# commentary

from other pens...

# Kansas a tough place to attempt comeback

#### **By John Hanna**

#### Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA—Some Democrats were giddy over the idea that former Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman might run against Sen. Pat Roberts next year and delighted in visions of an unexpectedly strong challenge to an entrenched incumbent.

 $Those \, Democrats \, should \, remember \, a \, fact \, about \, Glickman \, that \, would$ handicap a campaign. He's a has-been.

Yes, he was the nation's top agriculture official for six years under President Clinton. And yes, he served 18 years in the U.S. House, representing the 4th Congressional District, centered on Wichita.

But a key word in any description of him is "former." He left the agriculture post because Clinton, a fellow Democrat, left office. His last race for Congress was in 1994, and he lost it to Republican Todd Tiahrt. Officials who've retired from a career in politics typically don't suc-

ceed when they attempt a comeback in Kansas.

"I think once voters speak, it's hard to get them to reconsider," said Burdett Loomis, a University of Kansas political scientist.

Early this month, Glickman described the possibility of his running against Roberts as remote. However, other Democrats said last week he's mulling over the idea, cheering his Kansas party faithful with the possibility that Roberts won't have an easy race.

History would be against Glickman, and not only because a Democrat hasn't won a Senate seat since 1932. Kansas history is filled with examples of failed comebacks.

The trend started with the state's first governor, Charles Robinson. A Republican, he served one two-year term, surviving an impeachment and attempt to remove him arising from a feud with Sen. James Lane.

He did win a seat in the Kansas Senate in 1872 as an independent, but voters removed him from office in 1884, and he lost races as a Democrat for Congress in 1886 and governor in 1890.

There are more recent examples. In 1962, Republican Ed Arn, governor in 1951-55, ran for the U.S. Senate but lost the GOP nomination to James Pearson. In 1968, former Gov. William Avery, defeated for re-election in 1966, lost the Republican Senate nomination to Bob Dole.

Governors began serving four-year terms after the 1974 election, and Democrat John Carlin served two of them, starting in 1978. But after four years out of office, he ran again and narrowly lost the Democratic primary to Joan Finney; he lost a 1994 race for Congress as well.

Finney, who died Saturday, didn't seek re-election as governor in 1994, then ran for the U.S. Senate in 1996. Jill Docking captured 74 percent of the vote in the Democratic primary, despite Finney's six previous successful statewide campaigns.

It's hard to say why such a trend is so persistent in Kansas politics. Governors, for example, make executive decisions and appointments that anger various constituencies — over and over.

But Loomis suspects there's no general rule.

"It may resolve itself down to a batch of individual circumstances," he said.

To be sure, there are exceptions.

Democrat Dennis Moore served 12 years as Johnson County district attorney but lost a close 1986 attorney general's race to Republican incumbent Bob Stephan. A dozen years later, Moore unseated Republican U.S. Rep. Vince Snowbarger in the 3rd Congressional District.

"I don't think you want to over-generalize, but you can say Kansans are clearly leery of people coming back," Loomis said.

Democrats have plenty of reasons to see Glickman as a strong candidate, including ability to raise money and expertise with agriculture. But none of those reasons change the fact that he's a has-been and

that Kansas politics isn't kind to has-beens



# **Do Israel and Palestine really want peace?**

Where are the signs that Israel wants peace with the Palestinians?

Try to guess if an Israeli or Palestinian said this last week, "No country can afford to live like this, with its people being blackmailed, afraid to send our children to school. It can't go on. If it does, we will have no alternative but to go to war!"

Okay who said that? Israeli? Palestinian? Ding! Time's up. It was Israeli Cabinet Minister Natan Sharansky. But a Palestinian could have said it. They look at the Israelis in the same way. Sharansky had some other choice words for the Palestinians.

"We have to start a war to destroy all this infrastructure and to kill all those who are sending terrorists."

If you were Palestinian, does that sound like Israel is eagerly preparing for peace? Aren't Israel's actions against the Palestinians already "acts of war?"

Reality plainly shows us both sides commit acts of war and claim "self-defense." This gives each carte blanche to attack the other side with impunity. Both sides believe self-defense means "active" defense. Who does the United States government blame for the violence? To often Israel is the Palestinians are given swats in the principal's office.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said he can't make a deal with Yassir Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, because, "Idon't think you can make a deal with a terrorist organization."



What is the solution? Kill Arafat? Blow up the P.L.O's abilities for command and control of their people? If Arafat is removed, it would open up a whirlwind of more violence as local warlords brawled to gain power and control.

Does a weakened P.L.O help Israel? I think not. It would be a quagmire worse than the current situation.

Do Somalia or Beirut ring a bell? Arafat is already trying to keep control of a Palestinian populace splintered on how aggressive they need to be with Israel. The Palestinian leader has eight different armed groups he is attempting to keep in check. He has very little influence over at least four of these groups, all of which want a more active, aggressive, violent approach.

