

commentary

from other pens...

We could give more in year-around drive

The American Red Cross is bombarding its regular donors with requests for blood. The agency says a nationwide shortage is becoming a serious problem.

At the same time, it seems like the Red Cross has been making it harder to give blood, not easier.

In northwest Kansas, the bloodmobile out of Wichita visits the area only once every six months. Cards are sent out to regular donors and they are called and asked to make appointments, but little effort is being made here to boost the drive or recruit new donors.

While employers are asked to let people off, it can be very difficult for a teacher, nurse or child-care provider to take time off during the day — and the drive usually starts late in the morning and ends by mid afternoon.

Even if a donor is willing, well and in town, he or she can only give twice a year instead of every two months, or six times a year, which is what the Red Cross would like.

Those who spend or have spent more than a few days in England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland or that area cannot give blood because of the fear of infection by mad cow disease, so the number of donors has gone down.

We think that the Red Cross needs to change strategies. It needs to find ways to gather blood that are both safe, economical and handy for the donor.

How about setting up all our rural hospitals and clinics as blood collection sites? There would be some expense to equip and train people to handle whole blood. Still, there are technicians at the hospitals and clinics who know how to draw blood. They do it every day for doctor-ordered tests.

These people know how to safely draw and handle blood. They just need to learn the protocols for dealing with blood that will be used in transfusions. And they need the right equipment to draw, store and ship the product.

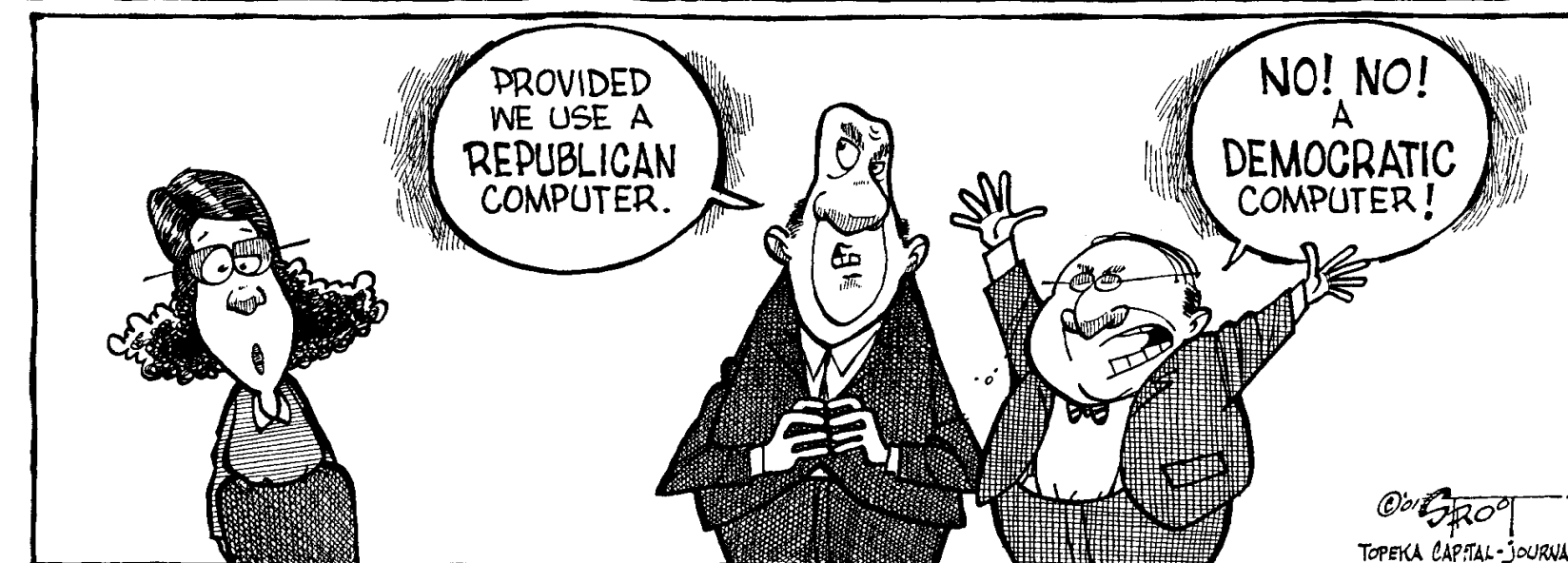
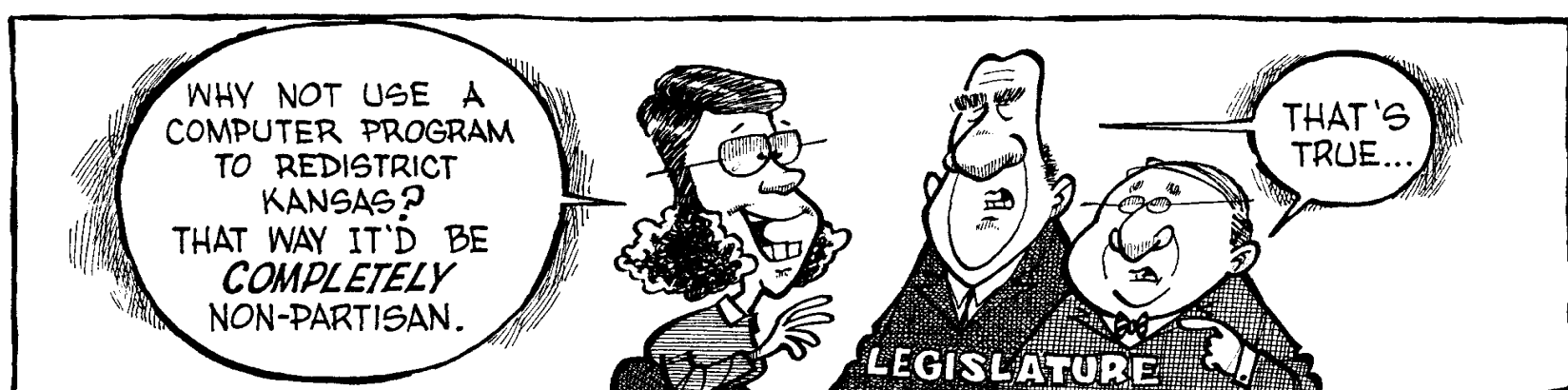
Send out calls or cards to all your regular donors and tell them that they can now donate every two months — and remind them every two months to do it.

