

Politics rarely includes honest look at the truth

Politics. Honesty, integrity, the truth. Draw a line between those two sentences, because one seldom mixes with the other, especially in Kansas this year.

It's nothing unusual in this country, but candidates seem to think they have to shade the truth to be elected.

Maybe no one is exactly lying, but it's hard to catch anyone telling the unvarnished truth. It's enough to make a voter run screaming from the booth.

Take the governor's race.

Please.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, who seems a shoo-in for re-election and beyond that, maybe somebody's running mate, likes to brag about the money "she's" gotten for Kansas schools, "all without a tax increase."

The truth is she pushed for a \$350 million tax increase which Republican legislators turned down. Her claim is technically true, even if it's not credible. The governor stayed behind the scenes through most of the school battle, coming out after the dust had settled to claim the credit.

That's not the kind of "truth" daddy would have let us get away with as kids. Who knows, though. Her daddy was governor of Ohio.

Her opponent, Sen. Jim Barnett of Emporia, is no better. He's running on a no-tax-increase platform, though in the heat of the school finance fight, he backed a \$250 million increase.

Maybe voters are supposed to listen to today's "truth" and forget the candidate's record.

Then there's the attorney general race, where the challenger, Democrat Paul Morrison of Johnson County, claims he's leading Republican Phill Kline.

One thing we're supposed to forget is that Morrison was a Republican until he saw a chance to unseat Kline last year. Morrison maintains a "truth squad" which fires off press releases claiming that Kline lies. These call his statements "Phill's fibs."

And while there's no doubt the attorney general has stretched and bent the truth to suit his needs, Morrison has shown he can fib it up with the rest of them. His latest television ad shows doctors working on records and claims that Kline wants "your medical records" in the hands of government.

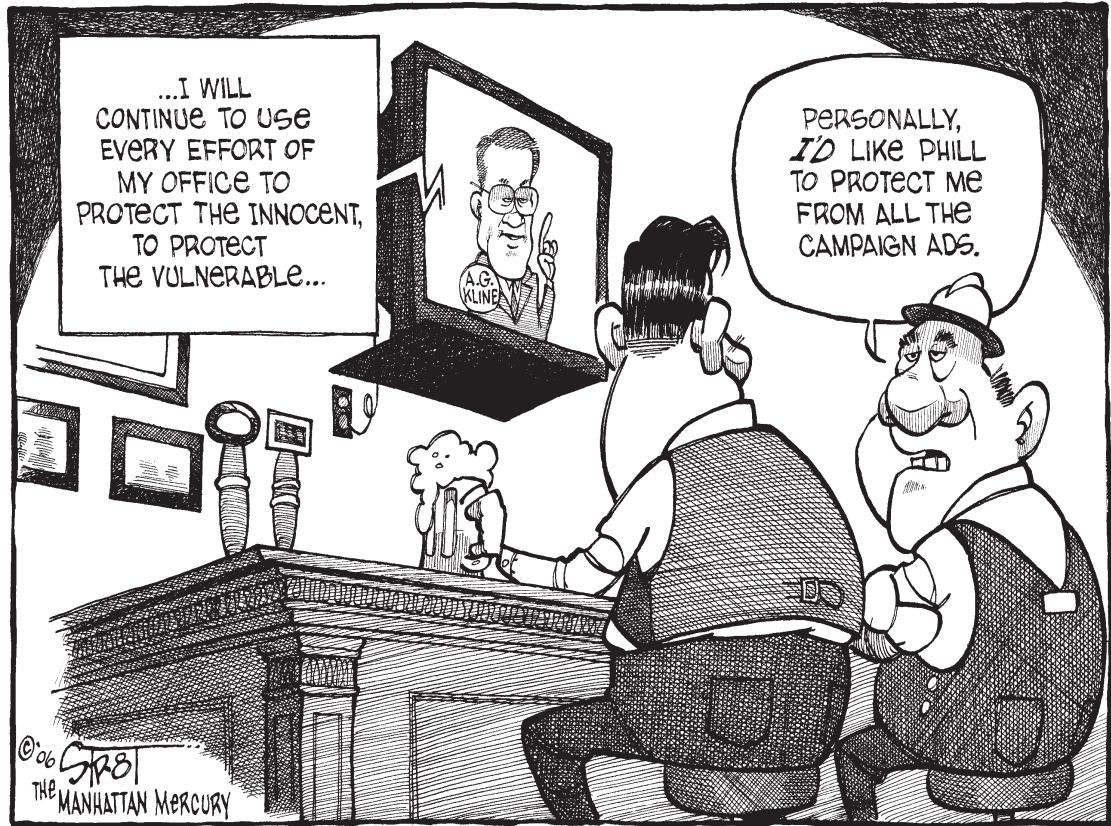
In fact, Kline's office tried to get a limited number of records from two abortion clinics involving underage girls, hoping to file statutory rape charges. Kline says he's just looking for lawbreakers, but the fight really is about abortion. Morrison knows that, too.

