



Other Viewpoints

Working in politics takes cooperation

Toward the end of his Oct. 18 night appearance at the Dole Institute of Politics, veteran political columnist David Broder was asked to assess the legacy of U.S. Sen. Bob Dole.

Broder responded, “There is no member who has served in the last 25 years who has a larger fan club and influence in both parties than Bob Dole because he made it his business to reach out not just to Republicans but to Democrats.”

That ability and willingness to reach across party lines in a productive way unfortunately is sorely lacking in the current U.S. Congress, he said. After 45 years as a *Washington Post* political columnist, Broder has some experience on which to base his conclusions. Fielding questions from Dole Director Bill Lacy and the audience, Broder referred several times to the bitter partisanship that has stymied progress on many important issues facing the federal government. Bipartisan cooperation in Congress might be better after the upcoming elections, he noted, but only because it couldn’t be worse.

Although he said he hesitated to wax nostalgic about days gone by (“I don’t want to sound like a sentimental old fool; it’s bad enough to be an old fool.”), he nonetheless was a little wistful as he commented on a photo of Dole and former President Gerald Ford in a nearby display case. The kind of collegial atmosphere that marked government when that photo was taken, he said, was something he and others tended to take for granted.

“We never thought very much about what it took to make politics work for the country. ... We just thought it was a natural condition, but we were wrong about that,” he said. “It turns out that it takes a very special kind of blend of personalities, intellect and circumstance, I guess, for politics to produce solutions.”

It’s something for Americans to think about as we cast our ballots in the upcoming elections. The purpose of democratic government is “to produce solutions” for the problems and challenges facing the country. The two-party system provides a creative tension that can lead to better decision-making, but when partisanship gets in the way of people even talking to one another, it’s hard to solve many problems or move the country forward.

The give and take that came naturally to Bob Dole and other lawmakers of his era too often is being replaced these days by a winner-take-all partisanship that puts politics ahead of progress. Dole’s goal for his namesake institute was to promote public service and political involvement as honorable pursuits, but given the current state of politics in America, selling that ideal sometimes is an uphill battle.

— *Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press*

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155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

