

## Other Viewpoints

### WSU's president starts with big plans

When asked recently by the *Eagle* editorial board what advice he might offer Wichita State University's new president, Kansas State University President Kirk Schulz recommended going slow during the first year. "Don't do stuff too quickly," Schulz said, noting how it takes time to learn the culture of a university and a state.

Too late for that. John Bardo, who officially began at WSU on July 1, is off to a fast start and already has big plans for boosting and transforming the university. His goals include increasing student enrollment, building a new residence hall in the center of campus, expanding research, turning more research into products in the marketplace, and improving the quality of student experience.

Bardo intends to begin a strategic planning process this fall in which half of the task force members will be from the community. He wants to have the plan ready by next June.

"It's a big agenda," Bardo told the *Eagle* editorial board. It sure is. But it's on target.

Bardo was able to hit the ground running because he was already familiar with WSU and Wichita. Bardo taught at WSU from 1976 to 1983, and his wife is from Wichita. They made regular visits back to Wichita after they left and considered Wichita their home. "I never gave up loving this university," he said.

This also isn't the first time Bardo has led a university. He was chancellor of Western Carolina University from 1995 to 2011, and he held key administrative jobs at several other universities.

Though he was familiar with WSU, Bardo has been pleasantly surprised by what he has seen. He has been particularly impressed by the quality of the faculty and staff and the research being done at the university.

"We've got people who can do a lot," he said.

Bardo has been spending much of his time meeting with faculty, staff and students and connecting with people in the community. He was on hand Sunday to greet students moving into WSU's residence halls.

Bardo knows he has a big challenge filling the shoes of former WSU President Donald Beggs. But because of Beggs' good work, Bardo is in a position to help the university take some needed steps forward.

"If I sound excited, it is because I am," Bardo said. Wichita should be, too.

— *The Wichita Eagle*, via the Associated Press

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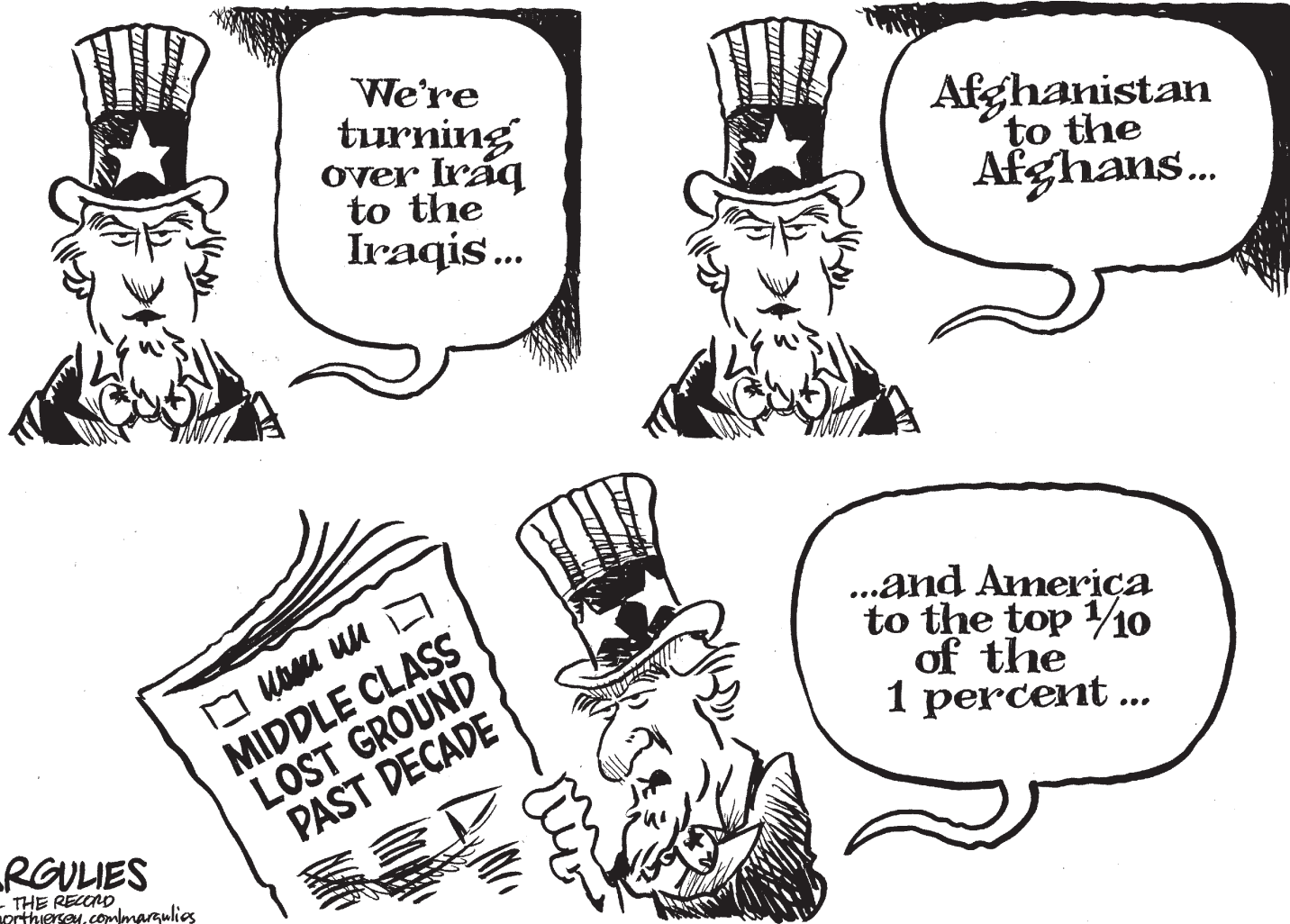
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## Candidacy means public scrutiny

