

from other pens...

Chalk one up for President Bush

He fooled a lot of people, in and out of Washington, with his so-called two-day Camp David Cabinet strategy meeting on Iraq. That meeting, much to the surprise of his cabinet, was a cover for a secret flight he was taking to Iraq to visit with that country's new prime minister and to visit with American troops.

About the only person at the Camp David gathering who knew what was going on was Vice President Dick Cheney. No one in the White House knew. Reporters weren't in the loop. All of those television networks that boast of having "sources" close to whatever is going on had to suck it up. They knew no more than we did.

CNN's John King was tapped by President Bush to go along and he was sworn to secrecy. His lips were sealed, even from his family. He gave an interesting account of the experience when he got back to his job. Scary.

It was a bold adventure. The President of the United States flying into Baghdad just days after terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was fed a fatal military diet that included two 500-pound bombs for dessert. Had word of the president's trip leaked out, the consequences could have been tragic.

When you see footage now of his appearance with the Iraqi prime minister and talking to the troops, you see a different kind of President Bush. Leadership sticks out. He, too, put his life on the line by sending himself to Iraq, just as he has sent thousands of young Americans on the same journey.

Will the trip give him a bump in the polls? We doubt that even played a role in his decision to make an appearance before Iraq's first democratically elected governing body.

Critics will beg to disagree. Instead of assessing the 11-hour journey as a demonstration of this country's support of the new Iraqi government, they will pick and chisel and hammer to find some reason why he shouldn't have gone.

We aren't always on the same page with the president. And we shouldn't be. Nothing would weaken this country more than giving the White House occupant infallibility status. We have always felt that criticism, and how one handles it, is one of the building blocks of leadership.

But there comes a time when we should take note, regardless of like or dislike, when our commander-in-chief steps forward as he did Tuesday.

Thumbs Up, Mr. President!

— Tom Dreiling, Publisher Norton Telegram

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nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(ntbetz@nwkans.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkans.com)

