

Former mayor enters congressional race

The race for the next congressional representative from the Kansas 1st District now has a Democratic entry in former Salina Mayor Alan Jilka.

Jilka was mayor for three one-year terms, presiding over city commission meetings, and a commission member three two-year terms. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame and spent time studying in Brazil and Argentina before returning to Salina to work at his family's furniture business.

Until now, we've only had Republican candidates in the race. Everyone was waiting to see who the Democrats would pick. A challenge was a foregone conclusion, though, because neither party can pass up an open seat.

Whichever Republican candidate emerges from the primary will be heavily favored, so what would a Democrat have to do to win this district?

The only Democrat to ever hold the "Big First" seat won only one two-year term. Howard Miller of Morill was elected in 1952. According to the Congress' Biographical Directory, Miller was a lawyer and farmer who was 74 when elected. During his time, Congress passed a law outlawing the Communist Party, established a tax to pay for unemployment insurance and got shot at by Puerto Rican nationalists.

There are also some similarities. The 1952 election came at the end of President Harry Truman's term, and his low approval ratings were counted as the main reason his party lost the majority in the House, much as President George W. Bush's end-of-term unpopularity is considered a cause of his party's defeat in 2008. In 1952, the nation was entrenched in the Cold War, fighting in Korea. Today, the nation faces a global war on terror and ground wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Miller died in 1970, so unfortunately we can't ask him how he won, and there's not much information available. It was a narrow margin, 68,909 votes for Miller to 64,963 for Cole, according to a book of election statistics printed in 1952. The state went pretty heavily for Republican presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower (about three quarters of everyone liked Ike), and interestingly, recorded 530 votes for the Socialist party candidate.

About the only information available on Miller's positions, according to the Kansas State Historical Society, is that he was opposed to the Tuttle Creek dam and reservoir – a major federal project going on at the time – which he amusingly called the "Big Dam Foolishness."

A Democrat who was not in favor of a spending project. Perhaps that's what today's Kansas Democrats need to get elected: a dose of fiscal responsibility. In this economic climate, that is certainly not going to be a strike against them. People are looking for someone who won't go out and spend their money like crazy, and conventional wisdom says that is exactly what Democrats do. As the saying goes: if you can't beat them, co-opt some of their policies.

Is it hopeless for a Democratic candidate in rural Kansas? Are they just window dressing to mollify the Kansas party and keep them voting in the presidential? Hard to say. But what a Democrat should really do to impress voters is be their own person. Show they have an informed, unique opinion and that they have the courage to break with their own party while the Republican candidates do not. Kansans, and really all of us out west, like to see that kind of independent spirit.

— Kevin Bottrell



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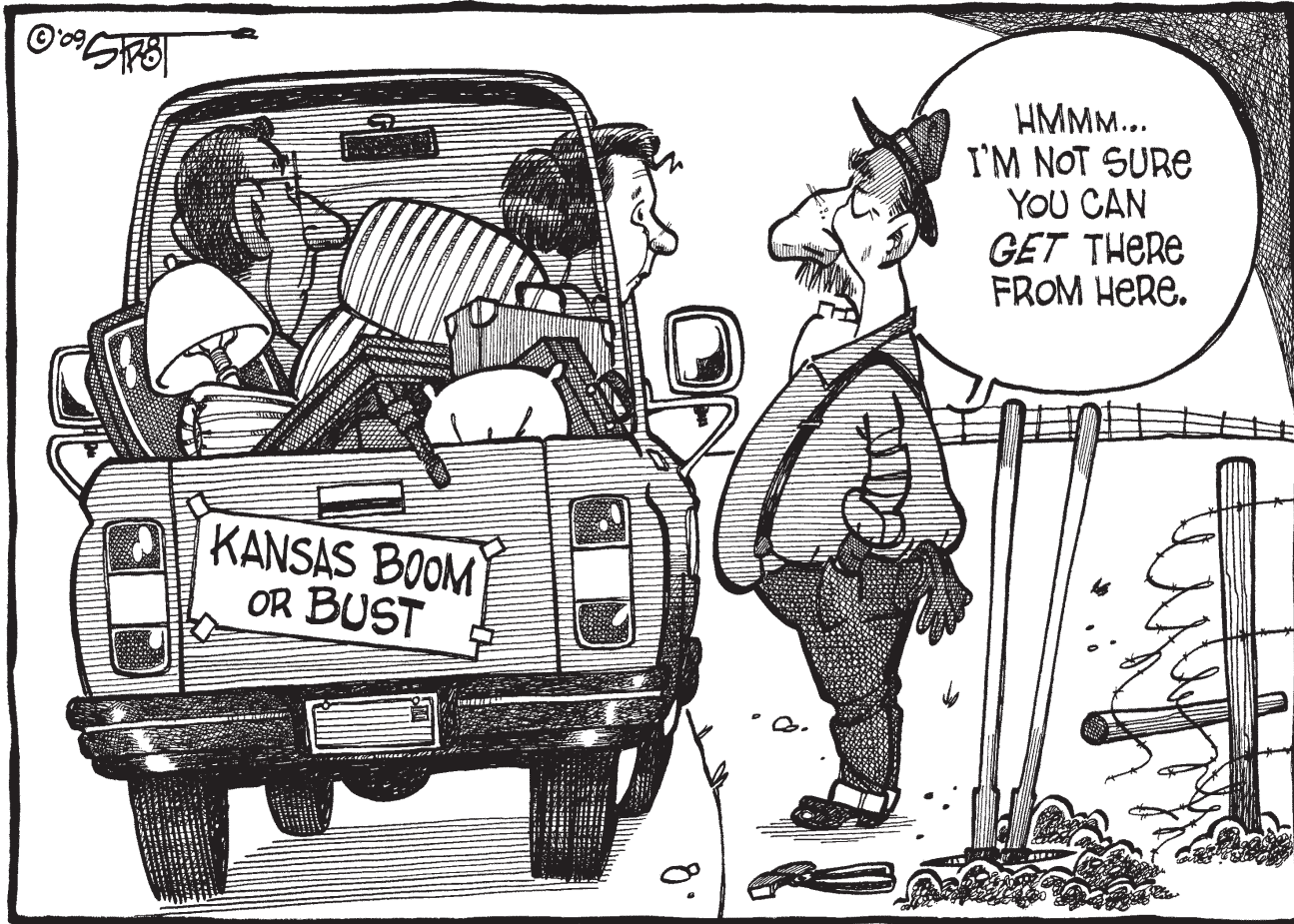
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Not ready for winter clothes

