

## Senseless killing shows why we are in the Mideast

The latest bombings in Iraq show the true colors of the killing in the Mideast.

Two men dressed as Moslem clerics, or ministers, walked into the offices of two Kurdish political parties in Irbil. The suicide bombers took advantage of crowds celebrating the Feast of Sacrifice, a Muslim holiday that recalls Abraham's sacrifice.

At least 56 people died and more than 236 were hurt in this vicious killing. While the wire services focused on the fact that the Kurdish parties are strong allies of the Americans, that's hardly important.

Nearly 300 human beings were killed or maimed in an instant that only symbolizes the violence in Iraq. Thousands of Iraqis have died, far more than the 523 American soldiers killed since March.

It's as if someone dressed as a Catholic priest had entered a Christmas party at Republican headquarters in Topeka, then blown the place to bits. It makes that much sense, but hate runs deep in the Cradle of Civilization.

Maybe the bombers really were Islamic clergy. Maybe they were impostors taking advantage of the holiday mood. What difference does it make?

The violence tells us a lot.

It tells us that if we are doing something, anything, to bring peace and freedom to Iraq, then our cause is just.

It tells us that the enemies of peace and freedom will go to any length to stop not just us, but anyone who opposes them. The Kurds,

remember, are a persecuted minority, a "third wheel" in a country where the two largest sects can't get along.

It tells us that this isn't going to get any easier, that the killing and bombing won't stop anytime soon. If we are going to help Iraq have a stable and fair government, we might as well start now.

It tells us that there is a certain amount of desperation among our foes that they would be willing to take this kind of action.

It tells us we will have to be strong to push this war through to the kind of conclusion that it deserves.

The truth is, whatever our government's motives or flaws, we've done the world and Iraq a favor by getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Now we have to get on with replacing him with something better.

Even after our troops leave, there will be violence in Iraq. You have only to read the Bible to know that someone has been fighting someone in this land since the dawn of time. It won't stop anytime soon.

But remember, our forces were hailed as liberators when they arrived and when they helped the crowd pull down Saddam's statues. Most Iraqis probably think so still.

But they surely cry out for peace as well, and that's something we may not have the power to grant. We will do our best, and hopefully leave Iraq a better place than we found it. That's all we can hope for.

— Steve Haynes

## Legislators go into top speed

Things are starting to heat up in Topeka this week.

The House Agriculture Committee on Monday planned discussion and possible action on Executive Reorganization Order 32, which would transfer inspection duties from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to the Department of Agriculture. Currently both do inspections of certain retail stores. This is projected to save about \$1.5 million.

On Wednesday, the Committee on Agriculture will have a hearing on a controversial bill that would require the livestock commissioner to identify individual animals, lots and herds of livestock, register premises where livestock are located

and track all livestock movement in Kansas.

This fee-funded program would mandate records be kept for all livestock, ear tags or other devices. The commissioner would be allowed to enter property where livestock are held and review any livestock records.

Penalties would be \$250 to

\$1,000 for each violation, and each day could be a separate violation.

The Kansas Livestock Association is pushing legislators on the committee to implement this bill. This is a peculiar position for the group to take, considering its past opposition to government regulation of any kind in the livestock industry.

## Business operation has not changed

To the Editor:

We would like to clarify some rumors that are going around town about us.

No, we did not sell our business. We are not moving. We did not buy a big fancy house in North Platte, nor has anyone seen us haul a trailer load of furniture to North Platte.

Also, Michael did not buy Mike and Jackie's building. He is not coming back down here, nor is he taking over our business and running it from North Platte.

Yes, he does own a business in North Platte. He is in plumbing, heating and air also.

He is a Lennox dealer, Hansen's Quality Plumbing-Heating and Air

LLC, 203 Rodeo Road, North Platte, Neb., 69101, (308) 534-5020.

We are also a Lennox dealer. We do not get our Lennox out of North Platte as many of you have been told. Our Lennox comes out of the Denver warehouse. Our dealer number is E66281, if anyone chooses to inquire about it.

We have been in business here for 27 years. We have always tried our best to please everyone.

If you have any questions or con-

cerns about us and our business, please stop by and visit with us, and get your information firsthand.

