clerk's office can be reached at (785) 462-4500.

Online voter registration is available at <http://www.rockthevote.com>, where potential voters can find out about their state's registration deadlines and other valuable information.

For undecided voters, there are still two presidential debates left and information on President George W. Bush is available online at <http://www.georgewbush.com> and the Web site for Sen. John Kerry is <http://www.johnkerry.com>.

Both sites have links to voter registration and people can sign up to volunteer for the campaigns for their candidate of choice, along with early voting, if they want.

So, like I said — there aren't too many good excuses for NOT voting this year. Don't forget. Tuesday, Nov. 2. A lot's riding on this one.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcx@nwkansas.com.

Kerry doesn't cut it

I almost entitled this column "Kerry doesn't get it" after the presidential debate Thursday, but that isn't exactly true. John Kerry does get it and that makes him even more frightening than if he didn't.

He talks about the mistakes George Bush has made and Bush has made a few mistakes since Sept. 11, 2001. Of course, one might argue that Franklin Roosevelt made a few mistakes and even the rightfully revered George Washington made a few blunders during the revolution, but that is called leadership and Kerry knows it.

He's hoping we don't.

Kerry brings up North Korea as proof that weapons of mass destruction were not part of the original reason for invading Iraq and also that the world is more dangerous since we did.

He doesn't, however, tell us what he would do differently about North Korea than has been done.

Diplomacy with North Korea has been extensive through China, a country who has a vested interest in keeping the lid on the maniacs in charge in North Korea. With Iraq, all we had for diplomatic assistance was the United Nations, led by France, Germany and Russia, who each had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Secondly, North Korea, while dangerous, is not threatening the world's oil supply. The oil supplying nations are producing all they can and the world needs more. While the terrorists may be a threat to Iraq, they constitute less of a threat



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

to the oil supply.

Third, does Kerry plan to invade North Korea? If so, what was so wrong about invading Iraq when we thought they had weapons capability?

Then Kerry accuses the administration of ignoring the genocide in the Sudan and claims our policy in Iraq had something to do with it. When I went to a preacher training school in 1995, there were five Sudanese men in my class.

They told me of the genocide going on at that time. In fact, General Charles "Chinese" Gordon of the British army was killed in Khartoum at the turn of the last century defending the African people from the Muslims.

How exactly does George W. Bush's actions in Iraq have anything to do with what has been going on for hundreds of years? By the way, the Bush administration has done more in the current crisis than any administration I can recall.

He says George Bush has done nothing for first responders, the fire and police departments of our country, another half-truth. It is true many

first responders do not have the materials and equipment they need, but the Bush administration has done more for the local fire and police departments than any of their predecessors.

He says George W. Bush lied about nuclear weapons in his state of the union speech, but that has been proven to be a red herring.

The Democrats jumped on documents that proved to be false and trotted out former ambassador Joseph Wilson to claim in a book that Bush knew it all along.

All the hoopla, however, covered up the rest of the investigation which found that, while some documents were suspect, Iraq did indeed try to get uranium from Niger.

Right after that, Joseph Wilson disappeared and the only time it is brought up is when there is a fast cheap-shot opportunity when someone thinks no one is looking.

Ultimately, George W. Bush has made some mistakes. One usually makes mistakes when one decides to take action. John Kerry keeps talking about how he would change things, but never gets around to how.

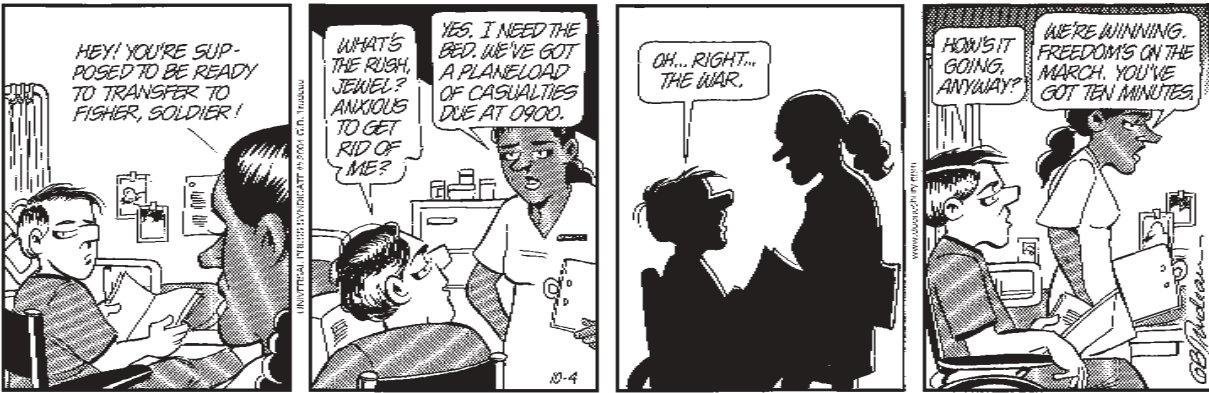
America needs a president who can make a hard decision and stick with it. John Kerry and George W. Bush have both said they can do that, but only one of them has proved it.

That makes my decision pretty simple.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelley@nwkansas.com.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau



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