

commentary

from other pens...

West Wing marks 100 years as workshop

Over the 100 years that separate Theodore Roosevelt from George W. Bush, the West Wing of the White House has become a sharply etched symbol of presidential power and television drama.

In the West Wing, workplace for 18 chief executives, presidents have planned wars, struggled with the Great Depression, played out the Cold War. From there, one president worked to contain the Cuban missile crisis and another dealt with the aftermath of a terrorist attack on American soil.

None of that was foreseeable in November 1902 when Roosevelt's staff moved into the new presidential office wing, a small, low-slung building so quietly well-mannered that it offered little competition with the architecture and history right next door.

Once past the restrained facade, however, it was clear that the new wing represented a sharp break with the past.

"For the first time since the United States has been a nation the head of the nation does not live in his shop," Harper's Weekly reported on Nov. 29, 1902.

The transformation is seen in an exhibit by the White House Historical Society at the White House Visitors Center, 1450 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. It will run from Tuesday until March 3, 2003.

Since John Adams became the first president to occupy the White House in 1800, only the thinnest of lines divided living quarters from workspace.

In Abraham Lincoln's era, the president's secretaries, John Hay and George Nicolay, worked at the east end of the second-floor corridor near the president's office. Lincoln's parlor and bedroom were just a door away. Later in the century, workers installed telegraph equipment and hung maps to allow officials to follow the Spanish-American War.

That was essentially the situation the energetic Roosevelt inherited in September 1901 when, assuming the presidency after William McKinley's assassination, he moved his large family into the limited living space on the other half of the floor.

The United States was emerging as an international power, the president was becoming the central figure of government and the old ways of conducting White House business suddenly appeared hopelessly out of date.

Roosevelt hired architect Charles F. McKim to make the White House functional for the new century.

Removing the glass greenhouses that had piled up against the west wall for the previous 50 years, McKim uncovered the columned terrace built as a service wing by Thomas Jefferson. He used it as a link to a new office building, a step that allowed him to remove the staff from the White House and double the size of the president's living quarters. It took only six months from concept to the last lap of white paint.

Harper's Weekly called the new offices, each lit with electric lights and lined with green burlap, "the White House workshop."

