



Other Viewpoints

Small towns see gang activity, too

Gang activity isn't limited to big cities. That fact is well known to local crime fighters, who've been determined to deter gangs and their destructive behavior. Garden City and Finney County have made inroads in combating gang activity since making it a priority more than a decade ago. Full-time law enforcement gang units and gang-prevention work in our schools have made a difference. But with gangs still determined to enlist as many youngsters as possible, law enforcement officers know they can't go it alone.

Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt drove home that important message during an appearance at Garden City High School. It was an appropriate setting for the attorney general's discussion on an initiative aimed at educating students and the public on warning signs of gang activity.

Schmidt shared details of a new website - gangfreekans.org - and other strategies to curb gangs and their criminal acts. Information will be available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, which should help reach more people in diverse Garden City and similar Kansas communities.

Such education has to extend beyond youngsters who could be tempted by the gang way of life. Parents and other stakeholders need to understand the true nature of the problem and be on the lookout for warning signs.

Clues of gang activity can appear in many ways, from how kids talk to their clothing. Graffiti is an annoying and costly reminder of gang activity, and even worse would be the ever-present threat of gang violence.

Of course, towns interested in reducing gang activity have to do more than acknowledge the negative fallout. It's also necessary to engage in discussions of ways to develop and build on positive alternatives for youngsters that keep them from making poor choices.

As the attorney general rightly noted, gang activity is a community problem that can't be solved by law enforcement agencies alone.

Parents, educators and other stakeholders need to get together and arm themselves with as many strategies as possible to reach youngsters in hopes of steering them clear of gang activity that not only damages communities, but also destroys young lives.

- The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press

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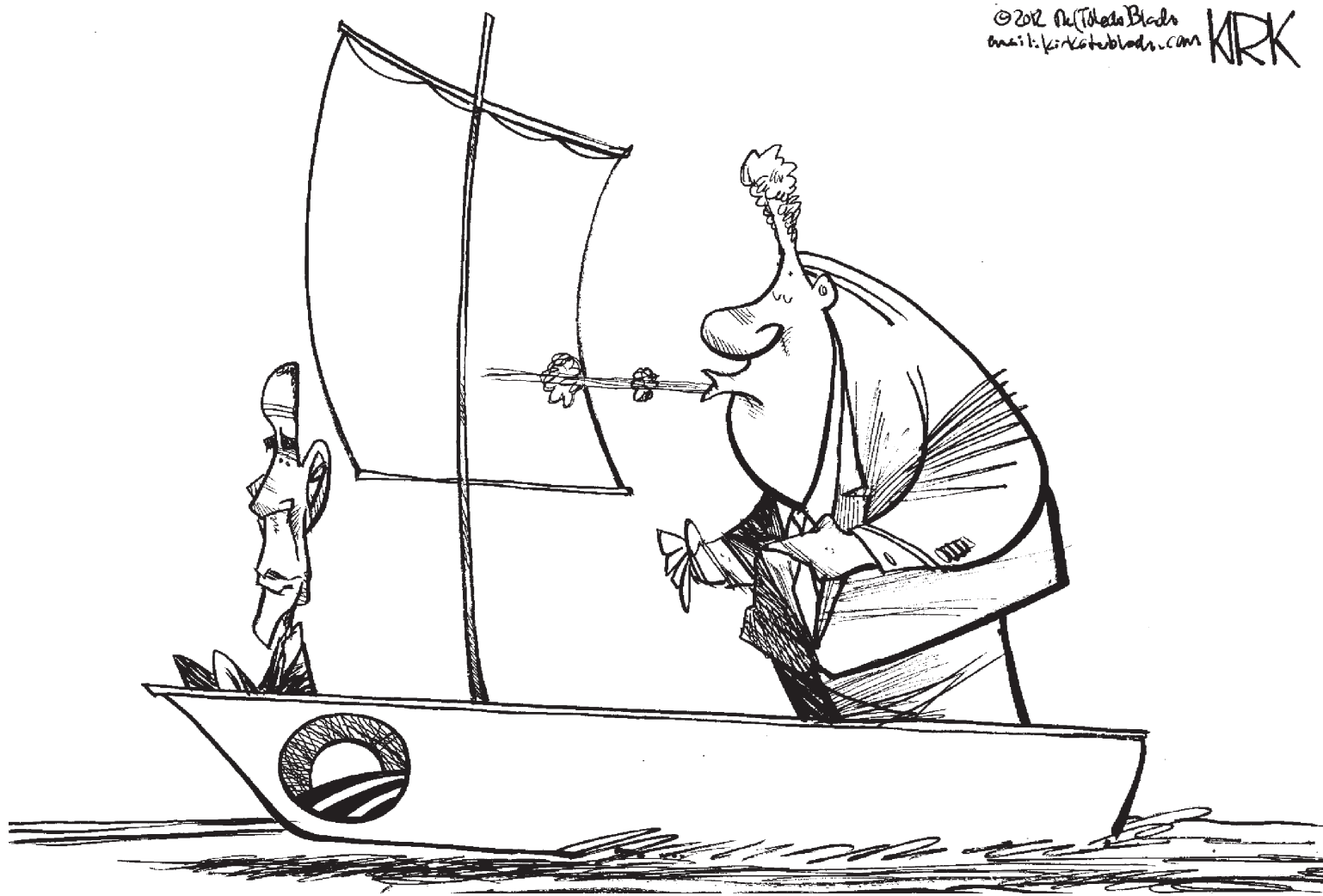
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Noah: the adventure continues

OK, I've told you about the big red dog named Noah that shares my husband's and my life, but have I told you lately that he has picked up some new habits?

