

from other pens...

# Straw poll has governor in the lead

The little straw poll we are conducting among our readers of *The Norton Telegram* shows no clear-cut advantage for either incumbent Gov. Kathleen Sebelius or for Republican challenger Jim Barnett, in our little neck of the woods.

The governor continues to lead, but barely so. And he fact she holds a lead at all could be in her favor since Norton County is heavily Republican territory. Of course the name Sebelius is household out here and that does play in the mix.

When the governor sought her first term in 2002, she was going up against Tim Shallenburger, a well-known and respected Republican. In this county in 2002, Mrs. Sebelius captured 1,131 votes and Mr. Shallenburger 916 for a 215 vote margin of victory.

But the race this year is different, much different, from the first. The governor is now running on her own record, which is a plus or which is a minus, depending on who is carrying on the conversation. She has something for the voters to use in deciding her fate in her drive for a second term.

The governor had no primary opposition, so she didn't have to spend much money on that campaign. Mr. Barnett, however, shared a gubernatorial primary run with a number of other Republicans and consequently was forced to use much of it to get to the final round. That will probably give the governor an advantage as far as getting her message out to the masses as we close in on Nov. 7.

Statewide polls show the sitting governor continues to hold a lead — primarily in the population centers, although some reports indicate she is gaining in some Republican strongholds in the west.

The name game goes to Sebelius. No question about that. Jim Barnett, on the other hand, is not a household name in this area of the state. For the record, he is a state senator and physician from Emporia. He is widely known and respected in the eastern reaches, where boosters give him a good shot at pulling an upset on Nov. 7.

Kansas, about as Republican as a state can get, many times places a Democrat in the governor's chair while electing big Republican majorities in the House and the Senate.

And if you need to register to vote, you have until 5 p.m., Monday, Oct. 23 to do so.

—Tom Dreiling, publisher of *The Norton Telegram*

## 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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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@nwkanssas.com>.

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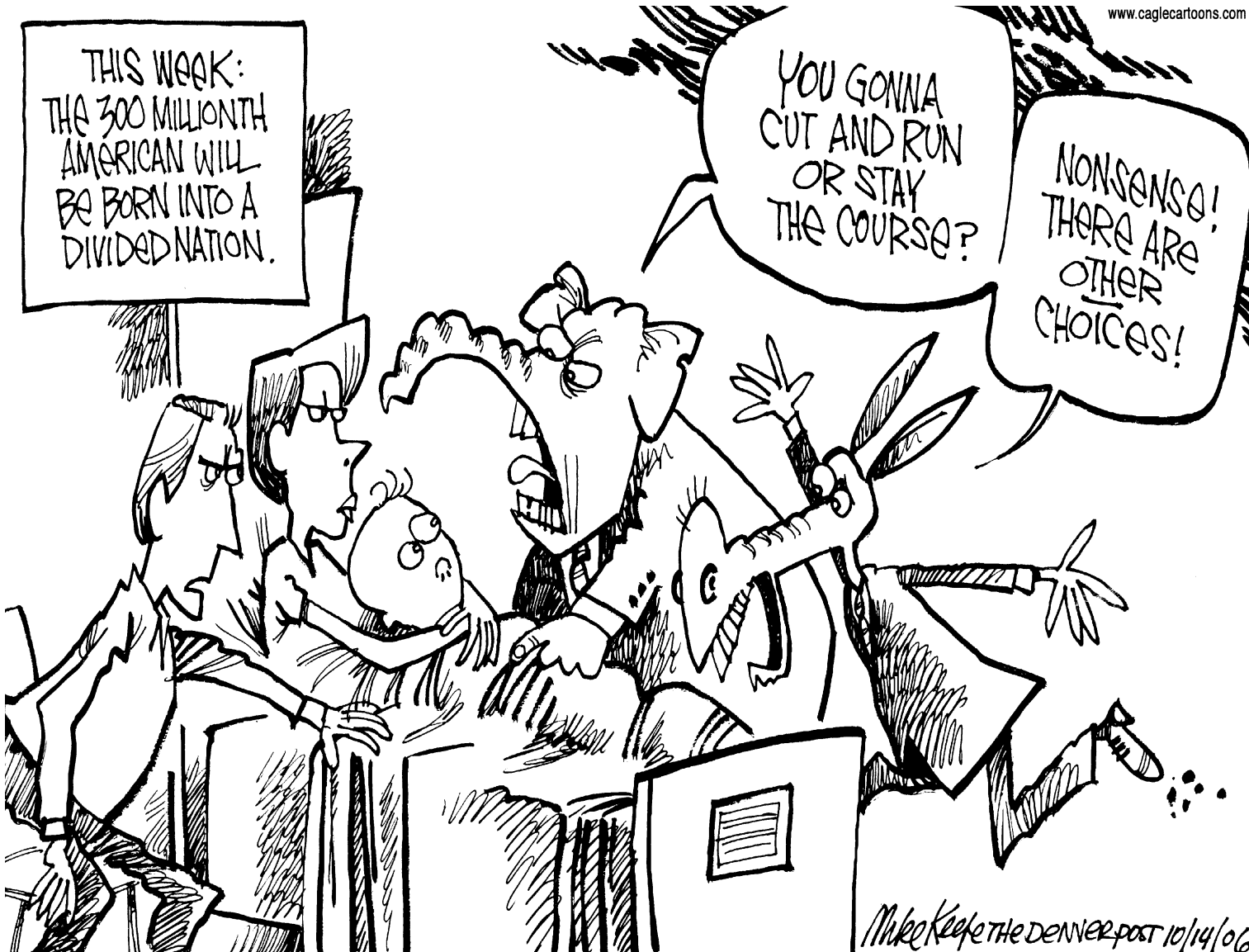
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# Thanks to those who worked on kids play