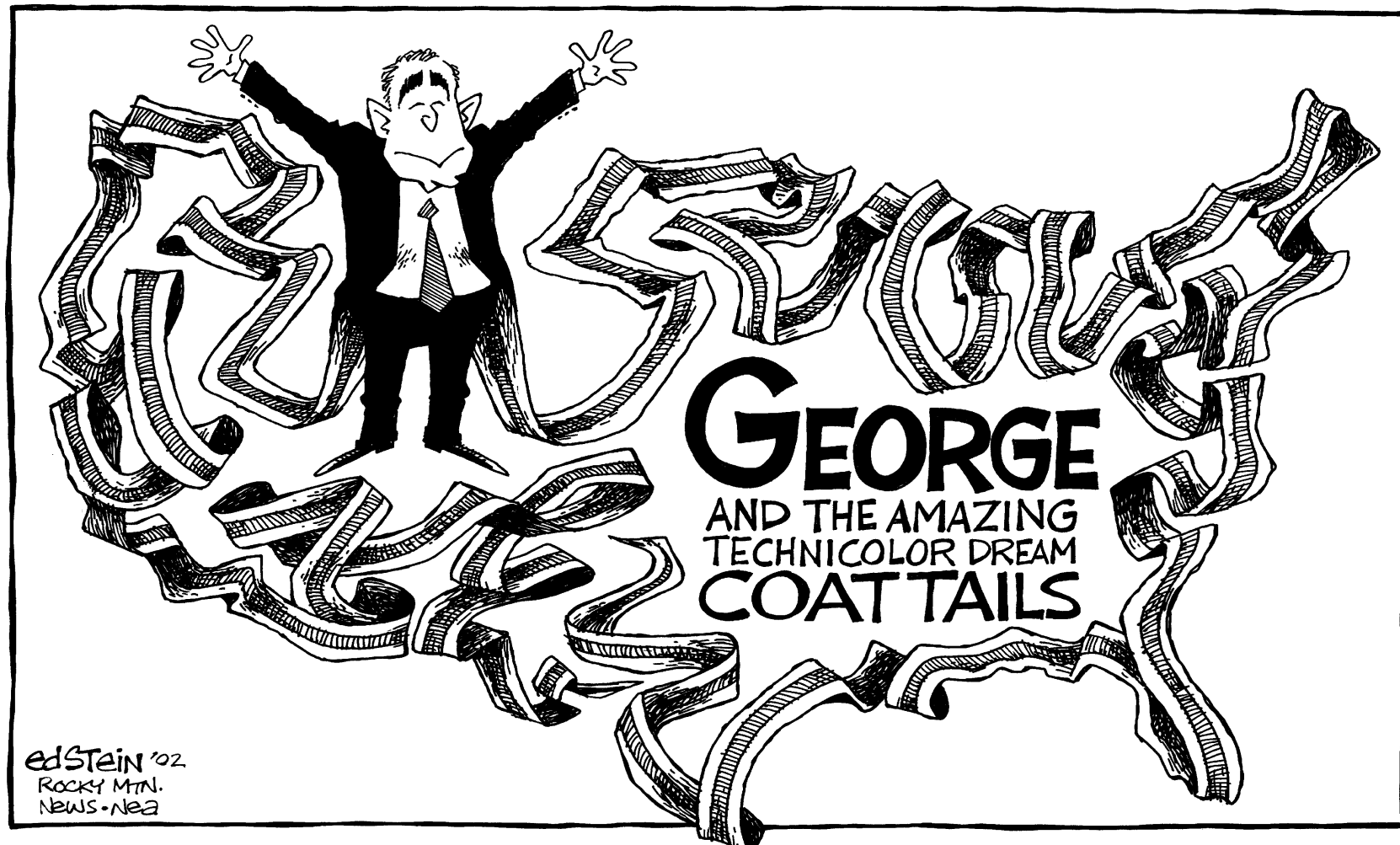
A large rectangular room was reserved for the president. A 1904 photograph shows logs stacked near the fireplace and a globe and rocking chair facing Roosevelt's desk. Sliding doors in a side wall opened to the new Cabinet Room. Roosevelt's secretary, George Cortelyou, occupied the large central room with bow windows overlooking a tennis court.

Next door was the communications center equipped with 65 telegraph and 25 telephone lines. "It is possible for the White House to be connected with any point in this country reached by telegraph service," Harper's Weekly reported.

William Howard Taft constructed the first Oval Office in the West Wing in 1909. Herbert Hoover rebuilt the wing after a fire in 1929. In the 1930s, Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the Oval Office to the southeast corner, added a penthouse and expanded the basement offices. That was about the time people started calling this executive real estate "The West Wing."

The West Wing has now been the cockpit of presidential decision making for a full century.

Presidents still use Jefferson's colonnade when they walk to work. **EDITOR'S NOTE**—Lawrence L. Knutson has reported on Congress, the White House and Washington's history for 35 years.



No time for gloating

The President has made it known: There will be no gloating in this White House about the amazing Republican victories on Election Day. There will be no shiny-eyed exulting in the GOP's historic gains in the House and Senate, and no breathless enthusing about the president's political courage in having staked all his political capital on this mid-term election — and won.

That's fine and good for a White House in which the president has an innate sense of decorum down to his boot tips. Little wonder he demands from his staff, as spokesman Ari Fleischer put it, "a touch of graciousness." But what about the rest of us? Saying the right thing (sans smirk) to the wronged Democrat may not come easily to someone still giggling over all those unexpected victories.

Tut, tut. It's important to bear in mind that where there are big winners (Erlich, Coleman, Bush), there are big losers (Kennedy Townsend, Mondale, McBride). We need to walk 150 feet without dithering in their shoes. Empathize with that new minority. Realize they don't color Democratic states blue for nothing. You never know when you might happen upon, say, Richard Gephardt. With just a little no-gloat sensitizing, you would know how to put the House minority leader at ease by congratulating him for being the only member of the Democratic leadership to have retained his job.

