

# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### Was it a joke?

The Emporia Gazette

If you want to know why the New Yorker's controversial Barack Obama cover is so controversial, well ... you're on your own.

The cartoon (that's what it is) shows Barack and Michelle Obama in what appears to be the Oval Office. He is wearing Muslim garb. She is dressed like a terrorist street fighter, with a bandolier and AK-47 slung over her shoulder. ...

The Obamas are giving each other the famous "terrorist fist bump." An American flag burns in the fireplace. Above the fireplace hangs a portrait of Osama bin Laden.

In brief, the cartoon portrays the worst nightmare of the nation's wacko right. It also portrays what is likely to be the subtext of any number of anonymous right-wing spams and whispering campaigns aimed at Obama before the November election.

The cartoon is funny because it puts all of these elements into one silly image. The drawing's title, which can be found inside the magazine, is "The Politics of Fear."

The drawing is not great satire or even great art — but it is not that bad.

Obama's campaign called the cartoon "tasteless and offensive." John McCain said it was "totally inappropriate."

And suddenly the cartoon is a political issue.

It is easy to understand why McCain would denounce the drawing. It reflects the various untruths that have been told about Obama — or hinted at — since he began his campaign. If McCain did not criticize the New Yorker, Obama supporters would tie those lies to McCain's coattails.

But why is Obama making an issue of the cartoon?

Certainly, he is an earnest man, but he has always seemed to have a keen sense of humor and an appreciation of the absurd. Based on his past performance, you might expect him to pass off the incident with a laugh and a quip. ...

His humorless response indicates that the Obama campaign is really worried about these whispering campaigns. ...

Unfortunately, they also seem to think that the American people couldn't recognize satire if it bit them on their bare big toes as they ran through the holler.

That's a pretty grim assessment of the general intelligence of the nation.

But most Americans can recognize satire. ...

To Obama's campaign: The cartoon was a joke — get over it and lighten up.

If you want to criticize something "tasteless and offensive," let's talk about the nation's nonexistent energy policy and the threat of an economic meltdown.

Then the rest of us will be happy to join you in your outrage.

### Where to write, call

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## COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

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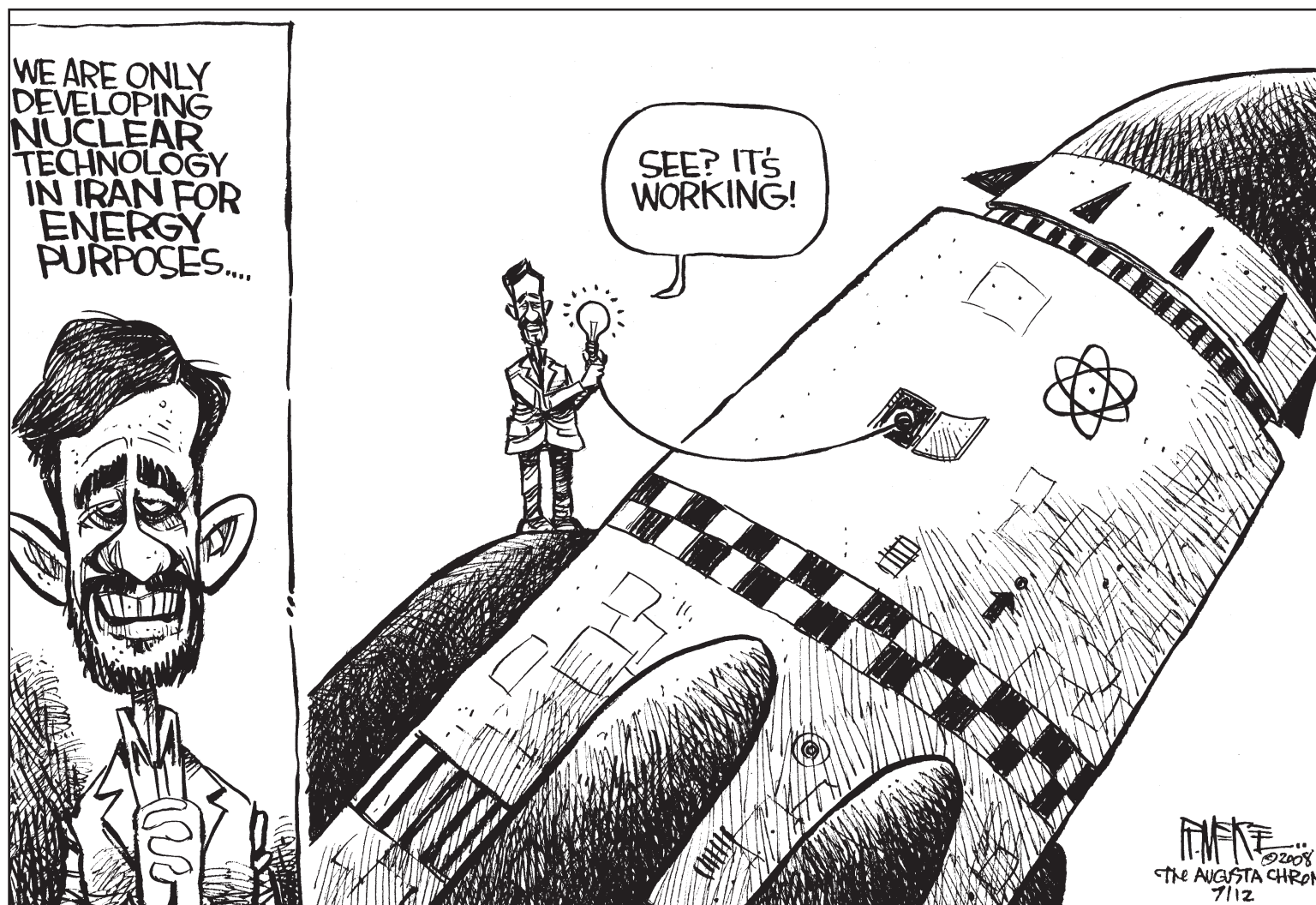
Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Becky Foster, Jim Jackson, Kris McCool, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Cheryl Holub, and Amanda Campbell

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail within Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.