When we moved into our new home, he had to find new spots to claim as his. This is a dog that thinks he's a person - and acts accordingly. He really doesn't like change, not at all. I once refolded the blanket on his chair, and he refused to get in it until he had pouted for a couple of weeks. I finally gave up and took the blanket out of the chair and he immediately got in it with a look that said "about time."

At the new place, we put his recliner next to the couch, and he seems OK with that so far. He hasn't gotten so comfy with it that he can sleep on his back yet, but at least he isn't shunning it.

When you live with a bloodhound, there are just some things you have to accept. No more clean floors. Hair bunnies are the order of the day.

I think we should be a tester for some kind of a high-tech vacuum, since the bunnies just clog up the works every time I try to collect them. I have become adept at disassembling the vacuum from stem to stern to get rid of the clogs. I have even come up with a new tool or two to help.

Noah loves to watch me fix a sandwich on the counter. Of course, he starts drooling before I can even get the mayo on the bread. I



Sharon Friedlander

• Musings

keep rugs in those areas so I can just toss them in the washer. Sometimes, though, he misses the rugs, and if I don't see the drool, I will find myself sliding across the floor. I get to find out how coordinated I am and how fast I can recover before the sandwich, drink, or my keister hits the floor.

After I'm done, the dog will follow me to the chair. His nose will be in the air where the sandwich was and he might even beat me to the chair. We found out early on that if you don't like to be stared at, you will be very uncomfortable as he stares at you then the sandwich and back to you. Once again, the waterworks kick in, and he can produce some wicked-looking stringers. Sometimes he looks like he swallowed a tennis shoe and the strings are hanging out.

Noah knows he is going to get the last bite of each half of the sandwich, but he is not really the patient type. He will sometimes put his chops on the arm of the chair to wait for that bite. Now you have drools on the chair, and

big soft brown eyes watching. When it is all gone, you have to show him the plate and let him smell it to be sure it is empty.

We make jokes about the "drool zone" when we are both eating in the living room. If you are sitting on his side, you can be the recipient of those stringers when he decides to shake his head. The wall is also a target-rich area and requires scrubbing on a regular basis.

We enjoy sitting on our front porch and watching Noah bound to the fence when anyone walks down the street. He bounces to the fence, where he just stand and watches them go by. He rarely even makes a noise doing this. If they speak to him, he gets all happy tailed and follows along the fence with big bounds. Several folks have laughed at his goofball bouncing.

Bloodhounds are incredibly loving and think everyone should be their new best friend. If you pet him, he will lean on you. He's a 100-pound leaner that can knock you off your feet if you don't know he is going to lean.

We are so lucky to have him. He is high maintenance, but so loving and funny that it's a joy to see every day what new stunts he will come up with.

Sharon Friedlander, publisher of the Colby Free Press, enjoys reading, hot rods and critters. Contact her at sfriedlander @ nwkansas.com.

Moderation, variety keys to health

The key to a healthy diet today is to eat a variety of foods including grains, milk, vegetables, meat and fruits - all in moderation. Each of us needs to make smart choices about when we eat and how much.

Another key ingredient in personal health is exercise. Something as simple as a 20-minute walk several times each week will go a long way toward improving personal health.

In spite of the widespread consensus to eat in moderation and variety, there are plenty of detractors who are trying to limit the amount of protein, especially red meat, in the everyday diet. Most of these opponents preach eating little or no beef.

Dietary guidelines are supposed to tell us what we should eat for good nutrition. Such recommendations are as plentiful as the half-truths or flat-out-falsehoods we're bombarded with daily during this presidential election.

Numerous organizations have been issuing their own guidelines about what they would have us eat based on their agendas. Oftentimes these guidelines are too dogmatic, containing specific recommendations for everyone while overlooking allowances for individual differences.

An example is the recent Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act that places a ceiling on the amount of proteins and overall calorie content



John Schlageck

• Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

of school lunches.

Our country is made up of individuals who need to adjust their diets to allow for their own states of health, age, development, risks of chronic disease and personal tastes. And when it comes to choosing meats as a source of protein, the key is to choose lean cuts and trim the fat from the meat before or after cooking.

Beef, chicken, fish, lamb, pork and poultry should be roasted, baked, broiled, grilled or simmered. No matter how you cut it - all lean meats are high in nutritional quality. They're good for the body as well as the mind. Beef, pork, chicken, fish and lamb have been recognized as healthy sources of top quality protein. They also contain thiamin, pantothenic acid, niacin and vitamins B-6 and B-12.

Red meats are also excellent sources of iron, copper, zinc and manganese - minerals not easily obtained in sufficient amounts in diets without meats. Well-trimmed, lean meats con-

tain about 4 to 9 percent fat when uncooked.

Meats of all kinds, whether fat or lean, are low in cholesterol, about 70 to 90 milligrams per serving. This amount is too small to have a significant effect on blood or serum cholesterol of most of the population. This includes those with normal blood cholesterol levels and who are not genetically likely to respond abnormally to dietary cholesterol.

Confusion about cholesterol arises when physicians or nutritionists speak of a cholesterol-lowering diet. They are referring to a diet that lowers blood cholesterol, not specifically to a low-cholesterol diet.

Lean meats in moderation as part of a varied diet are not now and are not expected to become a cause of heart disease or cancer. Beef steak, pork roast, grilled chicken and lamb chops are healthy and a necessary part of our daily diets.

When it comes to eating, the truth is, nothing compares to the smell, sound and taste of a steak sizzling over an open fire.

Cheeseburger, pork chop, grilled chicken or T-Bone anyone?

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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