

commentary

from other pens...

Nader forms new group, critics say rift too deep

By Will Lester

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Ralph Nader is back with a new organization, some new goals and the same dogged determination to make the Democratic Party squirm whenever it drifts toward the center.

The veteran crusader for causes of the left calls his new grass-roots group Democracy Rising. He has initiated a series of rallies his associates hope will help heal the rift in the political left caused by his candidacy in the 2000 presidential election.

The new group will have an easier time working with other such nonpartisan groups interested in similar causes, organizers say.

After a rally in Portland, Ore., attended by about 7,500, Nader said: "We plan to have rallies like this all over." Some of the cities are likely: San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago, New York.

"We have to replenish the well, find the young generation of leaders and galvanize existing citizen groups," Nader said in an interview.

Some activists blame Nader for tipping the presidential election to George W. Bush and say the division between Nader and others in his movement is deep and will only grow as his Green Party targets congressional seats in 2002. Veteran activists are wary of Democracy Rising.

"I think it's a strong possibility he's using this to build the Green Party to run candidates throughout the nation," said Alice Germond, executive vice president of the National Abortion Rights Action League. "I think the rift is very deep. The environmentalists are appalled at the Bush presidency, the pro-choice majority is getting more and more appalled."

Nader got just 3 percent of the national vote as the Green Party's presidential candidate in 2000. He got 2 percent of the vote in Florida, which was decided by just over 500 votes and gave Bush the presidency. Democrats assume the 2 percent was siphoned almost exclusively from Al Gore.

Nader hopes to field more candidates in next year's congressional elections than the four dozen or so Greens who ran for Congress in 2000. Democrats claim to be unworried about the Green Party's impact.

"People who care about a lot of the issues the Greens care about now can see they have a clear choice between the two parties," said Jenny Backus, a spokeswoman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "The differences have never been this stark."

Environmentalists worry about the Green Party targeting congressional districts where the incumbent is pro-environment and vulnerable.

They point to the 12th District in central New Jersey, where Democratic Rep. Rush Holt is highly regarded by environmentalists. Holt said the Green Party candidate won about 5,000 votes there in 2000, almost enough to cost Holt the victory, which came in at 750 votes.

Despite last year, Holt said he is aligned fairly closely with Nader's views in many areas, "such as environmental protection, consumer protection and standing up to special interests."

"Nader's candidacy was ultimately harmful to the outcome of the election and to environmental policies," said Deb Callahan of the League of Conservation Voters.

Any claim that Bush's election was good for the environmental movement is a myth, she insisted. "It's like saying the Vietnam War was good because it gave young people something to organize around," she said.

Nader dismisses such complaints. "Inside the (Washington) Beltway, there are some grouchers," he said.

He also ducks talk of the 2004 presidential race. "I haven't ruled out going in 2004," Nader said. "It's too early to say."

Long a hero to many in the progressive — some would say liberal — movement, Nader saw the 2000 election chip away at his popularity and reduce his access in Washington.

"Capitol Hill has closed down on us in the last 15 years," said Nader. "One of the reasons I was running for president is because you can't get anything done any more."

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

The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

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Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$22; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$ 28; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$95. (All tax included.) Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$25; six months, \$40; 12 months, \$75.

