# commentary

ETTA @ 2001 FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM HULME

### from other pens...

## Moran did right by staying in House

By the Associated Press Here are excerpts from recent editorials in Kansas newspapers:

#### The Hays Daily News on Kansas politics after the attacks: Jerry Moran did the right thing.

The congressman who represents the western two-thirds of Kansas announced Monday before the hometown crowd in Hays that he would not run for governor and instead keep his current political job in Washington. The announcement ended the summer-long speculation about his plans and threw open the governor's race to the many undeclared candidates awaiting Moran's decision.

Moran would have been the front-runner for governor, and he indicated Monday that he was leaning toward running just last week. But much has changed for many people in the last week. For Moran it was a realization that he needed to stay in Washington.

Moran said he could not vote last week to commit the country and its troops to a war against terrorism and come back to Kansas and announce that he wanted a different job....

We hope that Moran was moved not just by his integrity, which he demonstrated in this decision, but by inspiration to serve the nation in this time of need...

Moran would make a good governor. But he also has proven himself to be a good congressman. He is responsive to constituents and advocates issues important to his district, such as agriculture and rural health care. And his clout no doubt is increasing as the thirdterm congressman rises in seniority in the House.

#### The Garden City Telegram on Statehouse tunnels:

Kansas lawmakers are failing miserably in not nixing plans to construct tunnels between several nearby buildings and the Capitol in Topeka.

When Kansas Department of Transportation chief Dean Carlson went before a legislative committee this week to discuss the \$10 million tunnel plan, his cronies in the room virtually gave him the green light to proceed.

Sen. Steve Morris, R-Hugoton, embraced the misguided plan that absconds with millions meant to boost tourism and create outdoor bicycle and pedestrian paths and historic preservation.

The money for the tunnel comes from a federal program. It is administered by the transportation department, which has final say in how the dollars are spent. It's contemptible that Morris and other lawmakers don't find anything wrong with Carlson's plan, which would link his department's new headquarters, and other government buildings, with the capitol ...

Bilking the federal program to fund the luxury in Topeka is robbing genuine preservation and tourism-related projects all across Kansas, any of which alone would have a greater positive economic impact on the state than underground tunnels for bureaucrats.

### 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



Nothing ever happens in a vacuum.

Burdett Loomis, a University of Kansas political science professor and columnist, noted that new programs do not just spring into being in a crisis.

The new airport regulations, the laws giving the FBI wider wiretap authority, even the new Office of Homeland Security. None of that was dreamed up in the days following the Sept. 11 attacks.

Someone had drawn up those plans, written those laws, scoped out the new agency. And set the paperwork aside against the day when it all would be politically feasible.

And when the time came, those shadowy forces of the bureaucracy pushed their agenda as fast as they could, knowing that the window of agreement might be short.

Now we have new federal agencies, a lot more laws, and a few less freedoms. Given the urgent nature of the situation, no one is objecting. The people who plan these things know that is how it works.

Outside the usual legislative process in the evenly divided Congress, the proposals got no real scrutiny. They may be just what we need, but the speed with



which they moved is frightening.

In an ordinary year, those proposals were going nowhere. Today, no one questions them.

The new laws are aimed mostly at foreigners, but the security agency and added domestic regulations could pose a threat to civil liberties over time. Right now, though, people want to be safe. It's a fascinating time.

#### \*\*\*

Was anyone else watching Hillary Clinton on Thursday night?

The cameramen and television producers had their eyes on her. And what they picked up was not a pretty picture of the junior senator from New York.

In a House chamber where everyone else was nod-

ding respect and agreement with the President, Ms. Clinton seemed almost to mock him.

The former First Lady made comments and asides. Her applause seemed weak and perfunctory. Her body language told us she was not impressed.

It seemed as though Ms. Clinton, alone in the room, did not agree with or back the President. The attention the cameramen gave her said as much.

Her performance did not, we think, win her many friends.

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It was pointed out that the vice president was asked not to come to the Capitol, just in case. The same for the majority leader of the Senate, one of the joint chiefs, a single cabinet member and presumably, one or two justices.

In an extended version of normal practice, those who worry about such things made sure there would be a few seeds to grow a new government from ... just in case.

And while the precaution proved unnecessary, with the last few weeks in mind, who would argue them?

