

from our viewpoint...

Politics really is a fun, funny sport

There is an old saying that “everything is fair in love, war and politics.” This past week, it would seem all three have been intertwined in events that raise questions, but bring a smile to many faces. First came the 51 Texas Democrats who trooped up to Adrmore, Okla., to thwart the Texas Republican plan to redistrict the state and add five seats to their side of the isle. The maneuver left the Texas House unable to complete any action before its Thursday deadline, and had the Republicans sending the state troopers out to try to roundup the missing members. When the Democrats returned on Friday, they held a victory rally on the Capitol steps to the cheers of sign waving supporters calling them the 51 Heroes. There is quite a bit of humor in thinking about 51 Texans hiding out in Oklahoma, and yet there is a serious side, because the Republicans are blaming the errant Democrats for costing the state a pile of money because finance bills could not be passed either. It has always been a theory that the best that can happen in a state legislative season is the representatives do the least possible, adding no laws or other burdens to the state’s taxpayers and citizens.

It is a sure bet the redistricting fight is not over in Texas, but there is a new understanding of what self-exile means. On the love side, it was revealed Thursday that John F. Kennedy had an affair with a White House intern, and the now-60-year-old grandmother said it lasted from June to November 1963.

We can add JFK to the growing list of politicians who have found the lure of power irresistible and the young impressionable women find themselves romantically involved with their boss. The best answer in this case is “so what?” We already knew JFK had some affairs, and that added him to the list along with FDR and Ike as recent presidents who had special “friends.” It is interesting that it took 40 years for this affair to become public, and in light of the recent scandal with President Clinton, the story got a bigger headline. Those Kennedy people seem to know how to keep their secrets better. Well, that’s Jack, not Teddy. President Bush made it official he will run for re-election by filing the papers with the Federal Election Commission. His campaign people believe they will have \$100 million to use in the election campaign, and that does not include the millions that American taxpayers will provide through the federal election checkoff. With the passage of the Senate’s \$350 billion tax cut plan, the stage is set for a battle over compromise with the House’s \$500 billion tax cut plan.

As with most tax cut plans, there are sections guaranteed to confuse and to allow both sides to claim they are helping the “average taxpayer.” However, no matter how it plays out, there is a good bet that filing tax forms for 2003 will be more difficult than they were for 2002. There will be more new regulations and probably 10 more pages of instructions. Whatever happened to the Tax Simplification Act and the rhetoric about streamlining the tax process? Seems to be more politics as usual, and we can hope there are more fun moments that will give us a chance to smile at the funny side of the second oldest profession. — Tom Betz

