

from our viewpoint...

# Bring a peaceful end to the War on Drugs

Every summer, groups and individuals travel across the United States to spread the word on messages ranging from healthy living to civil rights to veterans affairs. Many come through Goodland, as I-70 is one of the nation's major east-west conduits.

One person we should hope to see is Javier Sicilia. Sicilia is a Mexican poet who is traveling the country to speak out against the War on Drugs. His message is a personal one: his son was kidnapped, tortured and killed by a one of the drug cartels, just one of the 60,000 deaths and 20,000 disappearances in the 40 years since President Richard Nixon declared the War on Drugs.

The War is not just being fought in Mexico, but right here in Sherman County. Just as I-70 brings us advocates of one issue or another, it also brings drug trafficking.

During the Republican Candidate Forum earlier this summer, both current Sheriff Kevin Butts and challenger Burton Pianalto spoke about the drug problem in Sherman County. Butts told the audience that his department could make a drug arrest almost every day. There have been meth labs found in Kanorado and area rest stops, and drug traffickers are routinely stopped on I-70 by both the Sheriff's Department and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

In Mexico the problem is not the drugs themselves, but the violence that accompanies the criminal cartels that have grown up around drug production and distribution.

How should we combat this epidemic? It is a question that has vexed leaders of both the United States and Mexico for decades. Should we increase security, build up massive armies of law enforcement officers and border patrol agents? Should we continue to allow weapons to fall into the hands of the cartels in failed sting operations? We've been doing that for 40 years, and the problem hasn't gotten better.

Enforcement of existing laws has its place to be sure. Our law enforcement professionals are doing what we need them to do, trying to keep our streets safe, but it is time to end the War on Drugs. It is time to stop thinking of it as a war and start thinking of it as a disease. To fight a disease, you do not attack the symptoms, you attack the disease itself. Attacking the symptoms of the American drug problem, arresting the narco-traffickers and drug users and assassinating cartel big-shots, only leaves the root problem in place and festering.

What we need to do is better educate the nation's youth and spend more on drug treatment. If we eliminate the demand for drugs, the supply will no longer be necessary.

Mexico and the United States need to work together to bring a peaceful resolution to the war raging on our border. It can no longer be about eliminating the "enemy" by force. That strategy has failed. We must find unconventional ways to bring about peace and save some of those lives in both countries. —Kevin Bottrell



## Parties need to listen to Eisenhower

Over the past two weeks Americans have watched and heard from the two major political parties in their attempts to put their story forward to set the stage for the final weeks before the November election.

First the Republicans met in Tampa, for a shortened convention because of Hurricane Issac that slid off to the west and hit the New Orleans area.

Anne Romney had a great speech and they had some comic relief with Clint Eastwood that overshadowed the speech by Presidential Nominee Mitt Romney.

The next week it was the Democrats in Charlotte, N.C., where the rains forced changes in plans to repeat the great outdoor speech President Barack Obama gave in Denver when he was nominated four years ago. The Democrats had more than 70,000 people lined up to hear the speech by Obama, but weather concerns about rain and lightning forced a move to the much smaller - 20,000- inside venue.

The Democrats had an all-star lineup all three days and brought out speakers for women's rights, small business, union workers and stirring speeches from rising Democratic stars. Many gave great speeches about how the Democrats have been rebuilding the economy, and want another four years to complete the process.

No matter whether you watched either party convention or have already made up your mind, the next two months will make the choice clear about the future direction of our country.

The real story is not who wins the White House, but includes who controls Congress and whether there might be a chance for success for any plans to improve the economy and create jobs.

When President Obama was being inaugurated in January 2009, the Republicans in Congress declared their party would not support any of the legislative plans the President or the Democrats would propose. Thanks to the Tea Party in 2010 the House Republicans



**tom betz**

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have been in a position to hold hostage any economic bill and to send to the Senate a series of extreme budgets in the name of balancing the budget and reducing the deficit.

In the Senate the Democrats have held control, but not with the power to override most Republican filibusters. The Republicans have used filibusters to block nearly all of the bills Obama was in favor of seeing passed so he could sign them into law.

President Obama said four years ago he was going to Washington to change the partisan process and find ways to cooperate to get things moving forward. The Republicans have obstructed those efforts.

Despite those blockades a few things did get passed including the historic Affordable Care Act and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to build infrastructure projects and cut taxes for 95 percent of Americans. Goodland benefited from the Recovery Act getting about \$4 million for road projects, a water treatment plant and taxiway work at the city airport.

