

# commentary

from other pens...

## Young voters believe they have no power

**The Wichita Eagle on young voters:**

Looking at voter turnout numbers these days, it's hard to believe that 30 years ago, angry young adults took to the streets and halls of power to demand the right to vote. They got it — a constitutional amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 in 1972.

That year, 55 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds voted. In the hotly contested presidential election of 2000 ... only 42 percent did. This year, less than 13 percent are expected to turn out Nov. 5.

... In the '70s, young people believed they had the power to change things — and they did. ...

Sadly, research released this month by the Youth Vote Coalition shows the passion for political involvement has faded. These days, most young people see voting as a choice — only 9 percent see it as a duty. ... They listed a lack of information as the biggest reason for not voting, as well as the feeling that one vote will not make a difference, and a lack of encouragement to vote.

... The top concerns of the young mirror those of Americans overall, says the council: Jobs and the economy, terrorism and national security, and crime and violence. They should be involved in the democratic process.

... Should the state or politically oriented groups send 18-year-olds birthday cards with voter-registration forms tucked inside? Organize youth summits on hot issues? ...

Should politicians do more to take their messages to high school students ...

We've got to do something ...

**The Garden City Telegram on Phill Kline:**

Voters deserve to know who the real Phil Kline is, but he keeps dodging the spotlight. The latest faux pas occurred Wednesday, when the Republican candidate for Kansas attorney general failed to show up for his own news conference.

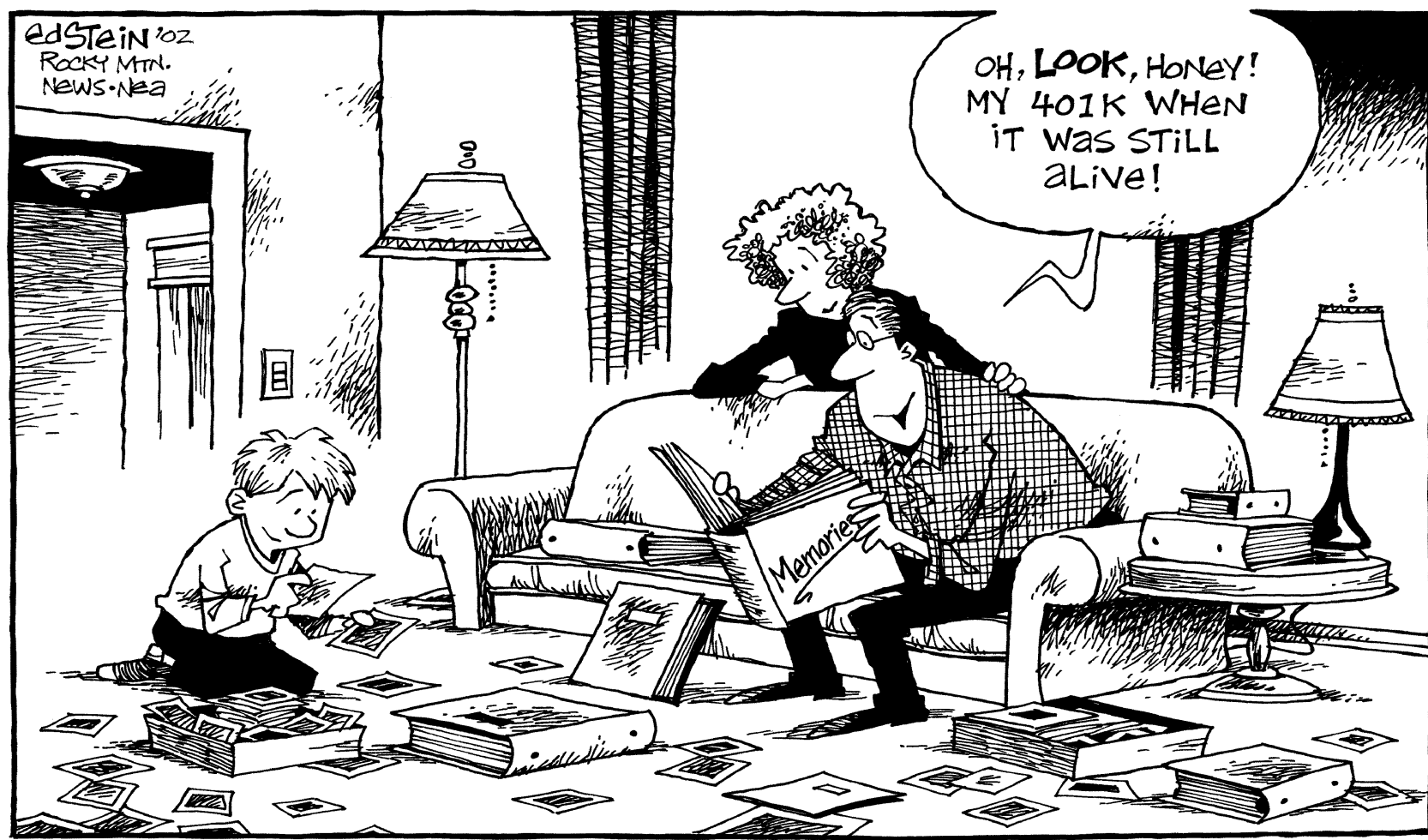
Kline's handlers attributed his absence to a scheduling conflict, which itself raises questions, in part, because Kline's campaign failed to elaborate on exactly what the conflict was. It certainly wasn't a public event, because of late Kline has been like a groundhog, who, afraid to see his own shadow, stays hunkered underground.

