

### We can't have change if leadership remains

New faces in old places. That's what I thought we were getting on election day Nov. 2. But it looks like old faces in old places: Pelosi, Reid, McConnell, Boehner.

Pelosi is twisting arms in her quest to be named House Minority Leader. Reid, wants to keep his Senate Majority Leader title. McConnell wants to remain Senate Minority Leader and Boehner wants to be Speaker of the House.

The new Republican-Tea Party faces elected Nov. 2 were very vocal during the campaign about changes they want to see in leadership posts, and it's not necessarily McConnell and Boehner. These two, plus Pelosi and Reid are acting like they've got those spots all sewed up. Unfortunately, they probably have.

The new Republican-Tea Party bunch is quietly being taken into the dark, deep, smelly canyons beneath the capitol to receive their marching orders. This is akin to being taken to the woodshed, which fits into the picture later on when members of the leadership find their flock going astray.

We can't have change when change in leadership remains the same. The people screamed in silence when they marked their ballots on Nov. 2. They said they just can't trust their government to do what's right for the people. Seemingly, the voters looked upon the House and the Senate as loaded with characters that looked after themselves first. So they got the boot

I encourage (who am I to encourage?) the new members of the House and the Senate to reject the ways of Washington. They can and they must if ever a change is to be realized. They'll have to buck the big boys, sure, but eventually the big boys will succumb if the new faces stick together. If they don't, they will be swallowed up and end up being nothing more than members of what many Americans call, "the Crooks of Capitol Hill." And those questionable characters are not exclusively Republican.

So we will sit back and watch and hopefully see something happen that will be cause for applause. Maybe, just maybe, one of the "happenings" will be in the form of compromise. Wow, wouldn't that be different?

Enough of McConnell, Boehner, Reid and Pelosi. They are the very reason we, as a country, are in this terrible financial fix. Everyone reading this today should hop on their computers and e-mail their Senators and House members to make changes, to get rid of the past. And if they don't make changes, remind them that in 2012, they, too, will end up on the outside looking in.

You know what? There is a very important post going unfilled and will probably stay that way. Alaska's Sarah Palin recently built an 8-foot fence around her property to keep a nosy reporter, who moved in next door, from spying on her every move. With that 8-foot fence, Sarah is unable to see Russia from her front porch.

Speaking of Sarah Palin, I, for one, don't see her seeking the presidency in 2012. She's not ready. Far from being ready. I heard some guy on FOX News the other day say that Sarah Palin is qualified to be president because she was a mayor and also a governor. He should have told it like it is: she was mayor of a small town in Alaska and she walked away from the governorship 18 months into her term. I'm still trying to figure out that "qualified" part. And, too, she was unable to get herself elected vice-president. In Sarah's case, maybe later, but not now.

As for President Obama, if the election were today, he'd be a one-term commander-in-chief. He's got an uphill battle in 2012, and he's going to need new voices advising him. Enough said?

**BREAKING NEWS:** I've got a new grand.....dog! Chole!

OK, readers, here's my e-mail address: <mailto:milehitom@hotmail.com>milehitom@hotmail.com. Some of your comments on the stuff I write will appear in coming columns. Don't be bashful. And if you prefer snail mail good. I live at 22004 E. Briarwood Dr., Unit 614, Aurora. CO 80016. And yes, I have a phone, it's 720 570-6197.

I would like to close with a Thumbs Up to my alma mater, Thomas More Prep-Marian High School (Hays, KS, for readers here in Colorado) on its latest and most generous contribution, \$2+ million dollars designated in the will of a 1945 graduate. These private schools do not operate with tax dollars; they are out on the limb by themselves so keep that in mind if you are a person of means. Thanks!

- Tom Drieling



### Doing things like the good old days isn't always good

I used to think I was born too late - that I would have made a good pioneer woman. Then I think of life without air conditioning or mascara and I get over it.

However, living with Jim Plotts could be considered a "back to nature" experience. Saturday morning I heard him rustling around in the kitchen. On inspection I discovered he had brought in the largest of the decorative pumpkins we had artfully arranged in the front yard.

