

commentary

from other pens...

Joan Finney, populist and thoroughly herself

By John Hanna
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — My phone beeped. Joan Finney was on hold. It was December. The Kansas Supreme Court was considering its first case under the state's 1994 death penalty law. I'd written an analysis about how the law was one of Mrs. Finney's biggest legacies.

Several people said Mrs. Finney had remained consistent with her populism, overriding her personal beliefs to allow a death penalty bill to become law without her signature in her last year as governor.

Mrs. Finney chewed me out. I'd not told the story as she believed it should be told. She said the death penalty had returned to the books because she stopped the games other politicians had played.

"Well, you did it to me again," she said, sounding as if she were scolding a disobedient child.

Mrs. Finney had a rocky relationship with many reporters who covered her administration, as well as with legislators, political insiders and anyone who pooh-poohed her populism.

She could be stubborn and wasn't afraid to show some temper. But she often was gracious and warm, and she had an almost legendary ability to connect with people one-on-one. Working a small crowd, she easily remembered names, then asked people about their families.

"You could run into Joan Finney in a grocery store or at the gas station, and she was always visiting with people," said Wayne Maichel, a Kansas AFL-CIO lobbyist. "She just enjoyed being around people."

Mrs. Finney had battles with legislators in 16 years as state treasurer. Some of them, especially Republicans, viewed her as being on the fringes of Kansas politics until she won the 1990 governor's race.

But she had a personal rapport with enough voters, built by trips to parades, bean feeds and homecomings, to prevail in statewide elections. "She had the touch," said state Sen. Janis Lee, D-Kensington. "You can say what you like about her policies, but she really liked people."

Mrs. Finney had a tough side, of course.

In 1991, frustrated legislators wouldn't enact her plan to tax services — close loopholes that made the tax system unfair for working people, she said — she vetoed their tax increase for public schools. She sent out a public statement at the end of the legislative session saying lawmakers should "get the heck out of Dodge."

The next year, she said one legislative redistricting plan should be redrawn to punish the lawmaker who'd served as state GOP chairwoman when Mrs. Finney ran for governor.

She wasn't what a modern politician was supposed to be — polished, cautious, detached and ready to impress with a knowledge of the smallest policy details.

But she didn't look to a consultant to shape her message, either. She wasn't bland.

She didn't agree with legislators who believed that the people who elect them defer to their judgment, and were supposed to do so, especially on complicated issues. Mrs. Finney argued that with enough information, people didn't need to defer to anyone.

"If you communicate with the people, they'll get the picture, and you'll accomplish what you want to accomplish," she said in a 1994 interview.

