

OPINION

THE HUTCHINSON
NEWS

Editorial Board

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EDITORIAL

Crime twitter

Reno County Crime Stoppers is joining the social media trend in the hopes of better connecting with the public, and it is not a bad idea to hop on the bandwagon. Any way that a law enforcement department can better communicate with the public is a big plus in our book.

Facebook and Twitter may sound like gossip boards, but they increasingly have surpassed their original use as social websites to become valuable marketing tools for businesses and nonprofit agencies, among others.

The local Crime Stoppers launched a Twitter feed at www.twitter.com/StopRn-CoCrime.

Though it is difficult to predict whether the website will garner any more tips than the phone number – or to envision exactly how the method would protect tipsters' anonymity – it does speak to a convenience factor that might compel someone to provide information who would rather not put effort into making a phone call. Increasingly, e-mail and Web posts have surpassed the phone as our favorite mode of communication.

The Reno County Crime Stoppers Twitter feed also will include some special features, such as a Crime of the Week and a Fugitive

of the Week. These are valuable tools not only for garnering tips from the public but for making residents more aware of the crimes in their community.

Crime Stoppers also should consider joining Facebook or using other website avenues to publicize public safety information. Detective Paul Sack learned at a Crime Stoppers convention in Great Bend that Wichita has been having success through both Twitter and Facebook.

The Pratt County Sheriff's Office also turned to the Web to improve its connection with the public recently. The website there was expected to include information about individuals being booked in jail, their arrest charges and bond amounts. Other information the sheriff planned to include were outstanding warrants, registered sex offender lists and other information.

The more information law enforcement agencies can provide us, the better their chances they will reach the one person who may have the information they need, as well as making residents aware of relevant dangers.

Reno County Crime Stoppers, and our other local agencies, should continue to expand on their options for linking with the community at large.

WESTERN FRONT

Rose is knowledgeable

It is my honor to endorse Trish Rose as candidate for the Division I district judge position. I have known her since my arrival in Hutchinson in July 2001.

Trish is knowledgeable in the law and experienced in its practice. She is concerned about people being treated fairly. She would be faithful, conscientious, hardworking and open-minded in service as a judge. She has the training, background, temperament and commitment that would make for an outstanding judge.

Trish is a longtime member and active participant in the life of First United Methodist Church. She has been a youth leader, youth Sunday school teacher, a trustee, and a member of Chancel Choir. Her views are well reasoned, and her ideas are worth considering.

I encourage registered Democrats and Independents to vote for Trish Rose in the primary election on Aug. 3.

MARK CONARD
Pastor, First United
Methodist Church
Hutchinson

Stories powerful

I appreciated the two inspirational stories published as front-page material recently, the one dealing with "Effie" and the one dealing with the Rev. Rick Saylor and his daughter. Both stories illustrate the power of divine grace working in and through individuals.

Furthermore, both stories illustrate "quiet individuals" serving the master faithfully on a daily basis.

GALEN R. BOEHME Ph.D.
Offerle

Necessary toughness

When are we going to take the gloves off? With the escalating violence from the Mexican border spilling into the U.S., what better use for the thousands of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan than to secure our southern border?

I am tired of seeing my country trashed by drug dealers and human traffickers.

What disturbs me even more is

watching our political leadership bend to appease a Mexican government that actively encourages its citizens to break our immigration laws while it ruthlessly enforces its own.

We are being invaded by foreigners who don't care about our nation or our heritage. They are here for one reason, to take. Whether it be from our schools or medical system, these criminals continue to consume the lifeblood of our elderly, children and working class.

We should expel those who have committed a criminal act by entering our nation illegally. If you have come to the U.S. by marriage fraud or any other illegal means, you are not an immigrant, you are a criminal. You have no right to be here.

When will we man up and stop this invading army of marauders?

GREGORY BONTRAGER
Hutchinson

Rose is fair

I believe Trish Rose is the perfect person for judge. She is knowledgeable, has the experience needed and would serve the people of Reno County well.

I have known Trish for more than 20 years. She listens to all sides and is very fair. She would do the same as a judge. I encourage you to vote for Trish for judge on August 3.

KAREN TAYLOR
Hutchinson

Our own worst enemy

We are destroying ourselves – politics – government – Wall Street – Gulf tragedy – mining – credit cards.

No way do we need the assistance of outsiders, Afghanistan, North Korea or terrorists.

VIVIAN CLINTON
Dodge City

ELECTION LETTERS

As of March 15, 2010, Western Front letters written in support of candidates or issues should be limited to 150 words or less.

