

from our viewpoint...

Too late to save the truth on Libya

The jury is out yet on Monday's presidential debate, but whatever was said – and whatever else voters hear about foreign policy – we need to do something to restore some basic honesty to the discussion.

For its own reasons, whatever they may be, the Obama administration tried to paint the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi which killed Ambassador Christopher Stevens as the result on an out-of-control demonstration. Even during the vice presidential debate, Joe Biden persisted in trying to blame the intelligence community for this lie.

Anyone who watched the news the night of the attack knew this was not the result of a demonstration aimed at the U.S. in retaliation for an anti-Muslim video. It was apparent from reports available to the world even then that a coordinated attack by trained forces had overwhelmed the consulate.

The administration, from the president to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, tried to make us believe otherwise. The world was not buying it. Then the vice president tried to blame the CIA and the rest of the intelligence service. The secretary of state did the same.

One of two things: either they were taken in by false reports, or the intelligence they get is so bad they deserve to be defeated and thrown out of office.

Now on the defensive, the administration has taken to accusing Republicans of "playing politics" with the deaths of three Americans, including the ambassador. What, we wonder, were they playing when they tried to convince us this was some innocent, spontaneous demonstration gone awry?

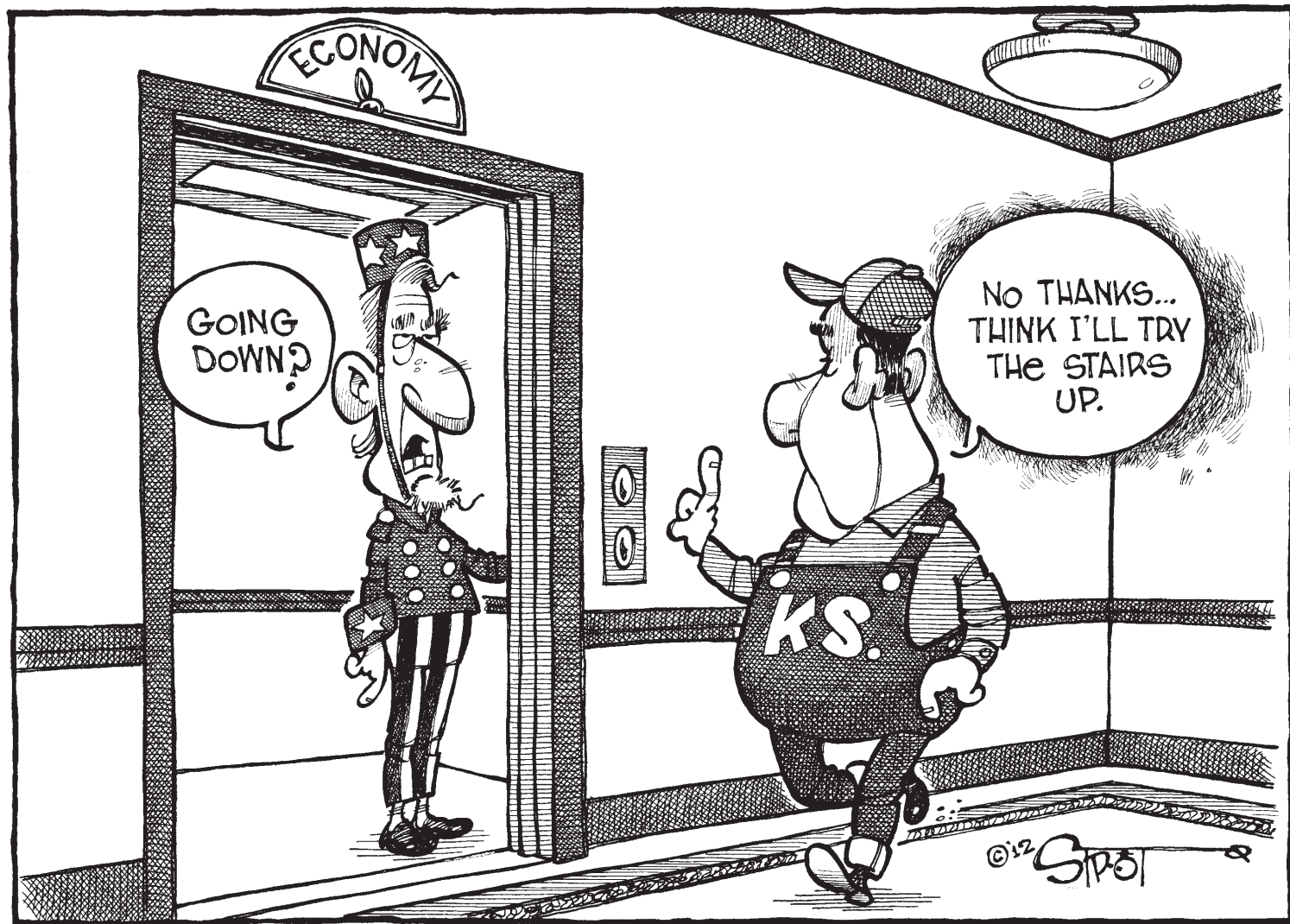
As opposition parties are wont to do, the Republicans are threatening to investigate. By the time Congress gets around to it, though, it'll be a postmortem: the elections will be over.