To the Editor:

My family and I wish to express our deepest appreciation to Tina Goodwin, Jessica Cole and Nancy Shores for all of their hard work, effort and dedication to our kids and our community in presenting the play "How to Eat Like a Child".

This was a first-class musical production, enjoyed by all who attended.

This is the kind of activity that makes Goodland stand out. We have so many people who give of their time to provide opportunities for our children. This also is something that will draw people to our community.

Let's all support these events as they come up.

Laurie Klemm  
Goodland

To the Editor:

I want to thank John and Carlotta McDermott for providing once again that the 50-state flag float and the U.S. Army "Mule" for the Goodland High Homecoming parade.

The "Mule" experienced a major loss of traction and steering control at the beginning of the parade. This resulted in our movement to Plan B. Thank you again and we look forward to many future parades!

My thanks to the Goodland Police Department and Sherman County Sheriff's Department for their quick response to our circumstance and their patience while we worked to resolve the issue.

I want to thank the American Legion members who came out in support of this effort!

Marshall C. Squires II  
Post Commander  
Goodland

To the Editor:



## from our readers

• to the editor

As election day draws near, I would like to share (and clarify) some information regarding the status of the Kansas business climate.

• Kansas is ranked 50th in private-sector job growth this year.

• Kansas is one of just three states losing jobs while the other 47 states are adding new and better jobs.

• Workers in the states surrounding Kansas earn more because businesses in those states are prospering.

Again, we are dead last in the nation in terms of job growth in the private sector, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Kansas economy has seen growth only in the size of government. We need to focus on creating a climate where business, agriculture and industry can thrive, rather than expanding the government work force, leading us to more regulation, more red tape and bureaucracy

On another important topic:

Twice, our Legislature sent bills to the governor's desk to improve licensing oversight of abortion clinics. Both times these were vetoed.

We have an opportunity to make a difference in our state. Please join us at a reception for gubernatorial candidate Jim Barnett at 6 p.m. Wednesday at the Technical College Student Union in Goodland, or at the Quality Inn in Colby at 6 a.m. Thursday.

