

from our viewpoint...

# Wildcat fans ready for Texas Bowl

Local Kansas State University fans will be able to watch the K-State Wildcats and the Rutgers Scarlet Knights do battle in the inaugural Texas Bowl in Houston’s Reliant Stadium on Dec. 28. The game will be on the NFL Network. S&T cable will carry it on Channel 35, and Eagle will carry it on Channel 45. Apparently that isn’t the case across the state. In fact, our own Sen. Pat Roberts talked with National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell, urging him to permit Kansans to watch the televised coverage of what could be one whale of a bowl game. A news release from the senator leads one to believe Kansans won’t be able to watch the game. We don’t know what area or areas of the state the senator is referring to, but out here we are already popping the corn, chilling the refreshments, cleaning off the grill and getting ready for the showdown. If you have friends in areas of the state that won’t be able to watch the game, invite them out, much like you would pheasant hunters to experience some of the advantages of small, rural town life. It’s not often we can brag about having something they don’t. In a news release from Sen. Roberts, he says: “Every Kansan should be able to cheer on their team, be it the Wildcats, the Jayhawks or the Shockers. This issue is symptomatic of a long-running dispute between the NFL Network and certain cable providers. “While I hope the parties can come to a long-term mutually acceptable resolution, I do not believe K-State fans should be kept from seeing the Texas Bowl simply because they subscribe to a particular cable company.”

Maybe the NFL Network might find it in their heart to give Wildcats fans, without cable service, a Christmas gift in the form of relaxing whatever hold it has on that exclusive, so they can watch the game, too. We were in hopes as the Kansas Jayhawks’ season rolled on that they, also, would end up in a bowl game. But that hope didn’t materialize. It would have been nice and would have been a feather in the state’s cap if both of its major universities were to appear in bowl games in closing weeks of 2006. Oh, yes, we would be remiss if we did not point out that Sen. Roberts is a graduate of Kansas State University. But we would bet that most Kansans, regardless of university allegiance, would like to see the game.

And, jokingly, if Sen. Roberts’ clout isn’t enough, maybe a call to another powerful K-State grad, who also now teaches a course at the university, would be in order. That’s Gen. Richard Myers (Ret.), former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He could park the military at the doorstep of the NFL Network. Strange, but we had never given any thought to the possibility that many Kansans, apparently, won’t be able to watch this particular bowl game. Not many people gave the Wildcats’ new head coach, Ron Prince, any chance of getting his team to a bowl game in this, his first season. But he did! And we’ll be watching it.

— Tom Dreiling, publisher, Norton Telegram


## The Goodland Star-News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)  
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Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year’s Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735. Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735. TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: [star-news@nwkanssas.com](mailto:star-news@nwkanssas.com). Advertising questions can be sent to: [goodlandads@nwkanssas.com](mailto:goodlandads@nwkanssas.com)

