



Other Viewpoints

Manhattan claims role in redrawn 1st

The three-judge federal panel has decided to move the Manhattan area, including Riley and Pottawatomie counties, from the 2nd Congressional District into the "Big First," long dominated by western Kansas.

This decision, which flows from the Legislature's inability to meet its statutory responsibility to draw new boundaries, was not entirely unexpected. While this newspaper championed people's desire to remain in the 2nd, it was not surprising that a judicial panel would opt for a map that was more geographically concise if, in our judgment, less satisfactory in other aspects.

If the area is to be moved into the 1st, it should jump in with both feet. This means, among other things, an extensive effort to persuade our representative, presently Republican Tim Huelskamp of Fowler, to put a district office here.

District offices are a matter of prestige, but also a matter of convenience.

They serve the needs of district residences, and their presence is especially vital in wide-ranging districts, which the new 1st - stretching more than 300 miles east to west - plainly will be.

The existing 1st District has three such offices: one in Dodge City, a second in Hutchinson - heretofore the district's largest city - and a third in Salina. That constituted a logical geographic spread in the old district, but it is far less satisfactory in a district containing almost as many people living east of U.S. 81 as west of it. That shift in numbers, if nothing else, argues for replacement of one of the existing offices with one in the Manhattan-Emporia nexus.

Chamber and business officials also want to make sure that their annual lobbying trip to Washington, which takes place later this month, is an impressive one. That means extensive and pointed meetings with Huelskamp and his staff at which the importance of the Manhattan area's agenda to the representative of the "Big First" is put front and center.

There have been too many rumors that the incumbent is not an effective liaison with his own party's leadership to take for granted his ability to carry the area's freight on matters such as the care and feeding of Fort Riley, or whatever shepherding is necessary to make the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility happen.

When Manhattan enters the 1st District, we hope and expect it to do so as a full and participating partner.

- The Manhattan Mercury, via the Associated Press

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Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

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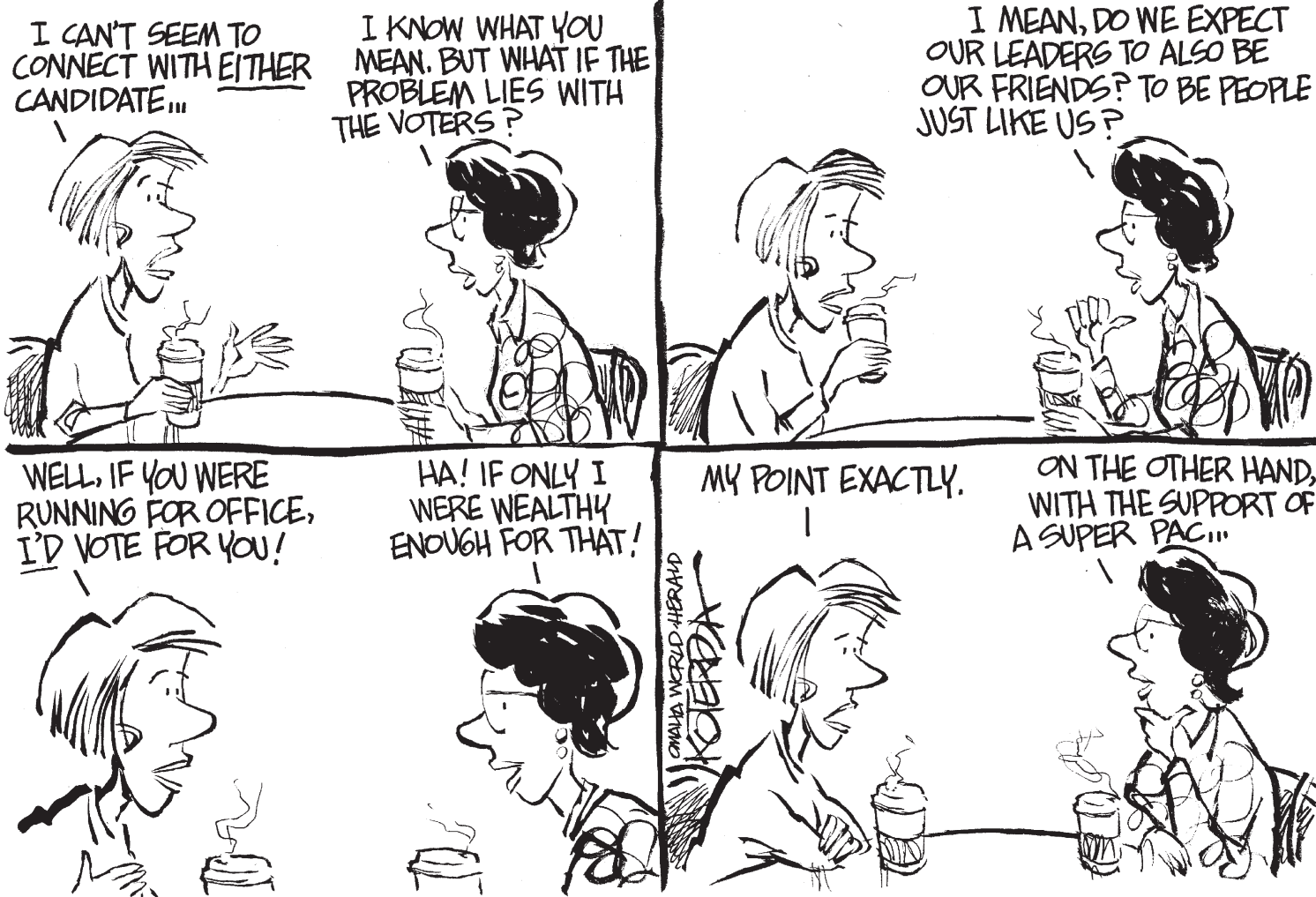
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Visit to city church becomes adventure

We went to church in Milwaukee on Sunday, at a parish called Old St. Mary's downtown. It turned out a little different than we expected.