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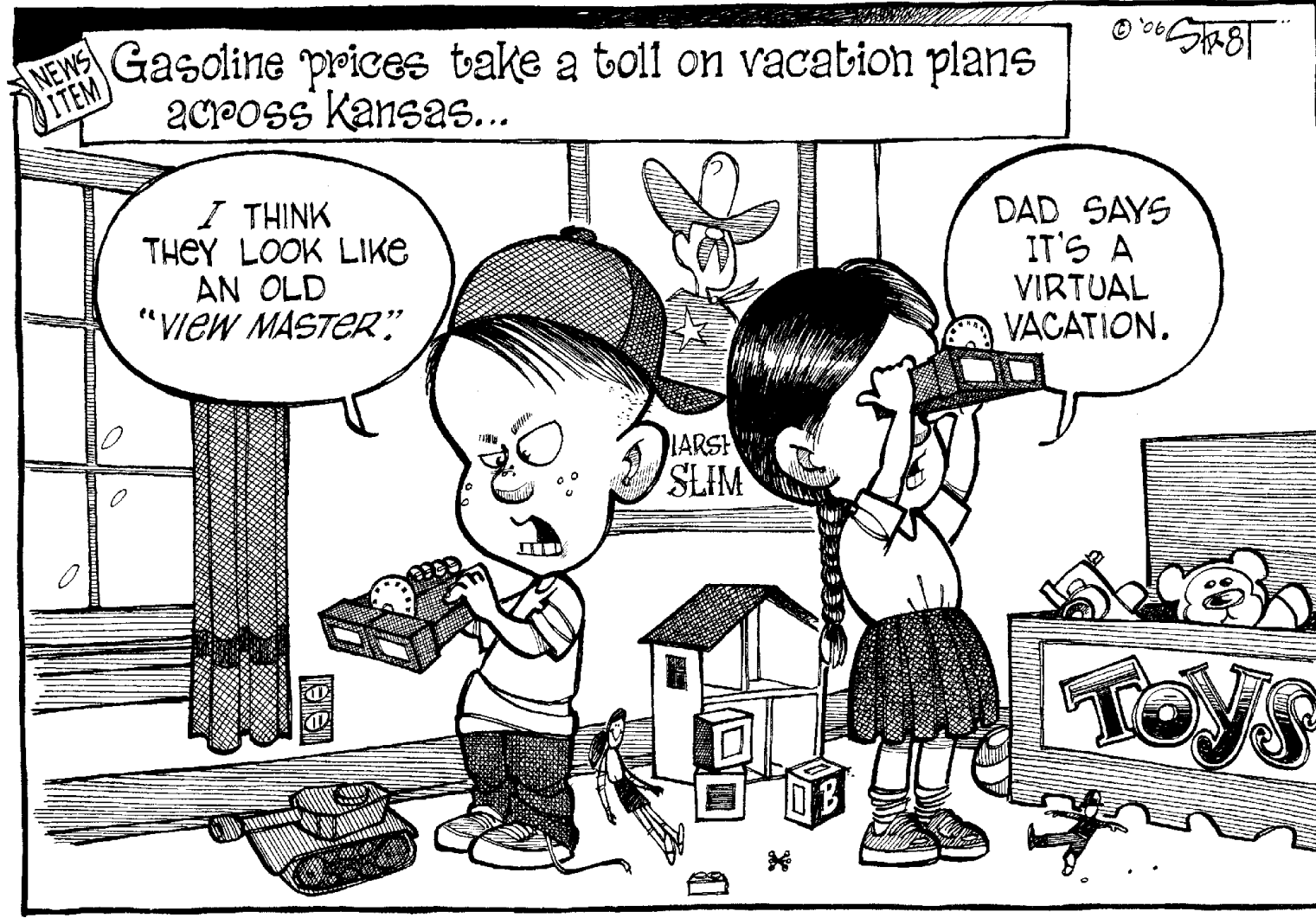
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Corn is high as an elephant's eye

The corn is as high as an elephant's eye — as long as it's a really small elephant, a really small, baby, pygmy elephant.

Well, actually some of the corn is up to my knee now, and almost as tall as a couple of the tomato plants.

The tomatoes run from four inches to two feet.

When Steve bought the plants, some of them were oversized to start. He planted some seeds this spring and those are undersized. I suspect by the time we get fruit, they'll all be big enough to provide more tomatoes than we can eat.

But this is the time of year that gardeners measure the size of the plants, worry about hail, bugs, drought, leaf rot and rodents. We have to add cats and dog to that list because the cats have downed a couple of pepper plants using them as beds and the dog did in three tomatoes when she ran through the garden before we had the fence up.

The crushed and broken plants have been replaced and we water and weed the garden each Sunday.

My job is weeding while Steve mows the lawn.

The biggest weed problem is an infestation



**cynthia
haynes**

• open season

of morning glories. Somewhere several years ago, someone — Steve claims it was me and I say it was a former neighbor — planted morning glories on the fence. They looked wonderful.

However, morning glories are a first cousin to bindweed. So now we get zillions of little morning glory plants growing up the corn and tomato stalks.

I spent Sunday on my hands and knees removing the tiny weeds from the garden and the more advanced ones from the fence and the side of the dog's pen, which provides one corner of the garden area.

We've been eating the spinach and lettuce as fast as we can. We had the last spinach salad for supper on Sunday. The hot weather has made the plants bolt and flower. Once spinach flowers, its leaves disappear. I'm not sure what spinach flowers taste like, but I'm not going to find out this summer. I pulled all the spin-

ach and spent a couple of hours carefully removing the tiny leaves to have enough for supper on Sunday.

I picked some lettuce, too. The lettuce seems to be holding up better than the spinach. We planted a variety pack and except for one type, which died immediately, the lettuce is doing great and putting lots of rabbit food on our table.