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



My interview was to-day."

I sat down. I knew this would be a long consoling session.

"What happened, honey?" I asked in my most understanding, sympathetic tone.

The crying got worse and I couldn't understand what she said.

"What did you say?" I asked.

She did a complete about-face and started laughing. "Oh, Grandma. I got in. I'm going to Canada! I was just teasing you."

"Oh, you little stinker," I said. "Don't do that to Grandma."

She told me one of the questions asked was, "Have you ever spent any time away from home without your parents?"

Taylor told them about her summers

at our house and the interviewer said, "So, you wouldn't have any problem being away from your parents for the 15 days?"

"Not at all," was Taylor's answer.

Oh my. I can't even begin to imagine the things my grandchildren will see and do.

Sunday, I felt like I had been through a preaching marathon by the time the day was over. Jim is often asked to fill the pulpit for a vacationing, sick or otherwise absent minister. Sunday was such a day.

He preached at one little country church at 9 a.m.; another at 11 a.m.; and finally at prison chapel services at 1:30 p.m. Now, I know he was the one doing all the "work," but I had to sit and act like I had never heard the sermon before. Actually, that wasn't too hard. Jim never delivers a message the same way twice. And, I always hear something new when he speaks.

The countdown is on for our departure for Mexico. We've had a couple of cancellations so if you've ever thought about going on a mission trip, now is the time. Get your passport and give me a call.

Fire up the grill

Insight

John Schlageck

about the food I eat, I prefer to consider the findings of someone who has conducted scientific research on what makes a healthy diet. The question here becomes whether the concerns about red meat are scientifically sound.

Dietary guidelines are supposed to tell us what we should eat for good nutrition.

Numerous organizations have been issuing their own guidelines, and these recommendations don't always agree.

America is made up of individuals who need to adjust their diets to allow for their own states of health, risks of chronic diseases and personal tastes.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture suggests eating two to three servings of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts each day. The key is to choose lean cuts of meat and trim the fat from the meat before or after cooking.

No matter how you cut it, all lean meats are high in nutritional quality. Beef, pork and lamb have been recognized as healthy sources of top quality protein, as well as thiamin, pantothenic acid, niacin and vitamins B-6 and B-12.

Red meats are also excellent sources of iron, copper, zinc and manganese – minerals not easily obtained in sufficient amounts in diets without meats, according to food guidelines by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

One widespread misconception about red meat centers on cholesterol. Meat is not high in cholesterol.

Meats of all kinds, whether fat or lean, are low in cholesterol (about 70-90 milligrams perserving), USDA reports. This amount is too small to have a significant effect on the blood or serum cholesterol of most of the U.S. population.

This includes those with normal blood cholesterol levels and who are not genetically likely to respond abnormally to dietary cholesterol.

Confusion about cholesterol arises when doctors or applied nutritionists speak of a cholesterol lowering diet. They are referring to any diet that lowers blood cholesterol not specifically to a low-cholesterol diet.

Lean meats eaten in moderation as part of a varied diet, including lots of fruits and vegetables, are not now and are not expected to become a cause of heart disease or cancer. Beef steak, pork roast and lamb chops are healthy and are here to stay.

Fire up the grill.

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