

from our viewpoint...

Can Republicans find a real winner?

The president seems to be down and nearly out, as much of a one-hit wonder as Jimmy Carter three decades ago or George H.W. Bush in the '90s.

But can the Republicans nominate a candidate who will unite the nation and attract enough support from independent voters — who hold the balance in any national election — to make a change in Washington?

And then, with majorities in both houses of Congress and a new person (man or woman) in the White House, can the GOP lead the nation to solving some of our most pressing problems?

All that remains to be seen. In politics as in weather, things can change overnight.

The president clearly is in danger. No one has been re-elected to his office with unemployment over 7 percent since the Great Depression. His administration seems to have stalled and even his vaunted health-care plan seems to be on the rocks.

Republicans don't like his policies, and Democrats increasingly seem to think he's strayed from the true course of liberalism.

Yet all that amounts to just wishful thinking if the opposition can't rally around an electable candidate. And remember, it's not the party hard-core or the "tea party" on the far right that will make the decision. It's those Americans in the vast middle who swing one way or another.

The same people opted for change four years ago and voted for Mr. Obama as George W. Bush wound up a tumultuous eight years. Hardly anyone wanted more of the same.

Now, the economy is in tatters, worse possibly than when the president took office. The "recovery" is as slow as the recession was deep. Unemployment remains above 9 percent. Business coughs and sputters as it tries to get geared up. And after four years, it's hard to keep "blaming Bush."

Then, one of the big credit-rating agencies downgrades the government's standing, something that's never happened. The stock market behaves like a yo-yo, and people are scared.

And scared people don't invest. They don't create jobs and they don't spend money.

By all rights, Mr. Obama should be done.

But so far, the GOP has no one who can stand up and lead the party to victory. Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney comes off as competent but uninspiring. Tea party favorite Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota, like her backers, may be too strident to attract independents. And former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin seems to wander without purpose.

It's not that the tea party is wrong, by the way. We owe the movement a great debt for focusing debate on the federal deficit and the national debt. But the voters who swing elections are not that devoted to principle.

What the Republicans need is a leader, a problem solver, someone the nation can believe in, yes, but someone who can knock heads and get things done, dealing with both sides of the aisle.

And so far, we haven't seen him — or her — on the campaign trail. — *Steve Haynes*



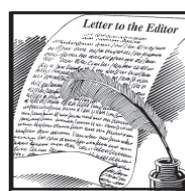
Congratulations, Goodland!

To the Editor:
To the folks who organized and conducted the 50th anniversary SCHS reunion, to the City Council and municipal employees who put pride in their hometown at the forefront and to the residents of Goodland who opened their arms and their doors to returning alums, we extend our sincere compliments for roles very well done.

From the fairgrounds to the arena to the golf course, Goodland was a gracious host for the hundreds of us who returned from across the nation to greet former classmates, acquaintances and, fittingly, Mr. Osborn. What a special treat it was to visit with the SCHS icon and to see him honored with a walk across memory lane.

Most impressive during our four-day visit to Goodland was the community's restored appearance. The downtown streetscape, the informational signs throughout the city, the well manicured home fronts and the absence of litter delivered a warm and favorable impression. What a difference five years made. We look forward to our next return and to the 2016 reunion.

Be proud, Goodland, be very proud.
Carol Lee and Roy Robinson
Graham, Texas
Classes of '55 and '57



from our readers

to the editor

To the Editor:

First off I would like to thank you for your time and for the service that you provide for our local communities. I am writing this letter to you to bring to public awareness about a matter that I find complex and concerning.

The new school year is upon us and students are or have been enrolled for the upcoming year. My concern has to do with the use of reduced and or free lunches for the low income families, such a wonderful and much needed program.

In this modern world we live in there are several broken families and in some cases one parent makes a small income while the other parent makes a much larger income. This is not a new scenario by any means. I want readers to get the foundation of my concern. With the lower income of one of the parents thus makes it possible for that parent the privilege of income assistance for their children's meals which is a very blessed thing.