Kline has been hounded this campaign for his unwillingness to release an FBI background report. ... He's also said there's nothing damaging in the report. Yet, his refusal to release it has skeptics wondering.

With two weeks to go before the election, Kline's face appears in television advertisements featuring President Bush. Kline supporters say that's proof enough that the FBI report is meaningless. ...

This is the second time in recent weeks that Kline has failed to show for a scheduled event, the other a candidate forum with opponent Chris Biggs. The sudden cancellations, given the lingering questions, and legitimate questions of a would-be attorney general, won't bode well for Kline at the ballot box. It's odd behavior.

Even if that's not his intent, he appears to be hiding, a questionable campaign strategy for sure.



## Be sure when you accept a third-party call

Dear Attorney General Stovall:

When I received my most recent telephone bill, I noticed that several long distance phone calls had been billed to my home phone number. I called my long distance carrier to explain that I did not make these calls, but the phone company said I had agreed to accept the charges when the calls were made. Attorney General Stovall, can you help me?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

The calls you were billed for are known as third-party calls. This occurs when someone places a call from a pay phone or other location, and uses operator assistance to bill the call to a different telephone number. My office has received complaints from consumers who accepted the calls thinking they were accepting collect calls, and from consumers who never accepted third-party calls but were billed for them anyway.



carla j. stovall

• consumer corner

Many third-party calls are placed from hospitals, and operators are supposed to call the number the call is to be charged to in order to ask for acceptance. However, if the calls sound like emergencies, operators may place the calls without authorization.

In your case, my office contacted your telephone company, which in turn offered a refund and placed a third-party call block on your line. If someone now tries to charge a third-party call to your telephone number the call will not be put through.

Consumers who want to place a third-party call block on their phone lines should simply call their local telephone companies and request it. One local carrier told my office that it does not charge for this feature, but policies may differ from one carrier to the next.

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 your call will be returned promptly.

## The Bible is accurate and ahead of its time

Sometimes people think the Bible is out of date because it was completed over 1,500 years ago, and parts of it were written more than 3,000 years ago.

However, accepting the Almighty and All-knowing Creator as its author requires seeing the information as relevant for today and superior to mankind's knowledge.

For example, God's laws given to the nation of Israel contained many laws for preventing health problems through proper sanitation. One such law is found at Deuteronomy 23:13.

The scripture there says, "And a peg should be at your service along with your implements, and it must occur that when you squat outside, you must also dig a hole with it and turn and cover your excrement."

This law, given to the Israelites through Moses 15 centuries before Christ, protected the Israelites from fly-borne salmonellosis, shigellosis, typhoid and a host of other dysenteries that still claim lives in areas where people do not adhere to that principle.

Even in developed countries, the fact that germs cause disease was not known until Louis Pasteur made the discovery in the mid-1800s. However, the Bible's author knew about germs and commanded the Israelites to protect themselves from disease 1,500 years before Jesus Christ was born.

In Genesis 9:4, the Creator commanded Noah, "Only flesh with its soul — its blood — you must



sharon corcoran

• use it or lose it

not eat."