Bee Hansen  
Hansen Plumbing-Heating  
and Air  
Oberlin



### Letter to the Editor

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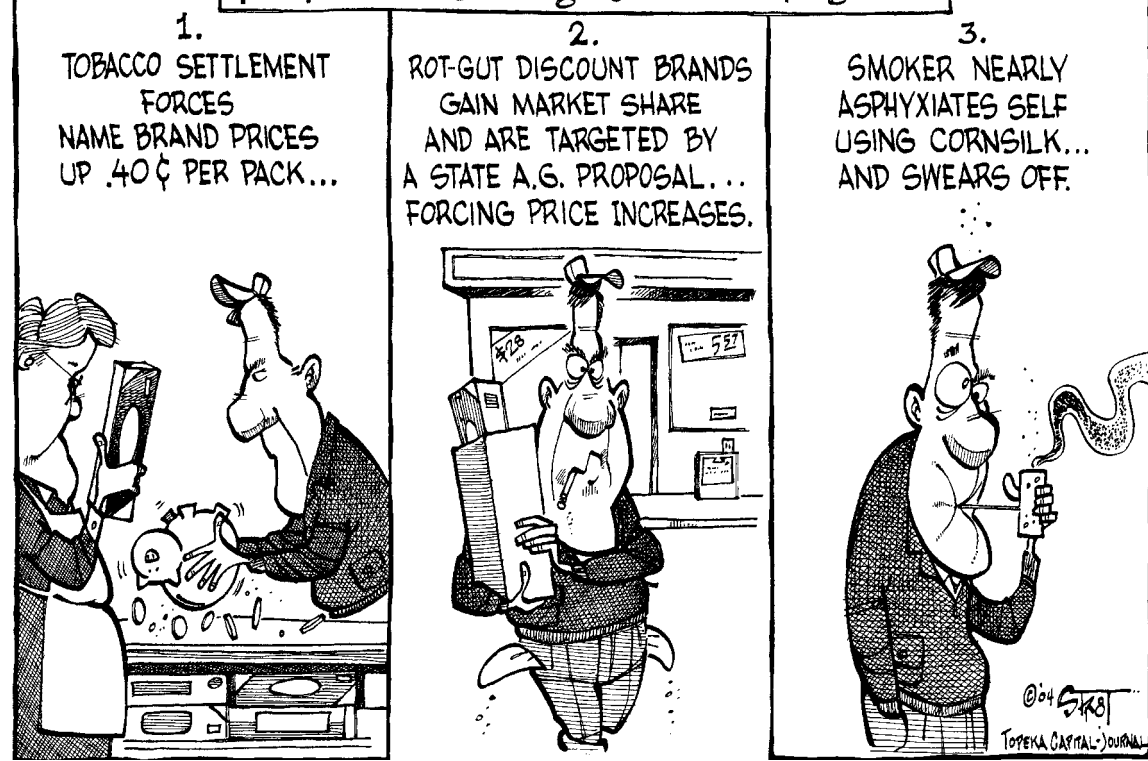
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## The Kansas Smoking Cessation Program



## State employees needed out here

Throughout the past year, several of you have contacted me regarding the closing of, or at least the rumor of the potential closing, of state offices in rural Kansas.

Those most frequently mentioned were Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services offices, but there is a real threat and attempt to consolidate magistrate judge positions and others. I have visited with people on the governor's staff and a number of other legislators from both political parties who really care about the future of rural Kansas; among them Reps. Jim Morrison, Ralph Ostmeier and John Faber from the immediate area and Dennis McKinney, the Democrat leader in the Kansas House of Representatives from Greensburg.

We have done our best to change the direction Social and Rehabilitation Services and other state agencies are heading. Dennis has met a number of times with the governor and her staff and reports back; we establish the next step and keep each other informed.

Recently I met with Candace Shively, deputy director of Integrated and Service Delivery within Social Services, and at another time with Jeremy Anderson, director of governmental affairs for the governor's office. In each meeting, I pointed out that one of the best ways the administration can truly demonstrate their sincerity in your efforts towards rural economic development is to maintain and expand the number of state government employees in rural Kansas.

Using the Internet and "800" numbers with the automated phone systems is a two-way street. People from the city many times are thought to be more technologically advanced and, if we accept that theory, can therefore access these govern-



## Letter from Topeka

By State Sen. Stan Clark

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ment services more readily than rural citizens contacting the city for these services. I point out that locating the jobs in rural Kansas helps stabilize the enrollment in our schools because the state employee's children will also become part of the community, their salary will help maintain the rural businesses and health care facilities, they will become active in the community service organizations and help maintain our way of life, and purchasing a home will help maintain the real estate market. Additionally, I tell them that the state employees could become ambassadors for the rural way of life and encourage more agencies to locate here.