My question is what right is it of the higher income level parent to file court orders against the lower income parent to require them to ap-

ply for the program? The lower income parent doesn't feel it is right for the higher income parent to receive the benefits of the meal program because the lower income parent qualifies for it. Why should a parent who can easily afford to pay for half their children's meals benefit from the fact the other parent struggles and may need assistance for their share.

I feel it is foolish to spend money to hire a lawyer to force the lower income parent to file for a program they feel is not a rightful benefit for the higher income parent. Both of the parents have a 50/50 split on time and financial obligations for the children, which are as court ordered. However should the higher income level parent benefit from the low income status of the other parent? Especially when the low income parent has said during the weeks they have the children a well balanced and nutritious lunch will be sent with the children to school.

How should the low income meal program be used? Is it possible for the low income parent to use the assistance without the higher income parent having the same privileges? Should higher income parent have the right to use this program due to the economic status of the low income parent even when they higher income parent can afford the meals?

Tasha Shores
Goodland

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Mom was a good driver; didn't smoke

I can remember when it was rare to see a woman driving a car. Or smoking. Or smoking while driving. That just wasn't in the playbook.

My, how times have changed. Now it seems rare to see a man behind the wheel. And it's also getting rare to see either gender smoking, whether in- or out- of a vehicle. (applause)

I am leading up to the days when my mother was learning how to drive, thanks to her instructor, my father. Whew!

Dad most generally used a favorite country road leading to the farm of my aunt and uncle, Adelia and Ambrose Brungardt, for the test-drive. He would pull the car to the side of the road, turn off the engine and get out, motioning to Mom to move behind the steering wheel.

After he was settled in the passenger seat next to her, he would patinetly tell her to turn the ignition on. She followed his instructions carefully.

Although the start-up sometimes was bumpy, it couldn't compare with what was yet to come. When Dad was satisfied with her starting the car, he would remind her what the two pedals on the floor were for. He simply called them the "stop" and the "go" pedals.

He would then tell her to slowly move the car from the side of the road onto the road. "Easy



tom dreiling

man of the plains

does it," he would say. Well, his definition of "easy does it" was no where near what the result was. My brother Jim and sister Mary, passengers with me in the back seat, knew the drill: we would hold onto one another, and for good reason. Mom would tap on the "go" pedal and just as quick hit the "stop" pedal. We three kids usually ended up bumping our heads on the roof, the sides of the doors or on the floor. Ouch!

Dad would instruct Mom to try it again... and again...and again. All that time we back-seat passengers would hold onto one another knowing the end result. By the time we reached the farm, we were wore out, bumped and bruised, but more than glad to get out of the car.

I remember as though it was just yesterday, Mary asking Mom, "Why do you drive so bumpy? Daddy doesn't do that!"

The return trip from the farm back home was always under Dad's control. What a relief.

where to write

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As I look back on those days, I am convinced the manufacturers of seat belts could not have devised anything that could have held us in place when Mom was at the wheel. But she turned out to be a pretty good driver, and not a smoker.

Political observation: Gov. Rick Perry, when he is using his hands and arms to help emphasize a point, looks like he is rolling the dice.

Snippets:

"That Bachmann lady from Minnesota had a close call when Rep. Paul from Texas almost knocked her off her perch at the Iowa Straw Poll. ..."

"Two Texans seeking the GOP presidential nomination? Neither stands a chance."

"... Mitt Romney will give Pres. Obama one heck of a run in the general election next year. I can already see a Romney-Bachmann ticket."

"Your obesity column was right on target. I hope it was read by those who needed to get that message most. Well stated."

"I think the word 'obesity' is a bit strong. They are fat, plain and simple. And has it ever occurred to you that some of those people are fat for health reasons? Lay off the subject!"

"You were raised in a totally different atmosphere. You never had fast food joints, and what's more when you grew up most moms stayed at home, but today they are forced to work to keep the family going. ..."

"We went from AAA down to Double A+. Heck, I'd settle for that grade in school!"

"Instead of raising hell, they raised the debt ceiling! What kind of stooges do we have back there in Washington! ..."

Your comments are appreciated. Please send to my e-mail below.

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