

Opinion



Another Viewpoint

Campaigning in 2008

By Lawrence-Journal World

It was probably inevitable that both racism and sexism would rear their ugly heads in the presidential campaign of 2008.

At the beginning of the campaign, the diversity of the Democratic field was seen as refreshing, perhaps a watershed moment for America.

A woman, a black man and a Hispanic man all were among the serious contenders for the Democratic nomination. Maybe Americans were ready to leave racist and sexist attitudes behind.

Or maybe not.

As the race for the Democratic nomination winds down to a contentious close, those wedge issues have come back to the forefront. Will white Americans be willing to vote for a black president?

Is Hillary Clinton's defeat a sign that women still aren't fully equal in America?

They are questions that some Americans hoped we had put to rest. We hoped that we had reached Martin Luther King's ideal that all people should be judged by "the content of his (her) character."

And, yet, as uncomfortable as these overtones make many Americans, the current presidential race may be doing us a huge favor by making us face the discriminatory attitudes that still exist in our nation. It's only when we have strong, viable candidates who don't fit the stereotypical presidential description that we have to really look at our attitudes about race and gender.

Is this really a nation that would disqualify a candidate simply because he was black? Or simply because she was a woman?

We certainly hope not, but clearly that question is being asked in opinion columns, television commentary and political cartoons.

On one hand, it's too bad we're still having that discussion, and yet, if those attitudes still exist in American, it's high time to talk about them.

For better or worse, forcing that dialogue may be one of the greatest contributions the current presidential campaign will make to America's future.

Where to write, call

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

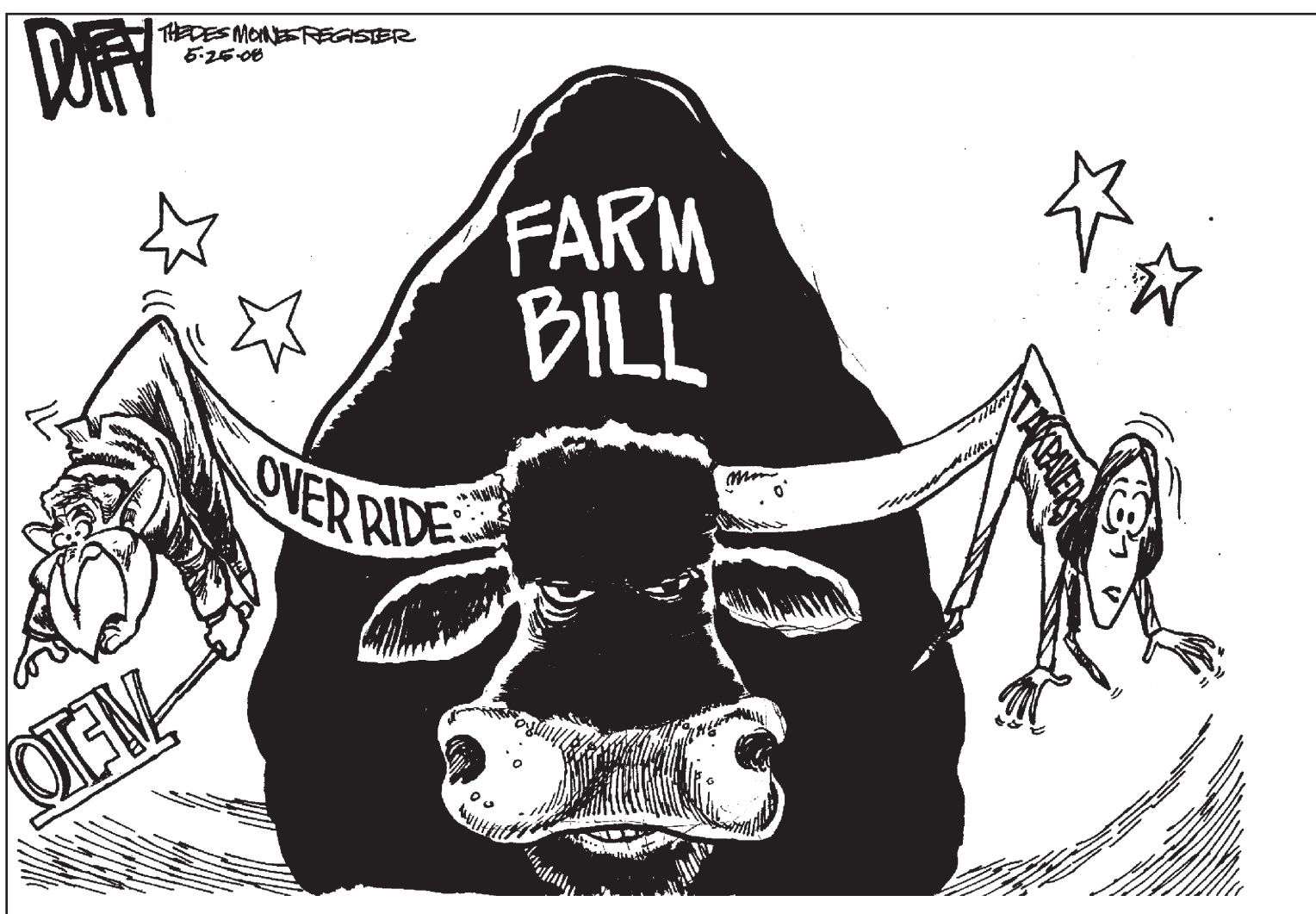
U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Rm. 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. 785/296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org