Then there's Tom Daschle. The plight of the erstwhile Senate majority leader puts a greater strain on the old tact resources. It's not easy finding the right thing to say to someone assuming the minority position while passing the baton, or gavel, or whatever it is, that - poof — turns every one of his Democratic committee chairmen, including Patrick Leahy, into a ranking minority member. (This, in the fairy-tale world of Washington, is the political equivalent of a frog.)



diana west

• commentary

Words fail? You bet. In this case, the no-gloat Republican seeks inspiration from someone who speaks Mr. Daschle's lingo, someone like Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic National Committee chairman. The rest is easy. Simply reassure Mr. Daschle that, as Mr. McAuliffe now says, we are in "basically the same place we were after the 2000 election. Fifty-fifty. Parity. Not much has changed." Add that personal touch by asking what's one or two senators among friends? Then ask the new Senate minority leader to pass along the news to Jim Jeffords.

Mr. McAuliffe himself presents a simpler case. Avoid the minority-majority unpleasantnesses altogether by telling him that it's the dream of every Republican that he remain DNC chairman. So long as Mr. McAuliffe stays at the helm, of course, the Democratic Party remains in thrall to Mr. McAuliffe's sponsors, Bill and Hillary Clinton. Judging by this same mid-term election, that's good news for the GOP.

Why? This election was not — how to put it without gloating? — a red-letter day for Clinton, Inc. While the Democrats netted four new governorships, the Florida, Massachusetts, New York and even Maryland statehouses went Republican despite the Clintons' frenetic flesh-pressing and fund-raising efforts. While Democrats won in New Jersey and Arkansas, Senate seats in New Hampshire, North Carolina, Georgia, Oregon, Missouri and

Minnesota went for the GOP despite — or because of — that same Clinton connection.

In the no-gloat spirit, maybe it's best to forget the more poll-challenged among the Clinton-supported candidates and see what worked. Most Americans know what happened when the Democratic Party got together in Minnesota not to bury Paul Wellstone but to resurrect Walter Mondale. Not many realize that Mr. Clinton flew straight from the land of 10,000 frozen lakes to another memorial tribute — this one a four-rally event in Hawaii for the late Patsy Mink, the Democratic congresswoman who died in September. Bill Clinton may have been the kiss of death for living Democrats — Mr. Clinton campaigned for Hawaii's Democratic gubernatorial candidate, for example, and the state elected its first Republican governor in 40 years — but something clicked for Patsy Mink. She posthumously held her seat. (Maybe Mr. Clinton put her over the top when he said he "was a declared dead a dozen times when I ran for president in 1992, and a dozen times after ...") Could it be there's a future for the former president in memorial politics? Call it "mourning in America."

Why not? The man has to do something. Even before Tuesday's vote, there were politicos knocking the Clinton factor. "I'm not sure you'll be able to blame Clinton and Gore for Democratic defeats next week, but you'll certainly be able to say their day has come and gone," Republican strategist Rich Galen told the Washington Times. The morning after the election Newsweek's Howard Fineman was more succinct: "The Clinton era is finally, finally over."

No time to gloat. The Bush era, with its midterm mandate, is well underway.

Diana West is a columnist for The Washington Times. She can be contacted via dianaww@attglobal.net.

I'm ashamed of the party's tactics this election

To the Editor:

I have been a Republican all my life and I've voted in many elections but I've never been so ashamed of the Party as I have been this year. The tactics they have used to try getting their Party elected.

The phone rings and when I pick up the receiver there is a tape lambasting Sebelius, just a tape recording, but the worst was Sunday evening (Nov. 3) when the phone rings and Laura Bush urges me to vote for Shallenberger.

Just why does she think she knows more about what goes on in Kansas than I do. How much has it cost the Kansas taxpayers to pay for all this running around the Bush's have done trying to get someone elected.

