

commentary

from our viewpoint...

Bad law gets passed in rush to go home

In the last minutes of the 2001 session, the Kansas Legislature passed a spectacularly bad law.

That's not unusual. It happens every year. But in this case, it boggles the mind that the supposedly conservative, pass-no-tax Legislature would create a whole new category of government regulation over crematoria.

Gov. Bill Graves should have vetoed this clinker, but we have no doubt — since there was no opposition — he let it become law. The bill was only news for a day, and it's not likely that anyone much cared.

That's too bad. The last thing the state needs is another set of regulations. Even supporters testified there were no real problems in the system, though cremation is becoming more common every year.

The bill came to the floor at the last minute, apparently without extensive hearings, and with no showing that there was a problem the state needed to solve.

With little notice and no opposition, it passed the House 95-28. No one really questioned the need.

Now, the state Board of Mortuary Arts has authority to license crematories. After Jan. 1, no such service can operate without a state license.

And thanks to Colby's Rep. Jim Morrison, we won't have to worry about being cremated in a kiln that once held a dog or cat.

"Some people seem to be offended by that," Rep. Morrison was quoted as saying.

Never mind that the practice apparently is common in some areas, or that operators say all ashes are removed between burns.

"I'd rather be in there after a dog than some people I know," said Ben Coates, executive director of Mount Hope Cemetery in Topeka, who said the bill would force his non-profit operation to add expensive (and unnecessary) equipment.

If you ever wonder why government just keeps on growing, why programs are started but never ended, why the book of regulations grows year after year, you need look no farther than the crematory bill.

It came up fast, was pushed by an influential lobby made up of the business to be regulated, and passed though no public need was shown. As usual, the beneficiaries will be the bureaucrats who run the program and the business which is supposed to be regulated. Rules will be drawn to keep upstart competitors at bay, and pet owners will have to pay.

It was a dog of a bill. With 65 percent of Kansans expected to choose cremation in the not too distant future, it will cost all of us lots of money.

But none of our watchdogs was barking. — *Steve Haynes*

where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 302 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, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676

State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 128-S, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7399

Kansas Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, 301 S.W. 10th, Lower Level, Topeka, KS 66612-1597 (785) 296-3751 Fax (785) 291-3699 TTY: (785) 291-3767

The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)
Member: Kansas Press Association
The Associated Press
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com

Steve Haynes, President
Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page
Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor
Janet Craft, Society Editor/Reporter
Lester Bolen, Sports Reporter
Doug Jackson, Eric Yonkey, Judy Harper, Advertising Sales
Karen Jones, Adv. Production **Debra Turner**, Page Prod.
Sheila Smith, Office Manager **Pat Schiefen** Bookkeeping

Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager
Ron VanLoenen **Judy McKnight** **Richard Westfahl**
Lana Westfahl **Betty Morris** **Helen Dilts**

 nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services (nbetz@nwkansas.com)
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$22; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$ 28; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$95. (All tax included.) Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$25; six months, \$40; 12 months, \$75.

Incorporating:

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

ETTA © 2001 FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM
HULME



" I'LL TELL YOU WHERE THE FUTURE IS —
MAKING ENERGY FROM POLITICS "

Wonderful to look at life through young eyes

I don't know about you, but I've had a new experience this past month.

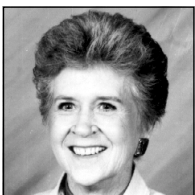
I've been a grandmother for many years, but this is the first time I've had the chance to keep a grandchild for almost a month. It has been quite a happening.

For years I've heard grandparents rave about their children's offspring. I've loved each of mine from the moment of their births, but never had much chance to really get to know them.

It's one of the things you give up to be a "modern" family. "Modern" meaning a family that doesn't stay in one town for many generations. "Modern" meaning a family who lives all over the world. "Modern" meaning — well, you know what I'm trying to say. I hope.

Children who don't live in the same town all their lives can become very erudite and well-traveled. People's eyes light up when you say your children live in exotic parts of the world. But there are trade-offs for everything. They give up the generational closeness and security of family, and grandparents aren't usually available at a moment's notice. Of course, there are exceptions to all of the former statements. Generally though, the number of family get-togethers decreases with the increased number of family members and distance between families. To not even mention divorces and remarriages.

So getting to have a grandchild for a month has



**lorna
g. t.**

• commentary

been a special treat for me. I have played more games of "pretend" than since I was a kid. And I've watched Bambi more times than I can count, and have marveled at the appeal it still has and the artistic form. A marvel indeed when you consider that it was made 60 years ago and without a single computer! I have seen the world through bright, young eyes.

The main thing I've learned, or rather had confirmed, is that I, like most people, live too fast. My schedule is crowded and things happen at a definite pace. I found out that things can't happen like that when you're dealing with a 3 1/2 year old.

A child doesn't worry about the past or the future. They live in the present. (Recently I read that today is a gift from God, and that's why we call it the present.)

The past month I've learned to slow down and truly enjoy the present. So what if it takes an extra half hour to get dressed and out of the house? So what if I have to get up and go look at every bug and butterfly? It's been wonderful to have young

Democrats should quit demagoging energy policy

For the country's sake, Democrats and Republicans should quit squabbling over the energy crisis and work together to solve it.