The wisdom of these words is seen in the cases of hepatitis, AIDS, cytomegalovirus and other blood-borne diseases being spread through blood transfusions. Though testing blood for disease reduces these risks, the only thing that eliminates them is to refuse blood.

Psychiatrists, psychologists and other medical professionals now recognize the role stress plays in causing physical health problems or making existing problems worse and the fact that a positive outlook can improve health. The Bible acknowledged the role mental outlook plays in health in the book of Proverbs, recorded more than 700 years before Christ's birth.

Proverbs 17:22 says, "A heart that is joyful does good as a curer, but a spirit that is stricken makes the bones dry."

This vast understanding about the existence of microscopic organisms and about the makeup of the human body and mind comes from a source of wisdom superior to man's, the Creator of man and

of microscopic organisms.

Psalms 139:3-15 says, "For you yourself produced my kidneys; you kept me screened off in the belly of my mother. I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, as my soul is very well aware. My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret, when I was woven in the lowest parts of the earth."

The one who knows us even in the womb is God, of whom Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Accepting God as our creator means accepting that he has knowledge and wisdom superior to ours and knows what is best for us. Believing this leads us to see that the Bible is more than relevant today; it is necessary in all aspects of our lives.

Romans 1:20 says, "For his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable."

People who do not see God's qualities and worship him are inexcusable because the evidence of his power and qualities are all around us in God's creations. This proof of his power, intelligence and excellence is the reason his words in the Bible must carry weight in our lives rather than being out-dated or irrelevant.

### Letter Policy

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By DeEtte Huffman

The Prairie Writers Circle

A sense of place for most of us includes a river. Rivers fire our imagination, offer us solace and nourish our spirit. We instinctively know that we cannot do without them.

That river for me is the Arkansas. We take pride in this river, superficially at least. Colorado boasts of great economic benefit from the Arkansas River as the most popular white water rafting river in the country. That the Santa Fe Trail followed the Arkansas closely is a matter of historic pride for Kansas. As a watersports playground and extensive shipping path, it greatly benefits both Oklahoma and Arkansas. Cities such as Pueblo, Wichita, Tulsa and Little Rock have cleaned up their Arkansas riverfronts for economic benefits as well as civic pride.

Many polls show that we Americans do not want our rivers to be dumps for raw sewage or chemical poisons. But we naively rely on our state water agencies to see that this doesn't happen. We know that river levels fluctuate with weather and dam controls. But it seems hard for us to understand that adequate seasonal river flow is not about increasing supply but promoting water conservation.

The Arkansas River, for example, struggles to survive. People over the past 100 years saw it as a "wild and unruly" river that needed to be tamed by the Corps of Engineers, cities and landowners. It is now very subdued, used-up, and only partially protected by federal and state pollution laws. It is drained nearly dry in areas of Kansas. One writer aptly described it as "the slurped-up Arkansas." For 10 years before the recent drought, almost no water flowed into Dodge City from the west.



from our readers

• to the editor

Our prejudice is that it is OK for agriculture and municipalities to use up the water of the Arkansas - and the Ogallala aquifer below - with no hard planning for a sustainable future. We do not heed the Native American proverb, "The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives." State agencies have discussed the river's flow problems for years, but have yet to come up with a workable plan to use the water sustainably.

While everyone passes the buck for this deadly assault on an ancient river, the situation gets worse. We are all guilty of letting farms and cities gobble up every drop of water. We let weak state environmental laws with very little enforcement allow more pollution into our streams than they can tolerate and remain healthy. There is no harmony between humans and the land.

The only salvation for the Arkansas, and for our conscience, is to develop a river ethic not governed solely by self-interest. Rivers can heal themselves. Given a little help, it is not too late for us to start paying close attention to what is really going on.

Kansas and Colorado water agencies need to forget their very old Cold War and plan together for sustainability. Individuals can become volunteer monitors, get reacquainted with the river and conserve water at home. Landowners can survey their property and make needed changes such as adding buffer strips or fencing cattle away from the river. It is time to put our pride and prejudices aside and

work together with the understanding that water must be managed in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems. We can all make a decision to protect and not pillage the Arkansas - a river for all time.

DeEtte Huffman, Wichita, is founder and president of the Arkansas River Coalition and a member of The Prairie Writers Circle, a project of The Land Institute, a Natural Systems Agriculture research organization in Salina, Kan.

### berry's world

