

**VIEWPOINT**

**It tolls for thee**

**Ask not for whom the workers' rights bell tolls**

It's going to take a lot of thought and more leadership than America has seen in several national administrations, representing both of the two main political parties, for us to really understand the implications of the "manifestations" that are being led by Latino workers.

But that meaningful leadership is not likely to be seen because at the center of this question is not immigration.

It is the status of the American worker, and both major political parties have made it clear that they could not care less about the future of working class America.

They don't have to because working class America has removed itself from the election process.

You can rule an election by appealing to people who are well above the working class status today.

Just look at the most recent local elections.

Decisions were made with only a couple of percent of the voters turning out.

Americans would rather get interested in what Oprah Winfrey has to say than what the most recent speech by the president was about.

We'd rather talk about who won Deal Or No Deal than consider whether or not we should be in Iraq.

The immigrant rallies are something like the anti-war demonstrations during Viet Nam.

Long-haired radicals confronted police in the streets and stood against National Guard units on college campuses, and their commitment to end that war was real, was genuine.

But face facts. That was ended when the mothers of this country, the middle class voters, told our leaders we would rather vote you out of office than see this conflict continue. We aren't going to put up with more body bags. That is what stopped the war.

As long as middle America watches TV and stays out of the voting booth, change is going to be a long time coming.

All American workers need to insist that we aren't going to tolerate inhuman treatment.

Working moms who are allowed to work just a couple of hours short of "full time" each week so businesses can avoid paying them benefits — we're not going to tolerate that.

Keeping working class families in debt with credit cards to the point that they have no reason to ever expect they'll get ahead — we're not going to tolerate that.

Watching working families continue to decline in their standard of living while those at the top of the ladder continue to reap obscene profits — we're not going to tolerate that.

When middle America is fed up and takes to the streets, then we will see change.

Until then, this is just another topic for the headline news networks.

— Chuck Smith

**Take time out to enjoy your days off work**

As much as I enjoy my job photographing and writing about the all goings on for the Great Bend Tribune, I do enjoy my time off the clock, the days I get to relax and do my own thing, my days of rest.

Sunday is one of my two official days off at the paper. So since, I didn't have to get up early and rush into work — like I ever do — I stayed up until after 2 a.m. answering e-mails and tweaking my personal Web site on Saturday night.

Sunday, my day of rest started by sleeping a little too late. I had things to do. I needed to get some laundry done, shoot photos of drag cars at the airport, shoot photos of a function at Fort Larned, and I had a big race coming up that I was woefully unprepared for, so I needed to spend some time on the trails with my bike.

After all, it is my day of rest. Up at 10, I downed a bowl of mini-wheat squares, threw a load of laundry in the wash, and was off to the drag strip.

Standing 30 feet behind a super-charged dragster as it does a tire smoking burn out is a good way to start the day. It will get your heart pumping better than three cups of coffee.

Feeling that rush of adrenaline, and life surging through your body — that is restful.

I can only imagine the rush those drivers get as they spend their day off, rocketing down a quarter mile

of pavement in nine to 11 seconds.

Twelve-fifteen I had to leave the track and stop by the house to move the laundry from wash to dry, grab a Pepsi and head off to Larned.

A friend had invited me down to his club's spring meeting, and hamburger feed at Fort Larned. After the meetings, food, and exhibit viewing.

I took time out to shoot a few pictures around the fort. I also sat in the middle of the parade field with my back against the flagpole and listened to the 20- by 38-foot garrison flag flapping in the wind above me.

Looking out across the prairie and thinking about some cavalry soldier doing this same thing many, many years ago — that was restful.

Afternoon was waning and I still had a bike ride to go on, so I loaded up camera gear and headed back to the house for the third time in my day of rest.

I stopped at the house, started downloading my flashcard from the day's shoots and changed into my riding gear.

I also took the laundry out of the dryer and folded it. Well, I folded it over so I could pile it in the bedroom. Nothing restful there.

By 4 p.m., I was leaving the trail-head parking lot on a short ride through the trails. It had rained earlier in the day. The colors in the woods were that deeper, shinier hue things get after a rain.

Terry Spradley



The trails were a bit wet. Occasionally there was a mud puddle to traverse.

By my turnaround point, the wind had ceased, and I stopped for a break before heading back.

It was quiet and peaceful.

I could hear birds cooing, and the far off sound of trucks rolling down the highway.

That was restful.

On the way back, I hit the mud puddles moving fast.

The front tire would ride high.

The back would slide down the slope throwing mud up on my jersey and shorts.

Dodging through the trees and muddying up my clothes like I did when I was 10 — that was restful.