## We're better than we were

The kids in the neighborhood rode their bikes to the corner grocer and bought frozen lemonade concentrate and two packages of paper cups. They mixed the lemonade in a large cooler, dumped in every ice cube from the freezer, then hauled it up to the post office, where they sold it for 25 cents a cup behind a sign inked in neat Magic Marker, "All money goes to the victims in New York."

parents, who regularly witness these same children lobby for advances on their allowance for another normalcy, the mayor had said, a sentiment echoed lessly analyzed our childhoods, obsessively pack of special-edition, limited-release baseball cards that they can't live without. When they returned home late in the afternoon, they had \$37.75 in their blue lockbox for the American Red Cross. On the "Late Show with David Letterman" Monday night, his first night on the air since the attacks on New York and Washington, the somber comedian laid his hand on the arm of Dan Rather, who had broken down reciting a stanza of "America the Beautiful." It was an unexpected, lovely moment: The cynic comforting the hardbitten. There was a genuineness to it that was almost jarring in this time of prepackaged politicians and Hollywood-starlet newscasters.



Our current fascination with "the Greatest Generation," as Tom Brokaw has called it, surely has been fueled by our own feelings of falling short. We are the generations that turned self-absorption into a virtue. We obsessed about our bodies, spending billions on SlimFast and ThighMasters, dermabrasions and massages — all in the admirable pursuit of being good to ourselves. We shot the divorce This action was something of a revelation to us New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani had asked New rate up to 50 percent, believing that personal ful-

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Letterman said he resumed his show because

Son's cat can't stay away from the neighbor's grasp

Pomeroy got arrested again and Lucky got rescued.

Pomeroy, my son's cat, got out the other night. The neighbors complained again, and he was picked up by the animal control officers in Lawrence.

This time it costs my son \$77.50 to get the cat out of the Lawrence big house. For a free kitten, this one is getting pretty expensive. Last week, it was only \$57.50, but as those of us who have wandering pets can attest — the more Fido or Fluffy get out, the more the courts charge.

times. The neighbors reputedly are less than friendly to both man and beast.

find another place to live—like Timbuktu or Outer Mongolia, where they don't care if your cat prowls as long as it tastes good.

friend Jean had a friend with a whole herd of farm cats. They estimated the feline population at 17. One night last week they heard a tremendous commotion and went outside to find that the cat population had been reduced to zero.

The kitties apparently had become the blue plate special for a band of marauding coyotes.

As the family looked over the devastation, they heard a tiny meow. One little four-week-old kitten had fallen into a hole and the coyotes had not noticed him or been unable to get to him.

by others.

I know what they mean, but I'm not sure we want to scratch our way back to the lives we had before Sept. 11. What I'm seeing now is pretty good. We're better than we were. Yes, catastrophe almost always does that. I know. We pull together. We raise money. We help. Then we settle back into "normalcy."

But we don't have to. A woman I know has struggled with returning to work because she wonders whether what she's doing is relevant. During the past eight days, she, and many of us, have been re-examining how we're spending our lives.

Is this what we had hoped for ourselves? Is this meaningful? Are we contributing anything to the world?

His neighbor called the cops on the cat both

If the cat gets picked up again, son may have to

Meanwhile, back in northwest Kansas, my



He wasn't in the best shape and had not been weaned. The family figured he was a goner, but took him into the house anyway. They figured the coyotes had had enough to eat for one night.

The next day, Jean came by and took the little fellow home. She named him Lucky and fed him kitten formula from a baby bottle every four hours. She noticed that Lucky had a nasty, infected cut (or coyote bite) under his shoulder, so she cleaned it out and got some antibiotics from the vet to treat the little fellow.

We met Lucky the other day. He's a dear little kitten who loves to sit on shoulders. His favorite, of course, is Mother Jean's.

Litter box training is still a hit-or-miss affair, Jean told us, but she figures he'll get the idea soon enough. Meanwhile, Lucky has started biting the ends off of his nipples, so he's going from formula from a bowl.

Ah, the joys of motherhood.

But having seen how kittens eat, biting and pushing with all 10 front claws, I wouldn't want to be a mother cat.

Yorkers to return to work. We need to find some fillment trumped all other considerations. We endchecked our portfolios, and paid more for bottled water than for gasoline.

The indulgence of our time was reflected in our leaders, who were slicker and richer versions of ourselves, epitomized by the Boomer of all Boomers, Bill Clinton. That's why Giuliani's grace and strength have been so striking: We haven't seen anyone like him in many years — a politician who shows that true leadership can't be manufactured by advisers and speechwriters. It was Giuliani who reminded us that we are the sons and daughters of

"the Greatest Generation." Their traits, he said, are in our American genes.

Some say trial and suffering transforms people. I like to think that the horrible events of Sept. 11 didn't change our national character, but, rather, revealed it.

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MY COMPLIMENTS TO YOU. THE PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SAND-WICH WAS DELICIOUS. "