When a sniper was going around killing people, where was the Selected President — out on the campaign trail! Maybe it would be better if the Bush family paid more attention to the rearing of their own family instead of flying all over the country telling the rest of us what we should do.

Wake up America, before its too late. We are rapidly losing our power, if we vote for everything Dubya wants we are rapidly nearing the hour, of losing the freedoms we now enjoy, by giving him all the power.

I know this will be published after the election is over, but I'd sure like for voters to decry the methods parties use to imply we aren't capable of deciding ourselves whom to vote for.

Fern Estes
Kanorado

To the Editor:

The Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter Board would like to thank the entire community for their continued support. The Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter operates entirely on donations and volunteers who care for the animals. We believe we provide a valuable service to this community and hope to be able to keep it going even in these rough economic times.

We realize there are so many good causes to support in this community and we feel very grateful for the support we receive.

The unwanted pet situation, even in our small community is a real problem. We urge you to spay and neuter your animals, make sure they have city

from our readers

• to the editor



tags and are current on their rabies shots and with winter approaching, make sure they have food and shelter.

There are a few changes we wanted to share with you, first of all, we have reorganized the board and have appointed interim officers that will serve until the Annual Meeting in March. They are Sandy Rodgers and Jamie Helmut Co-Chairwomen, Kathy Weis, Secretary and Sharon Bowker, Treasurer.

We will hold an election in March for officers and all members are urged to come and vote. Rest assured your shelter is in dedicated, hard working, honest hands and we welcome input from any of you.

The board recently voted to sell the land we own. We have thought long and hard about this decision and the reasons why are:

1. We have been using the shelter funds to care for hundreds of animals rather than saving for a building and we can offer the animals larger pens in our current facilities than we could in a new building.

2. The animals have volunteer supervision and we don't have to hire someone.

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@nwkans.com>.

3. The current Shelter location has been inspected and certified by the State.

4. The current Shelter location is out of the City limits and on private property.

5. The upkeep on the lot is expensive and we currently pay property taxes on the lot so we could save that expense.

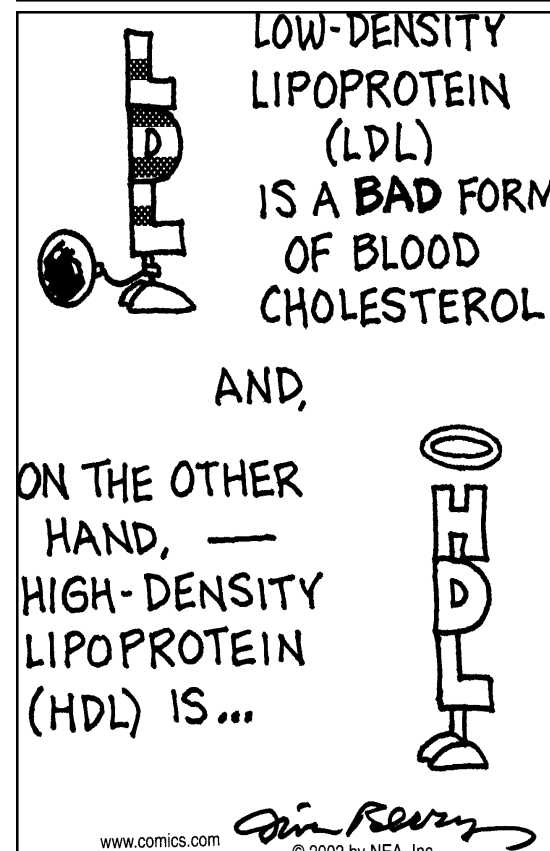
6. There has been opposition from some of the neighbors concerning building a shelter at the roadside park location

7. Ultimately, we feel we can offer the animals better accommodations and care and do it for less money using the current shelter location and foster homes.

We felt it was important to keep you posted on our position. We are very proud to be the largest no kill shelter in the tri-state area.

Sandra K. Rodgers
The Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter Board

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Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkans.com)

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