web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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Thanks for the memories

It seems like only yesterday I arrived in Colby to begin working at the Free Press as its sports reporter.

My first day (July 16) sticks out vividly. So does the first varsity game I covered (Aug. 31 in Hoxie). I still remember walking in Hoxie's stadium with a nervous excitement and feeling of uncertainty like I had on the first day of school.

Hundreds upon hundreds of games, duels and meets later, here we are at the end of May, and it's all over.

Seriously, where did the time go?

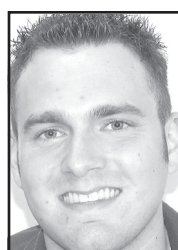
I can honestly say this has been the most hectic and fastest 10 months of my entire life. In that time, I have gained such an appreciation for others in my field that have done this much longer than me.

Like everyone else, I came into this job thinking 'how hard could it be?' It's just going to games and writing about it. At first, it really did seem easy because I had the excitement of a rookie getting called up to the big leagues — so to speak. But after a while, just like athletes or coaches burnt out, so did I. You go to so many games, do so many interviews and write so many stories over the course of a season it can become so monotonous. I still love writing and want to do it as long as I can, but it truly is a grind.

I feel like I've survived the toughest course I ever took in college. Unfortunately, as I have to remind myself quite frequently, there's no more spring or summer vacations. The sports never really stop either.

I came back from lunch Wednesday thinking I was done with everything for a few weeks only to look at my computer and find out there was a K-18 baseball game the next night.

"You've got to be kidding me" is the exact



Joe Falkoff

• A Sideline View

thought that went through my head, but eventually I calmed down and realized life could be much worse than having to go to a baseball game.

So before the summer sports kick into high gear and the memories of this past athletic year at Colby High start to fade away, I thought it would be nice to have a day or two to remember all of the top moments, games, performances and athletes that made this last year at Colby High so special.

A lot of bigger newspapers do something similar to this. Just last week, I saw the Kansas City Star had a ranking of the top 20 moments in the Big 12 Conference this year. I did this at the end of the 2007 calendar year, but it was sort of thrown together at the last minute.

I hope to make this a lot better, since I'll have the weekend to work on it. At least the first part will be in Monday's paper, so if you have any suggestions for stuff you'd like to see make sure and shoot me an email over the weekend (jfalkoff@nwkansas.com).

I want to include Brewster and Golden Plains, but I don't think I went to nearly enough games to make a fair evaluation. Same thing with the college and frankly there just weren't a lot of highlights this year anyway.