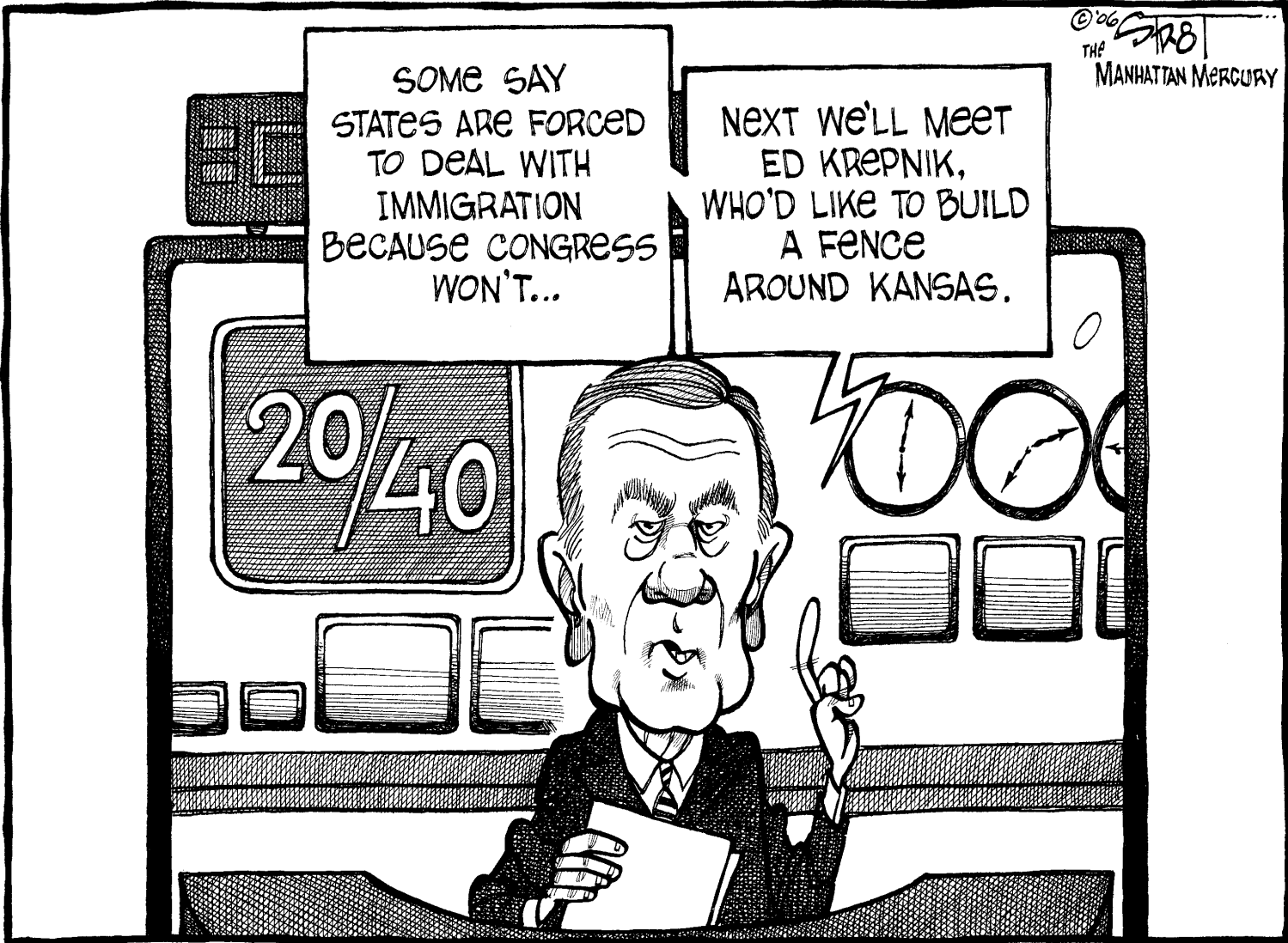
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## The bottom of the barrel

By Dick Morris and Eileen McGann

With the recent defeat of Sen. George Allen (R-Va.) and the surprising withdrawal of Sen. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) from the presidential race, the right wing of the Republican Party is running out of candidates for president in 2008.

For the centrists within the party, the likely candidacy of Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and the possible option of former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani offer attractive possibilities, but whom do the conservatives have to put up against them?

Surely the GOP is not about to embrace the pro-choice, pro-gay rights, pro-gun control, pro-affirmative action, pro-immigration Giuliani. (He’s fine with us, but not with the party base.) Nor are they likely to find favor with John McCain, co-sponsor — with Ted Kennedy — of the immigration amnesty bill, supporter of the rights of detainees to avoid “torture,” sponsor — with Joe Lieberman — of the anti-global warming initiative, and the original framer of campaign finance reform.

Conservatives are also likely to hold his membership in the so-called “gang of fourteen” against him. Back in 2005, he joined six other Republicans and seven Democrats in backing confirmation of moderate judges without a filibuster. Trusting such a person with control over judicial appointments may be a nonstarter on the right. (Again, we’re OK with all this, but you don’t win in South Carolina with these positions.)

So whom does the right have? The current conservative front-runner is Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, but Romney’s social positions aren’t likely to appeal to mainstream conservatives. During his 2002 race for governor, Romney said that while he personally opposed abortion, he would protect the current pro-choice status quo in Massachusetts.



**dick morris**

● commentary

“No law would change,” he said. “The choice to have an abortion is a deeply personal one. Women should be free to choose based on their own beliefs, not the government’s.” He said he would “preserve and protect a woman’s right to choose.” Ted Kennedy couldn’t have said it better himself.

Romney said, in a 1994 television debate when he ran for the Senate against Teddy that he changed his pro-life stand after, “A dear, close family relative...passed away from an illegal abortion... Since that time, I have been committed to the belief that...we will not force our beliefs on others. You will not see me wavering on that.”

Wavering? No. But outright reversing, yes. Romney seems to be a chameleon who adjusts his positions to suit the need of his environment. When he was running in a liberal state against the most liberal member of the Senate, he talked liberal. But now that he wants to win a Republican primary with a conservative base, he speaks their language.

Now, he says that his views on abortion have “evolved and changed” since he sought election in the most liberal state in the nation and he now considers himself pro-life.

But on abortion, the only thing liberals and conservatives agree on is that they can’t stand those who flip-flop on this moral issue, adjusting not only to the political winds but also to the

geographic area in which they are running at the moment. Since Romney has flip-flop-flipped, going from pro-life to pro-choice to pro-life, he is unlikely to gain traction on the right.