Yes, Mrs. Romney, I'm a small minded person. I don't have a genius-level IQ. But I'm not stupid, nor am I unaware of man's ability to cover up misdeeds.

When your husband aspires to be president of the United States, he had best be aware that his business and personal dealings are open to public disclosure and scrutiny.

Starting the game of life on third base – inherited wealth and status – doesn't give him an automatic score. And, if he plans to stay in the game, he'll have to try making it to the home plate, face the pitcher, the umpires will call the strikes, and he'll have to run the bases. Neither can he depend on his designated hitter – the vice presidential candidate – to make all the hard plays. He might just have to prove his ability and earn the right to be on the team.

There are a lot of us "small-minded people" who think the economy is in trouble, and the tax structure – not only federal income tax brackets, but the rest of the tax code, including exemptions, deferred tax liabilities and the like – needs to be looked at.

His ability to accumulate such a huge Individual Retirement Account should be looked into. Deferring tax liability is like getting 15 percent or more on your savings. It even beats most high-risk investments. That sure beats paying taxes up front.

If the system allows the millionaires, or anyone else, to avoid paying taxes on accumulated wealth, legal or not, the system needs to be looked at. His off-shore bank accounts and foreign investments (whether personal or business) certainly are of interest to the rest of us. Job creation and money available for borrowing, here in the U.S. doesn't come from foreign banks or corporations. If it does, we would be subject to foreign rule.



**Ken Poland**

• Ken's World

Neither does swallowing up the small farmers, small businesses, or even large corporations that have succumbed to the recession, create any new jobs. Romney's old firm, Bain Capital, does not, nor does any other holding company, create jobs. They create investment returns.

Running a successful business is a far cry from being chief executive of a nation, especially a nation with a supposedly democratic or republic form of government.

On a different subject but along the same line, the following caught my attention.

GOP 4th Senate District Committeewoman Sharon Barnes of Missouri and Rep. Todd Akin Republican Senate candidate for Missouri, must think the "small-minded people" are ignorant and have no concept of right and wrong. The Republican Party and the people of Missouri had best be thinking about the attitude and agenda of Akin. It may be the rest of us need to be thinking about the attitude and agenda of the ultraconservative and religious right when it comes to equal rights and personal freedoms of choice.