Israel places their agreeing to a cease-fire with the Palestinians on Arafat stopping all violence in the disputed territories. A big problem with this given gold-stars for defending themselves, while simplistic view is that Arafat has no power to stop all the violence. It would be like telling the Denver Police Department the only way they get paid is to stop all violent crimes in the Denver Metro area. That obviously is highly improbable, and not realistic

The Israeli plan for this undeclared war appears to be: if no progress can be made with Arafat, make Israeli's want war and they are getting it.

the situation worse by committing acts of war on Palestinians and claim self-defense.

With Prime Minister Sharon enjoying a 70 percent approval rating, no changes in this "no peace plan" are on the horizon. Israeli must know Arafat's hands are tied with his Palestinian populace, but they continue to blame Arafat for any violent acts committed against Jews in the disputed areas. Apoll taken two weeks ago showed how little Arafat's Palestinians trust Sharon and the Israelis. Arafathas no support from his people for peace. The poll showed 79 percent of Palestinians favored continuing the holy war against Israel. Just as most Israeli's believe Arafat is to blame and wants no part of peace, most Palestinians have no faith in Prime Minister Sharon.

Sharon's position, agreed to by a large majority of Israelis, is that Israel will not bargain under fire. Sharon is then able to avoid making peace happen by setting the bar for new bargaining sessions extremely high. He then can say to the world he's tried to work with the Palestinians, and that it's Arafat who is the problem. His voters are behind him, so he wins.

But even people in Europe are now starting to question whether or not Sharon is willing to do what needs to be done for a lasting peace. Everyone knows asking for all violence to stop before resuming any talks with Arafat is impossible. Everyone but America, that is. The United States continues to sleepwalk through this conflict, depending on the same old, tired and ineffective medicines to try to cure an incurable problem. Wake up America. The

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## 'he last time around

I have a friend who has never been able to sustain a long-term relationship with anyone of the fairer sex. (He doesn't call them that.) He's actually never had any degree of success with women, but as he ages, I like his chances. He doesn't see or hear so well as he used to. He's also losing his teeth, his hair and his ability to stay awake while someone else is talking. He does everything slowly, and he's generally turning into a pretty useless guy. This puts him into the perfect position to find a lasting relationship. Any woman who finds him attractive in his current state is obviously desperate. She must want a man around the house so badly that she will accept this reasonable facsimile. She's going to stick by him almost no matter what he says or does. He doesn't have to worry about losing his looks; they're already a distant memory. And with the loss of most of his hearing and eyesight, he doesn't much care how she looks or what she says. It won't be long until we're hearing wedding bells - really loud wedding bells. So don't ever give up. The closer you get to being dead, the easier it gets to find a life partner.

#### HOMESICKNESS

There was a golf tournament at our club a couple of weeks ago but the weather intervened. There were tornado warnings and heavy rain, and the tournament was called off a day or two in advance. I had reason to drop by the club on the day of the canceled tournament, and the dining room was full of old golfers. I asked one of the staff members why those guys were there, even though the tournament had been canceled. She answered, "These men are retired. They're not allowed to stay home." Now I know you retired guys out there think you should



be staying home with your wives all the time to make up for the years you spent neglecting them. I would suggest you check with them first. They may not be as lonely as you imagine. It's not fair for you to be hanging around your wife all the time. Don't forget, she's retired too.

#### **AVERAGING OUT**

In baseball there are a few superstars who make millions of dollars, but they also have a lot of average players — utility infielders, guys who ride the pine, warm bodies. In baseball, as in life, there are a lot of benefits to just being an average man. For example

When something goes horribly wrong, nobody ever blames you.

- No one is trying to take your job, and your boss is convinced that you'll never take his.

- When the phone rings, you can pretty much assume that it's not important.

- People you went to school with don't try to borrow money from you.

When it's your birthday, they don't announce your age on "Entertainment Tonight."

Nobody expects anything from you, which gives you complete freedom in the areas of wardrobe and vehicle choice.

- Life is good. You picked a great country to be average in.

#### **KILLING TIME WITH WORDS**

I remember when I was in school, I had books to read that were pretty heavy slogging for me. I wasn't that interested in obscure mediaeval poetry or the molecular structure of acetylene. A lot of the girls in my class had the maturity to knuckle down and wade through the material, assimilate the information and achieve an excellent grade. I lacked all three of those components. I thought the books were a waste of time and effort. More importantly, it convinced me that written material is tedious and not usually relevant. Just think, if my textbooks had been more compelling, I would now read instructions. And chances are my barbecue would still have a lid.

**QUOTE OF THE DAY: "Just because** somebody's smarter than you doesn't mean they're a genius." — Red Green

Red Green is the star of "The Red Green Show," a television series seen in the United States on PBS and in Canada on the CBC Network, and the author of "The Red Green Book" and "Red Green Talks Cars: A Love Story."

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