To be sure, mistakes were made. The ambassador was staying at a location that, apparently, was far from secure, even though Libya is not exactly a stable location. A consulate, unlike an embassy, is not a fortress. It wouldn't have been designed to withstand a military attack.

Requests to Washington to beef up security were ignored, it seems. Now it is too late to do anything, too late certainly for those who died. Too late to save the truth.

Then Mrs. Clinton tells us she will take the blame, though as secretary of state, she obviously wouldn't have known about the security conditions. She said that, by the way, during an appearance in Peru.

Let the investigation roll. We'll find out what happened soon enough, but well after the voters have spoken. — Steve Haynes



Early ballot in the mail

My wife Ava and I are in Georgia, and Monday our absentee ballots arrived from Goodland. We got them filled out and back in the mail on Tuesday to get our votes back to be counted.

The Presidential debates are over and both candidates are in the home stretch with the election coming down to the wire. The election will be determined in several swing states, but Kansas is not one of those.

We heard people say they were not going to vote because they did not like either of the candidates at the top of the ballot. We have heard that before, but the old adage is "all elections are local."

For those in northwest Kansas there are some important local races, and is the best way to be involved in the political process.

In the past there are many elections that have been won by the slimmest of margins, and it was not too many years ago when a Goodland city commission election was nearly a tie and then the winner changed by the provisional ballots. A county commission primary was declared a tie and the two candidates flipped a coin to determine the winner. However, an uncounted provisional ballot was discovered changing the outcome to the guy who had originally lost the coin flip.

And who can forget the national election of 2000 when the "hanging" and "dimpled" chads in Florida ended up with the Supreme Court giving the election to George Bush despite the



tom betz

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popular vote being won by Al Gore.

As the election nears the pundits begin to make predictions about who will reach the magical 270 in the constitutionally established electoral vote. This year the pundits can see a scenario where neither candidate gets the needed 270 and both finish with 269 votes.

In such a case the Constitution (Article II) has a means for determining the winner or sort of anyway. The original version was tested in 1796 and again in 1800 when Thomas Jefferson defeated Aaron Burr on the 36th ballot in the House of Representatives. The method of selecting the President and Vice President was changed by the Twelfth Amendment ratified in 1804.

The last time it was used was about 1824 when John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson tied in the electoral votes. The elections of 1912, 1924 and 1968 came close. The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and John F. Kennedy in 1960 came within 30,000 votes of requiring a decision by the House.

The Twenty-Third Amendment was passed in 1960 and ratified in 1961 giving the District of Columbia a right to elect members of the

Electoral College with the district limited to having the same number as the smallest state being three - the same number as Wyoming.

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 brought out more discussion about the electoral process, and a renewed question about changing the constitution. Each close election brings calls for this change, and it is expected such a call will come again after this election process.

In case of a tie the President is selected by the outgoing House of Representatives with each state getting one vote. Based on the current make up of the House the winner would likely be Mitt Romney. The Vice President would be selected by the outgoing Senate with each state getting one vote. In case of a tie the deciding vote would be the sitting Vice President.

Part of the fun of politics is watching the candidates as they head into the final days, and what all the options might be in a narrow race.

The more important results will be those affecting the people living in Sherman County and northwest Kansas. It will be those local votes that are the real reason to mark your ballot in this election. I hope people look beyond the top race, and if you truly do not like the choices leave that section blank and make your decisions count in the more local races.

