

from our viewpoint...

# Bush declares combat phase over

President Bush used his dramatic landing on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln to great advantage and declared the combat phase of the war in Iraq over.

It seemed sort of poetic that Bush should use the US. Navy's namesake of the standard bearer for the Grand Old Party as his platform to declare the people of Iraq have been liberated from the oppression of Saddam Hussein.

It seems Bush finally agreed with Vice President Dick Cheney, who announced the war was over as the troops entered Baghdad. Oh, that was just about the time his old company Haliburton was helping to get the Iraqi pipeline pumping again.

The invasion took a bit longer than the 72 hours some of the military brass were predicting, but the plan did work. The invasion of Iraq was a success, or at least so far.

Now, what of Saddam Hussein? So far, we do not know, but there are the usual rumors he is still alive and in hiding. Some of those were dampened this last week with the passing of his birthday without much of a ripple in the violence in the country.

As with Osama bin Laden, who we have been chasing for nearly two years, it seems very hard to catch these ghosts. Bin Laden and Saddam will probably join the ranks of the mystery people whose sighting keep being reported like Elvis — or Hitler.

Does it really matter? To some it does, but to most who have friends or relatives in uniform in the hot desert of Iraq, the more important question is "when do they get to come home?"

The search goes on for the "WMD," weapons of mass destruction, that Saddam was supposed to have control of, and was threatening to use against our troops. About the only things the troops found were piles of gas masks that the Iraqi soldiers could have worn to protect themselves from their leader's phantom poison.

Another 1,000 people have been sent to join the over 1,000 who are looking for the evidence of these weapons, which seem as elusive as the leader himself.

Whether the weapons are found or not, the invasion of Iraq has been accomplished and we need to focus on the important task of helping this country regain control over its own affairs. The longer our combat forces are kept on the ground with police duties, the more we can expect the Iraqi sense of relief at having Saddam removed will fade, and we will become the main target.

The invasion proved the fighting ability of the U.S. and coalition forces and their new high-technology weapons developed since the last Gulf War. The invasion also proved again that a war cannot be won with bombs or missiles alone. There must be a ground fighting force to cement the victory.

The combat phase is over, but the war for the people of Iraq has just begun. — *Tom Betz*