Then send out press releases about the new system so that everyone knows how it works.

They could find people in the community who need blood or will need it in the near future. Ask for donations for that person. Most people prefer to think that they are helping someone they know. The blood doesn't have to go to the person specified — most people realize that differences in type and RH factor make that impractical — but if people know that someone they know is a recipient they feel better about giving.

The Red Cross needs to stop complaining about the lack of blood. Go out and find new people. Go to the schools and talk to the students about the problem. Ask those old enough if they are willing to donate and catch the teachers at the same time.

The bottom line is make it easy. If you make the newspaper hard to read, you lose subscribers. If you make donating blood difficult, you don't get any. — Cynthia Haynes



Neighbors better if you know them

I don't know about you, but I've always had good neighbors.

It's fun to think about the variety I've had through the years, and I can't remember ever having much conflict with any of them.

Oh, there was one when I was a child who scared me. He was a gruff-sounding, Old World immigrant and I was scared to even see him in the yard.

There were a lot of trees in his yard, and he and his wife seldom turned on electric lights, so it seemed to me that it was always dark and spooky over there.

My dad would visit with the man (the woman spoke little English) over the fence.

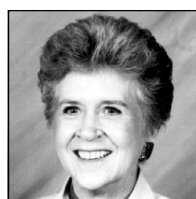
He tried to reassure me that the man wasn't to be feared, that he didn't speak English very well so it made him sound strange. As much as I trusted my daddy, I wasn't convinced.

I remember walking in front of their house, always being glad that their yard was completely fenced.

I wouldn't look toward the house; I'd just try and walk by without being noticed.

They often rested by sitting on the front porch, especially in the evenings, and their front porch was always dark and shaded.

Many times I would get almost past when some-



lorna g. t.

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one would say, "Hello, Lorna." It would scare me to death.

Even though I always answered, I didn't tarry, but hurried on home.

In England, I had neighbors who would peak out from behind their curtains to watch the Americans. I would catch them watching and I'd wave at them. Finally they became comfortable with coming out and visiting with the foreigners in their midst.

Sometimes I would find little gifts and/or bouquets anonymously left at the front door. They would tell me they enjoyed watching my well-behaved children play together.

The only time I can remember being upset with a neighbor stemmed from conflict between our children.

I allowed ball games to be played on our front lawn; the neighbor across the street didn't. So our front lawn got pretty ragged looking one summer.

The neighbor criticized my yard, to which I responded that it wouldn't look so bad if all the neighbors would take turns letting the children play on theirs.

