

from other pens...

## The world needs to call a 'time out'

Wouldn't it be nice if the world could call "Time Out!" But we know it can't. Sadly. But now would be the time for such a call before we end up killing millions of innocents for reasons, in many cases, that defy logic. The latest engagement is in the Middle East where Israel and Lebanon are exchanging missiles. The death toll mounts. The damage is beyond comprehension. North Korea has launched several missiles as a demonstration of its emerging might as they, too, want to be taken seriously as a major player on the international stage. We're fighting terrorists in Iraq. And Afghanistan. Terrorists aren't decked out in military uniforms. They look just like everybody else. They strap themselves to bombs and mingle in crowded places and then blow themselves and others up. They specialize in roadside bombs and numerous U.S. soldiers have died as a result. If you take a look at a map of the world and keep abreast of the wars going on, you would find it staggering. You get to the point of wondering if your own leaders can do anything about any of this. At this point in time it looks like they can't. They, too, are scratching their heads. It is an unsettling time. And in many respects, as unsettling as it can get.

On the homefront, we failed to get a constitutional amendment through the Congress that would have outlawed flag burning. It sounded good, but questions were many. We are still squabbling over the immigration issue. President Bush's call for 6,000-plus National Guard troops to help patrol the border between the U.S. and Mexico has become mired down in political mud. A drive has started to get "under God" removed from the pledge. Congress has enjoyed an increase in pay. Minimum wage workers will continue to work without a hike in their pay checks. The economy, the experts say, is showing signs of fatigue. The list is endless. The temperature the past several days has been in triple digits. 105+ here. Outlook indicates that could easily continue. Places like South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota baking in temperatures of 113, 117 and 117 degrees, respectively, over the weekend. We can't do a thing, nothing, about the weather. But we can do something about all the other things mentioned above. But we must want to. And that seems to be what's lacking. God Bless America? No. God Bless Our Planet — Tom Dreiling, Norton Telegram

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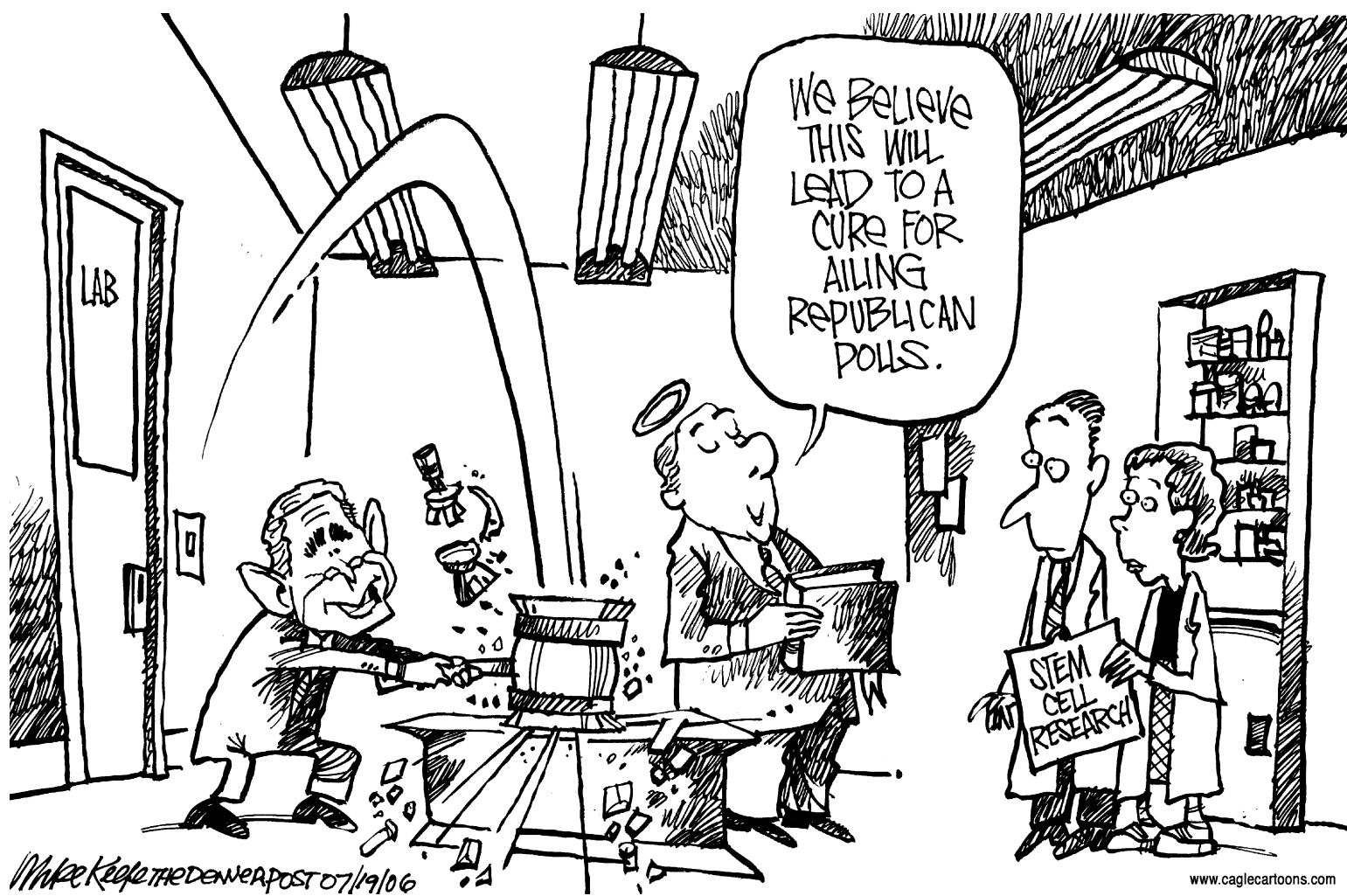
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Mike Keefe THE DENVER POST 07/19/06

