

from our viewpoint...

# Is it only a question of electabiltiy?

With a new front runner in the Democratic race to the White House the ultimate question is whether he can beat a sitting President.

Sen. John Kerry will find out today if he will be keep his front runner status, and maybe see another thinning of the field of candidates after the votes are in tonight.

Since winning in Iowa and New Hampshire he has become the focus of the media and the number one question “is he elect-able.”

The horse race has barely begun, and the candidates are heading for the first turn so there is a lot of time left, and plenty of chances for a dark horse to come out of the pack and take Kerry down. You can be sure that is what the other candidates are telling their supporters and the people they are asking to help finance their continuing campaigns.

There are signs on the other side of the political race all may not be as well as hoped. The continued attacks, and deaths of American troops in Iraq can cause some alarm at the White House. As the body count climbs the American nerves become somewhat frayed, and it may be a matter of timing as to whether this becomes the central issue in November.

Everyone supports the effort to help Iraq build a better and more peaceful government, but the longer the foreign troops are in the country the more they become the targets and appear to be an occupying force. The attacks have continued despite the fact Saddam Hussein is in custody and facing trial, but his supporters continue to show they have the willingness to continue the fight. Part of that may be loyalty, but another may be simply the reaction to the feeling they have been invaded and conquered.

The White House is planning to return control of Iraq to the new government in time to defuse it as an issue in the election, but there may be some left over things which will continue to haunt the administration.

Foremost will be the question of where are the weapons of mass destruction the American people and the United Nations were assured Iraq had and were prepared to use? This was the central theme the administration used to land our troops in Kuwait and invade Iraq last year. After nine months of searching there is little evidence to show there ever was such a threat.

There is no question taking Saddam out of power was the ultimate goal of the attack on Iraq, and that has been accomplished with his capture. Justice will come for this dictator who brutalized his countrymen, and the world will be a better place because we invaded Iraq.

However, the fact there was no imminent danger of Iraq using weapons of mass destruction will make it more difficult to get the world support for any similar effort in the future.

Whether this is enough to affect the outcome of the election in November remains to be seen, but there is going to be a lot of rhetoric and questioning of the intelligence community for their part.

We continue to pray for the safety of our troops, and for the new Iraqi government to take shape and be strong enough to quell the unrest in their country. — *Tom Betz*


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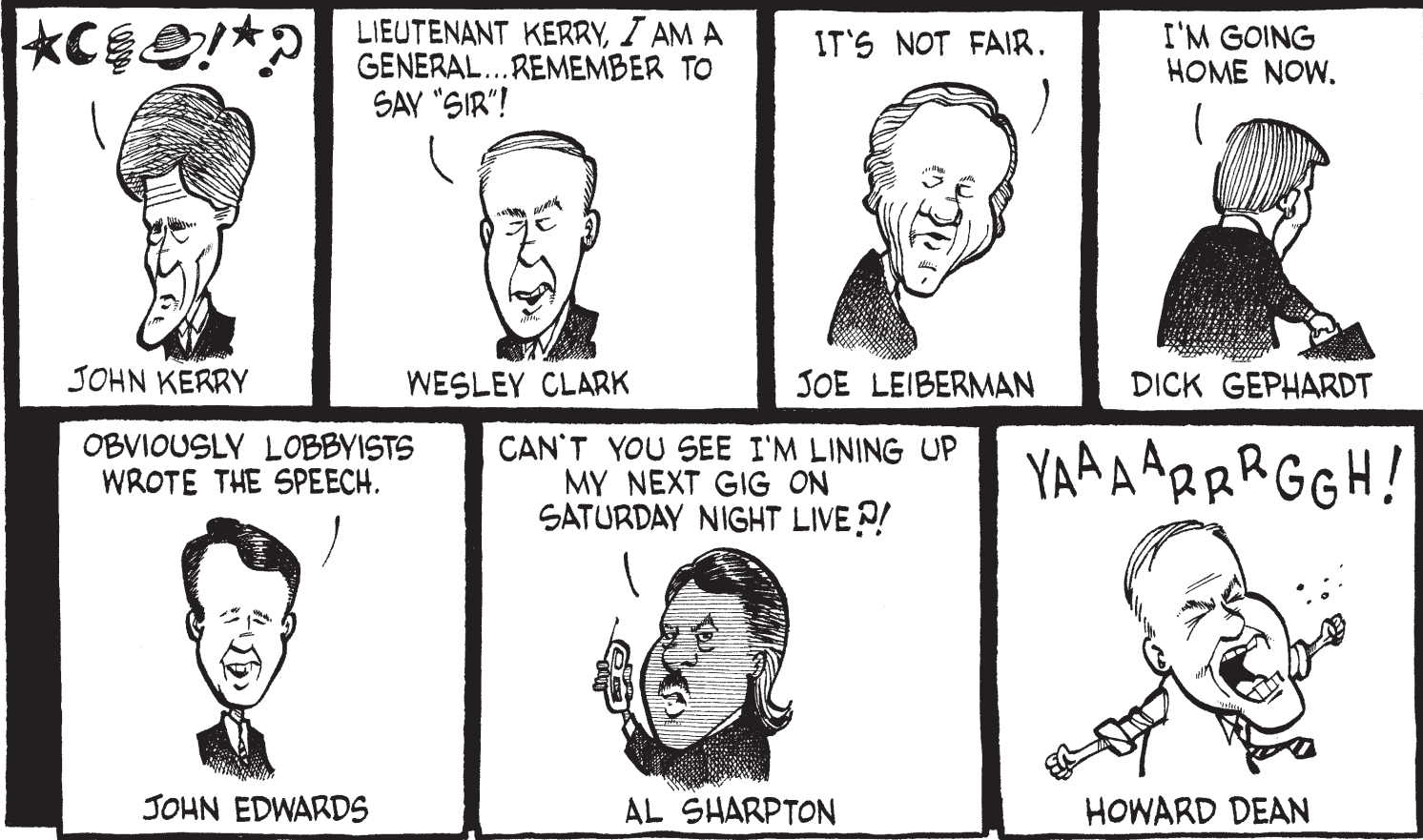
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## Democratic presidential candidates respond to the state of the union speech...