A famous Kansan, President Dwight Eisenhower, had some special thoughts in his farewell address in 1960.

Eisenhower had some reflections on his years as President and his relationship with Congress:

"Our people expect their President and the Congress to find essential agreement on issues of great moment, the wise resolution of which will better shape the future of the Nation.

"... the Congress and the Administration (Eisenhower) have, on most vital issues, cooperated well, to serve the national good rather than mere partisanship, and so have assured that the business of the Nation should

go forward. So, my official relationship with the Congress ends in a feeling, on my part, of gratitude that we have been able to do so much together."

His final thoughts as he prepared to leave public service:

"You and I — my fellow citizens — need to be strong in our faith that all nations, under God, will reach the goal of peace with justice. May we be ever unswerving in devotion to principle, confident but humble with power, diligent in pursuit of the Nation's great goals.

"We pray peoples of all faiths, all races, all nations, may have their great human needs satisfied; that those now denied opportunity shall come to enjoy it to the full; that all who yearn for freedom may experience its spiritual blessings; that those who have freedom will understand, also, its heavy responsibilities; that all who are insensitive to the needs of others will learn charity; that the scourges of poverty, disease and ignorance will be made to disappear from the earth, and that, in the goodness of time, all peoples will come to live together in a peace guaranteed by the binding force of mutual respect and love."

The words of Eisenhower were reflected in the speech on Wednesday made by President Bill Clinton as he nominated President Barack Obama in Charlotte. Clinton said cooperation will be needed to rebuild the economy and reduce the deficit.

Voters have a clear choice coming in November, and it will be interesting to watch the effects of the upcoming presidential debates and for the second election there will be great interest in watching the vice-presidential debate on Oct. 11, between Joe Biden and Paul Ryan.

The election is going to decide the future direction of our country, but no matter which side wins the real question will be whether any cooperation between the parties can be expected to keep us from going over a financial cliff.

## Moderate your way to a healthy diet

The key to a healthy diet today is to eat a variety of foods including grains, milk, vegetables, meat and fruits - all in moderation. Each of us needs to make smart choices about when we eat and how much.

Another key ingredient in personal health is exercise. Something as simple as a 20 minute walk several times each week will go a long way toward personal health.

In spite of this widespread consensus to eat in moderation and variety, there are plenty of detractors who are trying to limit the amount of protein, especially red meat from the everyday diet. Most of these opponents preach eating less or no beef.

Dietary guidelines are supposed to tell us what we should eat for good nutrition. Such recommendations are as plentiful as the half-truths or flat-out-falsehoods we're bombarded with daily during this presidential election.

Numerous organizations have been issuing their own guidelines about what they would have us eat based on their agendas. Oftentimes these guidelines are too dogmatic, containing specific recommendations for everyone while overlooking allowances for individual differences.

An example is the recent Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act that places a ceiling on the amount of proteins and overall calorie content of school lunches.

The United States is made up of individuals who need to adjust their diets to allow for their own states of health, age, development, risks of chronic disease and personal tastes. And when it comes to choosing meats as a source of pro-



**Insight this week**

• john schlageck

tein, the key is to choose lean cuts and trim the fat from the meat before or after cooking.

Beef, chicken, fish, lamb, pork and poultry should be roasted, baked, broiled, grilled or simmered. No matter how you cut it - all lean meats are high in nutritional quality. They're good for the body as well as the mind. Beef, pork, chicken, fish and lamb have been recognized as healthy sources of top quality protein. They also contain 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. Well-trimmed, lean meats contain approximately 4 to 9 percent fat when uncooked.

Meats of all kinds, whether fat or lean, are low in cholesterol, approximately 70 to 90 milligrams per serving. This amount is too small to have a significant effect on blood or serum cholesterol of most of the 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 physicians or nutritionists speak of a cholesterol lowering diet. They are referring to a diet that lowers blood cholesterol, not specifically

to a low-cholesterol diet.

Lean meats in moderation as part of a varied diet are not now and are not expected to become a cause of heart disease or cancer. Beef steak, pork roast, grilled chicken and lamb chops are healthy and a necessary part of our daily diets.

When it comes to eating, the truth is, nothing compares to the smell, sound and taste of a steak sizzling over an open fire.

Cheeseburger, pork chop, grilled chicken or T-Bone anyone?

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

### Letter Policy

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e-mail: star.news@nwkansas.com

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Advertising Department

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### Nor'west Press

Richard Westfahl, General Manager

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nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services

(nbetz49@nwkansas.com)

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

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