## Banning all those driving distractions

The City of Lawrence, in the People's Republic of Douglas County, proposes to ban all conversation on cell phones by drivers, whether they are holding the phone or using a hands-free setup.

Council members are pushing an agenda that claims it's not handling the phone that distracts drivers, just talking to someone.

There may be some truth to that, but as cell phone companies rightfully point out, the city is not proposing to ban the hundreds of other things that can distract drivers.

Cell phones are merely the newest and most popular distraction we face. If we ban them, there still will be the car radio, lunch, the tape deck, the CD player, two-way radios and hot coffee.

Oh, and did we mention, kids in the back seat?

"He touched me, Mom."

"Because she had her hand in my space."

"Children, if I have to stop this car ...."

OK, distractions make for bad driving. I ad-



steve haynes

• along the sappa

mit, I get a little hinkey when I see some woman driving down the street, cradling a cell phone to her ear, yelling at the kids in the back seat, driving with one hand and flipping someone off with the other.

I'd be the first to go along with a ban on handheld phones in the car. Hands-free kits of one kind or another start with a simple ear bud at \$5.95.

But mobile phones have become important communications tools, not just in this country, but around the world.

Sometimes I think we way overuse them — and I'll put myself in that category many days. People look silly walking down the street or sitting in a restaurant talking on the phone.

But we can't eliminate distraction from driv-

ing. I had a wreck once — hit a deer — because the kids wanted me to change the tape in the car. I looked down to see where to put the tape, and the deer jumped in front of me.

Music, kids, the control panel — maybe I would have hit the deer anyway, and maybe if I hadn't have been distracted, I'd have stopped in time to avoid it.

Are we going to ban all those other distractions — eating a burger, drinking coffee, talking on the CB?

We should ban talking two-way radios. It can't be safe to be holding a mike while driving. I'm thinking police officers are endangering us, talking to the dispatcher all the time. And it can't be safe to have a conversation during a high-speed chase.

No, this is just another silly attempt by the nanny do-gooders who want to pass laws to protect us from ourselves to make life more complicated.

