

from our viewpoint...

# At-large decision up to the voters

Advance voting has begun, and Election Day is one week away. We encourage every registered Sherman County voter to take time to cast your vote and participate in making an important decision to move the county ahead by voting for the at-large commission issue on the ballot.

Approving the at-large voting for commissioners will allow everyone in the county to vote for each and all county commissioners. At present the candidates are limited to a district within the county.

To pass voters both in the city and the rural areas have to approve by a majority. Should the rural people not vote a majority or the city not vote a majority the at-large issue will be dead.

This year we have seen more than one reason to move the county to the at-large voting on commissioners. A sitting commissioner moved from the city to the rural area south of Kanorado and checked with the county attorney about this before moving. She had been told it would not matter, but later when a critical issue arose with a 2-1 vote her legal status was questioned because she was not "living within the district."

She moved back into the district to rectify the legal situation, but hopes the Kanorado people will vote in favor of the at-large provision so she can spend time with her husband in their home.

Recently Larry Enfield filed as a write-in candidate in District 1 to oppose the re-election of Incumbent Commissioner Chuck Thomas. Because the county is districted some people who know Enfield or Thomas, but do not live in District 1 will not be able to vote for them in this election.

The second issue on the ballot dealing with the county is the proposal to expand the number of commissioners from three to five.

This passed earlier, but the vote was thrown out by a district judge because it was not voted on at a November General Election. The legal issues on this remain clouded, but the decision was not appealed and the voters have a second chance to decide on the expansion of the commissioners.

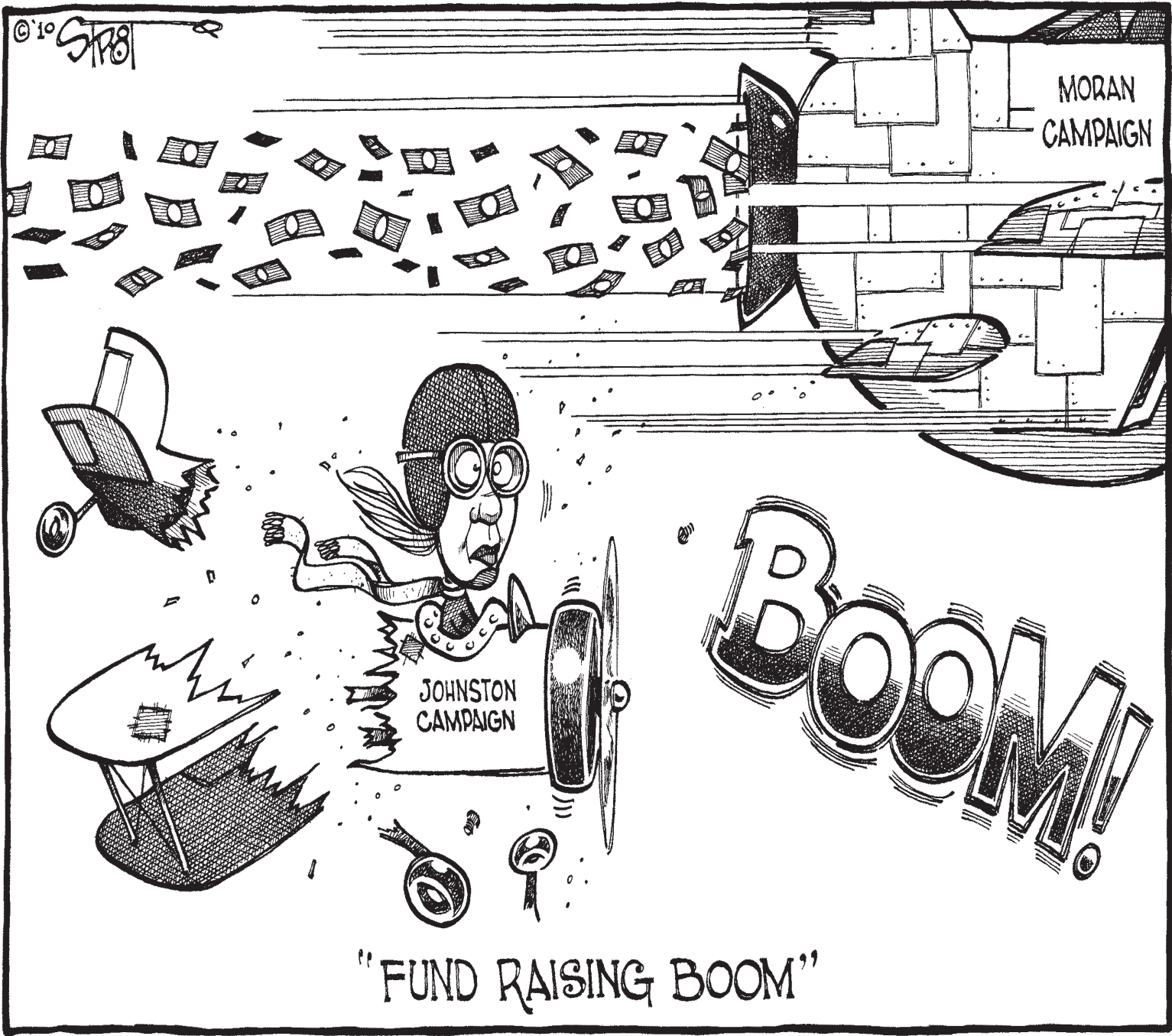
We feel the expansion is a good idea to spread the responsibility and bring more minds to bear on the issues facing the county. We agree many counties do OK with the three commissioners, but feel having five would be a good way to help move Sherman County forward.