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

The News encourages readers to share their opinions on this page and offers a number of ways to do so:

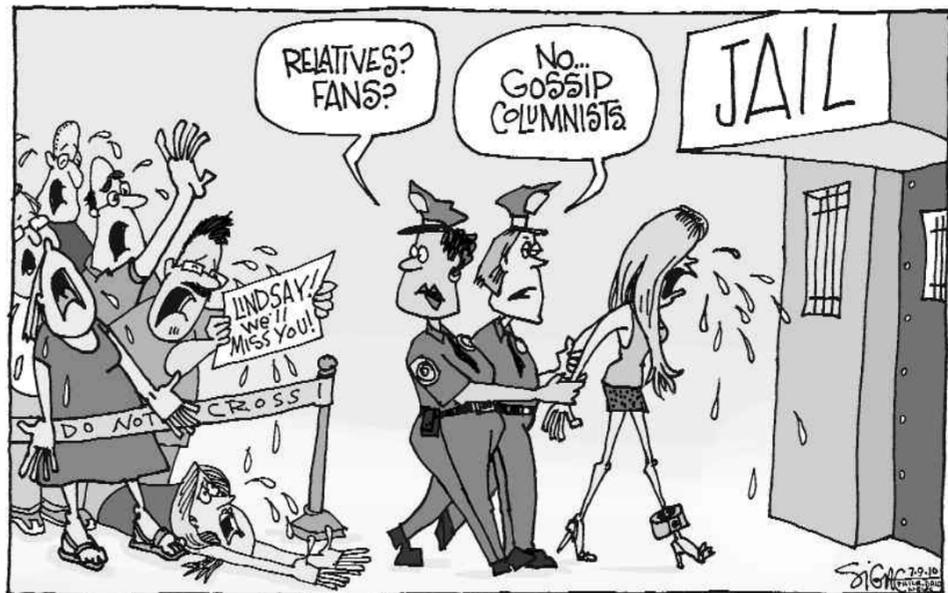
(1) Write a letter to the Western Front on any topic. Send to The News at 300 W. Second Ave., Hutchinson, KS, 67504-0190; fax to (620) 662-4186 or e-mail to westernfront@hutchnews.com.

Letters should be limited to 500 words. Poems, consumer complaints, business testimonials and group-written letters will not be accepted. Please sign your name and provide your address

and a phone number so we may call to verify the letter. We strive to publish letters within one week of verification.

Western Front letters are subject to editing for space considerations and libel concerns.

(2) Respond directly to a newspaper editorial by joining our online opinions blog. Go to www.hutchnews.com/editorialblogs and comment on any of our latest posts. A selection of constructive comments may be excerpted to go with opinions that are published in a later print edition of The News.



COLUMNISTS

Things don't have to be complex

It is a common theme in many conversations and media reports that the world is getting too complicated and the sheer volume of discrete bits of information is so huge it is impossible to keep up. I agree, to an extent. The issue is a lot of this confusion and blitzkrieg of factoids could be simplified but we choose to make it more complex.

Just because there is information available doesn't mean it is important. For example, I just spent five minutes of my life watching a portion of Lindsay Lohan's probation hearing. I don't know. I have also spent an amount of time I do not want to add up and state for the public record (the Lohan thing was embarrassing enough) reading and listening to people trying to guess where LeBron James is going to play basketball next season. The media can't just report what has happened. It must also spend great amounts of time talking about what might happen. Maybe we should just have Paul the Prognosticating Cephalopod tell us if Mr. James will be a Cavalier; a Knick, a Bull or a Heat (I still think teams should have nicknames which can be parsed into individual units – maybe Miami should have called themselves the BTUs). Why do I know there is an octopus in Oberhausen, Germany, who has predicted the winner of several soccer matches? I don't know. I didn't want or need to know. I just do. Now you do, too (sneaky of me, wasn't it?).

Part of this self-inflicted over-complication of life was made obvious to me when I went to the grocery store one summer evening. I was simply going to run in and get some ice cream. I wanted something simple. I was going to get vanilla or maybe chocolate. I

Community columnist



Christopher Pyle

couldn't find either one. Oh, there was Double Vanilla, Homemade Vanilla (but it was in a mass-produced carton meaning the "truth in advertising" police should be notified), Vividly Vanilla and Artisan Vanilla Bean. Chocolate was even more confusing. Classic Chocolate may have been what I wanted, but I remember the whole New Coke/Classic Coke fiasco, so maybe that wasn't the best choice. There was German Chocolate Cake ice cream. If I wanted cake, I'd have gone to the bakery section. There was Chocolate Almond Indulgence, but I wasn't in that hedonistic of a mood. There was Double Chocolate Cookie Crumble, which didn't sound like it was actually ice cream. Also, the ultimate, and I mean ultimate in the sense of final, end of the line, all she wrote, the ultimate flavor – Death by Chocolate. What is the advertising catch line for that flavor? "The last thing you'll ever taste, but sooooo worth it."

