commentary

from other pens...

South Dakota is first in Senate campaign

While the campaign for control of the Senate is just stirring to life in several of the most competitive states, the two Senate candidates in South Dakota are flailing away as if elections were being held in a few weeks.

The combination of inexpensive TV advertising, high-profile campaign connections and two candidates who are well-known in the state has the two parties battling as if control of the Senate depends on the outcome.

It might. Democrats have a 50-49-1 edge in the body, which makes every close Senate race in 2002 potentially pivotal. And South Dakota's Tom Daschle, the Senate's majority leader, has become the Democrats' leading voice to oppose President Bush.

"The big guys each have a dog in this fight," said political scientist Ross Baker of Rutgers University.

The Democratic candidate in South Dakota is the incumbent, Sen. Tim Johnson, a first-term senator who recently toured the state with Daschle. They told voters Daschle, as leader of the Senate, and Johnson, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, are in the best positions to deliver federal money and projects the state needs.

Johnson's Republican challenger is Rep. John Thune, the state's only congressman, serving his third term. Bush personally courted Thune to challenge Johnson, inviting the congressman and his wife to a White House dinner. Thune's campaign says his election would give the state bipartisan representation and a direct connection to the White House.

The South Dakota contest has become the top one in the Senate as "a proxy fight between Daschle and the White House," said Thune spokeswoman Christine Iverson.

That contributes to numerous ads in the state paid for by outside groups, some criticizing Daschle, others criticizing the Senate candidates. Recent negotiations to ban ads financed by third-parties fell apart.

Johnson spokesman Dan Pfeiffer said the third-party advertising and the intensity of the attacks this early has been disorienting.

"It's only March," Pfeiffer said, "and it already feels like Election Day is around the corner."

Political analysts agree a major cause is the state's relatively inexpensive cost of TV ad time.

South Dakota has a population of just over 750,000 and two population centers — Sioux Falls, a city of 120,000 near the eastern border, and Rapid City, a city of about 60,000 in the west.

"One of the reasons they're in manic mode is it's very inexpensive to run a full-blown media campaign there and sustain it," said Jennifer Duffy, an analyst of Senate races for the Cook Political Report.

Third-party advertising by interest groups shows up in South Dakota because "this is a state the national media is watching," said Jim Jordan, executive director of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

South Dakota is among a handful of states where the November elections could decide control of the Senate.

Incumbent Democratic Sens. Paul Wellstone in Minnesota and Jean Carnahan in Missouri are other leading GOP targets. Democrats are eyeing incumbent Republicans Bob Smith in New Hampshire, Tim Hutchinson in Arkansas and Wayne Allard in Colorado.

GOP retirements in both Carolinas, Tennessee and Texas are tempting targets for Democrats, although they will face difficult battles in all four states. Republicans hope to close the gap against Democratic incumbent Sens. Tom Harkin in Iowa and Max Cleland in Georgia.

With elections approaching in six months, Ginny Wolfe, a spokeswoman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said: "All the campaigns are incredibly focused on both sides."

The work in many states is focused on raising money, campaign organizing for later and preparing for primaries. In some states, candidates have advertising that focuses on their accomplishments and background. Bush's visit to Minnesota and planned visits to Missouri, South Caro-

I don't know about you, but about a month after my birthday, I realized I am a year older than I thought I was!

I've joked in the past about birthdays coming around more often than they used to, time getting shorter, etc.

But this year, it really did happen to me. I aged two years this past birthday!

of 1-10, it was about a 4.

Most of the problems centered around an illness - which for me is pretty unusual.

I consider myself generally healthy. I knew I was having some problems with constant pain, taking pened when people argued about whether the mil-



care of even everyday physical things and main-Last year wasn't a great year for me. On a scale taining an acceptable attitude about it all, but now I realize I must have been more ill than I realized. It took a remark by a total stranger to make me

I even did some convoluted thinking like hap-

lennium turned at the advent of 2000 or 2001. As I've been in a countdown with the Social Se-

curity system, I thought I had a year longer than I do That came as quite a shock! How could I possibly have gone a whole year denying my age? (I'd like to do it all the time, but the mirror gives me away.) I didn't do it on purpose, and yet here I am two years older now.

If I hadn't been in Hawaii when I realized it, I truly would have gone into a "funk." As it was, I was only depressed about three days.

But I'm beginning to accept it. At least now maybe I'll be able to collect some of my Social Security money before the system goes bankrupt!

What are you supposed to feed a python?

Horse meat.

Americans don't believe in eating anything they keep for a pet. That means that while horse is considered a delicacy in much of Europe, you won't find anyone chowing down on ol' Bessie here.

I personally have never tasted horse flesh, at least, not in any identifiable form. I've eaten bear and cat (mountain lion), elk and deer, pheasant and quail. Those are all wild animals that American kids don't usually keep at home.

I've eaten beef and pork, though I like cows well enough and certainly admire bulls. Even a few bugs, but only by accident.

Not only do we not eat our pets, but we don't apparently — allow anything else to, either.

Witness the furor last week after an El Doradoarea veterinarian gave three puppies to a high school science teacher, who planned to feed them



be fired. But someone might be. Did I say furor?

The story made the national wires. It was on CNN, MSNBC, you name it. It was listed as the third-most-e-mailed story of the day on the CNN web site.

You'd think the teacher had planned to feed one of the students to the python, which at eight feet, might take one on.

watched. (It takes snakes a long time to swallow) We even got a hysterical letter from someone with PETA, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals.