So whom does that leave? Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich says he will come into the race by September if “nobody else has caught fire.” But Gingrich may find that his own past makes him a hard pill for the Christian right to swallow. And clearly, he subordinated the moral agenda of the conservatives to his budget-balancing, tax-cutting economic priorities when he was speaker. (Again, fine with us, but not with the base.)

Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee is looking more and more attractive, given the paucity of the field. He is eloquent, outspoken, and has shown a record of great creativity in his state. Not only is he hard-line on the social issues — as a former Baptist minister and president of the Southern Baptist Convention — but his policies on health care and nutrition mark him as a compassionate Christian conservative as well. His state is a defect and he’s the world’s worst fund raiser, but the right could seek him out. He’s lost 100 pounds, so he really must want the job. (Note: He’s a former client.)

Kansas Sen. Sam Brownback is another possibility, but he lacks Huckabee’s background, passion and stage presence.

Or there could be someone else. But, at this stage, the Republican right is scraping the bottom of the barrel.

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## Democrat Iraq weakness is Bush’s strength

While the media dither over whether the sectarian violence in Iraq is a civil war or just a question of religious fanatics slaughtering each other, President Bush faces a reluctant Iraqi prime minister who seems utterly incapable of doing his job in the midst of the chaos that surrounds him.

While many in the defeatist media seem to be enjoying what they see as the president’s dilemma in deciding how to force Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to quash the violence in Baghdad and surrounding areas, they seem unaware that the president can deal with Maliki from a position of real strength, thanks to the Democrats.

Instead of playing the hard-nosed U.S. commander-in-chief and publicly humiliating the chief of state of a sovereign nation by ordering him to do what he must do to end the violence — or else — the president needs only to point out the inevitable consequences if he doesn’t act decisively.

What will happen, he can tell Maliki, will be out of his hands.

The consequences, he can say, will come about not because he, President Bush, will take some retaliatory action, but from the Democrats who control Congress and will surely use their new-found power to force a hasty withdrawal of U.S. troops, thus bringing down Maliki’s government, giving victory to international terrorism, and turning the entire Middle East into a powder keg with the fuse already lit.

That’s Bush’s real negotiating strength: the Democrats’ wimpishness in the face of the worst challenge facing the West since the Muslims stood at the gates of Vienna in 1683.

Unlike the heroic Polish King Jan III Sobieski, who stood at the gates of Vienna and fought and defeated the Islamists and thereby saved Europe, the Democrats appear willing to step back this time and open the gates in this



**michael reagan**

● making sense

latest episode of the centuries-long, never-ending war to impose Islamist rule upon the entire world.

That’s all Mr. Bush needs to say to Maliki: get tough or prepare for the Democrats to get out and leave you and Iraq to the tender mercies of Syria and Iran and Osama bin Laden, and heads will roll, including yours.

That’s no idle threat. If the violence in Iraq continues to shatter any semblance of stability, drawing the U.S. deeper and deeper into a senseless battle between two fanatic Islamic religious factions and costing us more American lives while the Iraqi government allows it to continue, the Democrats will de-fund U.S. involvement and Maliki will be on his own.

If you want to cut through the fog of war and all the media misinformation masquerading as reporting, it’s important to understand what is happening in Iraq.

During Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship, the country was run by Iraq’s Sunni minority, and they subjected the Shiite majority to the most brutal repression with great enthusiasm, and at great profit to themselves. They were Saddam’s well-paid hit men.

The Shiites have long memories, and they are acting on them now, especially given the fact that the Iran and al-Qaida backed insurgency, with all its terrors, is directed at them and the U.S. forces trying to enforce peace.

The end result has been the creation of militias on both sides, with the Sunnis getting support from al-Qaida and Syria, and the Shiites getting support from Iran. Maliki, who seems

to be caught in the crossfire, has pretty much come down on the side of Shiites and their fanatic principal supporter, Muqtada al Sadr, who enjoys huge popular acclaim in the Shiite community.

The Iraqi government must adopt a truly neutral stance, go after both sides and disarm their militias. The U.S. cannot and should not do the job. This means turning the battle over to the Iraqi army, seeing that they are adequately trained and equipped, and setting them free to do what has to be done without political interference from the government.

All this will require patience and forbearance on our part. We’d better be prepared to exercise both. The stakes are too high to do otherwise.

In the meantime, let the president deal from the position of strength the Democrats have unwittingly given him.

Mike Reagan, eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationwide. Email comments to [mereagan@hotmail.com](mailto:mereagan@hotmail.com).

### Letter Policy

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