

from our viewpoint...

## Citizens want to vote on at-large issue

Citizens of Sherman County want an opportunity to vote on county commissioners at-large, and after the results this month it is time for the county commissioners to live up to their promise to follow what the people want.

The effort to give the Sherman County citizens a chance to vote on the issue of electing county commissioners at-large has been ongoing for more than two years, and it nearly got through the Legislature in Topeka this spring. However, mixed signals from two of the county commissioners made the legislators think the people had not been informed and the legislature used the bill number to pass something entirely different.

In May after the legislature session ended County Commissioners Chuck Thomas and Mitch Tiede said they had lots of people tell them they did not want to change how the commissioners are elected from districts.

Thomas asked Trevor Linton chairman of the Shine On Sherman County Government Alliance Committee to hold some public forums to gather input from the citizens on the at-large issue.

A forum was held during the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair in August, and a booth was set up allowing people to vote on the issue.

Linton said the number of people voting on the issue at the fair was pretty small, and they wanted to have another way to give people a chance to express their opinion.

He said this was the plan behind the mock election held at the Goodland Activity Center on election day to give people the chance to vote on the question of asking the legislature to give Sherman County citizens the opportunity to vote on this.

When the commissioners asked Linton and his committee to hold the forums they had said they would follow the wishes of the people.

On Nov. 4 more than 400 people went to the mock election poll with 80 percent saying they want to vote on the commissioners at-large.

"That is a turnout of about 11 percent of those registered," Linton said of the mock election, "and 79 percent (333) voted YES while 86 (21 percent) voted NO."

He said the results were similar to those the committee had received from a similar effort during the Northwest Kansas District Free Fair in August.

"We were pleased with the turnout," he said. "We had hoped by being close to the voting poll at the Veterans of Foreign Wars we would have a higher turnout."

"The majority apparently want the chance to vote," he said, "but it will have to go back to the legislature in Topeka in January."

We agree the people have spoken, and now is the time for the sitting commissioners to ask Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Rep. Jim Morrison to take the issue back to the legislature in January.

This time the commissioners should support the bill without sending mixed signals no matter whether they support the issue or not.

Once the bill gets through the legislative process it will be put before the citizens to decide, and at that time both sides of the question should present their case and let the citizens make the ultimate decision.

Thomas and Tiede said they would follow the wishes of the citizens and Rasure has said he was in favor of the bill that failed this year.

We hope the commissioners stand up and do the right thing.  
— Tom Betz



## Does scripture apply to current aliens?

I try to listen to the readings in church, at least when I'm not nodding off.

Actually, because I'm a lousy oral learner, I follow along in the book or handout, because if I can't read something, there's little chance I'll remember it. I learned that in college.

And I try and save the nap for the second half of the sermon.

The other day, my ears perked up, because I thought maybe the Lord had been talking directly to Americans of the 21st century, and not just to the wandering tribes of Israel.

Here is the text, from Exodus Chapter 22, verse 20:

Thus says the Lord: "You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens in the land of Egypt."

People like to debate the meaning of scriptures, and a lot of the Bible may be open to some interpretation. Some things are pretty clear, though, and this passage seems to me to be one of them.

Someone will say it only applies to legal aliens, but I doubt it. It's a pretty simple sentence, no qualifiers or modifiers attached.

Another scholar will claim the Lord was just talking about the way things were back in



**steve haynes**

• along the sappa

ancient times, when the Jews were wandering in the wilderness, looking for the promised land.

Maybe, but again, I'm pretty sure He doesn't work that way. When he gives clear instructions, shouldn't we listen?

Does He mean we should welcome one and all into our country? Legal or illegal? Rich or poor? Working or not?

Here I cannot say with such certainty.

What does oppress mean?

Does it mean keeping out those who want to come here and share our riches?

Does it mean only immigrants who follow our laws?

Does it apply to people with a different skin color or a different religion?

I'll take some guesses.

I think the Lord is talking about anyone who winds up in our country, legal or not, invited

or not.

But surely we oppress an immigrant who isn't allowed to work, or to go to school, or to get decent health care or housing.

I'm not sure it speaks to immigration as such, though I'm pretty sure the Lord will judge those who are not just and caring. That's not my job.

It ought to be our job to build an immigration system and a body of law that works fairly and in reasonable time. In America, we sure haven't done that.