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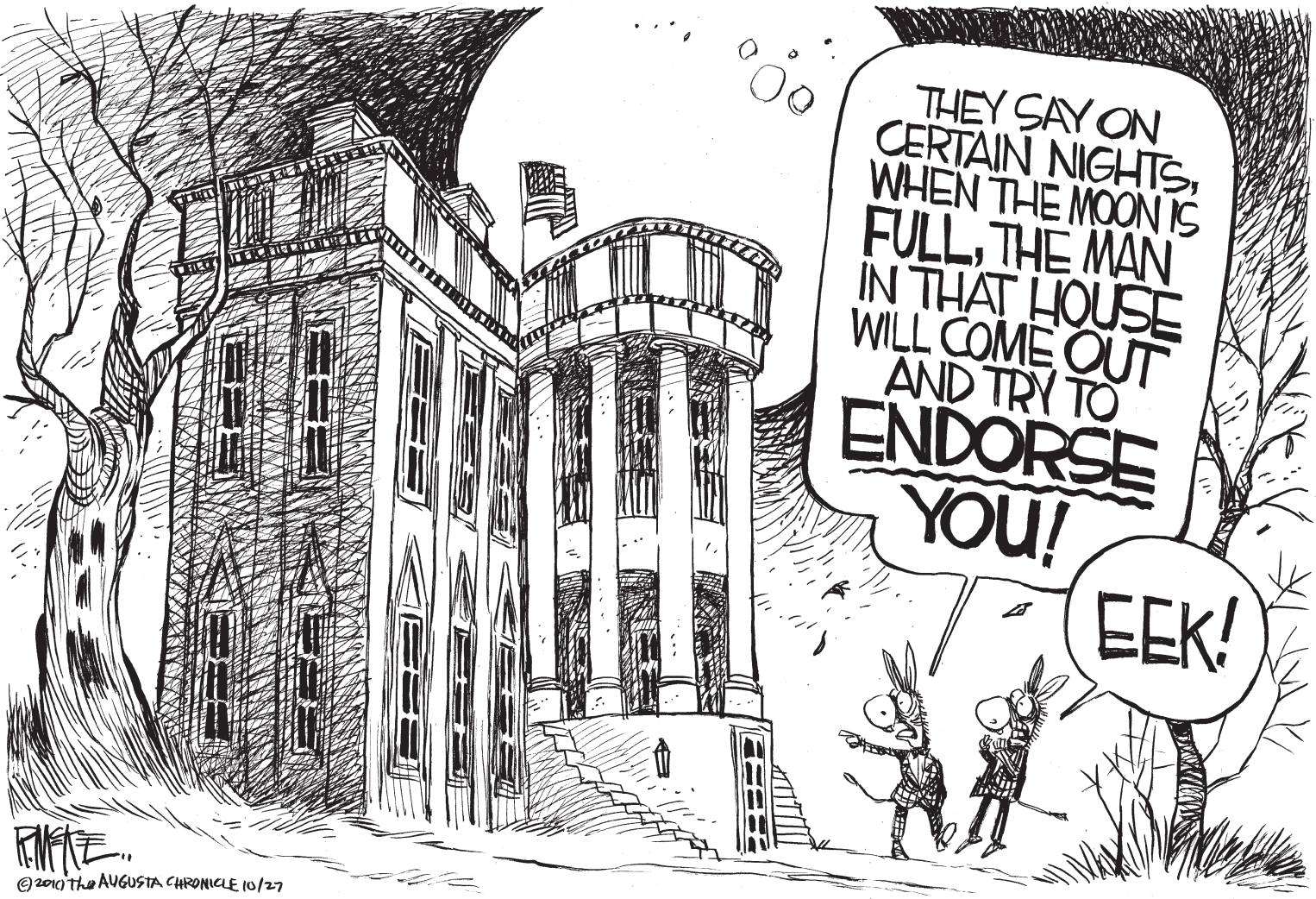
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

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

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 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 herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



Barbecue spot worthy of pilgrimage

We made a pilgrimage to Arthur Bryant’s in Kansas City the other day. It’s something as former Kansas Citians, and lovers of barbecue, that we just have to do at least once a year.

Bryant’s is one of Cowtown’s two most famous barbecue joints, the other being Gates and Sons. Bryant’s got the upper hand in national prominence, thanks mostly to the New York writer Calvin Trillin, a Kansas City native.

Mr. Trillin made a career, almost, of writing about food in his native town. He maintained in articles for several national magazines that Bryant’s was the best restaurant in the world, and Winstead’s in Kansas City made the best hamburgers in the world.

While his declarations seemed so tongue in cheek they could be passed off as just the ranting of someone who could remember when, there was an element of truth there. Winstead’s art deco drive-ins did put out a pretty good burger, complete with a thick slice of onion, and Bryant’s might be the best place to eat in Kansas City.

It’s no fine dining place, to be sure. The floors, though mopped dozens of times a day, tend to be slick with grease. The tables are covered in red-and-white checkered oilcloth, the napkins are white (but paper) and there are no waiters. You get your food from a serving line.

Little has changed since the glory days of



Steve Haynes

- Along the Sappa

the ’60s, when you could always count on a crowd at Bryant’s no matter the time. Arthur gave free food to any cop who was hungry, and squad cars flocked around the place. Despite the location at 18th and Brooklyn, just south of the old Municipal Stadium, no crime every blemished Bryant’s record.

In those days, when you ordered a sandwich, a cook with greasy hands would reach into a pile of meat and slop a pound or so of brisket, oozing oil, onto a couple of slices of bread. If you asked for fries, he’d slap half a pound of those on the butcher paper the joint wrapped it’s product in, too.

You didn’t want to take this stuff home and let it congeal. You knew it wasn’t good for your heart, but you didn’t want to see how not good. But my was it tasty.

