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# commentary

from other pens...

## Bush's strength means tug of war for women

Republicans believe President Bush's standing in the polls — spread equally among men and women — has given them an opening to wipe out Democrats' advantage among female voters in the 2002 elections. "To some extent the Republican Party is benefiting from a 'halo effect' on some issues," said Mark Mellman, a Democratic pollster. The party is faring better overall among women and has improved its performance on top issues like education and national security. In the 2000 presidential election, Al Gore beat Bush among women by a 54-43 margin, so Republicans see any signs of parity as progress. "We still have a long way to go," said Mindy Tucker, spokeswoman for the Republican National Committee. "With an election coming up this year, our candidates for the House and Senate will run into Democrats trying to operate as they have in the past."

Democrats see the GOP's 2002 campaign strategy as a replay of the 2000 presidential campaign when Bush actively courted women by talking about education, prescription drugs and Social Security — issues once dominated by Democrats.

Democrats say they can counter with the Bush administration's record. And they say polling suggests that the tide may be turning.

The agenda in congressional races will be set at the local level, Mellman said, once money is poured into television advertising. "It would it be good to have the focus on health care, pension protection and Social Security," he said.

Democrats this week noted a CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll and one of their own that showed Democrats with a slight lead over Republicans in a hypothetical congressional matchup. The Democratic lead among women in the Gallup poll was back in the double digits. Other polls taken about the same time have shown the overall congressional matchup virtually even, however.

Bush's popularity remains strong in early polls, said Lydia Saad, a senior editor of the Gallup poll, but "is not providing Republicans in Congress any guarantee. It's going to be competitive."

Both parties have set up intensive efforts to build their grass-roots network of women, polish their issues and do more research. RNC co-chair Anne Wagner was in Phoenix trying to build support among women and was headed to New Jersey on Friday for more of the same. "We have a great messenger in George Bush," Wagner said. "Women think he delivers, they like his issue set. Whoever could have believed the Republicans could own an issue like education?"

Actually, the president is rated ahead of Democrats in Congress on handling the issue — probably linked to his successful efforts to pass a law improving education standards. The parties themselves are close to even on the education issue.

The GOP's improved image could reverse the history of the party out of power gaining seats in a midterm election. Republican pollster Matt Dowd said. "The president is a breaker wall against the Democratic wave," he said.

The Democratic National Committee last month heard from one of its pollsters about the increasingly diverse views of female voters. They were told the gender gap in politics "is driven by men's flight from the Democratic Party" and they must do a better job of attracting younger white women without a college education.

Despite Democrats' efforts to regain dominance with most groups of women, Anne Lewis, national chair of the DNC's Women's Vote Center, said Republicans haven't closed the sale.

"They shouldn't get too giddy," she said, noting she wants to highlight how the GOP talks about popular programs while Democrats support providing more money to pay for issues like education, Social Security and health care.

"We're headed into an election where they are going to try to blur those issues," Lewis said. "What we have going for us is the record."

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



## Listening to those words that make us smile

I don't know about you, but I'm constantly hearing or reading things which make me smile - and sometimes wonder

Get ready. Here's another column on strange words and phrases.

1) What are borkings? I read: "Congress should end 'borkings' downward spiral." Senate Democrats (under Reagan vetoed Robert Bork for US Supreme Court, but just exactly does borkings mean?

2) Seen in ad for Natural Food store: Horny goat weed. Your guess is as good as mine!

3) Strange sentence in news article about victims of the Sept 11 tragedy: "Feinberg also announced that an immediate \$50,000 advance on their settlement would be sent to families of victims who were killed if they requested it." "Victims who were killed" would get compensation "if they requested it." I don't think many victims requested to get killed, did they? (And I hereby again register my



**lorna g. t.**

• commentary

opposition to all the families getting so much money when military members' survivors are not compensated according to that military person's lifetime earnings potential.)

4) In a talk by a nutrition expert on a radio show: repeated references to foods that were "calorically dense." What's wrong with just saying "high in calories?"

5) Overalls called "barn bibs."

6) Ever wondered what "a pig in a poke" is? From Reader's Digest: "A pig in a poke is an item or an idea that seems to be one thing but might well contain something different. In medieval England

small pigs were sold at market in pokes, or little bags. At times, however, some crafty farmers took to putting a cat in the bag and tried to sucker someone into buying the pig without looking inside the poke. If they looked, the farmer would warn, the pig might run away. Those skeptics who did look invariably 'let the cat out of the bag.'"

7) How would you pronounce "autodial"? Why not "au-toe-dee-al"? I think it needs a hyphen.

8) This is a description I just love: "Four-letter words steamed up, savage and thick... collecting in a peevish low-hanging cloud of concentrated spite." Jane Langton in *Natural Enemy*. Isn't that great?!

9) Heard spoken by disc jockey on a Golden Oldies station: "Stay tuned. More music you remember to come." Think about it!

10) Man on the radio advertising his furniture store: "I'll stand behind the furniture for a lifetime." You won't catch me buying anything in that store!

## Can't solve problems unless they are reported

We don't usually reply to letters to the editor. People deserve a chance to have their say without being slapped down.

But I'm going to disagree with the gentleman who took us to task the other day (April 7 *Goodland Daily News*) over coverage of the city-county trash controversy.

Briefly, he charged that *The Daily News* was "sensationalizing" the dispute. He said it was nobody else's business that Goodland and Sherman County can't seem to get along, and we shouldn't be airing the town's dirty laundry.