None of this is new in American politics. It's gone on since the founding of the Republic, the dark and disgusting underbelly of democracy.

Much as we claim to hate mudslinging, Americans decry a clean campaign. We go to sleep when candidates debate real issues. Dirt attracts attention. Lies become accepted truths. Exaggerations become reality.

Not a pretty picture, but there you have it. Wouldn't it be nice if they all stopped fibbing and got back to business?

— Steve Haynes



About time to put down roots?

Cynthia and I passed a milestone of sorts this fall, 13 years in one house.

That's a record for us, not that we've moved a lot by today's standards. Just a lot more than we ever wanted to.

We both grew up in families that never moved, not once they put down roots.

My folks married while dad was in law school in Lawrence after the war, and I was born there. They moved to Emporia in 1951 and lived in an apartment until they could build a house.

We lived at 1623 Dover Road for nearly 30 years. The four of us played in the woods across the street, learned to ride a sled and a bike on the hill out front, knew all the neighbors, left for college and became adults.

Mom eventually sold the house and moved into a condo, something she and dad always planned on "when the kids were gone." She only moved half a mile down the road.

Cynthia's folks married after the war, too, moving back to his home town of Concordia. They lived in town, then moved to a farm for a while — Cynthia remembers that she hated living in the country, and won't consider it even today — but by the time she started school, they'd settled in a house in town.

Her mom lived there until the steps got to be too much for her a couple of years ago. She moved into an apartment, then to assisted living.

It was painful to both of us, I think, to see our childhood homes sold. That's the kind of stability we al-



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes

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ways hoped to give our kids. But we stayed longer in Kansas City than we planned, bought a nice old house and started to fix it up. We were there more than nine years, had three kids and found that we were missing something: call it community, I guess.

City life got to be too much, with us working nights all or part of the time, the kids starting school, my company being sold. We wanted out.

So we sold that house and moved to the mountains of Colorado. I thought then that, as William Allen White wrote when he moved to Emporia, that we'd be there "until the new editor became the old editor."

Five years later, the mine closed and our prosperous little town began to decline.

We jumped on a chance to buy into the larger paper down the road, merging ours into a group that totaled six, later grew to seven.

We couldn't sell the house in Creede, where the kids grew up, so we rented it and bought one in the Valley. It had a big yard, two-car garage, shed and trees, views and a wood stove. We loved it.

Then six or seven years down the road, opportunity — or disaster,

you're never sure which — knocked. A chain bought our competitor and made an offer on our papers. We didn't want to leave, but our partners didn't want to fight. Eventually we sold both the papers and the house.

And since I was out of a job (Cynthia was running a pharmacy for Dillon's), we had nothing better to do than look for a paper. I remember our son cried when we told him we'd be moving again, but he and his sister joined the search for a new home after 13 years in Colorado.

That's how we got to Oberlin 13 short years ago.

No, we don't have any plans to move. It may be a long time for us, but it hasn't been long enough. Life is pretty good here, business is OK, people are nice and we've got more than enough to do.

We still own that house in the mountains, the one with all the memories from the years we went out on our own with three kids and a bunch of dreams. That's probably one more house than we need right now anyway. Two's enough, though at one point we owned three — two in Colorado and one in Oberlin.

I don't know about Cynthia, but I don't think I want to try that again.

Kittens better grow quickly

We're rewriting that old saying about "One boy, a whole boy." It's going to read, "Two cats, no cat at all."

A friend called last week and said, "Jim, our mama cat just brought three kittens to the garage and one of them looks Siamese. Are you still interested?"

For a year, Jim has been waiting for that cat to have kittens, so his answer was a definite "Yes."

He brought home the cutest little Siamese-looking kitten and he was welcomed into the family by Pete, the first kitten we had inherited two weeks earlier.

At first, I worried that Pete's size advantage would be a danger to the new kitty, which we have named Sammy. But, after separating them several times and having Sammy dive back into the fray, I decided he could stand up for himself.