## How to lose 30 pounds in 640 or so days

This is not a recommended method to lose weight, and I am not suggesting anyone will like it, but it is what happened to me over the past two years.

You start out by being a horse’s ass, and not paying attention to your body what so ever.

Two years ago this month, I was riding my mountain bike around town. I saw some excitement over at the Goodland Activity Center. Being a very new Kansonian, I was going to see what the heck was up.

To my surprise it was a health fair put on by the Goodland Activity Center.

I parked my bike and sauntered on in. Being from small towns most of my life, I knew what this was. I proceeded to start taking the tests (making sure like all Kansonians do, that it was free).

I took the simple (free) colon cancer test home. I followed the instructions and turned it in.

That’s when I got in trouble.

I took a 10-hour drive to Albuquerque and 10 back. I had a very sore bottom upon returning, so I lied to myself like all of us macho men do, and, “oh it’s nothing,” or just (dare I say it) hemorrhoids.

For two years, you’ve seen me limp, hobble, drag my leg, or just make faces as I cross the street in front of you. I’m the guy on the mountain bike at times (when I could set on a seat), a white funny hat (a Gatsby) and a pony tail hanging down. I work for the *Goodland Star-News*.

After arguing with myself for a month, I set up an appointment with Dr. Duncan Davis. After hearing my family history, Dr. Davis set me up for a colonoscopy the next day. I went in with all of the confidence a man can have. After all I’m a salesman; we’re supposed to be positive.

I openly admit I was the ignorant fool who said it couldn’t happen to me. I had cancer the size of a small baseball on my tail bone. Then the fun, fear, tears and pain began.

Don’t be a macho bonehead. Go to the health fair Saturday, and take home the simple test.

I did, and without God, Dr. Davis at Goodland Regional Medical Center, Dr. John Sun at Rose Medical Center in Denver and hundreds of prayers, you’d be reading my obit right now.

Dr. Davis walked into his office and just looked at me. He said something that took a lot of fear and guilt away.

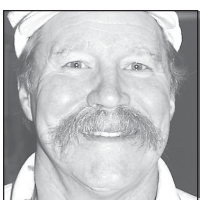
“Son, you didn’t go looking for cancer,” he said. “It found you. You had nothing to do with it.”

Now the fun began. Dr. Davis did my colonoscopy on April 5, phone calls started pouring in, from people I hadn’t heard from in years. Relatives started calling .

The nerves jumped in. I didn’t have time for me. I was thinking about everyone else. I wasn’t in pain yet, so I got to thinking about my daughters, my granddaughter, my twin sister. I thought of everyone else except me for the first week. Then I was hooked. I found myself staring into space, standing in the middle of my work area wondering what I was doing there. Just standing with nothing on my mind.

Now surgery comes. The closer I got to the Colorado mountains, the more I thought. Not scared, just apprehensive.

In the pre-op room, the ladies are angels. They get your pulse, blood pressure and all the



### bill wagoner

- a line or two

blood you have to spare.