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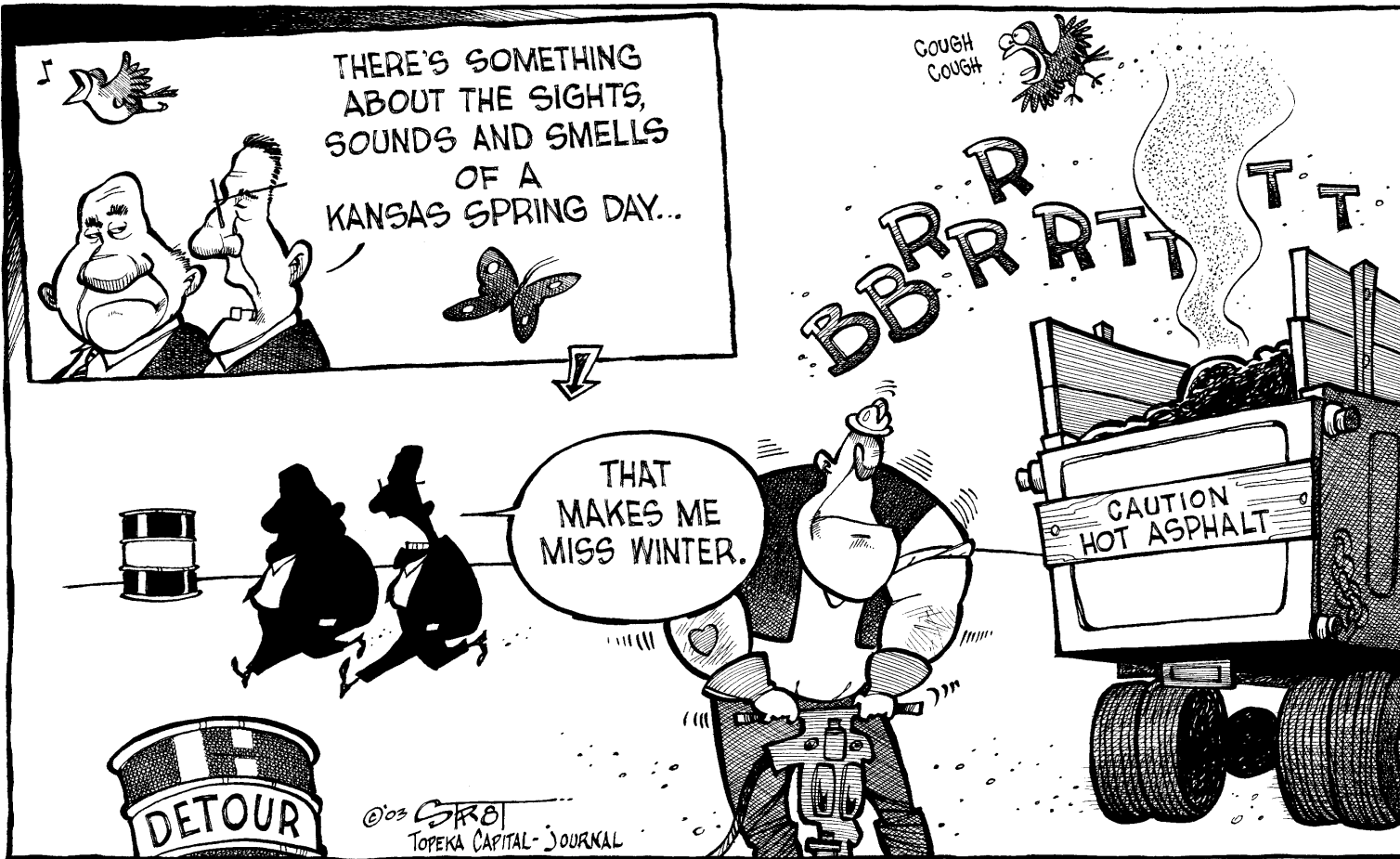
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## Dad could really read the future

My father was a prophet.

Not the Old Testament type with a long beard. Dad could just read the future. He knew what was likely to happen to his children and tried to prepare us for it.

He wanted both of his girls to be self-sufficient. He never wanted us to be one of those women who can't live without a man.

I remember when I was learning to drive, he had me stop on a side street one day and made me change a tire. There was nothing wrong with the tire I had to take it off and then put it back on, but he thought it was important for me to be able to do it.

He also made sure we both knew about basic tools. In those days, girls didn't take shop or woodworking, but we both learned how to use a hammer, pliers and screwdriver. We both learned to paint and hang wallpaper.

The big thing for Dad and Mom, too, was economics. We were never to be in the position that we couldn't make our own living. They were both determined that we would have a profession.

Mom was a teacher and Dad worked for the



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

electric company. Mom had a college education and a lifetime teaching certificate in the state of Kansas. She could teach anything from first grade to senior high school but most of her years in the classroom were spent in the middle grades. She did teach one high school class — physical education — but just for one year.

Dad quit high school in his sophomore year. The education that wasn't important to him then became a problem as he got older. He took correspondence courses and was self taught, but it was tough. He was determined that both his girls would have a college degree.

I was first, and when I was a junior in high school, I started searching for a career. I liked math and science, but I didn't want to be a nurse or doctor. Dad suggested pharmacy. It's a pro-

fession with a lot of respect, he said, and you can always work part time after the children are born. At 16, the thought of children was in the same league as Social Security. It'd come, but not for so long that it didn't matter.

I went off to five years at the University of Kansas, even though it was hard for them to pay all the bills.

Luckily, my sister was six years younger. She got a bachelor's in nursing at Fort Hays State and moved home to Concordia.

I worked full time when my children were growing up, but now that they are gone and I work full time for the newspaper, I only work now and then at the drug store.

Dad, you were right. Pharmacy is a great profession. It's good to have something.