There it was split in two, with Jim up to his elbows in pumpkin "guts." He meticulously cleaned the seeds and declared they would be delicious if they were toasted. So, I melted a little butter on a cookie sheet, stirred the seeds around, sprinkled on a little salt and popped them in the oven. Thirty minutes later the seeds were a golden brown. He was right; the seeds were tasty, but almost impossible to remove from their shell. Hardly worth the effort.

But, wait. We're not done. He also raved about how his mother had made pumpkin pie from homegrown pumpkins. And, after all, how hard could it be to bake a pumpkin? Well, I'll tell you how hard it is. It takes a long time to peel a pumpkin and even longer to bake it. I soon discovered, though, that pumpkin chunks cook very nicely in the microwave. Two hours

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



and a gallon of pumpkin pulp later, it was all cooked.

Turns out pumpkins are about 90 percent water. So I got out the cheese cloth; lined a colander; and began draining pumpkin juice. Mash, squeeze, drain. Mash, squeeze, drain. Progress was slow, so I decided to cook the moisture out. Into the crock pot, sans lid, to speed up the process. It still took hours, but it worked. Hard to believe but, that huge pumpkin only yielded six cups of useable pulp.

I wasn't ready to commit to baking three pies, but I took a chance on one. After adding all the required sugar and spices, into the oven it went. An hour later it was pie. Jim declared it satisfactory, but just like the seeds, it was hardly worth the effort.

I did can the other four cups so there are two more pies in Jim's future. But, when he asked if I wanted to fix the other pumpkins he got "the look." I am convinced that

if pioneer women could have purchased canned pumpkin at the store, they would have. And their family would have been no more the wiser. Just like my frozen noodles, it would have been pawned off as homemade.

-ob-

Remember my declaration to make noodles? I don't have a report yet because I'm waiting for the first day cold enough to warrant chicken or beef 'n noodles. However, I did make them. I mixed, kneaded, rested, rolled, cut and dried. They are in the freezer, just waiting to be called into service.

My friend Bernadine called to offer a suggestion. She said her mother included pepper into the noodle dough. Made sense to me, so I added pepper.

-ob-

Illustrating the point of how a church should appeal to all types of people, the preacher compared the congregation to a Colorado dude ranch. He said the ranch had horses for all kinds of people.

For slow people, they had slow horses. For fast people, they had fast horses. And for people who had never ridden a horse, they had horses that had never been ridden.

### Farmers must keep accurate records to stay in operation

It seems like nearly every meeting and many conversations in farm country eventually work around to the question, how can I remain successful and continue farming?

As in the past, the scales are tipped in the favor of the efficient producer and solid marketer. How do Kansas farmers know where they weigh in on that scale?

Today's efficient producers are low cost-per-unit farmers. They achieve those low costs by producing high yields - bushels per acre, pound of gain per head, pigs per litter or milk per cow.

The other half of the equation consists of holding down costs. That means securing low costs per bushel, per hundred-weight of cattle produced or per hundred-weight of milk produced.

Finding out where you stand on the production efficiency spectrum calls for comparing your production costs to some performance yardsticks. Such indicators can be state averages for similar size and type farmers. Better yet, compare your actual performance to goals you've set

### Insight

John Schlageck

for yourself.

Solid marketers receive higher prices for commodities they sell. These prices can be higher than your neighbors, higher than similar size and type farmers or higher than your goals.

Determining where you stand on these performance measures, calls for keeping and analyzing records. This cannot be considered a chore today. If you are facing challenges, examining such records is the best way to help you out of a fix.

While visiting with farmers, stockmen and a farm appraiser at a recent meeting, all agreed they kept concise, comprehensive records. Gone are the days when farmers skated by with few records other than check stubs. Lack of record keeping has a direct correlation with failure in farm country.

As the appraiser said, "You have to know where you are before you can chart a course to move where you want to be."

Record analysis can help you do both. The farmer or businessman who does not have solid production marketing or financial management skills faces several tough questions.

How well or bad off are you?

Your analysis will tell.

Do you have a large equity base to hold your operation together while you develop those skills?

What changes can you make to improve your farm performance? What will it take to make them? Are you willing and do you have the resources to make those changes?

The swift do not always win the race. The strong do not always win the battle, but that's the way to bet.

In farming, the smart money is on those with the best production and business skills.

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