

from other pens...

Advice for Obama: get over the cartoon

If you want to know why the *New Yorker's* controversial Barack Obama cover is so controversial, well... you're on your own.

The cartoon (that's what it is) shows Barack and Michelle Obama in what appears to be the Oval Office. He is wearing Muslim garb. She is dressed like a terrorist street fighter, with a bandolier and AK-47 slung over her shoulder. ...

The Obamas are giving each other the famous "terrorist fist bump." An American flag burns in the fireplace. Above the fireplace hangs a portrait of Osama bin Laden.

In brief, the cartoon portrays the worst nightmare of the nation's wacko right. It also portrays what is likely to be the subtext of any number of anonymous right-wing spam and whispering campaigns aimed at Obama before the November election.

The cartoon is funny because it puts all of these elements into one silly image. The drawing's title, found inside the magazine, is "The Politics of Fear."

The drawing is not great satire or even great art — but it is not that bad.

Obama's campaign called the cartoon "tasteless and offensive." John McCain said it was "totally inappropriate."

And suddenly the cartoon is a political issue.

It is easy to understand why McCain would denounce the drawing. It reflects the various untruths that have been told about Obama — or hinted at — since he began his campaign. If McCain did not criticize the *New Yorker*, Obama supporters would tie those lies to McCain's coattails.

But why is Obama making an issue of the cartoon?

Certainly, he is an earnest man, but he has always seemed to have a keen sense of humor and an appreciation of the absurd. Based on his past performance, you might expect him to pass off the incident with a laugh and a quip.

His humorless response indicates that the Obama campaign is really worried about these whispering campaigns.

Unfortunately, they also seem to think that the American people couldn't recognize satire if it bit them on their bare big toes as they ran through the holler. That's a pretty grim assessment of the general intelligence of the nation.

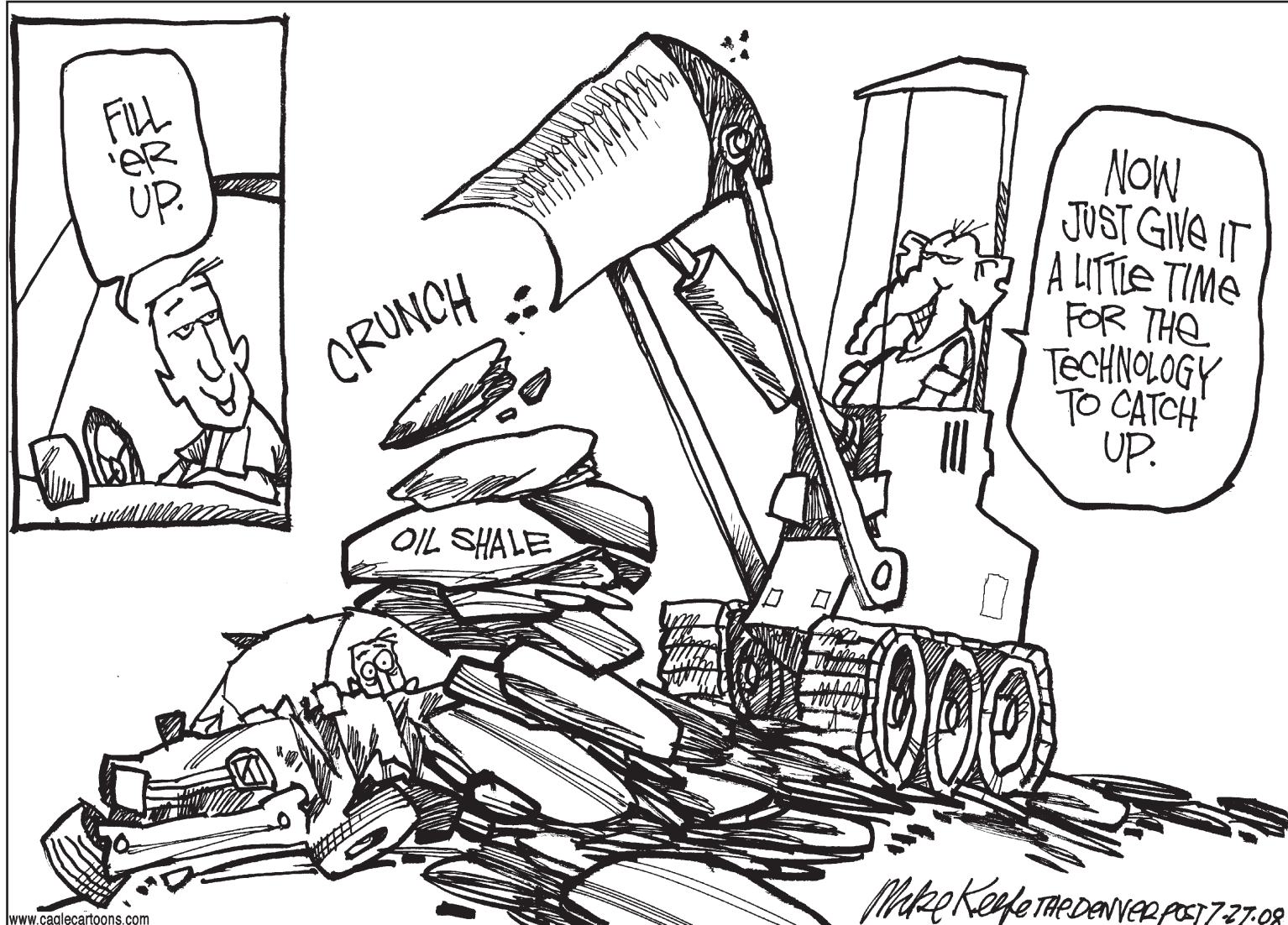
But most Americans can recognize satire.