Count on Lawrence to be out front, leading the way.

## Too few citizens exercise their right to vote

To the Editor:

July 4 we celebrated another year in this great country, the United States of America.

We have friends and relatives fighting in battles around the world to keep our freedom. We all know our freedom comes at a cost.

A major freedom we have that too few citizens exercise is our right to vote.

Aug. 1 is the primary election. It comes during a busy time of county fairs and family vacations. Some believe that the primary is not as important at the general election in November.

There are several positions for which the primary will determine the candidate on the ballot in November. The Republican candidate



from our readers

• to the editor

for the state Board of Education District 5 will be determined by the primary.

Connie Morris of St. Francis is running for re-election. During her term, she has been the center of controversy and held positions that most voters do not agree with based on news articles and editorials over the years.

Sally Cauble is a moderate Republican running for this position, who believes in teaching all students as the law requires and will listen to content experts when reviewing state standards. Republican voters have an important decision to make in this primary.

Voting in the primary is easy. A registered voter has three ways to vote: He or she can go

to the assigned voting place between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 1. He or she can go to the county clerk's office in the courthouse during business hours now through Monday, July 31. Or, voters can request a mail ballot from the clerk's office and mail the completed ballot before by Aug. 1.

The direction of public education as guided by the state Board of Education will be affected by the primary, as half the seats on this board are up for election.

Candidates do not represent the majority when they are elected by less than half of the registered voters. We allow that to happen when registered voters do not take the time and effort to vote.

Let's honor our soldiers by getting out to vote in the primary now and in the general election in November! Let's truly elect candidates with a majority vote.

Bernadine Samson  
Ludell

### where to write

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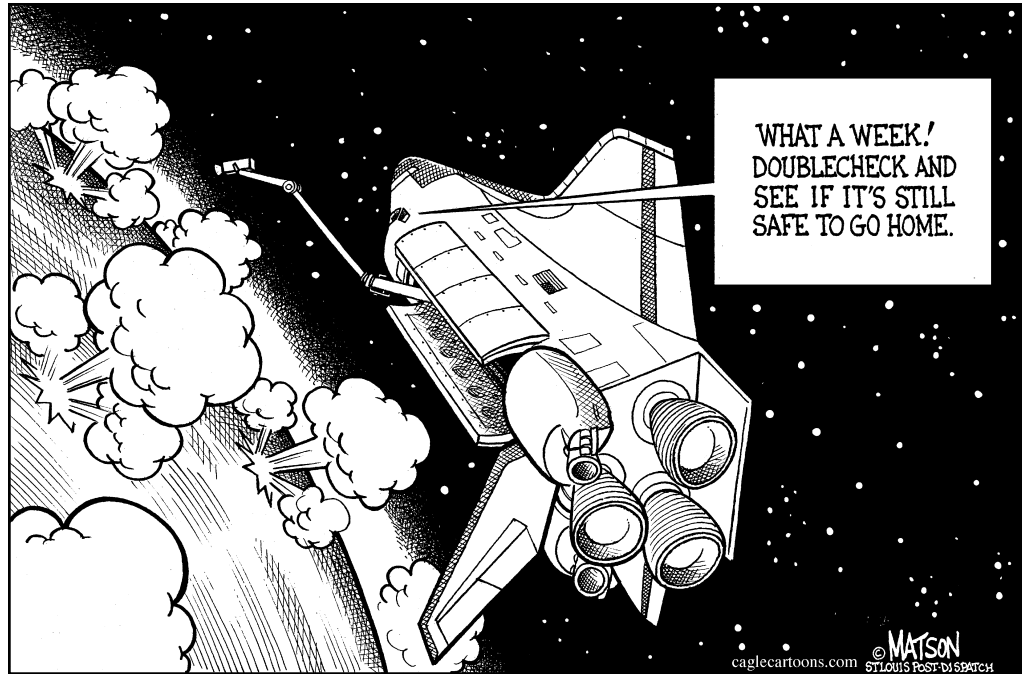
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