My sister got married and adopted two boys, but things weren't always good for her and her husband. They separated and later divorced.

Her nursing degree made it possible for her to stand on her own two feet, pay the bills and keep her home.

How did you know, Dad? How did you guess?

## There are ways to handle e-mail 'spam'

Dear Attorney General Kline:

Every morning when I sit down at my computer, I know I will have at least 60 emails that are unsolicited "spam." Doesn't Kansas have a law against this? Is there anything I can do to keep this garbage out of my inbox?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

The phenomenal growth of the internet, and email in particular, has made your concern very widespread. The ability to send messages freely and immediately, via email, has made it easier not only for legitimate businesses to communicate with their customers, but scammers and spammers as well.

"Spam," or unsolicited commercial email, is not completely prohibited under Kansas Law. However, there are protections granted to consumers which can help reduce the recurrence of spam in your inbox. For example, under Kansas law, once you order a company to stop sending you their commercial emails, they must discontinue. They also may not give, transfer, or sell your email address to anyone else except to put it on another do-not-contact list. You may contact my office or check the Attorney General's website for a fuller description of the Spam Law.

Many email programs now come with the ability to block addresses as spam, so with a click of a button, all further communication from a given email address will be automatically sent to the trash bin. Choosing a full-featured email program can help deal with spam once it arrives, but the problem is that you still have to go to the trouble of clicking, reading, and deciding how to handle these individual emails.

However, we all know an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and it's far better to avoid receiving spam in the first place than to have to go through the trouble of suing a spammer to get them to stop filling your inbox. So let me explain how companies get your email address and several things you can do to avoid getting spammed in the first place.

The most common way that companies get



**phill kline**

• attorney general

your email address is that you give it to them! Have you ever signed up for newsletters, entered an online sweepstakes, or requested information about a certain subject from a popup ad? If you have, then you have elected to receive ads sent to your inbox. For example, if you enter a sweepstakes, you are usually agreeing to accept email from the company holding the sweepstakes as well as their partners in marketing (check the rules to see what you are agreeing to when you enter). There are now several sites on the internet which will enter you automatically in many sweepstakes every day, and while your chances of winning something may increase, the odds that your inbox will be immediately filled with spam are pretty certain. When you sign up for free offers of information or newsletters, you are usually opting-in to receive advertisements as well. There's no such thing as a free lunch, and free information is paid for by advertisers who want to sell you something.

The best way for you to avoid this kind of advertising is to not enter online sweepstakes or request information in the first place ... in other words, not giving your email address to companies is the best way to keep it out of their hands. However, if you must enter them, it is best to get a free email address which you can dedicate for that purpose. It will eventually be filled with spam, but since it's not your normal address, you can deal with it at your leisure. If you order books or clothing online, be sure to understand the company advertising policy before you give your email address. Most companies will allow you to opt-out of their commercial email, but you might have to look hard to find out how to do it.

The second way your email can become part of a spammer's lists is by what is known as 'harvesting.' Certain computer programs have the ability to scan internet pages looking for anything that looks like an email address and sending email to it. If you post to newsgroups or if you have your own website with your address listed on it, it is probable that your address will eventually be harvested, placed on a CD, and sold to an unscrupulous spammer. Even though it is illegal in Kansas to distribute spamming software, such spammers can and do access webpages from anywhere in the world.

A second email address for public use is a good solution if you use online newsgroups where your email address will be displayed publicly. However, if you must post your primary email address on your web page (so customers can reach you, for example) there are several ways to hide it from harvesters. One popular way is to spell it so it doesn't look like an email address, by using something like General-at-ksag-dot-org. A better way is to make a graphic file, a picture of your email address, that people can read but harvester programs won't be able to.

The ability of the internet to send information freely and quickly has made it the perfect vehicle to ship massive amounts of inexpensive advertising, much of it unwanted. But your email address has an advantage that your home address does not: you can keep it a secret, and giving your email address to only those people you want to receive email from is the best way to avoid email you'd rather not receive.

Attorney General Phill Kline 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 information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Phill Kline, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th Ave., 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310.

## garfield

