

commentary

from our viewpoint...

Finney was 'outsider' who surprised most

Joan Finney was never very popular with the state's legislators. She fought them often in her four years as governor, and they seldom gave her anything. Kansas' first woman governor, who died Saturday at 76, always stood firm behind her ideals.

A turncoat Republican who won statewide office as a Democrat, she had little connection to the crowd that ran the statehouse. After 16 years as an "outsider" state treasurer, often the only Democrat in statewide office, she swept into office by beating two well connected former legislators, two members of the club.

First, in a narrow primary victory, only 1,844 votes, she ended a comeback try by former governor, and legislator, John Carlin. Then she ousted the incumbent Republican, Mike Hayden of Atwood, who had won office after a career in the Legislature.

Never one of the club, she won by running against it. She fought the Legislature in her days as treasurer, and successfully opposed a plan to make the office appointive.

As governor, her "populist" ideas were often at odds which was what the leaders in the east and west wings had in mind. Yet there was a remarkable record of accomplishment during her single term.

The state rewrote the school finance formula, revised the abortion law, overhauled the workers' compensation system, re-enacted a capital punishment law and signed four compacts that allowed Indian tribes in northeast Kansas to open casinos.

The death penalty bill she allowed to become law without her signature because, while she personally opposed it, she thought most Kansans wanted it. And she would not stand in the way of the will of the people. Detractors saw that as more of her "craziness."

None of this endeared her to the Legislature or its leaders. They made fun of her ideas before she won, and had little more respect after. Republicans were offended that, having started out as an aide to Sen. Frank Carlson, she had deserted the party. They never forgave her, but many, more liberal, Democrats never accepted her.

The truth is, no one thought Joan Finney would be re-elected after her four years. She left office on her own terms, though, announcing that she would not run.

Gov. Finney knew the reason for her success, even if the legislators didn't. She kept in touch with the people, and she had faith she would win when no one else did.

"I knew I would be the next governor, just by second sense," she said during an Associated Press interview on the 10th anniversary of her victory. "Legislators talk to each other and forget the people. The press, they talk to legislators."

When you met her, she either knew you or someone in your family. Tall and attractive, yet approachable, she had a reputation for a remarkable memory for people and names and knew how to work a chicken feed.

And she was, above all else, a very nice, very down-to-earth woman.—
Steve Haynes

where to write

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- 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
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Despite wear and tear, car still purrs along

Steve laughed when I told him I wanted to take my own car out to Colorado this year.

Every year, it's the same thing. We take his truck to Colorado, and for two weeks he takes it to go fishing and I'm stuck in the house, which is about two miles from town.

Over the years, I've gotten a lot of baking done, but sometimes I would like to run into town for something. But unless I really do run, I'm out of luck.

Not this year. I got a trailer and hauled my Ford Probe out with us.

The Probe was a birthday present in 1990. It was new then, a bright red sports car. I decided that my mid-life crises could be fun, especially when you're driving a fast little car on mountain roads and you know the sheriff is home with a cold and the State Patrol almost never bothers with the twisty back road from South Fork to Creede.

The kids loved the Probe and it was always the



cynthia haynes

• open season

car that went to prom, graduation and homecoming.

It carried pictures, a hammock and our two dogs to Kansas when we moved here. It was paid for in 1995 and was still going strong.

In 1998 my son decided to "borrow" Mom's car because it had a better stereo than his. The trip out to the sand pit was great, but on the trip back he hit a patch of loose gravel and took out a farmer's fence.

He walked to high school much of his senior year after that.

The Probe could be fixed. Its muffler and exhaust

system were gone and its paint looked like someone had keyed it with a whole set of keys. Of course, it would have taken a vandal two or three hours working diligently to put that many scratches on a car.

Barbed wire and painted metal do not mix well. The insurance company declared the car totaled and bought it from me.

I used the money to buy a new used car. After all, the Probe had more than 100,000 miles by then.

I kept having second thoughts and found out for \$500 I could get the Probe back. I badgered Steve into getting my baby back for me and spent about \$1,500 getting the exhaust repaired and the car painted on the worst side.

