

# commentary

from other pens...

## Democrats hold centrist boot camp

By Will Lester Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — For up-and-coming Democrats around the country looking for the formula to win elections in tough political terrain, the place to go this weekend is Indianapolis.

Several Democrats considering a presidential bid in 2004 will not make the trip this time.

That suits the leaders of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council. There will be plenty of time to preview presidential candidates.

This year, they want to focus on building party strength at the local and state level — and they cite Indiana as an example of what Democrats can accomplish with the right strategy.

"We revitalized the Democratic Party in Indiana by emphasizing economic growth, fiscal discipline and support for enduring values — the same agenda that has proven to be successful nationally," said Sen. Evan Bayh of Indiana, the council chairman.

The philosophy of the New Democrats blends longheld party beliefs like tolerance and inclusion with fiscally conservative, pro-trade and pro-growth views intended to win over swing voters.

"A lot of states are trying to rebuild the party ... Indiana is a model for them," said Al From, chief executive and founder of the council.

Indiana's governor, Frank O'Bannon, is a Democrat in his second term. Bayh was governor for two terms. The mayors of the two largest cities are Democrats.

In a state that last voted for a Democrat president in 1964 — Johnson.

"There are two things about Indiana that fit with the New Democrat style of the council — fiscal conservatism ... and a kind of populist, somewhat conservative approach to social values," said Indiana political scientist and pollster Brian Vargas.

While the state leans Republican, political scientist James McCann of Purdue University says it has a substantial minority population and labor base allowing Democrats "to cobble together a centrist base."

Indiana is a competitive state, said Republican state chairman, Mike McDaniel.

He calls the New Democrats "Republicans lite." On some marginal issues, he said, they take moderate positions, but "walk a pretty liberal line" on big issues such as the president's tax cut.

Some Democrats differ with the council stance on trade and say the moderates are emulating Republicans.

The council holds its fifth annual event known as the National Conversation in Indianapolis, beginning Sunday. The council offers training sessions on how to craft the right mix of core Democratic values and New Democrat ideas about business, trade, family and faith.

"It's important we have a national bench of qualified centrists who are increasingly able to move to jobs at the statewide level and the federal level," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher of California, council vice-chairman.

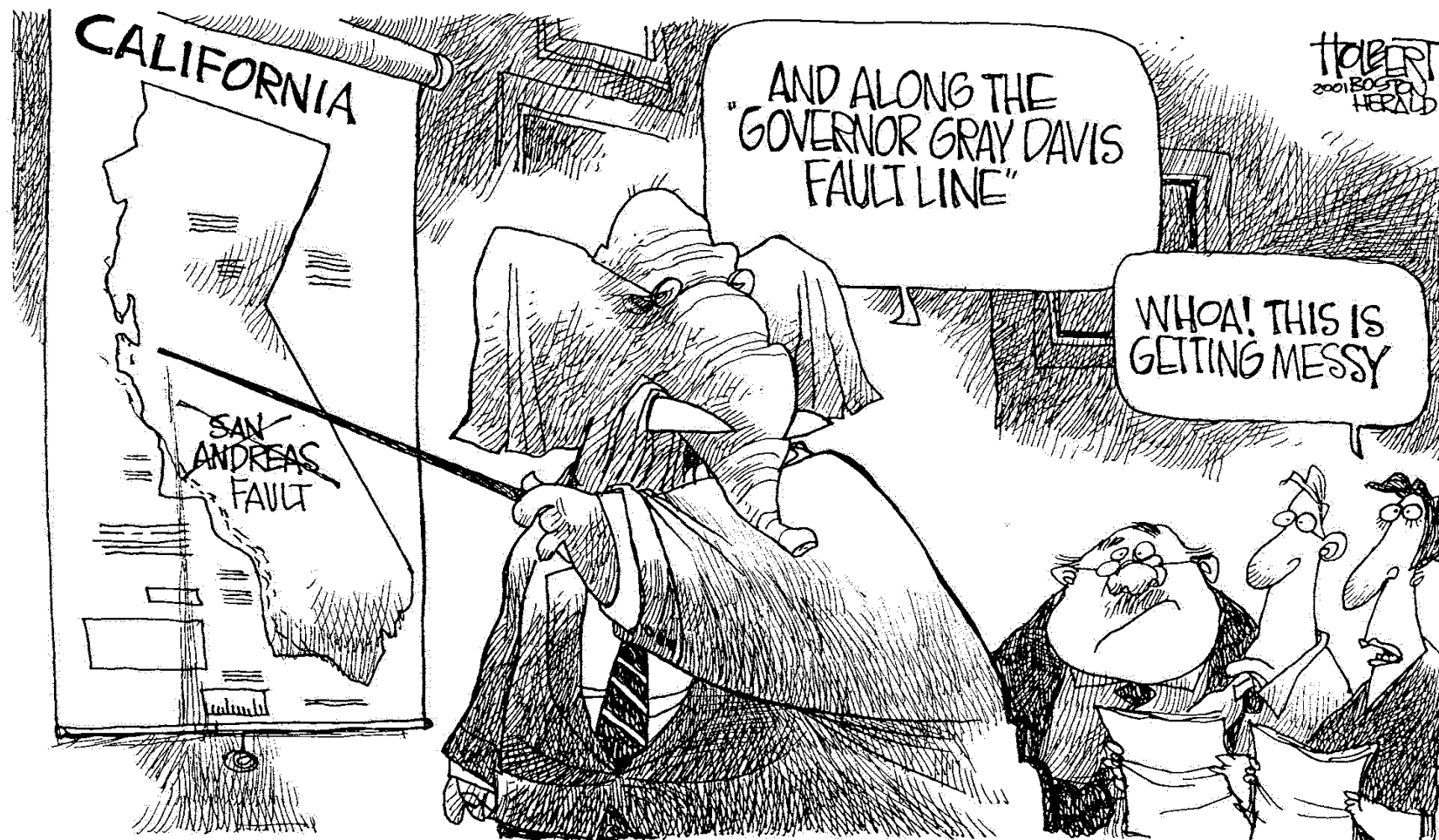
About 200 to 250 Democrats from around the country will hear from leading Democrats, including Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut — two mentioned in 2004 campaign speculation. They also will hear from Bayh and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, who say they are not running this time.

