

from other pens...

Democrats unravel rather than govern

The Democrats took control of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives after the 2006 November elections by the slimmest of margins. Since then they have desperately tried to convince everybody on the planet they had a mandate to turn things around.

Well, it just hasn't quite turned out that way. While they did manage to get a few things passed in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's first 100 hours, the going, since then, has been anything but smooth.

The way they talked after the November '06 mini-victory, they were going to tell President Bush how to run the country, the war, and anything else they thought needed running.

They seem to be shooting themselves in the foot. Senate Leader Harry Reid just doesn't seem to be equipped for the role. Speaker Pelosi is misguided as to what her duties are.

While Mr. Bush's approval ratings are still in the gutter, he need not make many adjustments; instead, all he need do is sit and watch the Democrats continue to unravel. They seem to have too many voices in the pot, allowing one to surmise leadership isn't the result of the 2006 election.

Democrat leadership tells the president their bill to continue funding for the troops would include a calendar for withdrawal. President Bush said he'd veto any bill with that stipulation. That would be like extending the enemy an invitation to the going away party. Sen. Reid remains adamant about that wording. There are other Democrats, thank goodness, telling Sen. Reid, of Nevada, to cool it.

The Democrats, under Reid and Pelsoi, are — at this early stage in their mini-majority role — setting themselves up for a letdown in 2008 if things continue on course. And if the letdown happens, won't that be something: Republicans in the majority in both the House and Senate, and the Democrats occupying the White House!

The voters are watching closely. Change is the name of their game. And if they have to change political diapers every two years, they will.

—Tom Dreiling, Norton Telegram

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The Goodland Star-News

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

Member: Kansas Press Association
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year's Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., 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 Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: star-news@nw-kansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: goodlandads@nwkan-sas.com

The Goodland Star-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, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

Incorporating:

The Goodland Daily News

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Founded by Thomas McCants

1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR

Founded by Eric and

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11th Big First listening tour completed

I recently completed my 11th annual Big First Listening Tour, making community visits in each of the 69 counties of the 1st Congressional District. It is always a pleasure joining residents for a discussion about current issues and ways I can better serve the interests of Kansans in Washington.

Many of my tour stops came on the heels of the severe winter storms that swept the western part of the state. Despite the devastation, I was once again reminded of the strength and spirit of our communities and the values that make Kansas a great place to live, work and raise a family. I not only appreciated hearing Kansans express their views on national policy, but also talk about their successes and achievements. Our state will continue to thrive



jerry moran

• in Congress

thanks to the work ethic and dedication of its citizens.

In our nation's capital, I continue to work on the issues important to our state. For a number of Kansans, the farm bill is the most important piece of legislation Congress will consider this year. In the coming months, I will also be working closely to improve No Child Left Behind. In bettering our education system, we should not take the joy and passion out of the

teaching profession by over regulating the classroom. Finally, I appreciate the advice I received from Kansans about our country's course of action in Iraq, as well as their concerns for the well-being of our service members and veterans.

If there were any issues that we did not have the opportunity to discuss or if you were unable to attend my tour stop, you can always contact me through my website at www.jerrymoran.house.gov.

It is an honor to represent Kansans in Congress. Please let me know how I can better serve you as together we strive to make good things happen for Kansas.

Jerry Moran, Hays
U.S. Representative

New Hampshire gets ready



bill steigerwald

• newsmakers

Every four years, when it's time to elect a president, Americans are reminded that there still is a New Hampshire.

The Granite State's famed presidential primary, first in the nation since 1952, is a circus of retail politics and national media coverage that often produces surprising results.

To find out how things are shaping up in New Hampshire, we called Joe McQuaid, publisher of the *New Hampshire Union Leader* of Manchester. The conservative newspaper, the state's major media power despite a daily circulation of only about 60,000, long has played an active reportorial and editorial role in the primaries. This election, says McQuaid, will be no different:

Q: Are you getting ready for the invasion or has it already started?

A: It's already started. It really never stops anymore. I wasn't sure that John McCain was running for president until I invited him up here for a speech at a school I'm involved with. This was I think three days after the 2004 general election? As he talked, I realized, "My God, he's running for president." I think that's probably the earliest it's started, and now it's just nonstop, and my editor is tearing his remaining hair out trying to figure out how and why we should cover all these people in addition to the regular news.

