

from our viewpoint...

Does state’s image need new ‘update?’

Kansas is poised to unveil a new state slogan and a new advertising campaign.

Here’s hoping it creates fewer snores than some of the late and mostly unlamented campaigns foisted off on the state by big-city advertising agencies with grand ideas and few scruples.

Kansas used to be the Wheat State or the Sunflower State. A lot of people still think of us that way; those are identities that spring from our nature, and they seem to stick.

Tourism promoters desperately want Kansas to be something it isn’t, however, and advertising agencies are perfectly willing to play along — as long as big bucks are involved.

So it was that Kansas once became the “Land of Ahs,” a not-so-subtle play on words involving a famous film. But the slogan “Ah, Kansas!” was loosely translated “Aw, Kansas?” in the back seat by children strapped in for a run across the Great American Desert.

Kansas is a beautiful state, but our highways avoid the best parts — too many hills to build through — and bereft of trees, our roughest terrain seems mild compared to neighboring states.

Kansas has history, hunting, fishing, scenery, open spaces, peace and solitude. It has a pioneer farming heritage and a clean, invigorating spirit that deserves to be shown.

Unfortunately, what we’re liable to get from the state’s latest effort is another expensive slogan and the need to spend millions of dollars “updating” the signs at entrances to the state.

Every administration, it seems, has to change those signs. The current version was designed with the aid of Linda Graves, wife of the previous governor. It features a sunflower that’s rather cold and abstract, in pale yellow on a blue background that fades purplish.

The best that can be said for the Graves signs is that they were a big improvement over the “confetti Kansas” signs put up under Gov. Joan Finney. The idea was that Kansas was so exciting that it was fairly bursting at the seams, but the visual impact on a sign was disquieting. Another ad agency triumph.

Then you get back to the “Ah Kansas” era, which featured exciting brown signs and even more exciting slogans.

The real Kansas is out here. It’s a nice place, though we suspect, it’ll never rival Colorado or Wyoming (Slogan: miles of empty desert before you get to Yellowstone!) as a destination. For one thing, the skiing is never going to be any good.

The best border signs we ever had date back to the Bob Docking era, when a simple green sign was crowned by a big sunflower. The slanted “stems” of those signs still hold up most of the border greetings.

Sometimes the simple approach is best. We need to market what we have, and we need to draw more people to our state. We don’t need another expensive slogan from some high-priced agency that wouldn’t know a purse from a sow’s ear — or a cow from a pheasant. — *Steve Haynes*

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I am celebrating the Christmas season

I don’t know about you, but I am celebrating the Christmas season.

You know, or course, that we are now in the Christmas season; it just began on Christmas Day.

Before that, it was the season of Advent when we prepare ourselves for the birth of Christ.

Now that the season of preparation is over, we can really get into the Christmas season and spirit!

Merry Christmas!

And may your New Year see a new spirit of love for, and in, you and for, and in, all those around you.

If you are continuing the season of giving right into your new year, here are some gifts (from an unknown author) you might give every day. They are eight gifts that don’t cost a cent:

1) THE GIFT OF LISTENING... But you must really listen. No interrupting, no day-dreaming, no planning your response. Just lis-



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tening.

2) THE GIFT OF AFFECTION... Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

3) THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER... Clip cartoons, share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say, “I love to laugh with you.”

4) THE GIFT OF A WRITTEN NOTE... It can be a simple “Thanks for the help” note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remembered or a lifetime, and may even change a life.

We can set differences aside for good deeds

By Gov. Howard Dean, M.D.

I generally write political columns and I have written a lot about the need for different kinds of people with different backgrounds to focus on what we have in common, not on what divides us. I think the following example, sent to me by Amos Kamil in Jerusalem, captures the true holiday spirit in all of us:

“Last month, we were at a beach north of Tel Aviv with a group of Israeli families. There were soft waves, a gentle breeze, a campfire and an idyllic moonlit Mediterranean night. After dinner my 7-year-old daughter Maia and her friend entered the water for a twilight swim. Perhaps 20 seconds later I followed them into the sea with Lea, my 4-year-old, in my arms.

“By the time I was waist deep, a rip tide had pulled the two older girls about 30 yards from the shore. They screamed for help as the rough sea wrestled them further and further out. I stepped out and extended my hand. But the rip tide was fierce and sucked Lea and me right out with them. Out here the waves were choppy and tumultuous, and the three girls shrieked in panic. With Lea clinging to my neck screaming “I’m scared! I’m scared!” I tried calmly — and to no avail — to push the older girls alternately toward the beach.