"Everybody has to play this delicately," said political analyst Stuart Rothenberg. "People who are potential 2004 candidates are making trips into Iowa and New Hampshire, but they avoid anything that would look like a full-blown presidential cattle call."

The council, formed to modernize the party after the presidential campaign in which Democrat Walter Mondale won one state, spawned some of the candidates in the last decade: former President Clinton, 2000 Democratic nominee Al Gore and Gore's running mate, Lieberman, as examples.

Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe will tell council members he sees them as critical to the party's success.

**EDITOR'S NOTE — Will Lester covers politics and polling for The Associated Press.**



GOP STARTS BLAMING CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR FOR ENERGY CRISIS

## Celebrating being an American

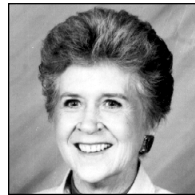
I don't know about you, but I'm proud to be an American.

As a child, I felt sorry for people who weren't Americans. I had no concept then that they might be just as proud to be Swedish or Mexican or Russian. America seemed like the best country in the world to me. But then, I'd never been to any other country, so America was all I knew.

I'm still happy to be an American, and I've lived in and visited some other countries by this time in my life. I am happy to pay my taxes as payment for the right to live here. But I also have seen wonderful things and people in other countries, so I can understand another person's national pride too.

This is the month of the year when we Americans think the most about our country, our history and our freedom.

This is the time we celebrate all those blessings - ironically, by setting fire to things to enjoy the lights and the noise of them. We light explosives to celebrate freedom gained during the noise, screaming, and crying in wars when soldiers



**lorna g. t.**

● commentary

prayed for survival to never hear such noises again.

Of course we also eat hot dogs and wave the flag a lot. There's nothing wrong with being proud unless it also makes us nationally arrogant.

Michael Quioist offers: "We are not God. We are simply the image of God, and our task is gradually to discover that image and set it free."

Did you ever stop to think that God created this world with no national boundaries? Of course there were boundaries where land stopped and oceans began. Looking down from the world from outer space, the astronauts surely saw that national boundaries were non-existent and therefore probably not too important in God's eyes.

In the book Warday, Strieber and Kunitka write:

"The bible said, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' That is all the government the world needs."

Doesn't that sound wonderfully ideal?

There is another thought also from Warday: "Lord, heal me. Heal my world. Heal the past. If we could accept one another so completely that we were free of all judgment, of all anger, of all denial, would heaven not shine through us then?"

I feel nothing else needs to be said. That hardly seems like an unattainable goal as I sit writing at my computer on this beautiful, peaceful morning. But then I haven't ventured out into the world yet today.

