

Pelosi learning just how tough it can be

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi looked like the losing boxer in the ring. She, and some of her Democratic leaders, went before the television cameras Tuesday to explain why they back-tracked on the war budget, handing President Bush a victory.

She wasn't the smiling, eye-sparkling person we usually see roaming the halls of Congress. Being in the majority is no guarantee of getting everything you want. And it is always a hard pill to swallow for new leadership.

We think the results of the election last November were not a mandate for total change. We read the results as the voters' way to even the playing field, whereby no one party controls the House, the Senate and the White House, as was the case before the election.

The Democrat majority, while slim, simply means the party leadership needs to work extra hard to push their ideas into the victory lane. Madam Speaker must extend a careful, yet trusting hand across the aisle. She needs some of those Republican votes to help her taste victory.

There just seems to be something about Mrs. Pelosi that doesn't set well with a lot of folks, even some Democrats. Yes she's a liberal, extreme for most part. And that has its drawbacks, ditto the ultra-conservative wing of the Republican Party.

The Speaker must keep in mind the voters will be going back to the polls in November 2008, and what they did for the Democrats in 2006, they just might decide to undo. It's a tricky path one walks in the land of politics.

Right now the focus is back on immigration, how to stem the tide, how to reduce the numbers of illegals on our soil. A bipartisan effort unveiled a few days ago, reportedly with the support of the president, is being met with fierce opposition. It is seen as a form of amnesty. The moans and groans can be heard from coast-to-coast.

This issue could join the war in Iraq to become the make-or-break tool for the presidential candidates. Voters won't tolerate fence-straddling, they will expect the candidates to address the hot potato head on, and let the chips fall where they may.

Speaker Pelosi better be thick skinned. There will be more hot potatoes coming. And her performance just might affect the way voters view that other lady's effort to occupy the White House.

—Tom Dreiling

Thumbs Up to...

✓Susan Lowry and the Northern Valley KAYS for the breakfast benefit they held for the Greensburg tornado victims. (brought in)

✓Mr. Will and his students, for the concert, and to everyone who contributed to the Art Exhibit. (called in)

✓Mildred Baudry, Happy Birthday! (called in)

✓The Norton Telegram, for the coverage provided our schools and students. Also, "thank you" for providing the "Employee Spotlights" this year. (Norton School District Board of Education)

✓Corey Roy, Eisenhower Elementary principal, "um, um, good!" (td)

✓Whoever steps up to assure tennis remains an option at Norton Community High School. (called in)

✓George and Violet Clark, on your 60th wedding anniversary. (e-mail)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom@dwnkansas.com, call 877-6908 or 877-3361, mail to the office at 215 S. Kansas Ave., or bring it in, or fax 877-3732. Thanks!)

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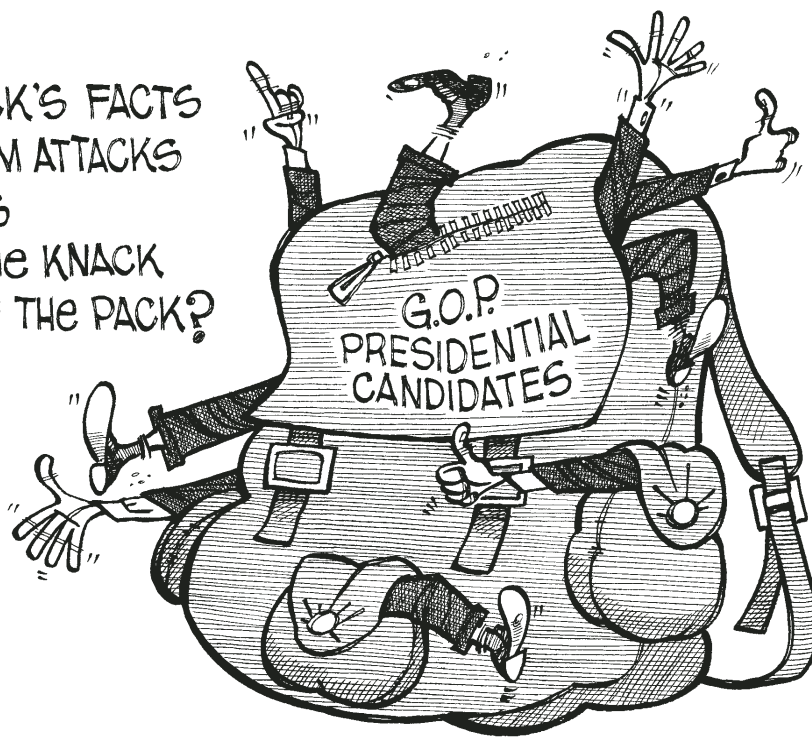
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"A KANSAS LIMERICK"

WILL BROWNBACK'S FACTS
SHIELD HIM FROM ATTACKS
BY RIVAL HACKS
AND PROVIDE THE KNACK
TO BREAK OUT OF THE PACK?



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THE MANHATTAN MERCURY

Once again, I ask for your assistance

It's starting to get very interesting. It, in this case, is the 2008 presidential derby. (Don't stop here, keep reading for the reason I'm penning this column). The many contenders, Republican and Democrat, are beginning to toss tiny bits of mud within their own camps. Won't be long and it will turn into mud slinging. It has to, there is a need to start weeding out the weakies, which both parties have an abundance of.

Mitt Romney, Rudy Giuliani and John McCain are the leaders for the GOP nod, and Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John Edwards lead the Dem pack. There is talk that Fred Thompson and Newt Gingrich will jump into the Republican race, and Al Gore will add to the Democrat field.

Chatterboxes are of the opinion that if there aren't enough people seeking the nod from the two major parties already, adding one or two isn't going to improve the situation. They are probably right.