I told Jim we don't need television; we have those two to watch. It's a hoot. Up and over the recliners, hiding in paper grocery bags, attacking from behind a pair of shoes.

These two clowns have so much energy, I wish I could bottle it up. But they sleep just as hard as they play. When they are tired, they seem to collapse.

Our timing wasn't the best, either. With the house to finish in little more than two weeks, we really didn't need two playful kittens to pick up after. I spend a lot of time re-rolling toilet paper and picking up shredded plastic grocery bags.



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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Yesterday, I was working on a pillow and they found the bag with the stuffing. Fiber-Fill was strewn from one end of the front room to another.

I don't know how long the kitten stage lasts, but if they don't want to start using up their nine lives, it better get over soon.

—ob—

A phone call from our daughter, Jennifer, in San Antonio caught us up on little Annie's progress. She is really growing and holding her head up well. Can hardly wait to see her at Thanksgiving. She will have changed so much.

—ob—

Since I'm the painting subcontractor on our house project, I have to stay ahead of Jim so I don't slow down his progress, but Sunday my painting schedule took a back seat to my napping schedule.

Early that morning, I had worked at the radio station, then went to church, lunch, chapel services at the prison, a meeting after that, and finally I stopped at my office to finish a few things. When I returned home, I told Jim I would take a nap

and paint later.

Later turned out to be midnight, because I didn't wake up until about 9:30 p.m. And Sunday night we have to watch the television series "24," so that bumped my schedule back to 11:30 p.m. By the time I changed into my painting clothes, which is a paint-smeared purple t-shirt and a pair of faded green knit pants, it was midnight.

Three hours later, I crawled into bed, tired but satisfied, knowing the final coat of paint was on the family room walls and Jim can install doors.

We're two weeks and four days away from our deadline. We'll make it if we don't weaken.

From the Bible

Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

Proverbs 24: 19, 20

Woman fears Oberlin's pet cats being trapped, killed by someone

To the Editor:

I am a longtime resident of Oberlin, having lived here for 28 years. I love the small-town atmosphere, the sense of security that I get knowing my family is safe here and the belief that my neighbors care about each other.

But today, I am writing to warn residents that our family pets are in imminent danger.

Several pet cats have disappeared from their homes in about a two-block radius from the Oberlin City Library. To my knowledge, at least eight cats have disappeared during the past few weeks and there may be more. This is not the first or only time this has happened.

The fate of our pets remains unknown, but many of us suspect they have met with an untimely death. We have seen animal traps in the neighborhood and suspect that our family pets wandered into these traps and were either poisoned, shot or otherwise disposed of.

Most of the cats that have disappeared were family pets that have been inoculated against disease and spayed or neutered. They were healthy cats that were well fed and taken care of. My cat, for example, weighed 20 pounds and was neutered, declawed and vaccinated annually for the past eight years.

Scavenger hunt needs contributions

To the Editor:

Once again fall is upon us, as is the annual scavenger hunt. This event has been held for many years and good times are had by all.

Even our local law enforcement has the opportunity to see if their lights still work from last year.

This annual event could possibly be coming to an end, though. I'm sure that all who participate would hate to see this happen.

Every year, there is some sort of money handed down to the winner of this event. This is supposed to take care of finances for the follow-

ing year's event, whether it be the prizes given away, the band for the party afterward or general cost of the hunt — it's not free.

Last year's prestigious winner was Gerry Tally's group. No money exchanged hands from this hunt and the previous year's winners, which means costs from this year's hunt will be out of the personal pockets of the group. That also means there will be no exchange of funds for this year, either.

Much more of this and the hunt will be history.

The only way for this event to

rights and privileges, and to question our government in a public forum. However, this does not give any of us the right to take the law into our own hands and dispense justice as we see fit.

As U.S. citizens, we have the responsibility of protecting and upholding the laws of our local, state and federal government and the privilege of participating in the law making process, if we choose. There are procedural guidelines in place that enable us to change laws that we disagree with or to enact new laws.

Someone in our community has apparently taken the law into their own hands and decided that cats should not be allowed to live. Whoever is responsible has acted with no thought or consideration to public law or how their neighbors might feel about having a family pet trapped, hurt or killed.

These actions are hurting the entire community and eliminating the sense of safety and camaraderie that we've all come to take for granted in our community.

Marsha Richards
Oberlin

continue is through a contribution, big or small, to help cover this year's costs and to help insure future hunts.

Being participants, let's all address an envelope to the Tallys to ensure the future of this annual event. Checks may be left at *The Oberlin Herald*.

Gary Wolters
Oberlin



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