They say every current employee can continue with their present job, but that they will be driving farther. I respond that that may be true for the short term, but the reality is that their replacement will live in Hays or Garden City or wherever the office is, and those communities have enough other employment opportunities.

Truly, wouldn't it be better for the state to locate these offices in rural Kansas? They do not disagree with my reasoning. I hand them the listing of all of the state government offices from the Feist phone books. These books list numerous offices in Hays and Garden City and quite a few in Dodge City. I ask which of these offices really have to be lo-

cated in these communities? I continue by asking which services and backroom paperwork (or computer systems) that are currently handled in Topeka or Salina or Wichita or Kansas City really don't make much difference where they are located?

They start listing the services: collections, legal, administration of countless departments. I ask, "Why not locate some of these in rural Kansas?" They hesitate and hesitate some more. They don't say it, but if I am reading their thoughts correctly, the answer is that they, themselves, really don't want to move to rural Kansas.

I point out, "You have a wonderful opportunity to keep the SRS office open in some of the communities in my legislative district because the lease continues for another two years. Why not move jobs from the city to a rural community and begin to truly demonstrate this administration's commitment to rural Kansas?"

How can we clear this hurdle? How can we get some momentum on this type of proposal? I need your thoughts and ideas.

Please feel free to contact me on this or any issue. I can be reached by writing to Senator Stan Clark, State Capitol-Room 449-N, Topeka, KS 66612; by calling 1-800-432-3924 or 785-296-7399; by FAX at 801-457-9064; or by e-mail at sclark@ink.org.

## Column almost was forgotten

You know that awful feeling you have when you wake with a start, knowing you've forgotten something? Guess what I forgot? This column!

We have been on a dead run since Friday morning, packing, loading, driving and talking (lots of talking) for and during our Mexico mission trip. But this morning, at 5 a.m. Mountain Standard time, I awoke with a jump like I had been poked with a HotShot. Oh, no! The column!

I launched out of bed ... well, maybe not launched. Crawled? No, we slept on air mattresses, so rolled out of bed is probably more like it.

Jim already had coffee going, so after a quick trip to the bathroom, I was ready to write. Trouble is, the path to the bathroom is littered with bodies. Sleeping ones, that is. We spent the night at a church in El Paso, and people are sleeping in hallways, classrooms and pews. So a flashlight is an absolute necessity.

We're getting acquainted with people from Syracuse who have joined our group. One woman, whose husband stayed home, said, "My husband's only concern was, 'What am I going to eat while you're



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts

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gone?"

People are starting to "roust out", and I'm finding it more and more difficult to concentrate. Not because anyone is bothering me, but because I have to talk to everyone who comes into the kitchen where I'm writing.

My brother Bob came down for the trip again. It's good to see him.

We have an Englishman named Rodney on the trip. He has lived in Kansas for more than 20 years, but his accent is as broad as ever. He is a godly man with a sense of humor. I've been taking notes so I can remember his stories. Remind me to tell you the one about the Frenchman who went into the restaurant.

It's 6:30 a.m. now, and the traffic in the kitchen is starting to pick up. The caravan leaves in an hour and I still have to dress and pack, so I'll

sign off until next week.  
Adios, and hasta la vista.

## From the Bible

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.  
1 Corinthians 3:11-13

## Backer thanks petition signers

To the Editor:

I would like to thank those of you who signed the petition to bring the Oberlin School District local option budget potential increase to a vote.

I would also like to tell those of you who wanted to sign the petition, but did not because of intimidation and fear of retaliation, that I do understand. You still have the American right to vote; no intimidation will exist inside of the voting booth.

I realize that this election will cost the school district, which eventually means we the taxpayers. I feel strongly though that the right we

have in this country to hold free elections is a great privilege and should be exercised.

I believe the provision of the Kansas law that allows this process was no doubt placed there for such reasons as this.

I strongly encourage each and every one of you to register to vote if you are not, and to go cast your vote on the day of the election. no

matter which side of the fence you are on.

I would love to see this election decided by the majority of the people instead of the majority of the minority who get out and vote. Please exercise your right as an American and as a taxpayer of Decatur County.

Phil Lahman  
Oberlin

### Letter to the Editor