Then it gets personal. Take your clothes off, ask if you are wearing any valuables, are those teeth yours? (No, I borrowed them to come here so I wouldn’t ruin my good ones.) Then the endless wait for them to wheel you upstairs, where you wait in a row of beds of endless people with more fear in their eyes than you can imagine.

Then comes a nurse who says she’s got something to calm you down. Then you see the anesthesiologist (Look quick.) Then your doctor comes in and reassures you all will be fine.

I grab his arm and ask for more drugs, and he hadn’t cut me yet, but I asked for an aspirin, or a hammer or something.

Then two people (with masks on, so you can’t blame them later) come take you away. You arrive in a very cold room and they all have masks. They ask me to get on an even colder bed .To do that, I had to bare my derriere.

I amused the doctor with a peace of surgical tape stuck across my butt saying this is an “outy not an inny.” He chuckled and my mask went on. Now I must say there is a time you will ask your doctor if he could just hold the gas right there. It felt so right.

Then all hell breaks loose, you, hear the words “can you hear me Mr. Wagoner, can you hear me? You’re in the recovery room.”

The first thing you notice is your not quite yourself. You say things like, “Can you check the refrigerator? I left a roast in my shoe. Did you take my hat?”

Then I had the bright idea to lower the blankets and take a peek. I looked at the nurse, as much of her as I could see and said, “girl or boy?”

I looked like they did the surgery with a rototiller. Then a nurse has the audacity to ask me if I’m in pain.

Let me jump up and down on your belly with track shoes for a while, then let me ask you.

Back to pain, you’re darn right it hurt and I had a spinal tap, couldn’t feel my legs, but I knew my stomach was there .

More moving. Now I get to see the real nurses who are going to love me. And that they did. God Bless the nurses on Second Central of Rose Medical Center. They didn’t know if I was going to live or die the first night. You see, to get to my cancer they had to take all of my innards out and put them in a tray.

Carolyn stayed all night with me, washing my face and holding my hand. The next day, it all began to come back to me. I had tubes coming out of every place they could find a place to put one. They had one in a place a man should not have a tube.

I got so tired of hearing rubber gloves being put on, and the worst Arnold Schwarzenegger impressions I’ve ever heard. Bend over.

The pain is something a man shouldn’t ever have to go through. I talked to a woman who had it done to her. She said she’d rather have a kid.

Ten days of this pain. They ask you all the time how is your pain level on a scale of one to 10. I’m thinking there’s got to be a 20 in there some where, who’s she kidding? To get to my cancer, they had to scrape my tail bone.

So after 10 days and nights of pain, no sleep and a colostomy bag, I can tell you for a fact the roads between here and Denver are not smooth.

Being of fair hair and blue eyes and light skinned, my body would not let the bag stay on for very long . It would come off at very inappropriate times.

Then came the burning only the acid in your system can produce. It would burn so bad it would turn bing cherry red. I got to hear, “there’s nothing we can do about it,” many times.

I was asked to drink 3-4 quarts of water a day. A baby jar of food would fill me up.

Then came the bad news. I woke up in the middle of the night, my bag had come off for the 30th time. I found out with all the trips to the toilet, I was dehydrating myself .

This meant a flight for life to Denver and another belly surgery, and 10 more days in the hospital.

I got to see those lovely nurses again. By this time we were on first-name bases, and I wasn’t so shy.

After months of dealing with not getting any farther than 20 feet from the john and still burning like hell, it was time for more surgery again and another bag .

Six days in the hospital, more time off work and more pain. I still had problems with the bags coming off, at home and in many public places.

My belly gets red and raw again. After weeks of that pain, an infection set it. More probes going where I don’t want them .

Once again, back to Denver. Once again another real belly surgery like the first one .

I now have a new bag on the other side of my stomach, which puts me out of my side job as a bikini model.

The reason I’m opening up to you readers is that no one on Gods Green Earth should ever have to go through what I have been doing for two years, two years of what can be called absolute torture.

People would see me in town and say, “hey you look great,” or they didn’t know at all. But under those long and bulky sweaters there was a very big problem. Don’t wait like the idiot I was. It doesn’t go away by it’s self . You can’t pretend it doesn’t exist.

So please, for Gods sake, for your wife, your husband, your kids, grandkids, your friends and other family members, and most of all for yourself, please get off your horse, tractor, out of the house and get in your car and go to the Goodland Activity Center on Saturday and get the test. The health fair will be open from 8 to 11 a.m.

I am now cancer free and infection free, just home healing. It takes a great deal of energy out of you .

I would like to thank all of my family, friends, the people who have tolerated me when times weren’t good, and to all of my customers.

God Bless and good health to you all.

Bill Wagoner

Goodland

### garfield

