

from other pens...

Beware of those stupid scam e-mails

It's not unusual for us to receive "stupid mail" via e-mail. The one to follow takes the cake, however. It's one of those so-called scam things whereby the writer, no doubt fictitious, wants to lighten our load, as in financial load.

Often we warn readers to ignore this stuff when it comes their way in whatever form. The one you are about to read invites us to get in contact with her/him for the details. Certainly, once an initial contact is made, he/she has opened the door and from that point on your troubles are just beginning.

After you read this, ask yourself: "Would I respond?" Hopefully your answer is a resounding, "No!" Remember this is just one of numerous scams that comes to us each and every week.

Here is the latest (just as it was received, untouched):

Dearest one,
I sincerely write you because I need your assistance to help me on what belongs to me. Your profile pushed me to write you. I am Miss Juliane Williams. The only daughter of Mr & Mrs Williams. My father was a highly reputable (a cocoa merchant) in cote d'ivoire. It was sad that he was poisoned and passed away mysteriously in France during his business trips on 12th December 2003. His sudden death was linked suspected to have been masterminded by an uncle who traveled with him. But God knows the truth! My mother died when I was 4 years old. My father took me so special before he made the trip.

He called me and explained to me the reason why he will make this trip and also told me that he deposited a trunk box contain \$ 15,300,000 million in a storage company here in Ivory coast. He told me that this money is for investment purpose overseas .

He told me that the storage company did not know the content of the box as money but gold. To avoid, he gave me the certificate of the deposit of the box & other vital documents of his asset before he died. I went to the storage company to establish ownership of the onsignment.

Now I need your assistance to move this fund to your country for investment as it was my late father's aim before his death. Contact me with my privet email : (juliane_williams_2006@yahoo.fr)

Thanks for your anticipation assistance.
Miss Juliane Williams.

— — —
We hope that writer isn't holding her breath. Or, come to think about it, maybe we should encourage her to. — Tom Dreiling

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@nwkansas.com>.

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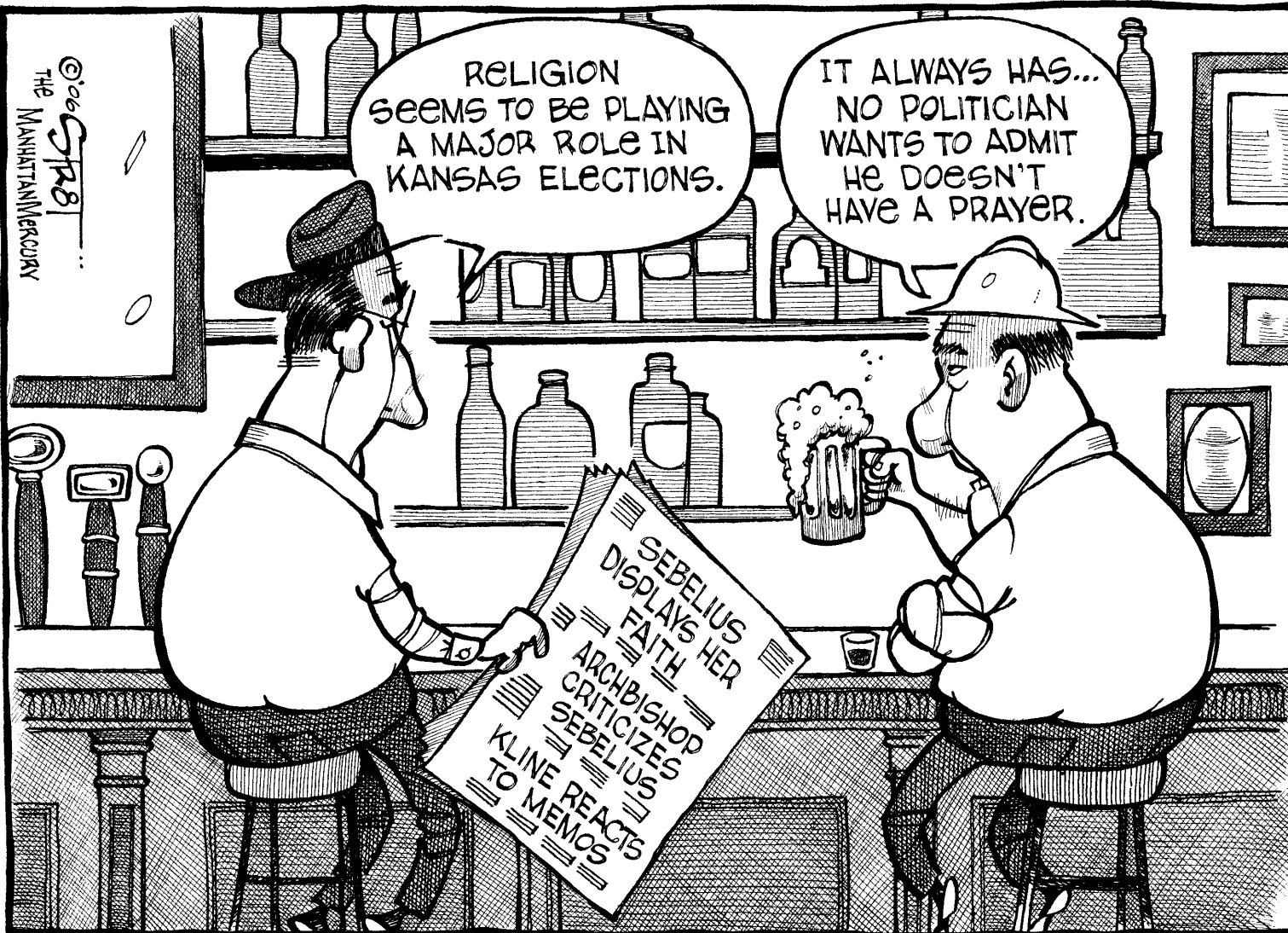
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We've found a few ways to get good seats

I thought the seats were pretty good — just 10 rows up from the third-base dugout — until I saw the bat spiraling toward us.

