

from our viewpoint...

‘C’ word rears head before session starts

Early on, the “C” word rears its ugly head. The legislative session hasn’t even started, and a prominent Republican already wants to start consolidating school districts. Senate President Steve Morris, a Hugoton Republican, says the Legislature needs to consider forced consolidations to make Kansas schools “more efficient.” That sounds good, but it’s all wrong. Though Mr. Morris says he’s talking mostly about small districts that surround and bedevil mammoth eastern Kansas megadistricts, the consolidation net would sweep up a lot of rural schools. Out in western Kansas, at least, consolidation is well under way. Small districts are merging or folding as their student base disappears. We’re fast headed toward the supposed ideal of one district per county. The real danger, in fact, is that we won’t have enough students some places to maintain even that. The specter of students riding 60 to 90 miles to class each day, then repeating the ordeal in the evening, is not inviting.

Many issues complicate any consolidation of eastern districts. Most of the outlying districts are heavily white, while city districts tend to be more diverse. When city parents sent their kids out to the country schools, is that because classes are better taught, or hallways safer, or because the student body is that much whiter?

It’s foolish to believe that district consolidation would save the state or anyone else money. It never happens. The money just gets spent. It’s one of the laws of government. Reorganization and consolidation means shuffling the money and the people around, but no actual money ever is saved.

Another thing about consolidation: If the Legislature is serious about the Augenblick and Meyers study, which caused all this trouble and which the Supreme Court relied on to set spending standards, it needs to look at breaking up some of the megadistricts.

That was one of the consultants least-remarked recommendations. The study found that the large city districts — Topeka, Kansas City, Wichita, Shawnee Mission and Blue Valley, for instance — were too big to function well.

So, why not split some of the giants and merge their offspring with some of those pesky rural districts around them? Give the supposedly well run smaller districts more kids, more money — and more color.

Parents should be happy their kids would be in smaller classes in smaller districts.

Educators ought to relish the opportunity to improve education.

Politicians could say they really did something good. But those big districts are politically powerful and their superintendents aren’t going to jump off the gravy train any time soon.

So, what’s left? If consolidation comes up, the Legislature will pick on the little guys as usual. Let’s not go there. — Steve Haynes

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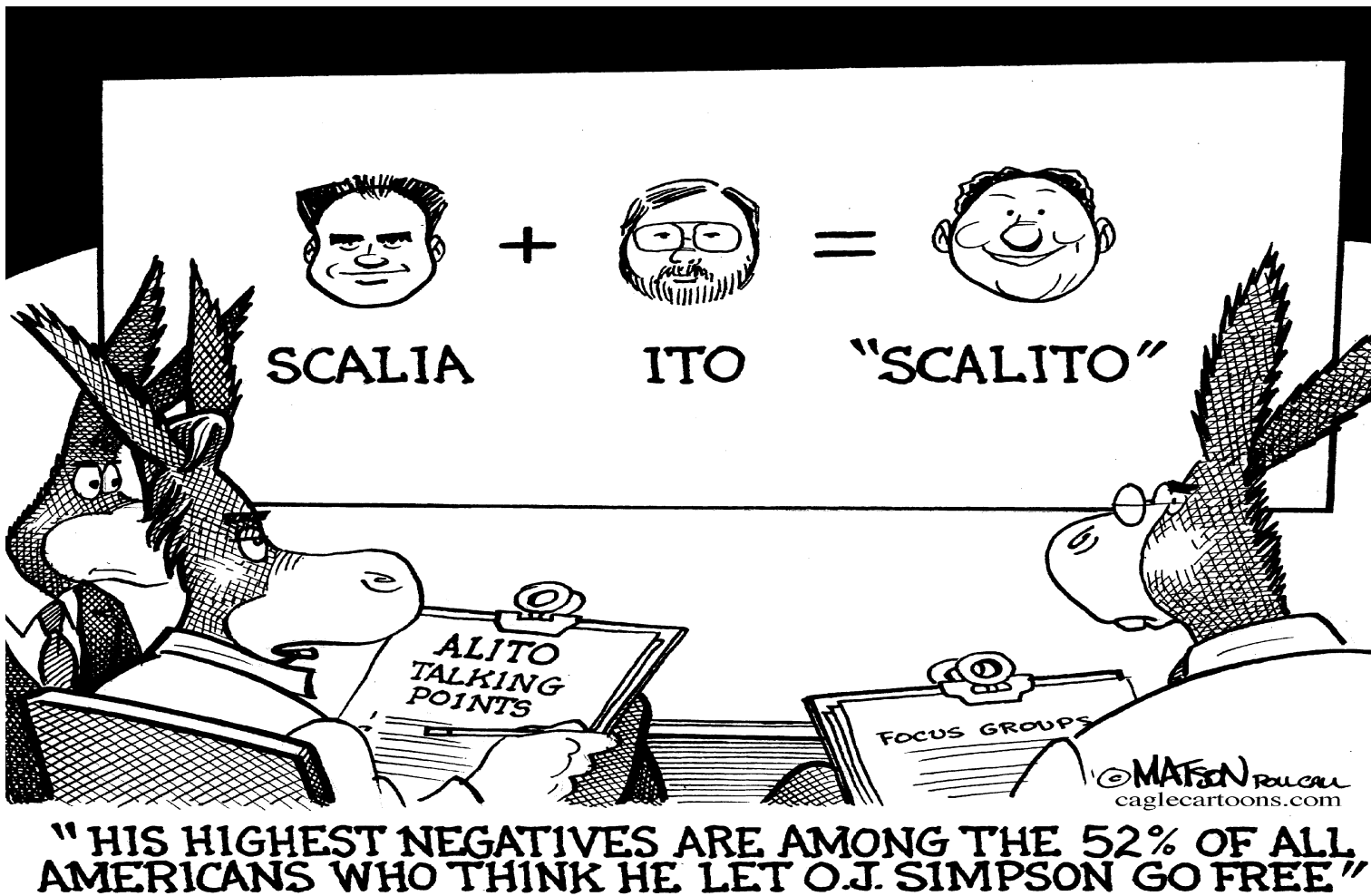
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On vacation, we watch what we eat