Democrats, in particular, have been demagoging the issue, portraying California electricity shortages and high gasoline prices as energy industry conspiracies and President Bush as a tool of big oil.

To the extent that they admit the problem is real, Democrats act as if conservation and alternative fuels alone will solve the problem and that encouraging oil, gas and coal production is simply a plot to destroy the environment for the sake of boosting the profits of the energy industry.

The Democrats did put out a positive energy program, but they have spent most of their time attacking Bush's — clearly demonstrating more interest in winning the 2002 elections than in making sure the U.S. economy has enough fuel to grow.

If they are interested in climbing down from their oppositionism, Democrats ought to consult the "New Democrat" Progressive Policy Institute, which has been critical of Bush, but which is developing a balanced, positive approach to the energy crisis.

To some degree, the Bush administration opened the way for Democratic attacks by initially portraying conservation as ineffective — almost wimpy — and by making fun of alternative energy sources.

Bush originally acted callous toward California, blaming it for the blackouts and indicating there was next to nothing the federal government could or should do to ease the pain.

The President also cut funding for energy research and allowed his first environmental announcements to suggest that pollution was simply the price America has to pay for prosperity.

Moreover, after summarily dumping the flawed Kyoto Agreement on climate change, Bush failed to say what, if anything, he plans to do about global warming.

So Democrats saw a juicy opportunity to play 2002 politics with energy and the environment and took it. The Democratic National Committee launched the Grand Old Petroleum Web site (<http://www.grandoldpetroleum.com>).

Incoming Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle, D-S.D., quipped that GOP now stands for "Gas, Oil and Plutonium." And even though Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., plans to investigate high gasoline prices, he's already made up his mind that "price gouging" is to blame.

There's evidence that Democratic attacks are achieving some political success. A Time-CNN poll last week revealed that 49 percent of voters think Bush's energy performance is "poor," while 38 percent believe it's "good."



**morton
kondracke**

• commentary

Various polls indicate that a plurality of Americans believe that energy companies, not the laws of supply and demand, are responsible for shortages and high prices.

Even so, poll scores won't solve the nation's energy crunch; only a balanced program of more production and more conservation will — a program that includes oil, gas, coal, and nuclear and renewable sources, such as wind, solar, biomass and hydropower.

Bush belatedly came up with such a plan, unveiled May 17, but his early bias toward fossil fuel and nuclear production makes his pro-conservation and alternative-source ideas sound phony.

While the President is right to say that price caps will not solve California's electricity shortages — in fact, they will encourage consumption — he's given next to no credence to the idea that generating companies may be unfairly jacking up prices.

Moreover, Bush is misusing the California crisis to campaign for opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration. Oil accounts for only about 5 percent of the fuel used in electricity generation.

Just as the Democrats are pummeling Bush, Republican groups are in the process of mounting an advertising campaign to blame current energy problems on former President Bill Clinton.

However, when the finger-pointing is done, there has to be a solution to energy shortages. PPI is working on a "third way" strategy emphasizing a balanced approach and technology.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten if possible, and should include a telephone number and, most importantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: <daily@nwkansas.com>.

ears call attention to birds' calls, a neighborhood woodpecker, etc. (I've been subtly reminded that the hearing isn't as good as it used to be.)

So what if there are more questions asked than I can answer? And so what if I had to pay for a chiropractor visit after lifting 35 pounds of sweetness too many times?

It has been a joy to just watch this little girl. She is active and healthy. She is alert and intelligent. She has a reasoning ability that puts many adults to shame. She is a new encounter for me; I reared only boys (who were also joys to me).

But as I watched this gift from God, I wondered why I can't remember just watching my own little ones so many years ago.

Why was it so important for them to pick up their room? Why was it imperative that the toys always be in the toy box when they weren't playing with them? Why didn't I enjoy them more? Why did they have to grow up so quickly? I have so many questions: why, why, why?

One consolation is that I must have done something right. All of them are rearing wonderful children. If I haven't had much of a chance to know the grandchildren personally, I hope that I claim some influence on them through their fathers. I take comfort in that thought, but still wish I had just watched and enjoyed more. I may not have gotten it right the first time, but it's wonderful to get another chance, even if it's for only a short time.

Technological advances, one member of PPI's task force noted, make it possible to extract, produce and use energy more efficiently, safely and cleanly than ever before.

The group has yet to decide on exploration of ANWR, but is inclined to favor new nuclear plants, which can generate electricity without producing greenhouse gases.

PPI's group is also working on novel ideas, such as creating a market whereby auto companies can trade auto-emission and fuel-efficiency "credits" the way factories do with pollution, so that clean and efficient automakers would profit and others would pay.

It is also coming up with "circuit breaker" price caps for Western states that would take effect temporarily when prices surge above certain levels — and only if the states are doing their best to conserve and to generate more power.

The bottom line is that the Bush administration, legitimately criticized for its callousness on energy and the environment, has finally advanced a broad policy. Democrats ought to quit skewering Bush for past mistakes and start working with him on real solutions.

Morton Kondracke is executive editor of Roll Call, the newspaper of Capitol Hill.

berry's world