Gates, up the street at 12th and Brooklyn or far south on The Paseo near the Country Club Plaza, was a little more refined – bright tile, more carefully measured and leaner meat, an emphasis on making you feel welcome. The

ribs were good at either place.

Today, a few things have changed. For one thing, the guy grabbing the meat wears a plastic glove. The meat is much leaner. And prices are much higher.

But the “Q” is still great. It’s still an experience to go to the old places and eat that wonderful food.

The best restaurant in the world? I’m sure many would argue. But every president and most presidential candidates since Harry Truman have eaten here. They have pictures to prove it.

Heck, they even have Sara Palin’s picture on the wall.

So who am I to argue with an expert like Calvin Trillin. (I even got to shake his hand once, years ago.)

For sure, it is the best barbecue in Kansas City, maybe in the whole world.

That just might be. Except, of course, for Ollie Gates’ offering.

Come to think of it, it just might be a tie. I go back and forth, depending on which one I had last. I can’t make up my mind.

But the research is, ah, not such tough duty.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

Right to work equals economic growth

California Congressman Brad Sherman (D) has introduced legislation to repeal right-to-work laws in the twenty-two states that have them, including Kansas. Right-to-work laws were created in 1947 as part of the Taft-Hartley Act, which amended the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. “Right-to-work” refers to the right of states to prohibit closed shops, a workplace that requires a worker to be a member of a labor union and to pay dues to that union.

Workers can form unions in right-to-work states but individual workers have the right to opt out and not pay dues. In states without right-to-work laws, unions can force employers to fire any worker who does not pay dues.

From 1935 until 1947, it was legal for closed shops to exist. If you wanted a job in a unionized factory, you had to join the union. Congress then passed the Taft-Hartley Act, restricting the power of union political action committees and allowing states to pass right-to-work laws. Taft-Hartley has been the law governing labor relations ever since.

Labor unions have been trying to repeal Taft-Hartley since 1947, but they have been unable to do so as a coalition of Southern Democrats and Republicans blocked repeal. Sherman’s new legislation can be seen as a continuation of that cat-and-mouse game in Congress.

Private sector union membership has declined since the mid-1950s, especially as companies shifted production to lower-cost states in the Sun Belt. Robotics, automation, and globalization of the world economy put employers with high-cost manufacturing and industrial workers at a serious competitive disadvantage. Private sector union membership was once as high as 45 percent of the workforce but today it’s around 15 percent.

Unions blame right-to-work laws for their

Other Opinions

- Greg Schneider
Kansas Policy Inst.

plight. But increasingly the number of union jobs declined because the companies where unions were dominant – the Big Three auto makers for instance – could not remain competitive under the old economic model. High wages, pension and health benefits hurt the ability of companies governed by the closed shop to compete. Steve Miller, chairman of Delphi Corporation (a General Motors spinoff) when it was going through bankruptcy, said the company simply couldn’t compete with its \$65-per-hour “all-in” labor cost (pay and benefits for current and retired employees).

Let’s look at some facts from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. From 1999 to 2009, right-to-work states have added 1.5 million private sector jobs for a 3.7 percent increase; states which are not right-to-work lost 1.8 million jobs over the same decade, for a decline of 2.3 percent. Some states, like Michigan and Ohio, home of the powerful United Auto Workers Union, have hemorrhaged private sector jobs, declining 17 percent and 10 percent respectively over that time period.

Is this what Congressman Sherman wants to see in the rest of the country? The facts clearly show that jobs in right-to-work states are growing, not declining and some of those jobs are union jobs. Congressman Sherman’s bill to repeal right-to-work laws is aimed only at protecting unions, not at allowing Americans

the right to work.

The question here is simply about individual liberty. Should the individual worker have the right to decide whether to pay dues to a union, or should that decision be forced on him by others?

This bill strips individuals of their personal liberty and it should be voted down.

Dr. Greg Schneider is a Senior Fellow with the Kansas Policy Institute and an associate professor of history at Emporia State University. He has been published widely and is the author or editor of three books on the history of conservatism.

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Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce
Tinsley

