

Opinion

A Kansas Viewpoint

Looking for good statesmen

From the Lawrence Journal-World

The dictionary says the term statesmanship refers to the skillful management of public affairs.

How much of that have we seen in recent times, a real and genuine effort at creatively managing public affairs so that citizens can be included and help make good things happen?

One official offers comments or proposals and in a heartbeat someone feels compelled to disagree, with little consideration to the merits of the offering. Whatever happened to discussion and compromise to reach a suitable common ground?

Consider how politics plays into all this. If the proponent belongs to one major party, someone from the other group offers instant opposition. If a Republican says he or she thinks something might work, a Democrat has to respond negatively, and visa versa. Never mind the potential of finding a sound solution to a given problem....

Republicans are under fire, often justifiably, for how they have handled various issues. But instead of generating support by intelligently explaining their stand and trying to sell the opposition, they stubbornly proceed as if they could not possibly be wrong.

Democrats keep telling us they have the answers to a lot of pressing questions and will provide them if they are elected to office in place of Republicans. If they are so perceptive and brilliant, why not propose their specific remedial views and programs so people may become interested in electing them? Why wait? Put it on the table and try to make it work.

One of the keys to good statesmanship, skillful handling of public affairs, is the ability to give and take with a minimal amount of ego and self-glorification. One of the finest practitioners of this process in our time was U.S. Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas. A staunch Republican, he had the great ability to deal with people on "both sides of the aisle" in Congress and to bring people together in the Washington power structure.

... The United States and its concerned citizens need topflight statesmanship now more than they have in many years. How glorious it would be to have people of Bob Dole's character, courage and perception in key roles now. We've had them before, why not now? Certainly such well-motivated people are lurking somewhere and can step forward to alter the current combative and nonproductive climate.

Any takers?

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwks.com or pdecker@nwks.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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32 is my favorite number these days

I'm counting down the days — no not until the November election or even Christmas.

I'm anxiously awaiting the first killing freeze of fall.

For about the past 20 years I have suffered from hay fever. I inherited it from my father. Even though the allergic reaction can happen from spring to fall, mine has always hit me from late August to the first freeze wherever I have lived.

One of my biggest fears of moving to the Great Plains from the Midwest was the intensity of hay fever. During my seven years in Iowa, my hay fever was mild. I took an over the counter medication that easily took care of the symptoms. I always thought high humidity levels, which are common in the Midwest, kept pollen down and my frustration minimal.

But it has not been the same story this year. I could easily tell the difference. The plants and climate of western Kansas intensify symptoms. I've switched to a stronger over the counter medication, but can tell when it is starting to wear off. Symptoms have interrupted my sleep on those nights when it is still nice enough to have a window open.

I've always joked hay fever sufferers should start a support group. Many times I've been told to find a prescription to make those approximate six weeks out of the year even easier to live with no matter where I live. Considering the cost of



John Van Nostrand

Line in the Dust

those prescriptions, and the invasive tests to find out which prescription is best — it's not worth it.

The anticipation for the first night below 32 degrees is inspiration enough.

The NFL started its season last week and my beloved, and struggling, Titans lost their first game to the New York Jets. But what I learned Sunday morning, my enthusiasm for the NFL is losing too.

Earlier this year, football fans were oohing and awing over the NFL Network, a cable station, broadcasting games this season for the first time. Tack that on to Monday Night Football, a cultural icon since 1970, also switching from network to cable television this year. That means fans have to pay more money to watch more games.

The NBC Network is broadcasting games on

Sunday nights, but to avoid lousy ratings, like what happened to Monday Night Football the past few years, what game will be aired won't be decided until the week before. NBC is wanting the best game of the week. Time will tell if it works.

Now, after reading some comments from a Sunday newspaper column writer, the NFL is not allowing local television stations to have their cameras on the sidelines. The NFL and one of the major networks will acquire game footage then sell it to the local stations for their news on Sunday nights. The NFL gets to control their image and make a buck off it from selling it to the local stations.

The NFL's television contract is worth bajillions and is a model for arrogance and greed. They force football fans in some regions to watch only one game at a time on a network station. Fans watching on the network can't watch another game's exciting last minute drive, or last second play, until after that game is over.

The kicker is some NFL stadiums have been funded with tax dollars and the private industries those stadiums are intended for, the teams and the NFL itself, are profiting.

Punting is starting to sound real good.
John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.

Your turn

Next time, in Holly Stephens' backyard

Jim Vollmer
Colby

This past weekend some 2,000 people joined in the fun at the Prairie Museum of Art and History. Judging by the faces on your Sept. 11 front page, a lot of people enjoyed the evening.

In that respect it was good for Colby; however, some of the residents living at Amber Waves Apartments take issue with the way it was done.

Our privacy was invaded by the steady vibrat-

ing of the bass and the beat of the drums. Now I know that money talks, and the Chamber of Commerce was out to do Colby proud in that area "apparently succeeding" but how about taking into account that the sound system blasted people out of their apartments "from families with small children to senior citizens" or don't these people count when there are dollars to be counted?

Both groups were talented, but the music was blared into our apartments without relief until 11 p.m.

In addition to the piercing resonance from the bass, a few young men decided to urinate in our parking area and against some of our apartments.

I don't wish to get personal, but if Holly Stephens, director of the Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce was so pleased with the concert, maybe next year the Chamber can put it on in Holly's neighborhood. That would certainly make some people living over here happy.

How did your Congressman vote?

Edna Hatcher
Colby

When I read Ken Poland's treatise on "The message we send" in the Monday, Sept. 11, 2006, issue of The Colby Free Press it made me think about religion.

I have learned in the past (from The Reader's Digest, in fact) that education and schools began because people wanted to know how to read so as to peruse the Bible. As time went by it became evident that various religious organizations disagreed on the path to get to heaven although they all believed in God.

In the United States, when a "holier than thou" stance took place as members of another sect did something awkward the fathers of our country were observant and, in essence, decided religious quarrels in schools had to be quelled so they put "separation of church and state" in the Constitution so that money in the Federal budget would not be funneled into various religious

groups.

It is a "no-no" for any religious denomination to be favored with our government's money. Kathryn Harris (on Chris Matthews six o'clock news on MSNBC) said, when asked about the incongruity of polls showing she was so far behind and her belief that she could win, related that God would help her win her election to the United States Senate.

Well, George W. Bush believes in God and so does Osama bin Laden and so do I! But Kathryn Harris doesn't believe in separation of church and state and she said so. She shouldn't hold an office in the United States government. She is now a Representative wanting to be a Senator.

I can understand why various churches could feel that funneling money into churches would be better than funneling it into the Iraq war but that war was unconstitutional also.

Last year Congress "raided" more money — \$173.5 billion — from the Trust Fund than any

single year in history. And then you get the "dirty" campaigners trying to destroy Social Security by saying the graying population is taking the money your grandchildren should have when it is the elderly who have had their money for Social Security in their old age taken out of their paychecks steadily for years.

Grandchildren should have jobs when they grow up so that they too can save for Social Security. It doesn't look as if Christianity is holding the reins in this Congress when some are attempting to show it is not the government's duty to provide healthcare such as Social Security and Medicare.

Other developed countries have thriving healthcare. One vote started the destruction of Medicare in the United States in the middle of the night when most of America wasn't watching C-Span where one could view the process. We can change that. We vote too. How did your congressman vote?

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