## Do voters want a change?

I heard what might be the best news for Sheridan County in years. I learned on Monday that Troy Dewey is running against Commission District 2 incumbent Keith Kennedy.

For several years now, I've lobbied for someone to start a recall on Kennedy and Ron Schamberger, Commissioner for Commission District 1. From where I stand, these two men have done nothing positive for Sheridan County.

On the other hand, Dewey, a Hoxie City Commissioner until moving to the county earlier this year, is someone who is proactive and in no way timid about looking for ways to improve things around him. Yes, I'm breaking my own rule here and publicly supporting Dewey, but I've watched him in action while he was conducting city business in Hoxie and he's the man for the job.

I live in Commission District 2, represented by Kennedy, and I see no evidence that he's in office for anything other than drawing out money from the county. At my urging as one of his constituents, Kennedy refuses to be proactive about installing an elevator in the courthouse. The courthouse of a county with an aging population.

Sure, Kennedy lives, farms and pays taxes in Sheridan County, but his wife works in Gove County and they are currently, or have in the past, educated their three children in Gove County. And Kennedy draws a salary



**Jan Katz Ackerman**

• From Where I stand

of \$11,000 a year out of county coffers, and refuses, at my urging, to take only a single health insurance policy versus a family plan which gives him another \$15,188 in benefits that he does not have to dig up out of pocket for health insurance. That's taking \$26,188 a year from Sheridan County taxpayers for working a little over two hours each Monday morning. That's what I call highway robbery.

Dewey's name will not appear on the Aug. 5 primary ballot, but he has been gathering signatures to put his name on the Nov. 4 ballot. Although not binding, people can write Dewey's name on the Aug. 4 ballot as an exercise of support for him.

Dewey, like me, is not a native of Sheridan County. However, he has established himself in the county as a businessman. Formerly a resident of Mankato, Dewey worked there for the road and bridge department before moving to Hoxie. He knows county work from running the Sheridan County Road and Bridge Department for

two and one-half years. He knows private sector business from owning a vehicle detail shop, doing light carpentry and working for area farmers.

In a conversation with Dewey on Tuesday morning, I was convinced people need to get on his bandwagon and go with him to the polls, both in August and November. He told me he is asking for voters' support because he is willing to put his effort into getting an elevator installed in the Sheridan County Courthouse. And he wants to continue efforts to improve the economic picture of Sheridan County.

So, if voters want the status quo, they should vote for Kennedy. If they want change, they have to vote for Dewey.

Speaking of voting, if you have moved or made any changes in your name you'll need to register to vote in the upcoming Aug. 5 primary and Nov. 4 general election.

The registration deadline for the Aug. 5 primary is July 21, and the deadline for the Nov. 4 general election is Oct. 20. Registration can be done at your local county clerk's office. A voter registration form is available online at [www.kssos.org/forms](http://www.kssos.org/forms).

Support your rights as an American, get out and vote.

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Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter with the Colby Free Press. Her column appears on Thursdays.

## Congressman agrees with publisher

By Jerry Moran

U.S. Congressman

I agree with John Van Nostrand's July 11 editorial. I am sponsoring legislation called the Broadcaster Freedom Act, which would

prevent the Federal Communications Commission from instituting the so-called "Fairness Doctrine."

This legislation preserves the First Amendment right of broadcasters to decide how to report the news. There is nothing fair about mandating that someone speak in

favor of or against an issue simply to meet laws and guidelines. It is not the government's place to calculate and control what views are expressed over the air.

If we dislike what we hear or see on one station, we are able to listen to or watch another.

## Improvements to Medicare coming

By Pat Roberts

U.S. Senator

Rarely when debating major legislation, does a bill have the strong and diverse support like that of the bipartisan Medicare improvement bill just approved by Congress. Kansas seniors, doctors, pharmacists, hospitals, military families and I all worked together to pass this bill.

We preserved seniors' access to care and improved the care they received.

Doctors don't have to worry about an unworkable 10 percent cut in reimbursements

from Medicare.

Pharmacists will be promptly paid under Medicare and will not face cuts in reimbursements, preserving critical care local pharmacies provide to Kansans — changes I have long sought.

And finally, as a member of the Finance Committee — which oversees Medicare — and as co-chair of the Senate Rural Health Caucus, I saw to it the bill contains important provisions I wrote to address the challenges of health care in rural America.

It has been my pleasure to work with so many Kansans on this legislation. It is clear that sup-

port from the Kansas AARP, Kansas Medical Society, Kansas Hospital Association, Kansas Pharmacists Association, and all of the other military, provider and patient groups helped get this bill approved. It was unfortunate the President chose to veto it, but I am glad Congress swiftly voted to override. Improvements to Medicare are on the way.

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Sen. Roberts is a member of the Senate Committee on Finance and a member of the Senate Health, Education Labor and Pensions Committee. He is co-chairman of the Senate Rural Health Caucus.

### About those letters . . .

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### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