Ms. Barnes echoed Mr. Akin's statement that very few rapes resulted in pregnancy, adding that "at that point, if God has chosen to bless this person with a life, you don't kill it." How big minded is that?

Really? God chose for that woman to bear

a child? Is that almost like saying that God chose to exterminate the Jews? I'm a strong believer in God and his ultimate control of the universe, but I don't think God put Hitler in power, nor do I believe God chose a rapist to impregnate any woman.

My Bible tells me he created the structures and the mechanics of how it all works. Man is subject to all the rules of nature. Man can choose to ignore those rules, and he will suffer the consequences. Man can choose to respect nature and his fellow man or he can show disrespect and destroy what God has created. That may appear to benefit No. 1 in the present, but the future will take its toll.

I may think I'm a pretty good guy and I know how to interpret the scriptures. But I don't think God intended for me to dictate the absolute meaning of all scripture to others, nor do I think he depends on me to enforce his commandments.

The truth is we, by consensus, determine the meaning of scripture and the most just and compassionate laws to govern society. God's grace acquits us of our failures, in terms of eternal punishment, but he doesn't negate the immediate earthly conflict we endure for our mistakes.

I won't go into what I think qualifies us for his grace or what eternal punishment is. That gets into theology, and that isn't what this column is about.

*Ken Poland describes himself as a semi-retired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rcwinc@cheerful.com.*

## New innovation boosts highway safety

With every passing year, farm machinery becomes larger and larger. Some of this new equipment is so big, it extends into the oncoming traffic lane and far beyond the tractor pulling it.

Farms also are larger today than in the past, and farm operators are forced to travel longer distances on the highways between fields. Fewer people have farm backgrounds. Many do not recognize they need to be careful when approaching farm equipment on the road.

There is also more traffic on today's highways. Farm equipment without side markings may not be seen, especially in low light. That's why colored, fluorescent film is the latest innovation to help make rural life safer. Properly placed on farm equipment, these vibrant-colored, acrylic safety devices immediately attract the attention of approaching motorists.

Sometimes referred to as "perimeter marking materials," the microprism used with fluorescent films uses up to 75 percent of its surface to reflect incoming light. Some of the glass-bead reflective elements use only about 25 percent of the surface to return light.

"These new, long-lasting safety strips were not designed to replace slow-moving-vehicle emblems," says Holly Higgins, Kansas Farm Bureau safety and health programs director. "Our farmers, ranchers and rural people could use them for their own protection and for those who may be traveling near them."

Higgins notes that about half of all acci-



**John Schlageck**

• Insights  
Kansas Farm Bureau

dents with farm equipment are sideswipes. The longer-lasting reflective tape can provide greater safety by increasing visibility when approaching slow-moving farm equipment from behind.

"The ideal scenario is to use yellow reflectors on the side and front of the equipment, while red and orange strips should be placed on both sides of the back, with the slow-moving-vehicle emblem in the middle," Higgins says.

Until recently, most fluorescent materials used outdoors faded quickly – in a matter of months. Some of the new products on the market today will last a minimum of two years and as long as three to five years, depending on weather.

The most critical time to provide high visibility for slow-moving farm machinery is in poor lighting conditions, including twilight and in bad weather, including snow, rain or fog, Higgins says. During these conditions, headlights are not always turned on promptly because they do not help to improve visibility.

Bright colors depend on direct sunlight and lose their attracting attention in marginal lighting conditions, the Farm Bureau safety coordinator says. The new fluorescent films continue to provide a high level of visibility during all conditions, however.

The sooner you recognize a slow-moving vehicle on the road ahead, the better your chances are for avoiding a collision, Higgins says. For example, a motorist traveling 65 mph will need 4.5 seconds to perceive, react and slow down when approaching a tractor traveling 15 mph.

That's why this new technology is important to adapt and use, Higgins says. "When your life and that of your loved ones is concerned, it's important to utilize every edge you can. Using fluorescent films can give you one advantage that will help protect you and those traveling around you."

While Kansas law does not require these reflective strips, it makes good sense to use them. Put some on your equipment and drive more safely today.

*John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.*

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