Jim is a doctor in private practice, and he understands what it takes to run a business. Like our local businesses, he meets a payroll,

pays taxes and hopes to make a profit at the end of the year. Because Jim is a businessman in Kansas, he understands the needs of the business community and you can count on him to stand up for your interests. Of course, this translates to benefiting our lives individually.

Please take time to meet and visit with him.

Roberta Bretz  
Goodland

To the Editor:

The Salvation Army Christmas season is just around the corner. We would like to thank everyone who last year gave so generously and from the heart. We couldn't continue to serve those in need without your help.

This year, thanks to your support, the Army served 81,022 people in 93 counties in Kansas, providing emergency crisis assistance, including help with utilities, rent, prescriptions, food and clothing. Our volunteers logged 27,699 hours of service.

Once again this holiday season, we are asking for your help to ensure the disadvantaged get the assistance they need throughout the year. In addition to the red kettles you'll see outside stores, you can donate by credit card on-line at [armykettle.com](http://armykettle.com) or by calling 1-800-SAL-ARMY.

Another way to make a difference is to volunteer. We need bell ringers. If you'd like to be a part of this holiday tradition, and change lives in the process, please give me a call.

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# Terrorists follow us home

A lot of trees died in vain as newsprint this week, reporting details of President Bush's wasted, desperate attempt to float a new trial balloon in his tortured six-year war against logic, reason, gravity and physics.

Apparently he's in need of a new sack of gas to tie his failed Iraqi war plan to. Due to the fact his most recent verbal bag of helium — "stay the course" — has been tossed onto the same discarded pile of shriveled rubber as "dead or alive," "smoking gun as a mushroom cloud" and "welcomed with flowers and candy."

He held an hour-long press conference in an elastic attempt to sound reasonable, having about as much success as a rabid, flatulent weasel trying to hide in a half-empty bin of spinach fettuccine at Whole Foods. Trotting out a series of mantras, the president courted the opinion of average Americans who, recent polls say, still retain their admiration for the man for his stick-to-itiveness, though they remain a bit skeptical of his synaptic activity. Much like a man intent on breaking through a brick wall using only his forehead: While you have to admire his persistence, you probably don't want him doing much math.

Experimenting with the calibrated residue of Karl Rove's extensive hot-air polling of focus groups, Dubyah introduced the new official buzz phrase of the Iraqi occupation: the word "wrong." Cutting and running is "wrong." The Democrats are patriotic but "wrong." Spandex on NFL linemen. Screw Kappa Napa. It's all just "wrong." He went on to say if we don't finish the job in Iraq, the world will see us as quitters and you know what they say about quitters. "Quitters bruise their shins and winners never evacuate and are destined to bloat up like poisoned toads," or something like that. He



## will durst

• raging moderate

wasn't really clear. As usual.

"There's a lot of people - good, decent people - saying, 'Withdraw now.' They're wrong," Bush said. "There are a lot of people in the Democrat Party who believe that the best course of action is to leave Iraq before the job is done, period. And they're wrong." Unfortunately, he steadfastly refuses to tell us exactly what job he is talking about. I'm thinking it has to do with developing a falafel-based oil substitute.

He further explained if we leave, the terrorists will follow us home. And if they follow us home, we'll have to walk them twice a day and feed them and brush them and they'll need

shots and let me tell you right now, they're sleeping outside, mister. Oh sure, they're cute when they're young, but when terrorists grow up, they're just like animals. Constantly begging for scraps and whimpering because they're afraid to be left alone. "Allah is watching." Chewing shoes. Peeing on their prayer rug.

At the end, he waxed weirdly poetic and at the same time loopy: "Sometimes I'm frustrated. Rarely surprised. Sometimes I'm happy, you know. But war is not a time of joy. These aren't joyous times. These are challenging times..." and they're straining the psyche of our country."

And as one who's had my psyche strained, I have to admit, he's right.

"We're not leaving so long as I'm the president."

OK, Mr. President, whatever it takes.

Will Durst is a political comedian who has performed around the world. E-mail Will at [durst@willdurst.com](mailto:durst@willdurst.com).

## where to write

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