When I do, I'll try to remember that last quote and make it my prayer for the day and for our national holiday. I feel it really needs to be followed by an "amen" which literally means "so be it".

Please God, "so be it" so that, no matter which country we represent, "heaven will shine through us."

If you have any comments about this column or idea please email me at [lornagt@nwkansas.com](mailto:lornagt@nwkansas.com).

## Is it a vast conspiracy, or just fuzzy thinking?

I'm not a conspiracy theorist. I don't spend hours fantasizing about the gunman on the grassy knoll or worrying about black helicopters sweeping in to take over our government.

Heck, I don't even wonder whether John Wilkes Booth had help.

But there are times when you have to wonder. Maybe there is a vast liberal conspiracy out to thwart George W. Bush.

Take the story which appeared on the front page of a regional newspaper the day before our new president left for his European trip.

The theme of the article was that Mr. Bush had made a hash of foreign affairs, that Europe hated him and environmentalists everywhere loathed the U.S. for renouncing the Kobe treaty on global warming.

The article was bylined by an Associated Press writer and presumably was meant to be news, though it read more like opinion. Reading on, you found that the only actual source interviewed was an "expert" working for the liberal Brookings Institution, a "think tank" with strong ties to the Democratic Party.



**steve haynes**

● along the sappa

In fact, this guy has spent the last term working in the Clinton White House, making him hardly a neutral expert. Even he admitted that the trends in European relations now coming to a head were the product of Clinton policies.

Somehow, though, the article implied, they have been accentuated by the Bush Administration.

Later, you find that while the U.S. is taking the heat for saying no to the global warming treaty, the fact is that no industrialized nation has signed on to it. It would wreck our economy while allowing third-world nations to continue polluting.

Most of our friends give the treaty lip service and hope the Yanks will kill it. That will make us look bad, Europe look good and allow Germany to continue polluting.

The fact is, no one really knows if global warm-

ing is for real. The earth's climate has changed constantly throughout history, driven by factors well beyond human control. Parts of Kansas have been covered in turn by tropical rain forest, glacial ice and vast inland seas. Theories abound, but no one can say what is happening today.

And, unfortunately, no one will know until it is too late.

The law of unintended consequences makes it seem unwise for humans to try to alter the weather. Yet the same people who are screaming about the dangers of gene mutation want us to embark on a program of climate control.

But back to the article. Its anti-Bush thesis was never supported with facts. A close reading made it clear that, on major points, the president is pushing issues established by the last administration.

But unlike Mr. Clinton, he's being painted as a dangerous cowboy oilman. And perfectly respectable newspapers are willing to put this stuff on Page 1, not the editorial page.

A vast liberal conspiracy? Probably not.

A vast pool of fuzzy, biased thinking? There is some evidence to that effect.

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## Handy House and Pioneer Park appreciate help

Dear Editor,

The Sherman County Historical Society wishes to thank the S and T Telephone company for their support of the Historical Society in our efforts to preserve and promote county history

The evening of July 4th, S and T Telephone Company hosted a barbecue held at the Sherman County fairgrounds. Although the barbecue was free, people could make donations. Half of the money received was donated to the Historical Society. This donation will be used to benefit the newest project of the Historical Society - the purchase of the 1907 Victorian known as the 'Handy House'.

Located at 202 West 13th in Goodland, the 1907 Victorian house has been furnished to represent the era from about 1880 through 1920 with displays which allow for the telling of Sherman county history. The house is open for tours Wednesday through Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Again, many thanks to S and T for their support for both the Historical Society and, also, for the planned Pioneer Park. A special thank you to all those who donated money at the barbecue.

Evelyn M. Ward

President, Sherman County Historical Society

Dear Editor:

If you advertised on radio, TV and Internet (got no response) tried the paper (it did thee good!), should you be forced to continue paying others? What have the cheat-off crowd promoted except check-off?

If churches and/or do-good organizations can't survive on a voluntary basis; let them perish. Community charity donations are ten to one more effective than mandatory unions and compulsory



**from our readers**

● to the editor

seizures. (for your own good thievery!) How much do they spend on non-compliance? What good are they doing the grain growers and livestock vendors?

It is outrageous to take anyone's earnings unless they consent!

If a producer can not say "no" to the cheat-off, it isn't constitutional.

U.S. Bill of Rights #4: The right of the people to

### Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten if possible, and should include a telephone number and, most importantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: [daily@nwkansas.com](mailto:daily@nwkansas.com).

be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures shall not be violated...

"The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits." II Timothy 2:6

Frank Sowers  
Benkelman

### berry's world



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