One thing for voters to think about as they vote on these two issues – passing the expansion of the commission from three to five without passing the at-large voting issue would create a real costly problem for the county.

Passing the at-large expansion can save the county money rather than cost as it will make the election process easier and less costly. County Clerk Janet Rumpel said with the at-large voting approved the county will not have to have as many different ballots and the cost would drop significantly.

We feel there are other important things on the Nov. 2, ballot, and hope some of the good men and women – some are Democrats and some Republicans – are elected to lead this state.

The most important thing is for as many Sherman County voters to go to the polls to let their choices be known. We urge a vote in support of the at-large commissioner issue if it is the only box a voter checks. – *Tom Betz*



# Our lives seem to be in different time zones

Steve and I live in different time zones. I don't mean that he lives on Mountain Time while I'm on Central. It's more like he's an owl and I'm a hawk.

Have you ever seen changing of the guard on power poles at dawn and dusk?

Each evening, the hawks quit their posts and the owls take over. It's sort of like the night shift coming on as the day shift goes home for the evening.

We always enjoy this peek into the avian world when walking in the park on nice evenings. We almost never see it in the morning. Steve doesn't do mornings, and while I get up a lot earlier than he does, I don't do early morning walks.

Now, I like to get up in the morning, not the middle of the night like some of my friends.

I feel that 8 a.m. is a great time to get up. I can handle 7 a.m. or even 6:30 if needed, however, earlier than that is getting into middle-of-the-night stuff as far as I'm concerned.



**cynthia haynes**  
• open season

I have two friends who regularly get up at 4:30 to 5 a.m. In fact, my grandmother used to get up at 5 a.m. and go out and work in her flowers. But then my grandmother lived in Arkansas in a non-air-conditioned house. Going out early in the morning allowed her to get her yard work done when it was cool and then take a nice nap in the heat of the day.

I'm all for the nap. I'm just not for the 5 a.m.

The only time Steve has seen 5 a.m. is when he's not been to bed the night before. His ideal time to get up is somewhere between 10 and 11 a.m.

He's a real night owl, but then, he worked for

a morning newspaper for 10 years. He went to work at 4 p.m. and got off at midnight.

When I hit the hay at 11 p.m. he's just getting his second wind. He's ready to watch television, listen to the radio, read, work on his computer, go for a walk – or go dancing.

It's sometime a strain for us to get things done. We end up not seeing each other in the morning and having supper at 9:30 p.m. As soon as the dishes get done and the dog gets walked, I go to bed, and he goes to work on those things I got done in the morning – like reading the paper, writing, editing, answering mail and doing odd jobs around the house.

It works for us most of the time. When it doesn't, one of us loses sleep and gets very cranky. That makes the other one make sure that on the weekend, he gets to sleep in and I get to go to bed early.

And we both take a nap. Some things are popular in any time zone.

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# Personal responsibility

File this under the category of the lamest excuse to come along in my lifetime.

What I'm talking about are the recent attempt by some in the media and entertainment business to blame America's farm and ranch families for the growing epidemic of obesity. Seems they would like us to believe farmers and ranchers are producing food that is too affordable and too available.



**Insight this week**  
• john schlageck

Stop right there. Many Americans can remember a time when their families or neighbors had trouble keeping food on the table. The concept of food that was too cheap was as foreign as paying nearly a buck and a half for a soda today.

But the times they are a changing. Americans' incomes have increased, and farmers are producing food more efficiently than ever before. That means food costs take a smaller bite out of Americans' pocketbooks than it used to.

Rather than thank farmers for producing abundant, affordable food so most of us will never experience the pangs of true hunger, making farmers the scapegoat for obesity appears to be a popular trend. Some say federal programs that help stabilize the farm economy encourage farmers to overproduce. Blaming agriculture only diverts attention away from the factors that do contribute to obesity.

Some media types may think they are performing a public service, but singling out farmers is a serious disservice to one of our nation's most important industries. It is a slap in the face to the thousands of families who depend

on agriculture for their livelihoods and to the millions of Americans whose high standards of living are built on our varied and efficient food and fiber system.

Without our nation's farmers and the federal programs that help them through economic and weather disasters, Americans might have to depend on other countries for food just like we already do for oil. That would be a kick in the backside not only to our food security, but our national security as well.

Recent evidence of a global obesity trend indicates the problem involves more than access to and an abundance of snack foods, desserts and soft drinks. People are reportedly getting heavier even in developing nations where citizens do not have all of the foods and snacks found on our supermarket shelves. That tends to point toward rising incomes and less physical labor around the world as the cause, not just U.S. food industry practices.

Since when do farmers grow junk food?

When did farmers begin to force consumers to eat a specific diet, healthy or otherwise?

Farmers and ranchers are not responsible for the U.S. consumer's dietary and exercise habits. These are all individual choices and matters of personal responsibility.

One must consider the constantly on-the-go lifestyles Americans now lead. This helps the fast food and vending machine industries turn a profit. And what about our technology boom that encourages kids to sit in front of the television or play video games and working their jaws (snacking) instead of exercising outdoors?

Recent statistics show Americans spend an average of more than 1,700 hours a year in their car, at their computer or in front of their television screens.

Whatever happened to personal responsibility in this country? What about the amount of food we eat at each meal? How about the many times we eat between meals? How about the individual holding the knife, fork or spoon? Used to be a time, I can remember when people didn't eat between meals, or is that a long and distant dream?

It is time we start looking for real solutions to fix America's growing weight problem, instead of blaming the very hands that nutritiously and safely feed America. It's important to note that while farmers produce a wide range of healthy food options, the ultimate consumer choices – moderation and exercise – are made far beyond the farm or ranch.

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## where to write

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