We may have been on vacation, but I was watching what we ate.

Thanks to me, Steve lost four pounds and I only gained one last week.

Curse you, kitchen full of food and nothing to do but cook.

I love to cook, but I seldom have the time. Last week, I had nothing but time, and a well-stocked kitchen to boot.

Since I was trying for healthy things, recipes that had lots of vegetables caught my fancy.

I started off trying one out of an old copy of the *Rocky Mountain News*. The dish is called Okonomiyaki ... it’s Japanese for ... heck I don’t know what that means or even how to pronounce it, but it’s sort of like a potato pancake made with cabbage.

The writer said that this is big in Japan, and I can see why. It’s tasty and reasonably healthy.

Okonomiyaki

- 1/2 cabbage, shredded
- 1 large peeled carrot, shredded.
- 1/2 onion, thinly sliced.
- 3 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups whole wheat flour.
- 3 to 4 eggs
- Milk or water
- Cooking oil

Combine everything except the milk or water and cooking oil in a large bowl, mixing well to distribute the eggs. Add milk or water slowly to



cynthia haynes

- open season

make a batter that binds the vegetables.

Heat oil on a griddle or frying pan until a drop of the batter sizzles on contact.

Pour about 1/2 cup of the batter onto the griddle and flatten into a pancake. Flip when the first side has browned. Makes 10-12 cakes.

Serve with soy sauce or mayonnaise.

The original recipe called for cooking 1 cup of batter at a time. I tried that the first time, but the cake was too big to turn, so I went with half a cup and the result is a cake about the size of an average salad plate — easy to turn and browns nicely.

We ended up with 10 cakes and two people. I decided to freeze the extras between sheets of waxed paper. When the cakes were all frozen, I stored them in a plastic bag with the waxed paper still in place.

I tried reheating two in a skillet for lunch and that worked well. I also tried to substitute cooking spray for oil when reheating. That worked well as long as I remembered to spray both sides

of the cakes.

We were out of soy sauce, and I didn’t feel like adding extra calories with mayo, but Steve said the mayo was good.

The other vegetable dish I tried was an idea from the Nov. 1 Woman’s Day magazine:

Cut a head of broccoli into florets. Toss with a sliced red onion, two tablespoons oil, one teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper.

Spread on a foil-lined, rimmed baking sheet and roast at 450 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes, until vegetables are tinged with brown and crisp-tender.