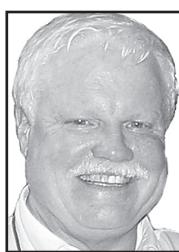
We'd spent the night, and we always like to find a church when we're away from home on Sunday. It's what you're supposed to do, of course, but it's also kind of a hobby with us. We see different churches, many of them quite beautiful, and different customs.

When we walked into Old St. Mary's, we were struck by the intricate and ornate decoration, just a little fancier, a little more gilded, a little more grand than most. And by the little knot of people gathered in the left front of the sanctuary, some of them pointing to the ceiling, some gathered around a woman lying on her back on a pew.

A woman next to us explained that a light bulb in the ceiling, 50 or 60 feet above, had exploded, showering glass shards on the people below. The one woman apparently had been not only startled, but cut by the glass.

Nine o'clock came and went. Finally, Father decided to let the parishioners clean up and get the rest of us to pray. He started a Rosary with the congregation while we waited for the firemen and paramedics to arrive.

Someone pulled switches until the overhead spotlights went out, then turned all of them back on except the bank where the rogue bulb



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

had exploded. Then they turned them all off just in case.

Pretty soon, a fire engine pulled up out front. Red lights reflected off the altar and windows. A company of four fire fighters and a couple of paramedics came up and tended to the woman, checked her vitals, then helped her into a wheel chair and out to the waiting ambulance.

She appeared to be an older lady, accompanied by two middle-aged daughters who went with her to the hospital. As she left, they passed the word that Joan was OK and her blood pressure - which apparently had spiked - was back down.

A team of volunteers and altar boys attacked the glass shards with a vacuum cleaner, paper towels and a broom while the organist played a few hymns. As soon as they were done, the priest and his retinue retired to the back of the church and began their procession.

The service proceeded apace through the

readings and Gospel, with a circle of empty seats where the glass had fallen, then Father came down the aisle.

"I looked down and realized it was already 20 'til 10," he said with a sly grin. "I know I can talk a long time. At least I'm told I do. But I think I can summarize my homily in five words today."

And he held up his hand. That drew a round of applause.

"Just five words: Trust in the Lord, always."

And he sat down for the intercessions. It was the shortest sermon I'd heard in a long, long time.

It still was nearly 10 when communion was being passed out, however. We slipped quietly out the door. We had a train to catch, and a long way to go before we got home.

Cynthia wondered how they'd change that broken bulb way up on the vaulted ceiling. It's normally done with a long pole with a device on the end to grip the bulb, but this time, she pointed out, there wouldn't be much left to grab.

We couldn't stay to see. But we came away with a story to tell.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

Laws of nature don't bow to politics

I was reading a post on the blog my daughter writes about our 3-year-old grandson. He had been waiting all spring for the vegetables to come up in his garden. Eagerly, perhaps over eagerly, he yanked up a green top. He showed it off to his playmate.

Just then, my friend the political scientist interrupted to tell me that President Obama had endorsed the idea of men marrying men and women marrying women. My friend, a Ph.D., went on to explain that a president can strongly influence public opinion. He cited President Nixon's trip to China. Before he went, 75 percent of Americans opposed recognizing Mainland China. Afterward, 75 percent favored doing so.

My learned friend said something similar could happen with what Mr. Obama calls "marriage equality." President Obama shares my friend's exalted view of the powers of the presidency. Recall in 2008, he told us when he clinched his party's nomination that we will look back and say "this was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and the planet began to heal."

I was skeptical then. And now. If he has such vast powers over the seas, it ought to be small potatoes to get the unemployment rate under 8 percent. That number still rises. And the

Other Opinions

• Robert Morrison Family Research Coun.

oceans of red ink are rising, too.

I remember the story of King Canute of England. He, too, was surrounded by lackeys and lickspittles who felt a thrill go up and down their legs whenever His Highness spoke.

"Think I can keep the oceans from rising, do you," the King asked his fawning hangers-on. He commanded them to take his royal throne to the seashore. Then, he commanded the tide not to rise. They all pressed in to see. When the tide came in, this royal press corps got all wet. And wise old Canute enjoyed a hearty laugh.

Neither kings nor presidents can contravene the laws of nature or of nature's God. King Canute understood this. President Obama may yet learn this. The president says he has "evolved" to see the case for what he terms "marriage equality." If the rest of mankind had evolved to a similar embrace of same-sex couplings,

evolution would have ended as abruptly as the age of dinosaurs. If this is what "marriage equality" means, then we will achieve this liberal goal the day zero equals one.

Back in his garden, my grandson tells his little friend that the daddy carrot came together with the mommy carrot and made a baby carrot. He already knows the law of nature and of nature's God. Bright lad. Let us pray that President Obama learns them, too, before we all get wet.

Robert Morrison is senior fellow for policy studies at the Family Research Council.

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