Sitting here at 10 p.m. telling you all about it, that is, well that is probably just a little narcissistic.

Enjoy your days of rest.

I do.

(Terry Spradley is a staff writer for the Great Bend Tribune. His e-mail address is [tspradley@gbtribune.com](mailto:tspradley@gbtribune.com))

**NEWS OF THE WEIRD**

**It's good work if you can get it**

Homeless New Jersey man, Richard Kreimer, said that he had settled, on undisclosed terms, part of his most recent lawsuit, against a transit company and two drivers, for having denied him rides because of his foul odor.

Kreimer's history includes a \$150,000 settlement in 1991 with the public library in Morris County, which had tried to keep him out because of the odor, and, by his count, \$80,000 in additional lawsuit-related income — though some went for legal expenses.

Kreimer dropped another foul-odor lawsuit in February, against a transit company and a train station in Summit.

**OK, this goes beyond 'weird'**

In Lunar New Year celebrations in January in China, 120 million rural peasants traveled to and from cities via jam-packed trains, despite meager restroom facilities.

As a result, according to a Reuters dispatch, there was a massive holiday run on adult diapers.

**Free pork rinds?**

A 300-page indictment detailing more than 1,000 allegations of election fraud was returned by a grand jury investigating the coal-mining town of Appalachia, Va., following reports of absentee-ballot bribery by two town officials.

Prosecutors accused candidates' operatives of offering the locals such goodies as beer, moonshine and cigarettes and, in one case, a supply of pork rinds.



▼ PUBLIC FORUM

**Oil and Gas Museum event was a success**

Dear Editor,

Our 2006 annual hamburger feed for retired and semi-retired oil and gas personnel was successful and well attended.

On behalf of all who attended, I would like to thank those who cooked and provided the food and refreshments.

Dean Weis, Museum Curator Bud Brungardt and Swampy Marsh, Allied Cementing, Tim Miller and

Frank Kelly, Oilfield Manf. Warehouse, Frank Feist, Sunrise Supply, Don Bentley, Bentley and Assoc., Barton County Desk and Derrick and Roland "Smitty" Smith and Darrell Mitchell, Smith Supply.

The food and refreshments were great and everyone had an enjoyable evening.

Danny Biggs,  
Kansas Oil and Gas Museum Foundation,  
Great Bend

**Health issues important at Cinco de Mayo**

Dear Editor,

Every year Great Bend celebrates Cinco de Mayo with a big festival.

This year's events will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 6 at Jack Kilby square at the Barton County Courthouse. This festival gives the opportunity for the Hispanic population to share their culture as well as their heritage by sharing their food, games, language, music and traditional dances with other cultures in this community as well as surrounding communities. Not only does this festival give the opportunity for the Hispanic community to share their culture and heritage but it also provides an opportunity for health care professionals to offer various medical information and health services.

For the last three years, the We Care Clinic has sponsored a health fair at Cinco de Mayo. Many organizations participate by providing services to the community. Services offered include blood sugar and blood pressure screenings, HIV testing, information on sexually transmitted diseases, hemoglobin screenings, body fat composition, education on stroke awareness, child identification kit, vision and hearing screenings.

By coming to Cinco de Mayo health fair people will

have the opportunity to receive free screenings and health information. It also gives folks the chance to be aware of medical organizations in other cities that may be useful in the future. Also, there will be many games for children to participate in.

The organizations that will be present at Cinco de Mayo this year include: Central Kansas Medical Center, Barton County Health Department, American Red Cross, BCCC Criminal Justice Program, United Methodist Mexican-American Ministries of Garden City, Lions Club, We Care, We Care's Wellness Center and Kansas Statewide Farmworker Program.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask all your readers to attend Cinco de Mayo in Great Bend on Saturday. I would like to thank all the organizations for offering to participate in the Cinco de Mayo health fair.

Finally, I would like to encourage other organizations and health care professionals to participate and expand next year's Cinco de Mayo health fair and celebration.

Alicia Bordier,  
health promoter,  
Judy Foster, RN,  
Great Bend



Send letters via e-mail: [email@gbtribune.com](mailto:email@gbtribune.com)

**Where to write the lawmakers**

President George W. Bush, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 20500. 202-456-1414 Fax: 202-456-2461. [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)  
U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. 202-224-4774. [pat\\_roberts@roberts.senate.gov](mailto:pat_roberts@roberts.senate.gov)  
U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202-224-6521. [sam\\_brownback@brownback.senate.gov](mailto:sam_brownback@brownback.senate.gov)  
U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1st District, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515. 202-225-2715. Hays office, 785-628-6401. [jerry.moran@mail.house.gov](mailto:jerry.moran@mail.house.gov)  
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