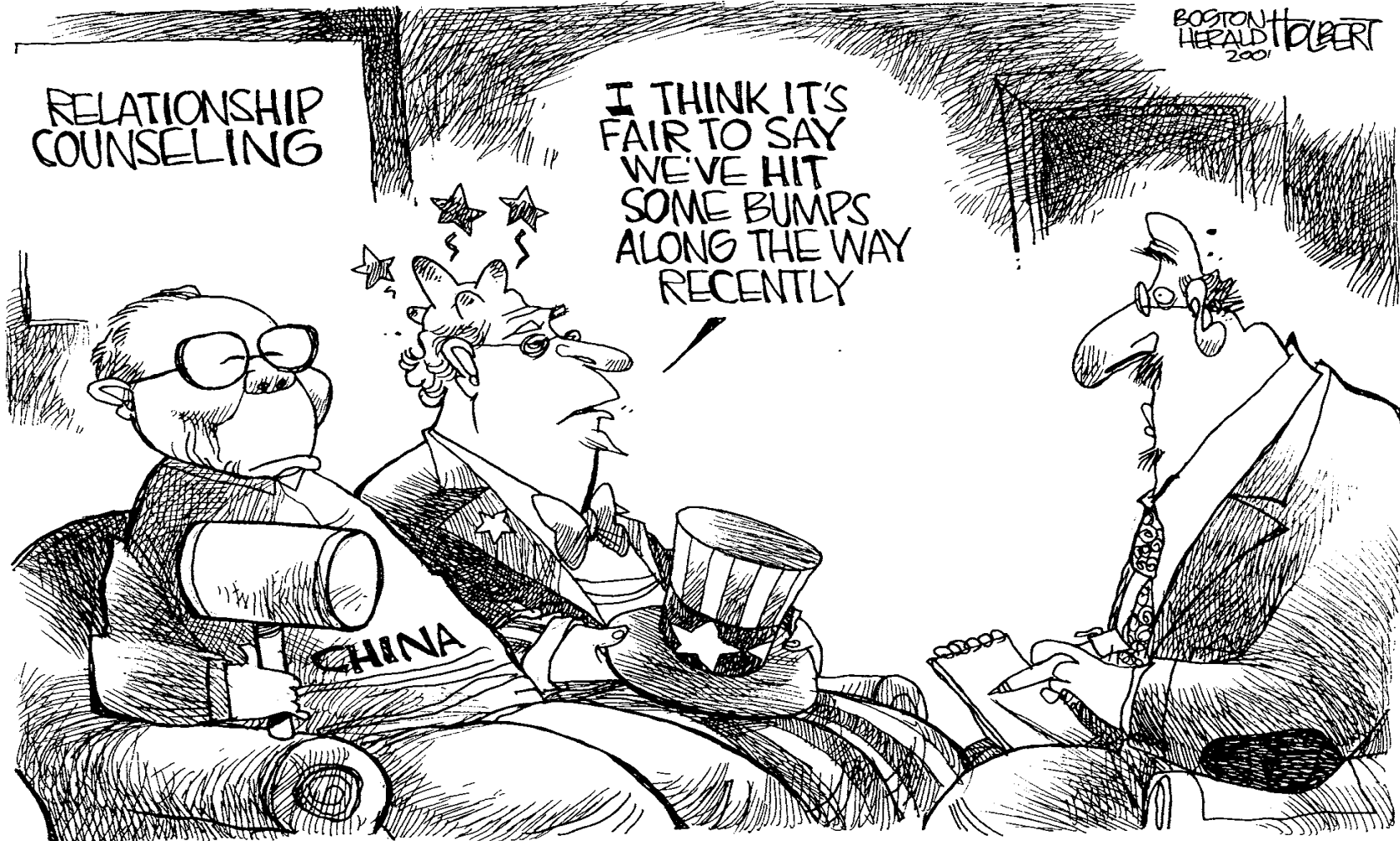
People who watch or are active in politics still are debating how much credit Mrs. Finney deserves for major accomplishments. Many legislators, political activists and reporters don't give her high marks.

But the point of her long career was that their judgments weren't the ones that were supposed to matter.

She seemed to connect best with the people who, in her view, were supposed to matter most to any politician — farmers, assembly line workers, owners of small businesses and other ordinary Kansans.

And because of that, she'll be remembered as a person, and not a political figure, and remembered fondly.

Correspondent John Hanna has covered Kansas politics and government for 13 years.



Twenty years is enough chicken litter!

Should corporations pay taxes because corporations don't pay taxes they just collect them? That's what the Indian rock counter (Treasury Secretary) thinks.

With every appropriations bill though, the tribal council (Congress) have money called market access money (subsidies).

It is used to promote U.S. exports, to do otherwise would be isolationist, but we sure better keep the licensing of farm exports! Yada yada, we wouldn't want to lose our farm surpluses you know.

Bet they would think we should subsidize the salaries of their CEOs, too. If we did would it be a crony corporation and would they stay in the U.S. instead of going to China?

The only thing better would be to have a bureaucracy to coordinate corporate mergers. Competition is bad you know. Right!

Look at it this way, that would be better than conspiring to fix prices, so it would not be so bad to have one corporation, one credit card and one of everything.

For 20 years we have tried this cyberspace economy and it isn't working. Every where you look another country is having to devalue their currency to compete with American farmers. It all began when the fancy guys decided commodity prices (\$40.00 oil and \$11.00 soybeans) would make a world wide recession.

Well you are out of here pal. We have a world wide recession, and who would defend Richard Nixon? It was all his fault don't you know. He



wayne gattshall

• wayne's world

didn't need fast track to trade with the U.S.S.R. and the Peoples Republic of China. He didn't have a trade representative to negotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, either. The U.S.S.R. decided to buy U.S. grain without a 1,000 pages of government edicts and tariff rate quotas. They just bought it out from under the American Bakers Association, and they squealed like a turpentine cat.

So as Gommer Pyle would say surprise—surprise.

This cyberspace recession has been roaring down the track for five years. Even the village idiot would have seen it coming. If it's the world recession they are worried about they should have seen it in July of 1997.

The New York City hedge funds turned the fastest growing economy in history into the OK Corral when they began buying everything American and sold everything that wasn't. When they did that it nearly brought down the Japanese yen. Then six months later it was the Mexican and South America central banks. When the American farmer sneezes South America get pneumonia. A year later Russian rupee collapsed.

Since then the International Monetary Fund has

funneled \$138 billion in loans and credit lines to prop up Thailand's baht, Indonesia's rupiah, South Korea's won, Russia's rupee and Brazil's real, and these guys have just discovered there is a world wide recession? Where have they been?