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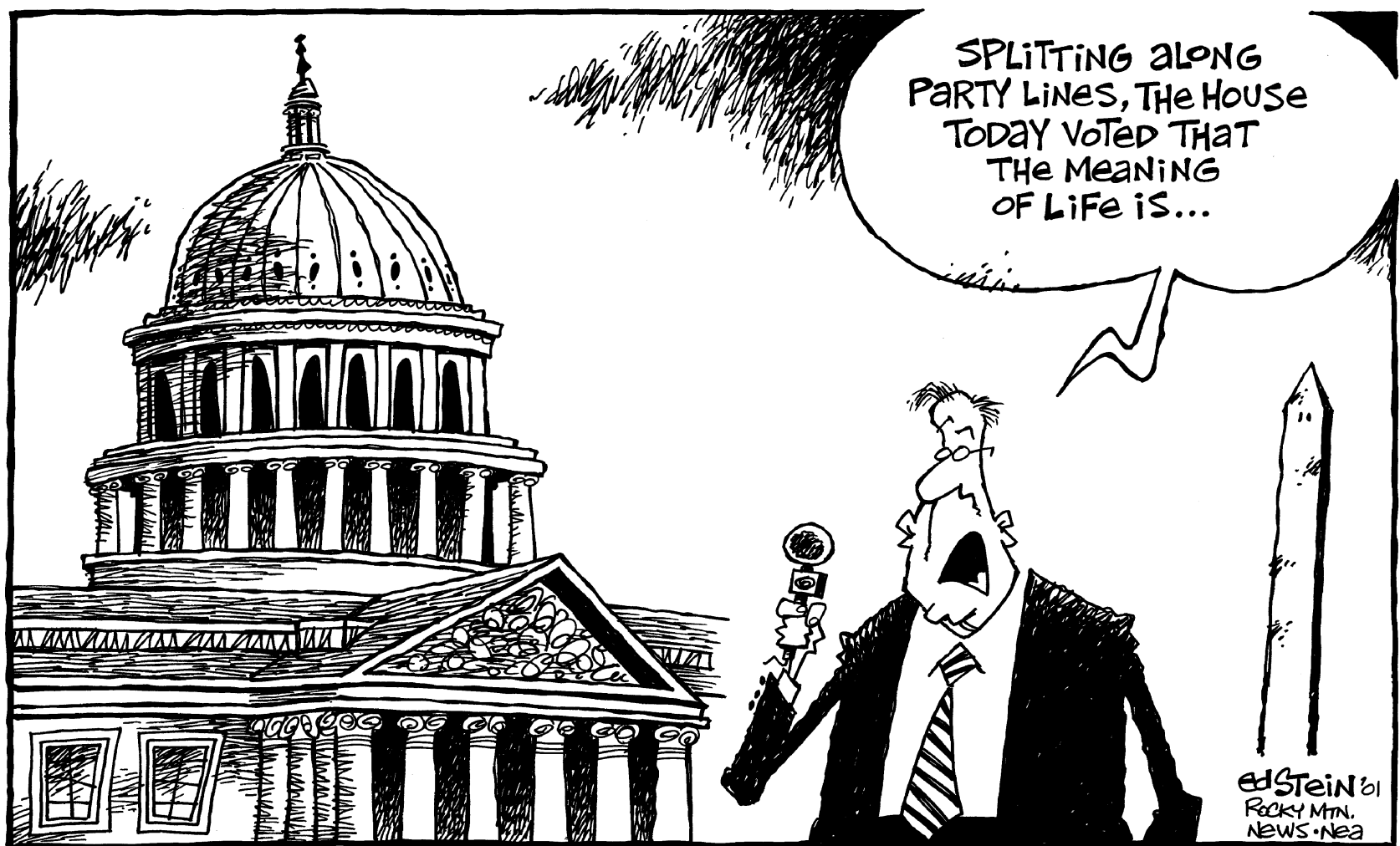
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Father seemed dorky, now looks like saint

It was tough being a teen-ager, but the farther away I get from it, the more I realize it was a tougher time for my father.

My father raised four children by himself. He worked, cooked, cleaned, did laundry, drove us to and from school and different functions and occasionally made trips to the police station or hospital to pick one of us up.

He wasn't the most affectionate or attentive person in the world, but he cared about us and did the best he could considering the circumstances.

Of course, when my three brothers were teen-agers and I, we couldn't see that.

We focused on his weaknesses, not his strengths, and selfishly went through each day with the attitude that we deserved more from our father.

To say the least, he put up with a lot of ... ummm ... stuff.

There was the time I called from New York to say I had wrecked a stranger's car. He sent hun-



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- unraveling

dreds of dollars.

And the time my brother Alex came home in a tow truck pulling the car my father had paid for just a few weeks earlier.

And the time my dad had to go pick up my older brother Nathan from the hospital because someone found him passed out in a park.

Then there was the night he spent following me around the mall to find a dress for the homecoming dance.

And the day he waited in the lobby of a hair dressing salon for me to get my hair done for prom. He reassured me it looked "fine" when I walked out. I

responded "Fine? Just fine?" and rolled my eyes.

He bailed us out when we got in trouble, patted us on the back when we felt down, listened to our problems and helped us find solutions and made sure dinner was on the table every night.

We basically treated him with disrespect.

We didn't want to do the dishes or take out the trash, so we didn't. We wanted to stay out late, so we did. We didn't think our father was doing a very good job and we told him so.

We didn't thank him for clothes or food, we just said we wanted more. We shrugged when he said he was feeling stressed and yelled when we didn't get our way.

I guess that's how many teen-agers act, and my dad took most of it in stride — realizing that being a parent is a thankless job.

