

Senator may lose out in the race for the White House

Sen. Bill Frist's White House bid may have ended this week. The Senate Majority Leader got whipped badly in the filibuster fight when seven senators of his own party merged with seven Democrats to fashion a compromise.

Then, John Bolton's confirmation as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations was expected to materialize but Frist wasn't able to deliver.

There has to be some eye-squinting going on in the White House. After all, as leader of the majority party in the United States Senate, Frist was expected to deliver for the man — in this case President Bush.

Frist was on the losing side in the Terry Schiavo case, in the filibuster fight and now the Bolton confirmation. Bolton will probably be confirmed when the Senate returns from the Memorial Day recess, but that confirmation was expected before the recess began.

It just might be that Sen. Frist isn't the timber everyone thought he was when he was advanced as majority leader. Of course there is a lot of time between now and the 2008 presidential election, but it is now that the forces begin forming and money begins arriving in the mail for potential candidates.

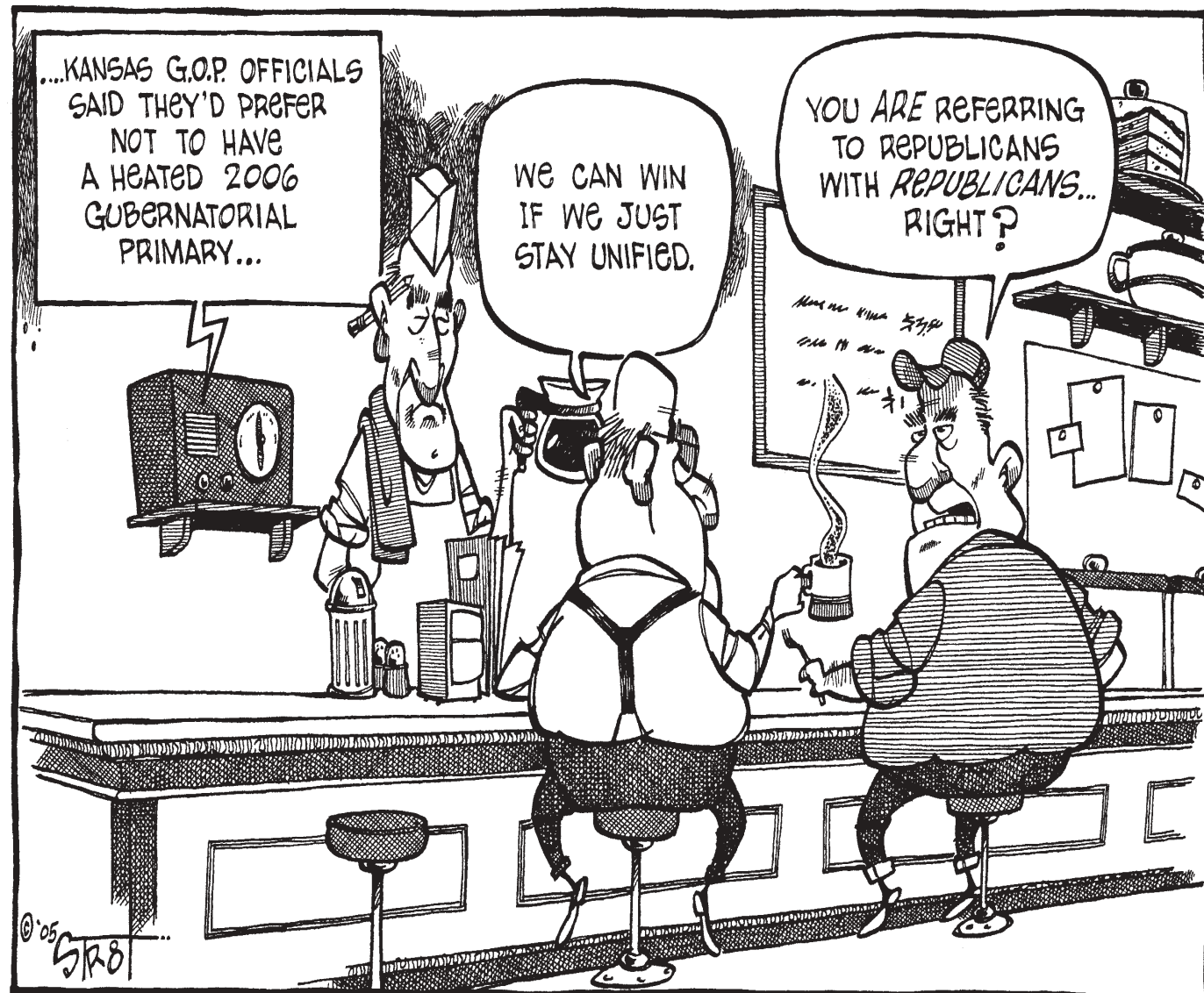
From here it looks like the best man for the job in the Republican ranks next time around just might be the man President Bush buried in the presidential primary in 2000 — Sen. John McCain. McCain was one of the seven Republicans that joined with the seven Democrats to reach a compromise on the filibuster as it relates to presidential judicial nominations.