The radishes aren't doing so well though. For some reason they just aren't growing much. Maybe it's the heat. Maybe it's the cats. Maybe it's just a bad year for radishes.

On Sunday, we had the first peas. I was busy weeding near the fence, where I planted peas this year, and I noticed the pods. I was a little worried about the peas since they are a cool-weather plant, and there just hasn't been much cool weather.

They were — several filled pea pods. Even Steve enjoyed eating the peas right out of the garden — and he doesn't like peas. (He's says they're mushy when cooked.)

The squash is also coming up, and if I can keep the cats and dog out of the vegetables, we should be enjoying tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, yellow squash and corn this season.

Yum. I love summer.

Immigration: Bush knows what people want

It is odd how there are so many issues on which the two political-party establishments in the United States sharply differ but on which the public is relatively united. As the debate rages in Congress on whether to be tough on the border or generous in granting citizenship and guest-worker status to illegal immigrants, the Fox News poll of May 9 echoes the public's point of view: Do it all!

While their party leaders steadfastly resist granting "amnesty" by allowing "illegal immigrants who have jobs in the United States to apply for legal temporary-worker status," voters back the proposal by an overwhelming 63-29 percent. And, despite the posturing of the right wing, Republican voters say yes by 63-30.

Nor are Democrats any more likely to fall in line behind their party's polarizing positions. Asked if they back "using thousands of National Guard troops temporarily to help patrol agents along the Mexican border to stop illegal immigration, voters as a whole answer yes by 63-31, and even Democrats support the idea by 52-40.

And everybody supports increasing the Border Patrol force. Voters as a whole back the addition of thousands of new agents by 79-17, and Democrats go along by 73-22.

So why is our politics so polarized when our voters are not?

The Fox News poll gives us the answer. The American people see illegal immigration as a serious problem and tend to favor anything that will solve it. Eighty-six percent say it is a very



**dick
morris**

• commentary

or somewhat serious problem, and 57 percent call it very serious. Only 13 percent take it more lightly.

Indeed, in the ultimate heresy for the Bush administration, 52 percent of all Americans — and 63 percent of Republicans — say they would be willing to pay \$100 in extra taxes if they knew that it would all go toward border security.

President Bush understands, for once, where the public is on this issue. As a result, his proposal is a grab bag of every proposal that is out there. The two parties' extreme ideologues are mistaking the public's mood in attempting to parse the Bush package and back the parts that appeal to their ideologies while opposing the rest.

That is not what Americans — or their own constituents — want. They want everything passed, whether it has its genesis on the left or the right.

It's virtually the same situation on gas prices. People want solutions whether they are ideologically acceptable to their parties or not. The left sees no reason why we should not drill for more oil and the right strongly supports alternative fuels. While it is possible to ask the poll-

ing questions in such a way as to show disagreement where there really isn't any, it is striking how voters essentially favor whatever works to solve the key problems.

When he was the U.S. ambassador to France, Felix Rohatyn reputedly said that the difference between the French and the American people was that the "French value ideas over facts while Americans value facts over ideas."

His point was that we want what works while the French have to stop to see if the remedy to the problem fits in with their ideological worldview.

But our politicians are increasingly following the French model, attacking one another's solutions when the people simply want their elected officials to pass everything that will work and get on with it.

I suspect that the real reason for the Republican opposition to the Bush proposals for an earned path to citizenship is that they are worried about a massive number of new Latino citizens and therefore voters.

As with the motor-voter legislation, they can't admit it but Republicans like to keep the franchise limited to those upon whom they can count.

This policy, if such an evil motivation lurks underneath GOP rhetoric, is shortsighted. The Hispanics are going to vote in large numbers eventually anyway. Only the question of for whom they will vote is up for grabs.

Dick Morris was an adviser to Bill Clinton for 20 years. Email for Dick Morris is dmredding@aol.com.

garfield