We've always done the conventional thing when we wanted baseball tickets, buying them from the team, scrounging them from charity auctions and cadging them from the bank.

The ones the team sells over the phone, we've found, often aren't the best. Season ticket holders have a special line they can call to buy extra seats, and they get first crack at the best of what's left.

We kept talking about a more daring plan — the scalpers who line the streets around any major ballpark.

The streetside vendors buy and sell, scoring extra seats from people headed to the game and selling them (with a markup, of course) to those who need them. It's a vital service, but most teams keep them off the stadium property and away from their boxoffice — for some reason.

The first time we tried this was in Milwaukee this spring, where we decided on the spur of the moment to go to a Brewers game. We were there and we had some spare time and the Braves were in town.

County Stadium is one of those out-of-downtown parks where the team controls all the parking and streets for a mile around, but there in the middle of the lots was one lone scalper astride a bike. I figured that was so he could scoot if the cops spotted him.

"You want the good seats?" he asked. (They always say that, by the way.)

We looked — one row behind the visitor's dugout. We bought — \$5 off the printed price. We enjoyed — you could hear Bobby Cox grunt every time the Braves did something wrong.

Facing pleas, Congress must be pragmatic

You have to pity your poor member of Congress. Pretty much every poll out there shows the institution to be held in low regard, and it has faced a barrage of criticism over the past several years.

Yet if we're going to criticize Congress, we should also understand it, and in particular we need to understand one thing: It is devilishly hard work to represent the American people.

We all want government spending reduced, for instance, but not if it means cutting programs we like. We hate "waste, fraud, and abuse," but have a hard time coming up with specifics.

We want lower taxes, but we also want robust defense spending, full funding of Social Security and Medicare, and spending on public education, infrastructure and national parks.

So you can understand why some members just throw their hands in the air and go off to talk about flag-burning amendments or new roads for their districts.

Politicians are just like the rest of us: They want to be liked, and it's hard to achieve that when you're making tough choices about what to cut or whom to tax.

Still, if you spend some time talking to ordinary citizens, you find that there are, in fact, some basic things we all agree on.

We want to see pragmatic, common-sense approaches to solving our problems.

We have a profound instinct for fairness, and want to feel comfortable that public policy is as fair as possible to as many people as possible.

We want life to be better for our children and grandchildren, and we are willing to invest prudently in spending on infrastructure, education and research that will lead us in productive directions.

And we believe that public policy decisions should promote the common good, not the interests of the well-connected or of a narrow



**steve
haynes**

• along the sappa

So when we decided to go to Denver for one more game, even though we really didn't have time, we had to scrape up some tickets. The bank's were gone, so the scalpers were our choice.

The first guy was buying, not selling. The next pair, a couple of homies in baggy pants and backward caps, had pavilion seats — baseball doublespeak for outfield bleachers.

The next guy turned out to be a lawyer whose firm has a dozen seats. He was unloading his surplus.

Bingo.
So there we were, 10 rows behind the visitors' dugout. A bonus, the employees thought we must be clients, so they were extra nice to us.

Behind us were Jenna and her mother, friends of someone in the firm, and a couple with their 3-month-old baby.

Jenna, 5, blonde, cute and talkative as could be, was at her first baseball game. So, I guess, was the baby.

You might say things started off with a bang in the first when Austin Kearns, the Washington center fielder, struck out swinging. He took such a big cut that his bat just kept on going. And going. Right toward us, spiraling ever higher into the stands.

I was about to cut and run when it veered to the right and landed in the aisle six seats down. The guy in the row behind us grabbed it. An

usher rushed up to check him out.

Next inning, the usher came back to get the bat, explaining that Mr. Kearns would really, really like his game bat back, but he'd be glad to trade a practice bat. An inning later he followed through.

After a foul ball, he came back and tried to get the baby's parents to move somewhere safer. When they turned him down, he sat in front of them and guarded the tike the rest of the night.

The Rocks followed their modus operandi for the week, surging ahead in the first couple of innings, letting Washington tie the game at 6 in the sixth, then winning in the eighth and ninth. Three home runs, a triple, a couple of doubles — there was plenty of action.

Late in the game, I glanced at the scoreboard and thought, "That looks a lot like Jenna and her mom."

Hey, it was Jenna and her mom. I pointed, they looked and my sleeve got on the scoreboard. So much for instant fame.

"Now," her mom asked, "aren't you glad we didn't go to a movie?"

"Well," Jenna replied, all mock serious, "it would have been a *whole* lot safer."

The guy with the bat was complaining about the "piece of *@#*\$" bat Kearns had sent him. I was about to tell him to cool it. He was, I thought, the only fan going home with a major league bat that night.

How wrong I was. How right Jenna was.

In the ninth, with the Nats trailing 9-6, the center fielder came out swinging. With men at second and third, he fanned — sending that same bat back into the crowd.

I don't think he got it back that time.

from
other pens

• commentary



slice of the electorate.

Americans value practical results, not ideology. It's tempting for members of Congress to despair that they'll never be able to satisfy everyone.

