

from our viewpoint...

One week to big decision day

The election is one week away, and advance voting has been open for a week. The decisions are important both on the school bond issue and on who will serve on the school board and the city commission.

To help we have presented a bit of information from each city commission candidate and from each school board candidate. Voters will choose three for the city and four for the school board.

On the school bond issue there are a few things to get clear before making that decision.

- This does not affect the sales tax only the property tax levy. The school district does not have the option to use sales tax for building schools. Their only choice is to raise property taxes for bricks and mortar construction.

By the way there is a story out Goodland's sales tax rate is higher than Denver. That is not correct. The City and County of Denver have a sales tax of 3.62 percent while Sherman County and Goodland share 1 percent. Sherman County voters added 1 percent in 2006 for the highway and street project. Sherman County voters have approved a .25 percent sales tax to be used for health care services. That means Sherman County's total sales tax is 2.25 percent.

Now when you add the state sales tax it does jump up over the total sales tax in parts of the Denver metro area where the base is 7.72 percent. They have added special district taxes as well for the stadium, cultural facilities and the regional transportation district.

- There is no free money is true, but the word is this school bond election will cost the property tax payers \$21 million in total.

That would be true if the school district did not have the \$5.4 million in special tax-free construction bonds to reduce the interest cost by about \$3 million and the state aid for bond and interest that will be another \$3.3 million.

With those taken off the top the total cost will be about \$17 million, and means it will cost about \$2.1 million over 20 years above the \$14.9 million for the total project. This appears to be a one time offer from both the federal government and the state may be changing their program for the future.

- Building the new K-6 and remodeling the High School to be a 7-12 will be a great way to give this town and the students a wonderful facility to learn in and grow over the next 20 years or more. It will not solve the current budget problems.

The budget cut backs of \$171,815 from this year and the \$256,365 from next year total \$428,180 and will be tough to swallow.

The bond issue is for the buildings and the only help out is the district will not have to operate five buildings in the future and the total cost of operating the two buildings should be quite a bit below what it is today.

- This school district has not made a major investment in buildings in 43 years, and looking at the past the efforts were much cheaper than what is being faced today.

If you take the \$14.9 million it would be about \$962 a day that could have been put in savings since the last building was completed.

The cost of the renovation and expansion of North and the renovation of the high school will be under \$100 a square foot and a contractor said that is a good price in today's construction market.

No matter what you decide is right, the important thing to do is vote in the next seven days to make your voice heard. We will be voting in favor of our schools. — Tom Betz



Good stories about how our mates met

Late in the evening last week, we were in the bar at a South Carolina hotel, talking with friends and sipping beer or coffee – some of us had to drive home – when the topic of how we'd met our mates came up.

Everyone had a pretty good story.

Leslie said she'd actually met Ned before, on a college double date with a friend she knew was two-timing him. Then later, another girlfriend had a date but no ride, and Ned had a car. So she promised to find him a date.

The friend ran into Leslie in the hall and told her she had to go out on a date with this guy, "but you'll never have to see him again in your whole entire life."

The two couples were so broke, she said, they went looking for free entertainment. For dinner, they went to McDonalds and had enough to buy two hamburgers and two bags of fries, which they split.

And while she might not have been required to see Ned again, the rest is, as they say, history.

Cynthia told the table about how we'd been introduced because she needed a date for her sorority formal. We met at a Young Republicans party a week or two before the dance. I guess I passed inspection, at least as an emergency date.

I took her to the Savoy Grill in downtown Kansas City before the dance, and I think she was a little impressed that the waiter knew me by name. (My dad had been eating there since he was a teen.)

When I admitted that I'd won the money I



steve haynes

• along the sappa

used to buy her corsage and the bubbly in a poker game that afternoon, though, she said she thought I might have been the kind of guy her mother had warned her about.

(And to this day, I'm not sure if that was a good point or a bad.)

I got to tell about how she got cold feet and dumped me the year before her graduation, and how the guys in the back of the newsroom conspired with me to get her back.

Since she'd made me promise not to call her, we settled on Bob Dye's suggestion that I send her a single red rose with an unsigned card that said simply, "I miss you."

She called right away.