This seems to be another way to serve broccoli, which I always steam, without adding too many calories.

The last recipe idea was given to me by a friend. She said that she puts everything in her slaw that she would normally put in a green salad — carrots, onions, green peppers, celery, radishes, cucumbers, even pickles, plus cheese. She said it was delicious. It sounds a little strange, but I think it will work and I’m planning to try it, but I think I’ll leave out the pickles, radishes and cucumbers. I’m not big on pickles and Steve won’t eat the other two.

Now if I can just find a recipe for calorieless cheeseburgers.

De Borchgrave’s world

Few people know as much about the world and the major and minor geopolitical events of the last 60 years as journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave.

De Borchgrave, who began his career as United Press International bureau chief in Brussels at 21, has been a senior editor of *Newsweek* for 25 years, editor in chief of *The Washington Times* and an author of books about such things as cybercrime and organized crime in Russia and around the globe.

De Borchgrave, 79, has rubbed shoulders with scores of premiers and presidents. But he also still gets out into the countryside and dresses like a native. That’s what he did three weeks ago while traveling for UPI in remote Waziristan, the mountain region along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, where even the Pakistan army has trouble distinguishing between the al Qaida terrorists, Taliban refugees and local tribesmen.

Q: Isn’t Waziristan where they think Osama bin Laden is hiding?

A: North Waziristan is where most locals believe he is hiding in perfect safety and, I assume, comfort, as well. One forgets that the people in that part of the world think he is some kind of a god, certainly a “freedom fighter” who enjoys the kind of romantic picture that Che Guevara did in an earlier time — a cross between Che Guevara and Robin Hood. You see his poster everywhere on the back of buses with “freedom fighter” written under the poster in English and in Urdu and in Pushto. The guy is walking just in from a little stroll on the Sea of Galilee.

Q: What are your personal politics?

A: I just call it the way I see it.

Q: Has the world become more or less dan-



bill steigerwald

- newsmakers

gerous in the last 50 years?

A: Oh, I think without question more dangerous, because I don’t think there is any doubt that we will see a weapon of mass destruction used by the bad guys. It could be tomorrow, it could be five years from now, but it’s bound to happen. When I started my career with *Newsweek* in 1950, you had 87 million Arabs. Today you have 310 million. And in 2020, you will have half a billion. It is inconceivable to me that they won’t by then have managed to acquire weapons of mass destruction, if only to establish a level playing field with Israel, which has about 300 of these weapons.

Q: How would you rank terrorism as a general threat? Is it real or overrated?

A: It’s totally overrated because terrorism, to begin with, is simply a weapons system, the way a howitzer or jet plane or bomber is a weapons system. For 5,000 years, it has been the weapon of choice for the poor and weak against the strong. Now we think we’re fighting terrorism. We’re not. We’re fighting a global movement today, just as much as we were fighting a global movement under communism. Today you have a global, political, religious, ideological, spiritual movement that fishes in many of the same spawning grounds used by the communist parties throughout the world during the Cold War. These are the poor, the disenfranchised, and led, of course, by people from middle-class families with very

good educations.

Q: What’s the most important thing you know about U.S. foreign policy that every American citizen should know?

A: That we’ve been totally wrong on Iraq. I testified before the House Subcommittee on Terrorism and Nonproliferation after I returned from Afghanistan. The hearings were on the evolving counter terrorism strategy. I said, “There’s an understandable reluctance to recognize that the Iraq war has served as a recruitment poster for al Qaida and for the Iraqi insurgency. The global network of Islamist terrorists and its seldom-mentioned support groups have been energized by events in Iraq. The war has turned Iraq into the world’s most-effective terrorist training camp.”

Q: You were always against the war, right?

A: I was very much against it. To begin with, we were being totally misled about the reasons. The more you dug into it before the war, the more you discovered that the neoconservatives were driving the campaign to take us to war. ... It seems to me you don’t go to war to establish a democracy in a country that has really never known democracy.

Q: Is Iraq going to be trouble all the way to the end?

A: I have an awful feeling that we may be going through the same scenario we went through in Vietnam. ... What happened in Vietnam was not an American defeat. It was Congress yanking the rug right from under the Nixon-Kissinger plan for peace by refusing to go on helping the South Vietnamese and the Cambodians.

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