Most of these will be included next week, but here's a handful of what I believe the best

Colby High games from this past year:

Colby vs. Concordia (football)- A night that started so ceremoniously with the unveiling of the new Dennen Field ended in a most disappointing fashion. Colby led the whole game only to have Concordia, who was using their backup quarterback, tie at the end and win 12-6 in double overtime. Colby was one play away from taking control or winning on several occasions, but got stuffed at the goal line on 3rd and 4th down in double overtime and missed a 22-yard field goal in overtime that would have won it. Sickening, if you were an Eagle fan in the stands that night.

Colby vs. Smoky Valley (volleyball)- Colby beat Ulysses to reach the state tournament, but it was their semifinal match with Smoky Valley that proved to be their biggest test. Colby staved off two or three game points in an exhilarating first game and put Smoky Valley away in game two. Besides how dramatic some of the points were in the match, what I'll always remember is how loud it was inside the gym. Best atmosphere I'd been apart of to that point in the year.

Colby vs. Goodland (football)- I'll just save this for Monday.

Colby vs. Wichita South (girls basketball)- It wasn't exactly David vs. Goliath, but the Lady Eagles showed they weren't just beating up on bad competition out west.

Colby vs. Liberal (boys basketball)- incredibly entertaining game. Ethan Stover was something else that weekend.

Colby vs. Ulysses (girls basketball-Substate final)- arguably the best game all year, but I still need the weekend to think about it.

Joe Falkoff is the sports writer for the Colby Free Press. His column appears on Fridays.

Not so fast

By John Schlageck

Kansas Farm Bureau

Pre-packaged, vacuum packed, just add water.

Many of us in Kansas live in a world where food comes fast — so fast we all forget how it arrives at our table. We also forget it comes from the hard labor and calloused hands of Kansas farmers. Our food also comes from Kansas ranchers who work miles of range land in rain, snow and blazing heat.

Fast food? Not really.

Our lives wouldn't be the same without the farmers and ranchers who put food on our tables. Just as meat, eggs, milk have always been part of our mealtime routine, caring and providing for the animals that give us these staples are part of a farmer's daily activities.

These activities continue, often for long hours, throughout the day. Farmers look after their animals first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. In that sense, livestock producers often place greater emphasis on their animals than themselves.

Farming has changed throughout the years. Today's farm animals live in carefully supervised environments. No longer do they need to struggle for survival in a driving snowstorm or search for nourishment on parched rangelands. Instead they have heat in the winter, cool ven-

tilation in the summer and clean, dry living areas with food and water all year long.

All of this is provided with hands-on care, education and a long tradition of animal husbandry. Farmers and ranchers go far beyond their role of humane guardians and demonstrate devoted concern for their animals' health and safety.

They routinely stay up all night to help sows deliver piglets or tend to newborn calves. When it's 15 degrees below zero on a frigid Kansas winter morning, farmers and ranchers are feeding, watering and caring for their livestock.

They're God's creatures and a farmer and rancher's responsibility. Proper care of animals is a time-honored ethic that also makes economic sense. In order for animals to increase efficiencies in meat, milk, wool and egg production, farmers must take all possible steps to ensure their animals live stress free.

Kansas farmers raise kids, crops and livestock on ground that has been in their families for generations. Farmers are responsible for the food we buy in our grocery stores. Farmers are responsible for the food we put on the table each day for our families.

The farmer's creed has always been to nurture the land, improving it while coaxing forth a bountiful harvest. Farmers hold enduring respect for the land that sustains them and con-

sumers in this country and around the world. Their reward is an abundance of the safest most wholesome food on the planet.

Today's American and world consumer enjoy ample yields from this nation's farm. Success lies with the farmer's ingenuity and stewardship ethic. Farmers want to leave the land in better shape for their successors.

Advances in crop production enhance the farmer's natural commitment to providing us all with food. These innovations allow farmers to harvest larger yields with fewer acres, in harmony with the environment.

Yes, it takes plenty of hard work and honest sweat to raise the grain, vegetables, fruit and livestock that provide this country's food. Farm and ranch families take pride from their shared experience living, working and harvesting food from the land.

They believe that through their profession of producing food they are giving more to the world than they are taking from it. Agriculture producers believe their lives will be measured ultimately by what they have done for their fellow men/women.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