With all of this said, what I am leading up to is a presidential poll which we will call "Tell Us 2008," designed somewhat like the poll we did last year for the Kansas gubernatorial race. The response to that one was very, very good.

You can become a part of "Tell Us 2008" in several different ways.

- You can call us at either 877-3361 or 877-6908.
- You can write to us at "Tell Us 2008," c/o The Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, KS 67654.
- E-mail tom@dwnkansas.com.
- You can drop by the office.

Your name will not be used, ever. You

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



need not sign anything. You can add a comment to your straw vote, if you want.

I just want to see how our little area stacks up to what media tell us is happening.

This is not a scientific poll, and it wasn't designed to be. We get right to the heart of the matter by asking you who you would vote for (on the day you mail in your response). We don't ask anything else — as most polls do.

Just to refresh your memory, here's the roster:

GOP — Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas, former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, Congressman Duncan Hunter of California, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, Congressman Ron Paul of Texas, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, Congressman Tom Tancredo of Colorado and former Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson. Waiting in the wings: former Senator and actor Fred Thompson, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and Nebraska Sen. Chuck Hagel.

DEMOCRATS — Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton

of New York, Sen. Chris Dodd of Connecticut, former Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, Mike Gravel, former U.S. Senator from Alaska, now of Virginia, Congressman Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois, and Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico. Waiting in the wings: former Vice President Al Gore and former Gen. Wes Clark.

Pardon me if I missed anybody. Also, you can go outside the roster and name someone you would rather see sitting in the White House.

On June 3 and June 5 we can see a couple more presidential debates, this time courtesy CNN.

-td-

This will be my last column until the paper of June 8. I will be away from my desk. Something about "grandkids." Of course mine live quite a few miles away. Denver isn't that far, but Spokane, well, that involves air travel. Looking forward to it.

As you read this today, I should be in Denver. Then Saturday Spokane.

-td-

I saw a couple of ladies at the grocery store Wednesday afternoon who looked somewhat distressed. I asked a lady in front of me at the check-out what she thought the problem was. "Oh, that's easy," she smiled. "Today's the last day of school and the kids are theirs again."

-td-

Have a good evening and a good weekend. Please be careful over this Memorial Day break. And make sure you include a church break in the mix.

Add loss of piano to May's memories

May is a busy month. Mother's Day, graduations, Memorial Day. Both the hubby and I attended high schools that have alumni celebrations in May. The eldest daughter has a May birthday. There are end-of-school programs and celebrations and maybe a pretty spring wedding to attend.

We spent Mother's Day delivering "my" piano to Kate. All the girls had lessons, Elizabeth a whole ten weeks! This came back to haunt her after choosing to pursue a career in music education. She spent several semesters in piano class until she was deemed "proficient." She is able to accompany just fine; although she likes it best when she can use the electronic piano and prerecord. It also gives her the option of playing a difficult piece slowly and speeding it up with just a twist of a dial. I marvel at the technology and can't help but think that playing an old fashioned piano is sort of like using a manual typewriter when a computer with word processing is available.

Still, it was hard to part with the piano. Sometime in about fifth grade I remember realizing that not every home had a piano. I was shocked. I thought it was a necessity. As I reflect on it, it seems very odd because I know we did not even have a piano until I was in the second grade.

Perhaps it was not so much the piano that was a necessity but what it represented: MUSIC. Music is a necessity.

I may have been "proficient" at playing the piano at one point in my life, but that time has long since passed. The piano sat in the corner and gathered dust. Sometimes one of the girls or Sue would play. Usually I would get this comment: "Your

Back Home Nancy Hagman



piano needs tuned." I know it did but I loved hearing someone play.

In January I decided I was going to start playing again. It is most amusing to those of us who know Elizabeth well but she now gives piano lessons. Maybe she could get me some books and help me along. I sat down and thumbed through a hymn book and realized very quickly it was never going to happen. There are so many other ways I'd rather spend my time.

Kate wanted a piano, how foolish for me to keep it just because I have the notion that you can't have a home without a piano. It is a spinet piano but it still takes up a lot of room.

So we made plans to move it! Even after the hubby went to pick up the rental trailer and the piano movers were scheduled to arrive I had misgivings. But we loaded it up and off it went.

It looks so beautiful in Kate's living room, just like it has always been there. When we got home my dining room also looked beautiful, like it had never been there. Ever since we moved there was just not a good place for it, it didn't fit anymore. It was time to let go.

While we were at Kate's we did not take the time to even play a scale but the next

evening, she called and told me she had played a little. It still needs tuned but in my heart I know it was beautiful.

-nh-

The first Mother's Day after my mother died was a hard one. We were in Norton shortly before the holiday. The hubby left me down town and went up to the highway for something. I bought my mother-in-law a card at the drug store and walked to the grocery store.

I got a couple of things and walked back to State Street where I was supposed to meet him when I realized I no longer had the card. I walked back to the grocery, looked in the carts, and asked the clerks if anyone had found the little sack with the card. No one had.

I don't remember if I bought another card. I just remember how I felt: as though I had lost everything. Twenty-two years later and Mother's Day is still a very hard holiday for me. No matter what your relationship with a mother-in-law or your status as a mother, nothing can replace your own mother.

-nh-

Memorial Day is Monday, another hard holiday for me. My parents, grandparents and great-grandparents are buried together. Decorating the graves was so important when I was young. Many years it is hard to come up with any flowers at all. But my mom never put artificial flowers on a grave so I don't either. Music, fresh flowers on a grave; the gifts we give to others and the things they end up treasuring may not be what we anticipate. But the things that we do in the name of love are never wasted. Somewhere, somehow they will be honored and remembered.