“A dark man, roughly my age, appeared seemingly from nowhere. I could tell he wasn’t a strong swimmer, but together — both grunting and gasping — we tried pushing the three girls ashore. As we pushed one girl, one of the other two would submerge gagging under the tide. I have lived through many things (including the mayhem of 9/11) and no fear in my life has come close to the thought of one of these three girls (and/or myself) dying just yards from the beach.

“Close to three excruciating minutes later, the stranger and I managed to push the two older girls to the safety of the shallow water. The two sprinted to the beach, screaming for help, as the rip tide continued pulling the stranger, Lea, and me back out to sea. I tried in both Hebrew and English to summon help from my friends on the beach. The sea was



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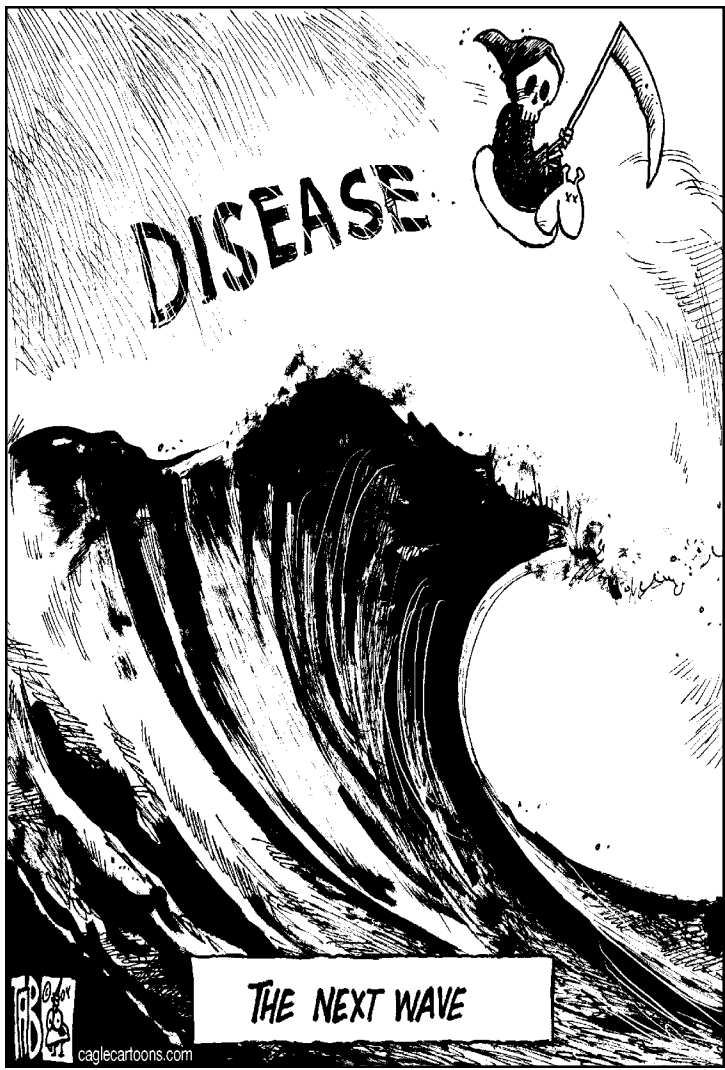
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deafening and no one heard. Suddenly the stranger began waving his hands and shouting for help — in Arabic.

“Within 20 seconds, a line of seven or eight men formed a human chain on the beach. A

dark-skinned teen-ager scurried out on a boogie board. A proprietor from a nearby falafel stand darted into the waves with a lifesaver in hand. With the coordination of the entire assembly, the falafel stand guy grabbed Lea, now hoarse with terror, and pushed her onto the lifesaver, and the human chain dragged the three of us back to the shallow water.

“After the trauma, there were slaps on the back, thank-yous, and hugs. It was only then I learned that the stranger was not only an Arab from a nearby village, but that he didn’t know how to swim. I learned, too, that the human chain which brought the five of us back to the shore comprised almost equally Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews. The Arab stranger and I both agreed the situation could have ended up much worse. He said, “Baruch Hashem!” — Hebrew, not Arabic, for



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