To Obama's campaign: The cartoon was a joke — get over it and lighten up.

If you want to criticize something "tasteless and offensive," let's talk about the nation's nonexistent energy policy and the threat of an economic meltdown.

Then the rest of us will be happy to join you.

— The Emporia Gazette



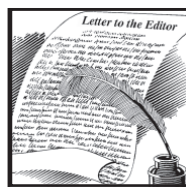
Disappointed with beer garden decision

To the editor:

It was with extreme displeasure that I read in the report of the July 25 Sherman County Commission special meeting that the Flatlander Fall Festival Committee proposed, and the county commissioners approved, a beer garden on Wednesday, Aug. 6, at the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair.

I don't know why the Flatlander committee and the commissioners just didn't schedule this beer garden for Aug. 7; after all, that's Family Fun Night at the fair. Nothing says family fun more than a beer garden mixed among the rocketry displays, livestock entries and the home-owned carnival.

Perhaps the commissioners and the Flatlander members should have read the first line of the National 4H pledge, which reads: "I pledge my Head to clearer thinking."



from our readers

to the editor

Yeah, not much clearer thinking going on between those two groups, that's for sure. With this decision, the commissioners and the Flatlander committee members have destroyed one of the last alcohol-free refuges for our children.

They should be very proud of themselves indeed. Clear thinkers, not hardly.

Rob Tomsic
Goodland

To the Editor:

I am not biased, as I am not voting for any of the ones running for district judge.

I met Andrea Wyrick a few years ago, since I had an appointment with her in her law office in Colby. Her secretary directed me to her office.

I just got my foot in the door and Andrea informed me that she was too busy to see me as she was working on some bankruptcy cases. She even gave me the name of one of the people.

Andrea did not seem to mind me taking my time and gas driving to Colby.

This was not a good experience for me. She was not kind or respectful.

After all, as an attorney, she should have shown integrity, respect and honesty.

Elsie Wolters
Oberlin

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: <star-news@nwkans.com>.

Evolutionists fear academic freedom

Celebrate the courage of Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal in the fight for freedom. He has shown tremendous courage in signing the Louisiana Science Education Bill, an important blow for academic freedom.

"Our freedom to think and consider more than one option is part of what has given America her competitive edge in the international marketplace of ideas," said biology scientist Caroline Crocker to the Louisiana House Committee on Education. "The current denial of academic freedom rights for those who are judged politically incorrect may put this in jeopardy."

Crocker was testifying on the bill allowing supplemental materials into Louisiana public school science classrooms about evolution, cloning, global warming and other debatable topics. The legislature went on to unanimously (35-0) pass the bill. Now it has become law because of Gov. Jindal's courage.

One would think legislation which allows an environment that promotes "critical thinking" and "objective discussion" in the classroom would please everyone — it did the bipartisan group of legislators in Louisiana — but such is not the case. The New York Times felt threatened by the legislation, calling it "retrograde," naming its editorial on the topic, "Louisiana's Latest Assault on Darwin." They were attempting to pressure Gov. Jindal to not sign the law, using a number of tactics including implicit ridicule, subtle belittling insults and untruths.

The law is straightforward and clearly restricts any intent to promote a religious doctrine. There is no mention of either intelligent design or creationism. Darwinism is not banned and teachers are required to teach students from standard textbooks. But the Times calls the legislation a "Trojan horse" because the state board of education must, upon request of local school districts, help foster an environment of "critical thinking" and "open discussion" on controversial scientific subjects. This allows teachers to use supplemental materials to analyze evolution and show views other than Darwin's theory. It allows evolution to be criticized, and the law protects the rights of teachers and students to talk freely about a wide range of ideas without fear of reprisal.

The Times' fear is that objective discussion "would have the pernicious effect of implying that evolution is only weakly supported and that there are valid competing scientific theories when there are not." They called any school district "foolish" if they "head down this path."

Evolutionists use a variety of methods to silence alternate viewpoints. They say people are trying to "inject religious views into science courses." Besides calling it a "retrograde step," the Times used implicit ridicule of Governor



floyd, mary brown

commentary

Jindal, saying, "As a biology major at Brown University, Mr. Jindal must know that evolution is the unchallenged central organizing principle for modern biology."

Many reputable scientists and scholars disagree with Darwin's theory of evolution and certainly challenge it. Evolutionists say they don't want biased religious views forced on students. Ironically, Darwin's evolutionary theory is based on atheistic naturalism, a religious belief.

Dr. William Provine of Cornell University explained his and Darwin's shared atheistic beliefs in this way: "Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear — and these are basically Darwin's views. There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal — directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no

ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either. What an unintelligible idea."

Scientist Casey Luskin, a scholar with the Discovery Institute said, "We would like to see evolution

taught in an unbiased fashion and also want students to learn how to think like scientists and to weigh the evidence for and against."

Academic free speech rights for Louisiana's public school students and teachers are now guaranteed because of Gov. Bobby Jindal's signature. Trying to strike a modicum of balance to the scientific discussion in classrooms and allow students to hear more than one view, Gov. Jindal acted wisely.

Other states are considering similar legislation. Students deserve academic free speech rights to hear alternate views, ask critical questions and debate controversial topics. This freedom will in turn strengthen our country.

Floyd and Mary Beth Brown are bestselling authors and speakers. Together they write a weekly national column. To comment on this column, e-mail browns@caglecartoons.com.

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