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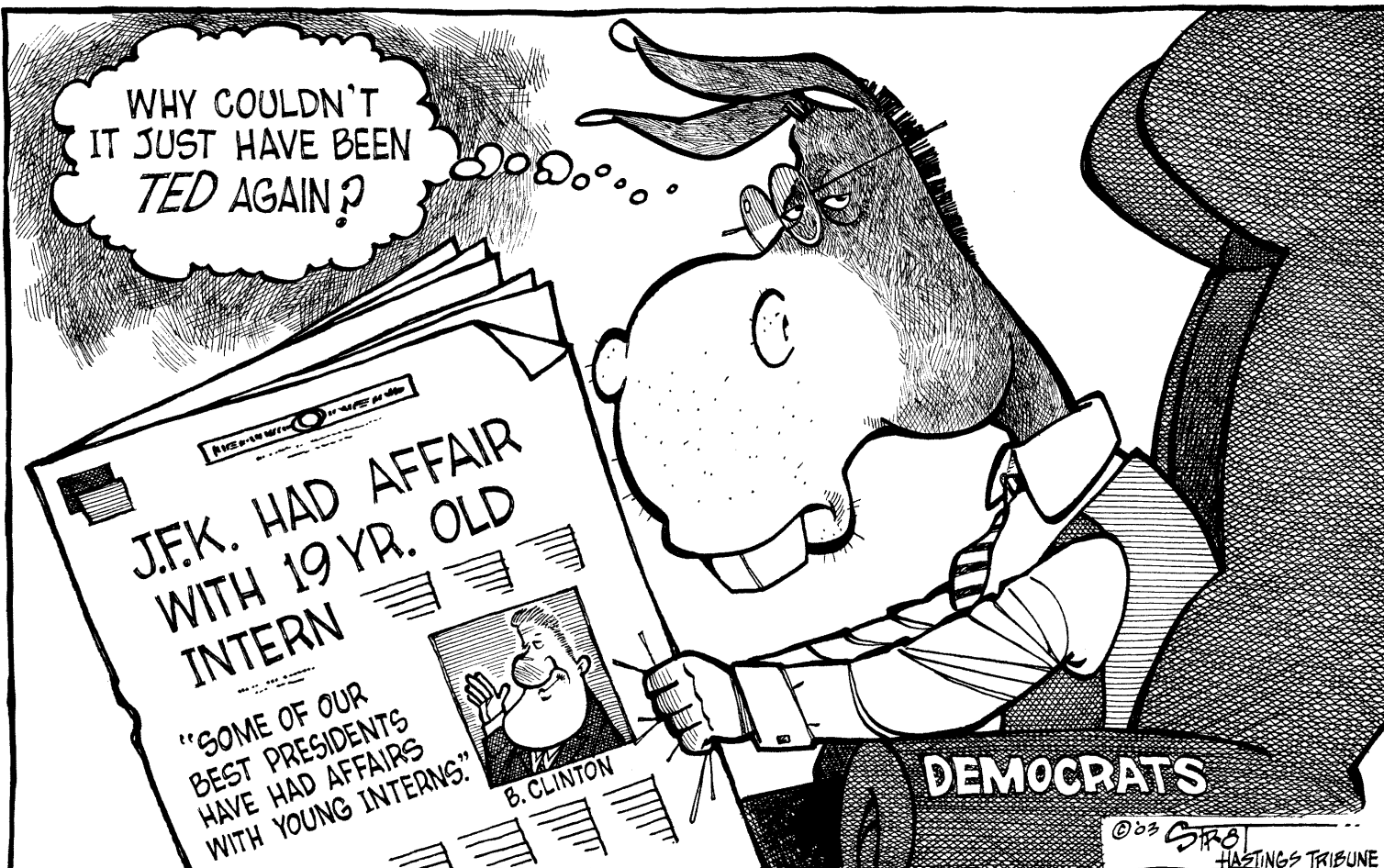
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Elegance done simply

Pearl Sgutt Gordon in her cookbook “Simply Elegant” gives even the most novice of hosts tools to have a successful event. Gordon wrote the book for her eldest son going to college as a survival guide. Menus, types of meals, settings and recipes are included in this book. Gordon lived a number of years in Topeka before moving to Illinois. The flaming dishes sound very dramatic and I intend to try one.

Crab Stuffed Avocado or Papaya

Mix 1/4 cup mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon chopped chives, dash of salt and pepper, dash of Worcestershire sauce and 1 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice.

Mix 1 cup crab meat (or 7 ounce can) lightly into dressing. Chill.

Cut 2 avocados lengthwise and remove the pit. Peel the avocado halves. Put in or brush on lemon juice to retain the color. If using artichokes cook and then fill.

When ready to serve, fill avocado halves with crab salad. Sprinkle with rice or very finely chopped hard boiled eggs. Place on lettuce and garnish with slices of orange and grapefruit and ripe olives. Top with the dress-



pat schiefen

• postscript

ing of your choice.

Brandy Pepper Steak

Pan broil a very tender top serloin steak. When cooked grind or shake coarsely ground pepper on both sides to coat steak.

While pan is still hot, turn off fire and pour in 1/4 cup brandy or cognac. Ignite with a long handles match. Use caution.

Turn steak while brandy flames. When the flame goes out, place steak on cutting board and slice thickly. Put on platter and pour rest of brandy over the steak. Scrape pepper from bottom of the pan onto the steak.

This would be very dramatic with the lights turned out.

Fresh Cherries Jubilee

Wash, drain, stem and pit ripe bing cherries.

Place cherries in kettle. Use 3/4 cup sugar for each cup of cherries. Layer cherries and sugar ending with the sugar on top.

Let stand 10 to 24 hours in kettle, covered. Then simmer 60 minutes or longer for right consistency. Cook until it thickens.

Turn into chafing dish. Slightly warm cognac or brandy in small pan. Ignite with match; pour over sauce and serve over ice cream.

If you do not wish to flame or serve in a chafing dish, just stir in a little brandy and serve over rich vanilla ice cream.