Then, there is an election next year — an election that is now shaping up as a barnburner and that could see the majority party of the present in the minority party's role. There are some profound things going on right now and some of the influential and powerful forces in the GOP camp are expressing outrage at the compromise reached and are starting to point the finger at Sen. Frist and other so called leaders in the party. That could spell trouble for what looked like a sure bet return of some big names when voters go to the polls in 2006 — the mid term election.

The Democrats, at this point in time, are sitting back and watching the bloodshed. They have little to do but let the Republicans self-destruct.

The goings on in Washington are getting more and more interesting as each sun sets. Stay tuned.

— Tom Dreiling



A sister's death came without warning

It was late Thursday evening when my cell phone rang. My brother Jim was calling with the news that our sister-in-law, Liz Kelley, had died.

Mom always thought with a beautiful name like "Elizabeth," it was almost a sin to shorten it to "Liz." I just thought she was the most beautiful woman, period.

My brother Don met her when he was stationed at the Air Force base in Little Rock, Ark. It was easy to see why he was attracted to her. She was a petite, southern beauty with black hair and snappy black eyes. And then there was her southern drawl. It only added to her charm.

I was 7 or 8 when they got married. Mom took the bus to Little Rock for the wedding, and I remember looking at the pictures she brought back.

Later, Don brought her to the farm to meet the rest of the family. He must have told her that his little sister collected dolls. He had certainly brought me enough from his world travels as a pilot.

Liz had a present for me, the most beautiful doll in the world. I called her my "Indian Princess." She stood six-inches tall and wore a white leather, beaded, fringed dress. She had matching moccasins and a headband with two tiny feathers. I

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



couldn't believe something so special could be mine. She was too pretty to play with.

I remember asking my mother to line the box she came in with cotton and material to protect her. That doll was so special. I never let anyone touch it. I never really played with it. I would just take her out of her box and admire her.

Do I still have her? Of course, I do. Still in the original box, on her little bed of cotton from Mom's first-aid box. Now, she will hold an even more special place as a reminder of a sister and a dear friend lost.

Liz was the one who prepared me for seeing my dad right before he died. "Carolyn, your Daddy's not good," she said. "He's real sick."

No one prepared us for Liz's death. We all thought she was getting better. After

their last year of struggling with health issues, Don's last e-mail to the family said, "Things are looking up here."

We were so hopeful.

Now, the family is gathering. As families do. There's nothing we can do, except be there. But it's something we have to do.

—ob—

Little Taylor is here for her summer stay. Plans were made for her to stay with her Aunt Jennifer while we go for the funeral. She is so adaptable, she just announced that Grandma and Pa-Pa would be gone for three days and she would see us when we got back. Bye.

Her first week here was so hectic, I felt like all I said to her was, "Come on, Taylor. Hurry up. Get dressed, get in the car, we've got to go. Grandma is late now."

We had a quiet moment, though, one night before bed. She was wrapped up in her blanket, snuggled on my lap. I said, "Oh, Taylor. We've been so busy I haven't washed your hair all week and you've only taken one bath. Your mom and dad are going to fire me."

She turned and looked me in the eye. "Oh, no. They can't fire you. You're the Grandma."

Nothing like job security.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Children thrilled with new equipment

Wow! The installation of the new park equipment seems to be a huge success. It is safer, looks wonderful and provides so much fun and exercise.

Kudos to the city council, city manager, city workers, Lions Club and all the volunteers who brought this project to our community.

If anyone needs a lift to their day, drive by Elmwood Park and take in the children thrilled with the new equipment. Thanks.

Pam Shelton
Parents for Parks
Norton

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Congressman working for better benefits

Congressman Jerry Moran recently announced he is continuing his efforts to better provide for members of the Kansas National Guard and Reserve and their families by sponsoring legislation to lower the retirement age and help troops in combat save for retirement.

Today, nearly 40 percent of the troops serving in Iraq are from the reserve component.

"Today's soldier, fighting to keep our country safe from terror, is not just enlisted men and women - it's the local teacher, banker or small business owner who is part of the National Guard and Reserves," Congressman Moran said. "As we call upon these citizen soldiers more and more to serve in the line of fire, we need to make sure that the benefits they receive reflect their sacrifice."

The congressman is a sponsor of H.R. 783, which lowers the age for receipt of retirement pay for Guard and Reservists from 60 to 55. Guard and Reserve members are now ineligible to receive retire-

Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



ment pay until they reach 60, regardless of when they retire.

Active duty forces have no age restrictions once their 20 years of service is complete. This legislation would allow members of the National Guard and the Reserve to qualify at age 55 for retirement pay, thus making the system fairer. It will also help recruit and retain reserve members.

Congressman Moran has also sponsored H.R. 1499, the Heroes Earned Retirement Opportunities Act. This legislation makes adjustments in the federal tax code to allow combat soldiers to make

contributions to their individual retirement accounts.

Wages paid to soldiers serving in a combat zone are not eligible for the retirement account contributions. As deployment times have grown longer, many soldiers' compensation consists entirely of hazard pay. The act works to ensure that the men and women defending our country are not excluded from planning for their retirement by making hazard pay eligible for contribution to retirement accounts.

"Despite ranking 33rd nationally in population, Kansas ranks eighth nationally in number of troops per capita deployed from the guard and reservists," Congressman Moran concluded. "These citizen soldiers deserve our support."

For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at www.house.gov/moranks01/.

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