Nonsense. If there's nothing to be ashamed of, then there's no reason to keep a story in the paper.

And if there is, then how can we solve the problems by ignoring it?

A problem swept under the rug is pretty easy to ignore. And this one has been around for a long time.

There no way to say why the city and county don't seem to work well together. Or how far back you have to go to find the first example.

But it has been going on for a long time. It's not just trash.

The two commissions didn't connect on the repaving project on old U.S. 24 and the sales tax which was passed by voters to pay for the work.

City officials distinctly thought the two short sections of the road inside city limits were in the project, but the county maintained they never were.



**steve haynes**

• along the sappa

It's a safe bet no one played that point up, however, when they were selling the tax plan to the city.

The city had to waive it's right to part of the tax money, and you'd have to wonder about that if they'd known their roads wasn't in the program.

The city had it's own problems last year working with the state highway department, which resulted in near-gridlock at the entrances to downtown.

In the trash situation, the city and county talked at each other a lot, but it seemed like the city never took the county's threat to refuse it's trash seriously.

The county *told* the city what would happen if they kept delivering loads shot through with prohibited items.

Like many problems, this one won't be solved until people get tired enough and mad enough to demand an end to it. There are good people, hard-working, dedicated, well-meaning people running the city and the county. But they all are part of a system that doesn't always work.

The city parts of Old 24 did get paved eventu-

ally, but only when taxpayers went down to the courthouse and demanded that the county do something. It was county residents, not city people, who had to drive over those awful bumps, after all.

Now people are mad about the trash situation. They're tired of paying more for less service, and they don't want their public officials fighting each other. They don't understand or care why the county is so picky about what goes in the trash new landfill. They just want their trash picked up and their fees kept down.

Both the city and county have right on their side. The county has to protect it's landfill, and the city is rightly concerned about escalating costs for trash disposal. Homeowners, though, just want to get rid of their law clippings.

If city and county officials work together, they can solve this problems. They've proved that with cooperation on recycling, but it's been tough sometimes to keep that project moving.

Somewhere in all this, someone ought to ask why in this day and age, we even have a city and a county, rather than just one unified local government. Sure, the duplication creates some jobs and it's the way we've always done things, but do we really need both?

Given the choice, people might decide they can't afford both and don't want to keep settling these squabbles.

Or maybe the two commissions and their hired hands can show us that they can work together.

## Making sense of long-term care insurance

To the Editor:

One of the most common consumer requests we receive here at the Kansas Insurance Department is for information about long-term care insurance. My staff and I have spoken with many Kansans who are concerned about affording long-term care should they require it in the years to come. In many cases, purchasing an appropriate long-term care insurance policy is the most practical and responsible way to provide for the possible expense of future care. Long-term care insurance is designed to pay for some or all of the costs of assisted-living, but it is not the right choice for everyone, and selecting the right policy and type of coverage can be confusing.

When determining if long-term care insurance is right for you, there are several "rules of thumb" to keep in mind: You should not buy a long-term care policy if you have trouble stretching your income to pay for utilities, food, and medicine. If your only income is Social Security, it may be unwise to buy a long-term care policy.

• If you are buying this policy to protect your assets and your assets are less than \$50,000, long-term care insurance may not be the best approach for you.

• If you will be paying premiums with money received only from your own income, you may not be able to afford this policy if the premiums will be more than 7% of your income.

We have created a user-friendly Long-Term Care Insurance Guide to help Kansans understand this type of coverage and determine whether it is



from our readers

• to the editor

right for them, as well as a Shopper's Guide to assist consumers in selecting a policy and comparing rates. I am pleased to announce that the updated 2002 Long-Term Care Insurance Shopper's Guide is hot off the presses and now available from the Insurance Department, free of charge.

If you decide that long-term care insurance is for you, the Shopper's Guide is a great place to begin. Our Shopper's Guide enables you to find out which companies sell long-term care policies, compare rates and review company rate increase histories with the turn of a page. We also give you guidance on how to design your plan, what questions to ask your agent, and what protections you have when you purchase a policy.

Before you purchase a long-term care policy, your agent is required to give you an outline of coverage. The outline should be easy to understand, describe the benefits and disclose the exact costs. This outline is especially useful when you are comparing policies. Remember that long-term care policies are not standardized. Use the outline to make sure you're not comparing apples and oranges.

Take your time. There is no rush for you to make a decision on the spot. Be sure you are working with

an agent you are comfortable with.

Even with these precautions, sometimes people end up with a policy that they do not want. In Kansas, you have a 30 day "free look" period. This means that you have 30 days to make sure that your policy says what you think it does. If it doesn't or you've changed your mind for any reason, you may get a full refund of your money as long as you return the policy before the 30 days is up. Our office can assist you if you have questions on how to get your money back.

If you would like a free copy of the 2002 Shopper's Guide, please contact our office tollfree at 1-800-432-2484 or get one online at [www.knsurance.org](http://www.knsurance.org).

Kathleen Sebelius  
Kansas Commissioner of Insurance

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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@nwkansan.com](mailto:daily@nwkansan.com).

## The Goodland Daily News

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

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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@nwkansan.com](mailto:daily@nwkansan.com). Advertising questions can be sent to: [gdnadv@nwkansan.com](mailto:gdnadv@nwkansan.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.)

Incorporating:

**The Sherman County Herald**  
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