Q: Do New Hampshire residents dread this process and all the national media attention or do they embrace it?

A: Oh, they embrace it. People in New Hampshire are quite proud of the fact that politicians come up here to state their case, and New Hampshire people get to talk to them and ask questions of them. Actually, I think New Hampshire has a better voting record in presidential primaries than we do in our own state elections.

Q: Is there a downside to the primary?

A: No. There may be fatigue on the part of news media up here, but there is no downside. For the state, it brings in revenue and you guys. And the politicians and the hangers-on come up here. I hope it elevates the level of discourse. They get asked better questions — the politicians do — by rank-and-file people in the state than they do by the news media.

Q: Is The *Union Leader* still the strong voice of conservatism in your state?

A: Yeah, it's about the only one. It always has been.

Q: How would you describe your brand of conservatism? Can you further define it? Is it Reaganesque? Taftesque?

A: Taft? You mean Robert Taft? Or his old man?

Q: Either one.

A: How old are you?

Q: Robert Taft. He was a good guy. He lost up there, didn't he?

A: Yeah, he lost to Eisenhower. William Loeb, who owned this paper for many years,

backed Robert Taft in 1952 and was furious when Gov. Sherman Adams managed to get Eisenhower on top. That was the first beauty contest, where names meant something.

Back to your original question, I think we're certainly in the Reagan mold — a strong national defense, personal liberty and pro-life. I think the whole international trade issue has become a great concern to us. We supported Pat Buchanan in 1992 and 1996. We ended up in 2000 with the lesser of the evils: We backed Steve Forbes rather than either Bush or McCain. I guess that's our brand.

Q: Who will make the decision about who the paper will support — you or the editorial staff?

A: It would be me.

Q: OK, so what do you think of the conservative credentials of Messrs. Giuliani, McCain and Romney?

A: Well, I don't think I'm going to really get into that yet. I want to see more of all of them. Plus, there are I guess practical reasons for holding off. We're one of the sponsors of some upcoming debates, and I would like to hear them all out. ... I would just say that I am not overwhelmed with any of them at the moment.

Q: The paper will endorse someone at some point?

A: Yes.

Q: And it will be a Republican? There's no chance it'll be a Democrat?

A: Oh, we've backed Democrats in the primary as well as Republicans in the primary before. We backed Bill Bradley over Gore not that long ago (in 2000). The late William Loeb heartily endorsed Mayor Sam Yorty of Los Angeles (in 1972).

Q: Who's leading the Democrats right now in the polls in New Hampshire?

A: I don't keep track of polls. I think it's a

crock. My editors and some of the reporters love them and keep putting them in the paper. I keep telling them, "Don't play 'em up because right now it's still a name-recognition thing." If I had to guess who's leading in the New Hampshire polls among the Democrats, I would guess Barack Obama would be on top.

Q: How about the Republicans?

A: On the Republican side, I think the polls show Giuliani and McCain and then Romney third. But again, I think they're going to have boots on the ground and we have these debates and when people start paying more attention, I think that can change.

Q: What's the typical New Hampshire voter? How would you describe voters' politics? Are they necessarily more knowledgeable or opinionated or both?

A: Oh, I think that the ones who vote are knowledgeable. Interestingly, under party registration the biggest registration is "undeclared." We call them "Independents" and they outrank Republicans and the Democrats are a close third.

We, like much of the country, just had a sea change in 2006. We elected a New Hampshire Legislature that is Democrat in both houses for the first time in like 100 years. But this is an open primary. If you are an independent, you can pick up either ballot, Democrat or Republican. It's always interesting to see who pitches to what crowd. It's a little tough on the candidates sometimes. That's why a guy like McCain could win up here, as he did in 2000 against Bush, because independents chose him. This time around, they may be more interested in the Democratic race and choose one of those candidates. So it's tough to gauge.

Q: Do you think New Hampshire is going to spring another surprise this time?

A: I hope so, because I hate to see just the huge money and the star quality of some of these people winning out over people who make the most sense and have the most ideas.

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