Having put my ballot in the mail I will now sit back and watch the show unfold. I hope you vote.

Obama's dream harmful to America

To the Editor:

President Obama learned to play politics the "Chicago Way." Just look at how he muscled through Obamacare over the objections of the American people; twisting arms and offering bribes behind closed doors. Bypassing Congress, he worked on it for two years; the big government takeover of our health care.

I didn't believe that President Obama ever intended to create jobs and reduce unemployment in America. The \$90 billion he put into green energy companies that went belly-up went to his core supporters that poured money into this election campaign. This money should have been used for the future of our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Obama claims to be for the middle class but he was against the Keystone Pipeline,



from our readers

• to the editor

shutting down out gulf oil rigs, not pursuing drilling for gas, oil or oil shell, drastically cutting military expenditures and troops; which didn't create jobs, but put Americans in the unemployment line. Most grievous of all was the EPA initially ordering the shutdown of 25 coal-fired plants, which has been delayed till after the 2012 election. This adversely affects miners, railroads and the cost of electricity.

The Obama Democrats opted to leave God out of their convention platform. Then the is-

sue received news coverage, they voted God back in. It took three votes amidst the "boos" from some of the members. The Obama administration still wants nothing more than to erase Christian values and severely restrict our religious freedom.

The election of 2012 is the most important election in American history. Romney's dream is creating jobs, putting Americans back to work, standing up for our freedoms, making our country strong and safe. Obama's dream is to fundamentally change America into a European-style weak, socialist, welfare country at any price.

Pray for our nation and get to the polls.
Marilyn Frisbie
Cheyenne County

Speak from the heart

Life experiences teach plenty to those willing to learn. From the time I was a small boy, I remember my dad, uncles and grandfather talking and debating the issues of the day whenever we visited one another.

As I grew older, I began to hear some of what they said. I began to understand what they were talking about. But it has taken me nearly 30 years to understand what my grandfather used to say about understanding issues.

About the time I was halfway through high school, something he said finally sunk in. Grandpa Bert always said when you know a little about an issue, it's easy to form an opinion. When you learn a little more, it becomes a little more difficult to make a decision. And when you learn even more about an issue, your decision becomes, "just plain hard."

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about the issue of farmers and ranchers who often toil long days away by themselves. Sometimes they feel isolated with their backs against the wall. More than one farmer has expressed a feeling of, "It's me against the world."

Never before in agriculture has it been more important for farmers to express their basic wants, hopes and needs. Things like protection of personal property, a sound education for their children and a responsible, nonintrusive



Insight this week

• john schlageck

federal government, to mention a few.

Never before has there been such an opportunity to express agriculture's needs. Today there are hundreds of satellites in orbit around our globe. Our cable system is loaded with hundreds of networks. The information highway continues to speed forward and we can communicate with people around the world instantly. Smart phones and social media keep us connected at every turn.

It's been nearly three decades since newspapers entered the era of national and international publications. In this country, Christian Science Monitor and the Wall Street Journal pioneered the way. Magazines and newspapers from all over the world are on line today, available for anyone with the time and desire to read them.

With all of these different information avenues, it may be easy for some to tune out and turn off. Farmers, ranchers, businessmen, bankers and professionals cannot afford to do

that. We must utilize these communication tools to tell our story.

Agriculture finally arrived as a headliner during the farm crisis of the mid-'80s. Every day, newspapers, radios, televisions and computers are chock full of stories on agriculture. Subjects range from food additives in processing to agricultural chemicals. Stories include animal care, cholesterol in the diet, sugar-less foods, the farm bill and finding ways to increase agricultural trade.

Remember, farmers and ranchers must continue to voice their message in the public information arena. Agriculture must utilize this medium to promote and persuade others to bring about change - change that will benefit agriculture and a society that relies on U.S. farmers and ranchers for the safest and most abundant food source in the world.

A Kansas citizen said it best approximately 90 years ago. "This nation will survive, this state will prosper, the orderly business of life will go forward only if men can speak in whatever way given them to utter what their hearts hold - by voice, by postal card, by letter or by press."

William Allen White wrote this in his Emporia Gazette during the post-World War I recession in 1922. These words ring true today.

The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association

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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nwkansas.com.

The Goodland Star-News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day; (call for a price).

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

1932-2003

The Sherman County Herald

Founded by Thomas McCants

1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and

Roxie Yonkey

1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company