To have cherries jubilee all year long after cooking until thickened stir in brandy and pour into sterilized jars. This is also an excellent sauce over duck.

Brandies Bananas Zahava

Melt 4 tablespoons butter in a chafing dish or skillet. Add 3/4 cup brown sugar, 1/4 cup dark rum, 1/2 cup apricot brandy and stir and cook until it is blended and thick.

Add 2 or 3 bananas sliced lengthwise and cut 1 1/2 inches long. Sauté in hot mixture. Serve over ice cream immediately. Zahava means gold.

What type of soil are you?

Jesus spoke many times in illustrations. Large crowds of people listened and enjoyed what he was saying, but even his disciples often had to ask what his stories meant. People who didn’t ask probably never understood them.

These illustrations are recorded in the Bible, but they can hardly be of any benefit if we do not understand what they mean. At Matthew 13:15, Jesus says of many people: “For the heart of this people has grown unreceptive, and with their ears they have heard without response, and they have shut their eyes; that they might never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and get the sense of it with their hearts and turn back, and I heal them.”

The condition of a person’s heart determines whether he understands Jesus’ illustrations and whether his response leads to Jesus’ healing. This is the subject of his illustration about a sower sowing seed on four types of soil.

At Mark 4:3-8, Jesus said, “Listen. Look! The sower went out to sow. And as he was sowing, some seed fell alongside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. And other seed fell upon the rocky place where it, of course, did not have much soil, and it immediately sprang up because of not having depth of soil. But when the sun rose, it was scorched, and for not having root it withered. And other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. But others fell upon the fine soil, and, coming up and increasing, they began to yield fruit, and they were bearing thirtyfold, and sixty and a hundred.”

The four types of soil Jesus mentioned were soil along the road, rocky soil, thorny soil and fine soil. What do these types of soil represent?

Jesus answers in verses 14-20: “The sower sows the word. These, then, are the ones alongside the road where the word is sown; but as soon as they have heard it Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. And likewise these are the ones sown upon the rocky



sharon corcoran

• use it or lose it

places: as soon as they have heard the word, they accept it with joy. Yet they have no root in themselves, but they continue for a time; then as soon as tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, they are stumbled.

“There are still others who are sown among the thorns; these are the ones that have heard the word, but the anxieties of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches and the desires for the rest of the things make inroads and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. Finally, the ones that were sown on the fine soil are those who listen to the word and favorably receive it and bear fruit thirtyfold and sixty and a hundred.”

Soil alongside the road that leads through a grainfield is hard packed by traffic. Similarly, those who allow the events of life to impose undue demands on their time and energy develop hard packed hearts. They are too preoccupied to find time to appreciate the word of God.

Before they develop a love for the word, Luke 8:12 says, “the Devil comes and takes the word away from their hearts in order that they may not believe and be saved.”

Just like soil needs to be plowed and traffic diverted from it to become soft and productive, the heart needs time for studying and meditating on God’s word to be fine soil.

On the rocky soil, the seed takes root and sprouts, but when the sun comes, it withers. The seed sown in fine soil is also exposed to the sun, but it thrives rather than withers. What makes the difference?

The rock mass just under the top soil prevents the seed from sinking its roots in deep enough

to find moisture and stability.

Jesus compares this type of soil to the hearts of those who become so fearful when they are exposed to the heat of persecution they lose their joy and strength. The rocklike condition of their hearts prevents them from meditating deeply on spiritual things.

Such an individual needs to remove rocklike obstacles like deep-seated bitterness, underlying self-interest and other hard feelings.

Studying God’s word is the solution, for Hebrews 4:12 says, “the word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of the joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The next type of soil is the thorny soil. Again, the word takes root, but this time it is choked out by thorns. Just as thorns provide competition for moisture and space to healthy plants, anxieties, riches and pleasures of life provide competition for God’s word to gain the attention of many people.

Jesus warns his followers at Matthew 6:31-33: “So never be anxious and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or, ‘What are we to drink?’ or, ‘What are we to put on?’ For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.”

Jesus warned his disciples to seek the kingdom first rather than worry about material things. But they all had jobs, homes, families and other responsibilities. He wasn’t discouraging them from taking care of those things, just to not allow them to take up all their time and energy.

The last type of soil Jesus mentioned was the fine soil. By making sure we never let our hearts become hard, shallow or overgrown, we can be fine soil and be spiritually productive. So, which one are you?

garfield