The myriad of ice cream flavors brought to mind the fact that paint is never just a color. The last couple of times my wife selected paint for rooms in our house she would tell me the name of the paint, and I would still have to ask what color it was. So I went to the Sherwin-Williams website to investigate. Just call me Bob Woodward.

On the first page of color palettes

I found "Nomadic Desert," "Foothills," "Summer Day," and "Enigma." Is there even an indication what your bedroom would look like if you painted it any of those colors? My personal favorites had to be "Knitting Needles" and "Wool Skein." Truthfully, I do not remember what those two looked like, but they had to be complementary colors.

OK, what is the most non-descript color out there? How about gray? On that same website, there are 61 different hues with the word gray in their name. Sixty-one different grays! Sixty-three if you throw in the color squares labeled with the term Greige, which I am guessing is some unnatural hybrid of gray and beige, the ultimate in boring. I do not have enough space in this column to list all the different grays, but here are some of my favorites: "Agreeable Gray," for the décor of union negotiation conference rooms, "Escape Gray" would be a truly mean color for prison cells, and "Dorian Gray" for painting portraits of ageless beauty.

There were 1,479 different colors represented on the Sherwin-Williams website and naming each and every one of them would be a gargantuan task, but "Stolen Kiss" and "Notable Hue"? Really? There was a color titled "Loren's Surprise." That had to be an incredibly cheap birthday present.

"Honey, I didn't get you that diamond necklace you wanted, but I did get the fellows over in the nomenclature department to name a color after you."

Christopher Pyle's favorite color is red, just red, not "Showstopper" or "Heartthrob," just red. You can contact him at occasionallykeen@yahoo.com.

A little economic realism

Let's say you're the leader of the free world. The economy is stuck in the doldrums. Naturally, you want to do something.

Many economists say we need another stimulus bill. They debate about whether the stimulus should take the form of tax cuts or spending increases, but the ones in your party are committed to spending increases. They trot out a plausible theory with computer models to go with it. If the federal government borrows X amount of dollars and pumps it into the economy, that would produce Y amount of growth and Z amount of jobs. In a \$14 trillion economy you'd probably have to borrow hundreds of billions more to have any noticeable effect, but at least you'd be doing something to help the jobless.

These Demand Side theorists are giving you a plan of action. But you're not a theorist. You're a practical executive, and you have some concerns.

These Demand Siders have very high IQs, but they seem to be strangers to doubt and modesty. They have total faith in their models. But all schools of economic thought have taken their lumps over the past few years. Are you really willing to risk national insolvency on the basis of a model?

Moreover, the Demand Siders write as if everybody who disagrees with them is immoral or a moron. But in fact, many prize-festooned economists do not support another stimulus. Most European leaders and central bankers think it's time to begin reducing debt, not increasing it – as do many economists at the international economic institutions. Are you



David Brooks

sure your theorists are right and theirs are wrong?

The Demand Siders don't have a good explanation for the past two years. There is no way to know for sure how well the last stimulus worked because we don't know what would have happened without it. But it is certainly true that the fiscal spigots have been wide open. The United States and most other countries have run up huge, historic deficits. And while this has helped save public-sector jobs, we certainly haven't seen much private-sector job growth. It could be that government spending is a weak lever to counter economic cycles. Maybe monetary policy is the only strong tool we have.

You can't read models, but you do talk to entrepreneurs in Racine and Yakima. Higher deficits will make them more insecure and more risk-averse, not less. They're afraid of a fiscal crisis. They're afraid of future tax increases. They don't believe government-stimulated growth is real and lasting. Maybe they are wrong to feel this way, but they do. And they are the ones who invest and hire, not the theorists.

Moreover, public spending seems to have odd knock-off effects. Professors Lauren Cohen, Joshua Coval and Christopher

Malloy of Harvard surveyed 42 years of government spending increases in certain congressional districts. They found that federal spending increases dampened corporate hiring and investment in those districts. You wish somebody could explain that one to you before you pass on more debt burdens to your grandchildren.

So you have your doubts, but you are practical. You want to do something. Too much debt could lead to national catastrophe. Too much austerity could lead to stagnation.

Well, there's a few short-term things you can do. First, extend unemployment insurance; that's a foolish place to begin budget-balancing. Second, you need to mitigate the pain caused by the state governments that are slashing spending. You need a program modeled on Race to the Top. You will provide federal money now to states that pass responsible long-term budget plans that will reduce spending and pension commitments. That would save public-sector jobs and ease contractionary pressures without throwing the country into a fiscal-debt spiral.

But the overall message is: Don't be arrogant. This year, don't engage in reckless new borrowing or reckless new cutting. Focus on the fundamentals. Cut programs that don't enhance productivity. Spend more on those that do.

You don't have the ability to play the economy like a fiddle. You do have the ability to lay some foundations for long-term growth and stability.

David Brooks is a columnist for The New York Times News Service.

Doonesbury