Then, it would be reasonable to say to the prospective immigrant, "follow the law and we welcome you."

For those who sneak in, treatment ought to be fair and humane, no matter what.

Should an employer be allowed to take advantage of immigrants just because they could be sent home on his say-so?

I can't see the Lord buying into that, can you?

I can't see a lot of things about the way immigrants are treated, but there you go.

But I have to say, I think the Lord is a pretty sensible guy.

## And they're off



**will durst**

• raging moderate

to your inevitable question: No. Not even for a second.

THE VERY FIRST HANDICAPPING OF THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL RACE:

Sarah Palin. Inside track goes to Queen of Moosylvania. 4 to 1.

Mitt Romney. 4 more years of craggy and grey might be just the ticket. 15 to 1.

Rudy Giuliani. "Daddy. What was 9/11?" 80 to 1.

Piyush "Bobby" Jindal. How about changing the change? 40 to 1.

Chuck Norris. You know actors. That Huckabee thing was pure rehearsal. 100 to 1.

Arnold Schwarzenegger. First we must change the Constitution. No Problemo. 50 to 1.

Jeb Bush. You think the Bush stops here? All the country needs is a little sorbet. 30 to 1.

Michael Bloomberg. You can spend as much as you want? Who knew? 80 to 1.

Tina Fey. She and Sarah could run together on the Doppelganger Ticket. 300 to 1.

Hillary Clinton. This time, it's personal. 10 to 1.

Bill Clinton. Three terms? Hey, Bloomberg did it. 500 to 1.

Al Gore. In the unlikely event the planet survives. 20 to 1.

Bill Richardson. All right. I'll shave. But not for Secretary of State. 30 to 1.

George Clooney. President McDreamy. 100 to 1.

Oprah Winfrey. You heard me, girl. 25 to 1.

Dennis Kucinich. Every election needs a mascot. 1000 to 1.

Joe Lieberman. You want bipartisan? How about anti-partisan? 400 to 1.

Ralph Nader. Fifth time's the charm. 315,000,000 to 1.

Like all political comics, Will Durst is akin to an Olympic athlete, with a career every four years for a month. That month is over. He now enters hyperfasia.

Will Durst is a political comedian who has performed around the world. He is a familiar pundit on television and radio. E-mail Will at durst@caglecartoons.com.

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As the curtain mercifully falls on the Most Important Election of Your Lifetime, the nation breathes a collective sigh of relief. Or do they?

Sure, there were enough Byzantine plot twists and darkly rich comic characters to exhaust Dostoyevsky's older smarter brother. And I imagine more than a few of you are woke up spent, limp, barely able to grasp your coffee cup and raise it to quivering lips; tertiary casualties of Election Fatigue. But, now that the votes have been tallied and the results buried deep in Almanac City, you're happier than John McCain in a flag factory.

Then, this column... is not for you. This is for the millions of us political junkies who feel emptier than a Chrysler SUV showroom. Whose zest for life has faded like the colors of the posters in a video store window, facing west.

Obama's new administration does guarantee a steady stream of politics blaring from the front pages, but far short of the decibel level we've inured ourselves to. Chris Matthews may continue to bellow, but it will be a shell of his former shrill. Joe Biden undoubtedly will insert his foot in his mouth so often that he should invest in mint-flavored shoelaces to facilitate flossing, but who has the energy to throw his blunders up on YouTube? And if they do, so what? If a faux pas is uploaded and no eyeballs visit, is it really a gaffe?

It wasn't just the horse race; the sidereal side shows were just as intriguing. Since the middle of 2006, electoral Web sites sprang up like mushroom spores in a cow field after a Wisconsin spring rain. Rachel Maddow became a video star. Cable ratings crested higher than the Stanford Band after a homecoming win in the '60s. The rise and fall of inevitable candidates, surges, purges and financial lurches, AND Keith Olbermann, riveted us like so many three-year-olds holding a Mason jar full of paisley-painted fireflies.

What I'm saying is, I don't want to live in a world without presidential campaigning. And don't give me that midterm stuff either. I need the real thing. I want XM satellite radio's POTUS Oh Eight to become POTUS One Two. And because I know nobody else will do it, I've put together a snapshot of the field for the next presidential election. Yes, now. After all, November 6, 2012, is only 48 short months away. Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to jump-start your engines. And in answer