In high school, I honestly thought he was the meanest, dorkiest person in the whole world. Now he looks more like a saint.

Surviving fall sports practice and hot weather

The approach of a new school year also means the beginning of practices for fall sports. Each year, schools begin fall sports practices several days before classes get underway and the weather can be quite hot during those first couple of weeks of practices.

This year appears to be no exception when it comes to hot weather for the beginning of fall practices. Heavy on everyone's minds is the effect hot weather can have on young athletes. There is no question that coaches in Goodland share the concern.

Each year at the beginning of fall practices, we meet to discuss heat-related issues. We schedule practices early morning and late afternoon or early evening to avoid the hottest part of the day. We insist on frequent water breaks and try to make certain each student athlete is consuming sufficient water to stay hydrated. We will watch each participant carefully to make sure they are not experiencing medical difficulties during training.

It is equally important for parents to be involved with their student athlete at this time of year, making certain their son or daughter is eating properly, consuming water throughout the day, and getting



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- activities, athletics

plenty of sleep. Parents can help too by insisting that their son or daughter start a regular training routine before the first practice session so they are somewhat accustomed to the physical activity of the sport they are wanting to participate in.

Paramount in the student's preparation for participation in sports is the required Kansas High School Athletic Association Pre-Participation Physical Exam. No student will be allowed to practice until the physical form has been completed by a qualified medical services provider and signed by both the parent and the student.

Important too is communication between parents and coaching staff with any concern that may arise during conditioning drills. Parents need to let coaches know of any injury or physical condition that has arisen that may put the athlete at risk. Many times the student is reluctant to tell their coaches

about a problem for fear of hurting their chances of success in the sport.

Goodland is fortunate to have a Black and Gold Booster Club that makes it possible for Goodland High School to contract for the services of a qualified athletic trainer to assist coaches and students with sports-related injuries or illnesses. Recently the trainers assisted the football coaches in properly fitting football helmets. The trainers from Sandhills Orthopedic and Sportsmedicine will visit Goodland every Wednesday during the school year to assist with injury evaluation and recommend treatment. They are also on call any time. We encourage our student athletes to take advantage of this service.

When it comes to the safety of our student athletes, nothing is taken lightly or taken for granted. We will do all we can to insure a safe athletic program for all our student athletes. We also know and understand that there is always risk of injury in any athletic endeavor. We cannot eliminate all risks related to sports injuries, but we can manage those risk in such a way to help minimize risks.

Dick Liess is the activity and athletic director at Goodland High School.

Thanks for the magnificent 2001 reunion

To the Editor:

I wish to thank Sherman County Alumni Association, Barb Whistler and all who helped and planned the 2001 Reunion Odyssey Assembly.

Also, thanks to all who worked on different committees to bring such a successful and fun reunion. It was magnificent

As an alumnae of 1946, I personally thank you all for your hard work, which I know was long and enduring.

Another reunion has passed and I say hats off to all of you for a successful reunion for 2001.

Nyla (Smith) Finley
Goodland



from our readers

- to the editor

may have our figures not quite right, upkeep and maintenance will exceed \$250,000 per year. Payments to pay off the debt of building the pool will cost us \$275,000 a year for the next 11 1/2 years, and income from the pool, according to estimates by City Manager Ron Pickman, will amount to \$60,000 this year. What a shortfall this will be. These costs do not include the cost of moving the ball park, estimated at \$190,000.

Well, because of those concerns, and many others, we attended the meeting to voice our concerns because they now tell us they need to raise the tax levy 7.8 percent to meet the needs of next years budget, but next year's budget will not be as much as last years budget?

Many at the meeting felt the standing-room-only crowd would indicate the we would like to have the 2002 budget revised and no new tax levy imposed. Then after some of us expressed our concerns, they said that nobody told them about any concerns, and then proceeded to pass the tax hike and the 2002 budget.

Maybe they need to turn on their hearing aids, and/or learn to read, because letters have been written, and commissioners have been spoken to about many of the problems that have and continue to occur. We do commend Commissioners Rick Billinger and Chuck Lutters for voting no.

Incidentally, according to the contractor who removed the old swimming pool, there was not a hole under the pool, just another myth created and perpetuated by our city government.

We feel "our city government" is out of control, and is not acting in the best interests of the "citizens of Goodland."

If you have comments about these concerns as we do, and would like to be part of our group, you may call Mel Pfau 899-3445. Please leave message if no answer, or Elmer Jacobs at 899-3467.

Melvin Pfau
Goodland

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