Ahh, they were too busy saying the Berlin Wall has fallen on the old economy from the election night green part of the country, where all the commodities (oil and food), comes from.

It truly was better than a tax cut for the election night red part of the country. These tax cut true believers say everyone knows when you cut taxes the economy booms,

So it's lets' do it to them again as long as day traders in the stock market can buy and sell every day and make money both ways, why not.

Well they're not making money both ways now and that's where the rub is. Just listen to them whine, they sound like some farmer that lost his loan deficiency payment. All of a sudden they want good ole Uncle Alan to introduce some inflation into the economy and increase the money supply. Yeah, U.S. interest rates are lower than Chinese sovereign bonds, the stock market is sick as a foundered cow.

That sounds like all of this will weaken the U.S. dollar. Okay that wouldn't be the end of civilization as we know it.

We like to tell Japan exchange rates cannot be a substitute for policy, but of course it is policy. It was monetary policy when the big three central banks decided to support a sagging U.S. dollar

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Tips for shopping by mail

Dear Attorney General Stovall:

My family and I moved out of town to a rural area within the last year. As a result, we have begun to shop more by mail. So far, we have had good experiences with the businesses we have ordered from and have been pleased with the products we have received, but some of our neighbors have been disappointed with some companies. What are the laws that cover orders by mail, and what guidelines do you recommend we follow to protect ourselves?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

Shopping by mail can be a convenient alternative to shopping at a store. There are several guidelines to follow to protect yourself while shopping by mail:

- Always deal with reputable firms.
- Read the description of the product you are considering purchasing. Do not rely on the picture alone.
- Be sure you understand the company's refund and return policies prior to placing an order. A company may issue a "restocking" fee.
- Never pay cash when paying for an order by mail. Use a credit card, personal check, or money order.
- Remember that any time you place an order



carla j. stovall

• consumer corner

your name, address, and telephone number may be sold to other companies. This is something to consider if you are concerned about receiving unsolicited mail or phone calls.

- Do not buy anything on impulse.
- You are never required to purchase merchandise in order to enter a contest.

In addition to considering the above-mentioned guidelines, you should be aware of the Federal Trade Commission's Mail or Telephone Order Rule, which covers merchandise you order by mail, telephone, computer, and fax machine. This law has two components to remember:

1. By law, a company should ship your order within the time stated in its ads. If no time is promised, the company is required to ship your order within 30 days after receiving it, unless you are applying for credit to pay for your purchase, in which case the company has 50 days after receiving your order to ship.

2. If the company is unable to ship within the promised time, they must give you an "option notice." This notice gives you the choice of agreeing to the delay or canceling your order and receiving a prompt refund.

These guidelines and rules should help you and other Kansas consumers make informed choices when shopping by mail. As with any consumer transaction, be a smart consumer and "do your homework" before agreeing to part with your money.

Attorney General Carla J. Stovall offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints. For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310. Leave your name, number and subject of your inquiry with the receptionist and an agent will return your call promptly.

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e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com



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Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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Embarrassed to live in Goodland

Dear Editor:

I read Jim Petrach's letter in Friday's Goodland Daily News and I agree 100 percent. This town is going down hill fast.

What's wrong with this town is the "rag heads" and the "goons" who run it.

Our gas bills are outrageous, then they raised the electric bill and now they are raising the taxes.

I agree, the pool is a big joke. Most families can't afford to send their kids and I know for a fact there wasn't anything wrong with the old pool.

That stupid-looking sunflower is also a farce. My son can certainly draw a better looking one than that, and for a lot less money. They probably wouldn't have paid him for it because he's not one of the so called "name brand" kids in this town.

You've got to be somebody or know somebody or have a "good" (ha! ha!) name in this town to get anywhere or go anywhere.

I was born and raised in this town and I've always been proud to say I'm from Goodland. Now I'm almost embarrassed to say I even live here.

No wonder all the people that graduate leave



from our readers

• to the editor

here as soon as possible. There isn't a thing to offer to anyone of any age here.

It's a dying town and the rag heads and the goons are really seeing to it that it stays that way. Soon, Edson will be bigger than Goodland.

Is that what we want?

Let's do something and let's fight for our city and get rid of the people who run this city.

Why can't we vote for what goes on here? Nobody asked us anything, they just do it.

Another stupid thing that nobody likes and thinks is crazy are the backward benches on Main Street. How stupid can they get? Well, I guess we found out, didn't we?

Kathy Miller
Goodland

berry's world