I thought Mark and Liz had the best story, though. Reporters for competing newspapers in New Jersey, both single and 20-something, they met, Liz said, at a murder scene. For months, though, she refused to date him. They hung out with a friend of his, but never on a "date."

Only when he got a job offer in Saudi Arabia did they face the issue. Late into the night they talked, and Mark said, he launched into a long speech. Liz said she cut him off, told him to "just go to Arabia," went into the next room to make coffee. There she realized that he was

trying to propose. (Mark admits he's a little long-winded.)

"And here I'd cut him off," she said. "I went back in there and ask him if he could just start over."

More history.

All those were long-lived romances, 30, 35 and 40 years. The next is more a tale of late-blooming young love.

A week later, we were having dinner with Jennifer and heard how she'd met John. She does public relations and projects in Birmingham, Ala.; he runs a small-town newspaper. They met at the state press convention, where else?

She'd been married, but it had not gone well. She said she really wasn't looking to do that again. He was married, but unbeknownst to him, not for long.

John invited her to come down and talk to his Rotary Club. Both are painters, and she took her latest work to show him. He wanted her to meet his goats.

When they went to look at the painting, it fell on him; she had to walk through mud in her heels; and then he managed to tell her he'd gotten divorced and his dog had died over Thanksgiving.

"I was so outta there," she recalled, adding that later, she noticed what a good sense of humor he had. What a nice guy he was. And when he called and asked her to go to lunch, she said yes, even though they live 90 miles apart.

The smile on her face when she tells that story is something to see.

Praising Bossie



Insight this week

• john schlageck

Talk to farmers, stockmen and ranchers – most will tell you how much they love their cows. Problem is this humble and in most cases easy-going beast rarely receives the praise associated with the noble show horse or one of the so-called smartest creatures, the squealing pig.

No one extols the virtues of this contented creature that spends her days quietly grazing and eating grass. We've all watched movies about horses My Friend Flicka and pigs Babe, but for most of the time, cows are considered boring and ignored by Hollywood, the media and the general public.

Still, cows are not whiners and they take their obscurity in stride and rarely complain about their circumstances. They spend days and nights under the stars without a tent or blanket and only their coat to keep them warm. They have to hoof it across the pasture just to get a drink of cold water.

But hey, I'm not here to say I feel sorry for the cow community. Confident and quiet, it is not their way to ask for preferential treatment.

Spend time with a herd of cows and you'll soon discover they are indeed spiritual beings. They live their entire lives in service to mankind.

Behind that seemingly blank stare rests a

knowing glint that suggests, "Go ahead. Make fun. I spend all day eating and sleeping. You're the one with high blood pressure and cash-flow problems."

Cattle occupy a unique role in human history, domesticated beginning with the Stone Age. Some are raised for meat (beef cattle), dairy products (cows) and hides (both).

They are also used as draft animals and in certain sports. Some consider cattle the oldest form of wealth, and cattle rustling, consequently one of the earliest forms of theft.

Dairy cows are referred to as the foster mothers of the human race because they produce most of the milk that people drink. They provide 90-percent of the world's milk supply.

The best cows may give approximately 25 gallons of milk each day. That's 400 glasses of milk. Cows in this country give an average of 2,000 gallons of milk per year. That's more than 30,000 glasses of milk.

Beef cattle supply more than 30 different

cuts of meat including the heart, tongue and what we grew up calling mountain oysters – a male private part. You gotta' admit, that's meaningful giving.

Another gift from the bovine community is leather that comes from their hides. We use it for boots, belts, baseballs, suitcases, purses, wallets, easy chairs and jackets.

Cows also shine in the rodeo arena or as spokesmammals in advertising. Borden's Elsie the Cow has graced this company's dairy products for eons. And who hasn't seen the skydiving cows on their television screen?

Snorting bulls symbolize a healthy stock market and a Hereford cow pioneered space travel. Every kid knows about the cow who jumped over the moon.

Milk, ice cream, cheeseburgers or that fine leather purse – think about it. Where would we be without our cows?

On any given day a cow often does more for us than our friends, neighbors, in-laws or even our elected officials. Cows deserve a roaring round of applause and recognition for a job well done.

Anyway, I'd much rather thank a cow and wear a pair of leather boots than sport a mink coat and thank a varmint. I know I'd rather drink milk from a cow than milk from a mink. Enough said.

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