She didn't care for my speaking back, and I don't think we ever had the same respect for each other again.

Whenever I've had "iffy" neighbors, I can look back and understand it was because I didn't really know them. Fear and distrust usually result from ignorance or misunderstanding.

I am thankful my loving family encouraged me to always look for good in other people, to try and understand their point of view and to be a good, available neighbor without being prying or interfering.

"Good fences, good neighbors make" was written by a famous author whose name escapes me.

Fences do make the boundaries obvious, but they shouldn't be so high and thick that they become a wall behind which people hide.

I enjoy my current neighbors much more than they know.

Maybe this will be one way to tell them.

To send a comment or an idea to Lorna use her email address <lornagt@nwkans.com>

Bush could be a real leader

WASHINGTON — Lucky though he was, Bill Clinton never had his shot at greatness. He could lower the jobless rate, balance the budget, and console us after Oklahoma City. But he never got the opportunity George W. Bush was given this Tuesday: the historic chance to lead.

Our American spirit, power and enterprise now stand ready for orders. Only the president can give them. Only the man in the White House can tell us whom to strike and with which weapon.

Bush's first challenge is to size up the enemy for us. We Americans need to know what we're up against.

Most importantly, we need to know that we face an adversary that is ruthless in exploiting our distinctive strengths and character and using both against us.

Think of the hijackers: They volunteered for a mission that required them to kill American female flight attendants by their own hands and to fly planes loaded with screaming, pleading passengers to their certain deaths. They set out cold-bloodedly to kill Americans face-to-face — to plunge into the face of death themselves.

At each step, they exploited Americans and American assets to destroy American assets and Americans:

1. FREEDOM. Anyone can cross the border from Canada into the United States. Anybody can board an American airplane. All you need is a phony driver's license — the kind kids get off the Internet to buy booze.

2. COURAGE. The hijackers were said to have lured our pilots out of their cockpits by killing one female flight attendant after another. They exploited a pilot's gutsy concern for his crew to gain control of his plane.

3. TECHNOLOGY. The plotters knew how to fly our big commercial jets, even when loaded down with fuel. They knew the flight maps to Manhattan and the Pentagon. From a previous bombing, they knew the structural weaknesses of the World Trade Towers. They combined this knowledge with the cold ease of a chemist mixing medicines.

If Bush is smart, he will tell the American people all this. He will let us know exactly what we're dealing with here: a smart, state-of-the-art, ruthless enemy whose route to eternal glory is over our dead bodies.

If Bush is smart, he knows that the hijackers have anticipated — and discounted — his own next steps as well. He will share that fact as well with the American people.

After all, we have been this way before: 1986: A bomb detonates in a West Berlin nightclub, killing two American servicemen. Ten days later, U.S. planes attack the camp of Libya's Moammar Gadhafi. Fifteen years later, three Germans, a Palestinian and a Libyan are on trial in Berlin for staging the nightclub bombing.



chris matthews

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1988: Pan Am Flight 103 explodes over Scotland. One man gets life imprisonment in a Dutch court. His co-defendant is acquitted.

1993: When the World Trade Center is bombed, an FBI probe leads to the arrest and conviction of six Islamic extremists loyal to Egyptian Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman.

1998: After Osama bin Laden bombs our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Clinton bombs a factory in Sudan, and a camp in Afghanistan. Later, four men are found guilty of the African bombings. Thirteen others remain at large.

2000: When a suicide bomber strikes the USS Cole, Clinton makes defiant remarks. Eight people are arrested in Yemen, but the investigation continues.

Which route does President Bush take this time? He said in his TV address that we must bring the

hijackers "to justice." Does that mean a long, painstaking probe that takes the matter to some distant courtroom?

Bush also said he will target those who "harbor" the hijackers as well as the plotters themselves. Does that mean a wider attack on a country such as Afghanistan, the current home of bin Laden?

One danger is that, like the pilots on those doomed airliners, President Bush will do what the hijackers expect him to. He will launch a retaliatory raid against some defenseless people, thereby creating blood enemies of the United States. This is a step that even Israel, despite every provocation, has been wise to avoid.

Another danger is that President Bush will appear to be doing nothing at all — that he will lack the fire for this task.

The goal here is not to get mad, but to get even. That said, getting mad is not a bad place to start.

(Chris Matthews, a nationally syndicated columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, is host of "Hardball" on CNBC and MSNBC cable channels. The 1999 edition of "Hardball" was published by Touchstone Books.)

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