Steve still thinks he was had, but it sure was nice to have my car in Colorado this last week while I was on vacation. It now has more than 134,000 miles, but it still purrs up and down those mountain roads — and it's still my bright red sports car.

His and her unwritten rules

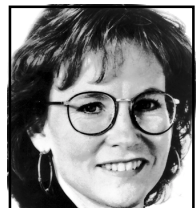
When scientists finally solve the question of why men and women are such a mystery to each other, the answer won't come from a DNA strand or brain scan.

It will come from some cosmic Rosetta stone that decodes the unwritten rules guiding each gender's behavior.

This thought occurred to me the other day while I was watching the San Francisco Giants game. I think many women don't watch male team sports because they don't understand the rules — not of the game, but of the men.

Women know from personal observation in their own homes and offices that it is perfectly OK for one man to look at another man's new shirt and ask the guy if he fell through an awning. He can comment on the guy's haircut by wondering if he lost a bet. Or he can crack that the guy is so ugly his therapist probably makes him lie face down on the couch. Indeed, such comments solidify the friendship.

Just as mysterious, seemingly insignificant comments or gestures can bring men to blows. In the Giants game the other day, Diamondbacks batter Matt Williams had doubled twice, singled and driven in two runs. His team was ahead 6-0 when Williams came to the plate again. With a 3-0 count, the Giants pitcher laid a fat one over the plate, and Williams hit it for another double.



joan ryan

• commentary

The Giants gasped. Williams had swung on a 3-0 count with his team ahead by six runs midway through a game! He might as well have put his thumbs in his ears and wiggled his fingers.

The insult had to be answered. The next time Williams came to the plate, the Giants pitcher hurled the ball at Williams, who then walked toward the mound, pointing first at the pitcher then at Giants manager Dusty Baker in the dugout. Again the Giants gasped. He pointed! Both teams poured onto the field as Williams and Baker went ballistic, needing to be restrained lest they pulverize each other.

"He was talking stuff and pointing his finger, and that's a sign of aggression," Baker said later.

Or, as Giants infielder Jeff Kent put it, "When respect is lost and you're shown up, you do the best thing that men know how to do: You fight."

Women, on the other hand, live by a different, more reasonable, set of unwritten rules. A woman might respond to an insult by, say, refusing to send

a Christmas card. (Unless the other woman sends her one first, at which point she must, according to the rules, send one in return. But she wouldn't write a personal note.)

Men don't understand why women can never, ever, not even as a joke, comment negatively on another woman's appearance (at least not in her presence). Why would it be unthinkable, men wonder, for one woman to look at another one's new baby and crack, "She's a porker just like her mother!"?

Men especially don't understand our rules about dating. But to women, the rules are obvious. There will be no second date if a man should do any of the following:

1. Asks the waitress, whom he calls Sugar, which wine goes best with potato skins.
2. Shows off his end table constructed entirely of used pizza boxes.
3. Repeatedly steers the conversation back to personal stories that feature, as main themes, "fleshy growths," "hair follicles," or "cleaning fish."

But if they want to talk sports, that's all right, especially if they explain the rules about on-field versus off-field fanny patting.

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The challenge is to change the future of Goodland

To the Editor:

I was reading a letter to the editor the other day that stated, "You've got to be somebody or know somebody or have a 'good' name in this town to get anywhere or go anywhere."

Well, I can tell you that I was not born and raised in Goodland and neither were my parents or any of their relatives, and so obviously I don't have a name in this town.

The point that I am trying to make is you determine what your future is going to be and where you go with it. True, maybe the "name" helps, but that should not be what stops you from doing what you



from our readers

• to the editor

think you can do.

I have been reading all of the letters to the editor over the last few days and my challenge to everyone who has complaints is this:

You have two choices: To keep saying what's wrong and do nothing about the problem, or the

people in this town can come together and determine what the future of Goodland will be by getting out and making a difference.

Amanda Hoffman
Goodland

berry's world