She said it was horrible. Teachers are supposed to be a "moral compass" for their students, after all. So what is he supposed to feed the snake?

The snake is allowed to eat, isn't it?

Rats probably are OK. People do sometimes keep them for pets, but rats have a bad rep. No one is going to stick up for something with no hair on its tail.

Well, maybe PETA will. You never know. The PETA lady probably likes rats as long as they aren't running around her office.

Are they supposed to starve the snake to keep it from eating animals? That'd make a lot of sense. They don't eat dead things, like eagles, bears, coyotes and other carnivores do. Most snakes need live Some teachers I know would back him on that. food to survive, and they are not particularly nice



g. t. commentary

Somewhere I lost track of how old I am



lina and Georgia on behalf of GOP Senate candidates will raise both money and public interest.

EDITOR'SNOTE—Will Lester covers politics for The Associated Press.

The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562) Member: Kansas Press Association The Associated Press Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association National Newspaper Association e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com



Steve Haynes, President *Tom Betz*, Editor/Editorial Page 2002 Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor Pat Schiefen, Copy Editor PRES Doug Stephens, Sports Editor

Sharon Corcoran, Society Editor Skilar Boland, Reporter Eric Yonkey, Bill Wagoner, Advertising Sales James Schiefen, Adv. Production Sheila Smith, Office Manager

Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager Richard Westfahl Ron VanLoenen Judy McKnight Betty Morris Lana Westfahl

📗 nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services (nbetz@nwkansas.com) Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)

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, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

Incorporating: The Sherman *County* Herald Founded by Thomas McCants 1935-1989



to the class python.

Oh, bad move. The guy who gave him the pup-

Some days, with some kids.

pies is a school board member, so the teacher won't feed puppies to the snake while his classes pecially not your moral compass.

adout it.

But this is serious stuff. This guy was going to Oh well. Just don't feed it anything cuddly. Es-

I like the jingle in my pocket and the feel of cash

I like paying in cash. There is something about a fistful of dollars in my hand which is much more satisfying than a shiny credit card or a check, even with a few zeros on it.

When I think of money, I don't think about fund transfers or cashier's checks. I think about crinkled bills and lose change. I think of my old piggy bank full of pennies, and the first time I cashed a paycheck. That is money.

It seems more and more people and businesses don't like to take cash. Mail-order companies accept check or money orders. Credit cards. No cash, please. So if I want to buy from them, I have to buy a money order, which costs about 50 cents; send a check, which I have to pay for; or use a credit card, where the interest can kill you. Not to mention, when you pay the credit card bill, they won't take cash either.

I'm looking at a dollar bill now, and it says "This note is legal tender for all debts, public and private." Just because it is legal, though, doesn't mean a business has to accept it, I guess.

If someone chooses not to accept my money, that is their right. I'll just mosey on down the street and find someone else who is willing to make a profit.

I can see why cash is sometimes frowned on. It is easier to steal, easier to hide its origins, not a lot of paperwork. Most employee theft is cash taken right out of the cash register. Drug dealers don't pay with checks.

But I like cash. With it I can buy from a company and not end up on its mailing list. No one can keep track of what I buy and how often I buy it. It's gives me a sort of anonymity. Plus I don't have to worry about overdrafts. When I'm out of money, I'm out. Can't spend another dime.

If I was in business, I would prefer cash over any other form of payment. Checks can bounce, credit card companies charge a fee, and debit cards need a lot of equipment. With cash, though, you don't have to worry, as long as you trust your employees

My landlord looks at me funny when I pay my rent in cash. When I pay my city utility bill, the clerk sometimes has trouble making change. I'm sure the bank would prefer if I used a checking account. The money would stay in their coffers, after all. But I like using cash, and living in Goodland, I don't have to worry about being mugged



when I walk out of the bank. If I lived in Houston, I'd use checks, albeit reluctantly. The day I don't feel safe walking the streets of Goodland with money in my pocket is the day I move.

Not that I ever really have any money; it's the principle of the thing.

About a dog

I mentioned the possibility of getting dog a couple of weeks ago. Finally put down my foot at home. Not going to get one, I said. I'm the breadwinner; I decide. Don't need mess, noise, hassle. Kids too young to appreciate. Don't want dog slobber on clothes. Gave a million good reasons. Very well reasoned. Not emotional. Rational. Logical.

Wife waited patiently for well-thought-out rambling to end, then nodded head. Said sure, whatever you say.

I know that look. Wonder how long until we get a dog?

The past returns

There was a girl in high school I could never talk into dating me, so we became friends instead. Which was good. You can make a friend mad and still be friends. I made her mad a lot.

We kind of stayed in touch after high school, but I didn't think about it much. I ended up in Good-

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and 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>.

land, she moved to California, we both got married, life goes on.

Recently, we started talking again. Well, not me and her, her and my wife. All of a sudden, they are best friends. This is not good.

At first, I thought it wasn't a problem. They're not talking about me, I thought. The world does not revolve around Doug. I'm sure they have a lot to talk about. Housework, babies, bills, whatever.

We got a computer at home a couple of weeks ago, and guess what was one of the first e-mails we got? A letter from my so-called friend with an attachment of a picture out of my freshman yearbook. There is a reason the wife has never seen that picture.

This has got to stop. The past should stay where it belongs, in the past, preferably buried under a landfill somewhere.

berry's world



