

Nasty campaign? Change TV channel

They say this campaign — the battle for control of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives — is about as dirty as any ever before seen. That's open to debate. It seems that description surfaces every time we have an election involving the national stage.

But we are of the opinion that this election does sound nastier because those cable network talk shows are nastier. They bring together opposing viewpoints that far too often turn into shouting matches. And shouting matches prove nothing. Matter of fact the shouts often drown out the comments. The hosts of these shows know how to fan the flames and at times they are the ones doing the debating, leaving little time to the experts they invite in as guests.

Forget the TV ads, that'll never change!

We prefer the old-fashioned approach employed by C-Span. Their debates are just that — debates. Questions are asked, answers are given...well, given as politicians would give them. But that's the test of debating, keeping your opponent on his or her toes, finding flaw in an argument, taking advantage of fiction passed along as fact. It's skill.

We have watched countless hours of debates on C-Span this campaign season and have come away better informed on the various candidates' stands on the issues. We are watching closely the Senate races in Montana, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Tennessee. Each of these has been in the C-Span spotlight. And repeats are the norm, never interrupted by commercial advertising. They generally last an hour.

The debates not only include candidates for the U.S. Senate, but also the House of Representatives, and governorships.

Strange how we formed opinions on some of the candidates as passed along by cable chaos, but changed our minds when we watched these same candidates square off on C-Span. A world of difference.

Why would we be interested in candidates from other states we cannot vote for? Simply because whoever those winners are will be making the rules under which we all play.

The big day — election day — is just around the corner. Nov. 7. A few days later everything will return to normal, but only for a brief period of time. Because 2007 will usher in the start of the 2008 presidential election.

See what we mean by "a brief period of time"?

—Tom Dreiling



Wow! Now that was some hot chili

While living in Texas, I was once asked to judge a barbecued brisket contest. Texans take barbecue seriously. It's their official state pastime. Anyway, this week, I was asked to judge a chili cook-off. The other judges included a small-town mayor, a radio personality, a very popular high school wrestling coach, a Catholic priest and me. Not bad company.

So, armed with a bottle of antacids, I smelled, stirred, sampled and tasted. Some were mild, some were soupy and one was liquid fire. The latter was, literally, afloat with jalapenos. Grocery store shelves within a 50 mile radius are probably devoid of canned jalapenos because they were all put in that pot of chili.

Naturally, it was the winner. And, I need another bottle of antacids.

—ob—

This week Jim took the phone call that I feared might change our lives.

Our only thought recently has been to get the house to a livable stage before the opening weekend of pheasant season. And, to get moved out of the hunting

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



lodge where we've lived for five years so our hunters from Oklahoma could have it for the weekend. Alas, they called and a crisis with one of the hunters is causing the entire group to cancel. The pressure is off. Well-meaning friends have said, "I wouldn't tell Jim they called."

Not an option. He took the call.

However, our commitment remains the same. Push to completion and get moved in as soon as possible. Actually, I am somewhat relieved. I knew it would be close and the move would have resembled Lee's retreat from Atlanta. Like refugees, everything we owned would probably have been crammed into an expandable trash bag and dumped in the new house. That would have, then, become one more

mess to clean up.

Perhaps, now, we can accomplish the move in a more orderly manner.

—ob—

Did you hear about poor Bubba? He went to the doctor's office last week and the receptionist asked him what he had.

"Shingles," answered Bubba. "Have a seat and the doctor will be with you soon," she told him.

Later, a nurse called his name and asked the same question, "What do you have?"

Again, Bubba answered, "Shingles." "Well, then, we'll have to get you weighed, test your blood, take your blood pressure and do a urinalysis."

After the tests, she led him into an office and told him to take off all his clothes and wait for the doctor.

Finally, the doctor arrived. While looking at Bubba's charts, the doctor said, "So, I understand you have shingles. Where are they?"

"On the truck. Where do you want 'em?"

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- ★ Governor Kathleen Sebelius, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- ★ U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- ★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point.

They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area.

We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

Tip: The shorter the letter, the better it is read.

Mail your letter to 215 S. Kansas Avenue, Norton 67654; fax to (785) 877-3732; or you may drop it off at the office.

Additionally, it can be e-mailed to tom@nwkansas.com.

In the case of election letters, we prefer letters from local and area readers. Letters from other areas of the state carry little clout. And again, the shorter the letter the better. Thanks for your participation.

Friday is 'Thumbs Up...' day

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I choose 'Happy, Healthy, Ignorant'

I have decided I am going to start taping all the shows I want to watch. For one thing it only takes me about 35 minutes to watch an hour long show. But that is only part of it. As I started yet another diet, do you know how many minutes of a 60-minute program are devoted to food? Now, it is bad enough to hear all of this, but you have to watch as they dish up this steaming hot food or cut up crisp lettuce, which must be fake, no lettuce I've seen is that crisp or that green.

After the food ads come the latest area now blasting the air... pharmaceutical ads. If you have ever priced ads, particularly TV, you know why that little tiny pill costs you \$100 each. In case we aren't smart enough to remember the name, the drug company wants us to just ask for "the purple pill." Almost makes you sick. doesn't it?

And when did it happen that you can't watch a program without having to ex-

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



plain to your grandchildren why a person uses Viagra. And then the warning does nothing for you when it graphically, at least if you are a visual person like me, states to seek medical attention if an erection lasts four hours or more. If you're going to advertise, can't we be somewhat discreet?

After all of this come the ads for insomnia. The butterfly zooms around the room and I'm thinking, if he passes my ear one more time, he is history. Of course, the

warnings on this drug and the others make you wonder if you weren't better off before you knew you had these problems.

The itchy feeling to get something done is really "restless leg syndrome." I always thought it was God's way of telling me I needed to move around more. The somewhat sick feeling in my stomach after I eat, probably tells me to avoid spicy food at my age or at least not go to bed right after I eat. Both of which are probably just common sense.

The sinus medicine may cause headaches and the stomach medicine, gas or constipation. I think I am going to just continue taping and not see what I want to eat or hear the diagnosis the drug companies are selling me. I think I am going to follow the example of a woman who wrote years ago in "Good Housekeeping." She wasn't going to read or hear anymore ads; rather she wanted to remain, "Happy, Healthy and Ignorant"!

Danger of lead poisoning still very real

By KEN LOOS

High Plains Mental Health Center
The effects of lead poisoning in children have both a physical and mental impact. Lead has not been an ingredient in house paint in the United States since 1978, but the danger of lead poisoning in children is still very real. Parents are always going to worry about their children and the modern world seems to give us something new to worry about on an almost daily basis.

Although lead exposure is dangerous at any age, it is particularly dangerous for children three years of age or younger because during the first weeks and months of a child's growth, the brain is developing at its most rapid rate and vital nerve connections may be damaged by lead or may not even form properly.

In addition to obvious physical health problems, lead poisoning in children may

lead to lower IQs or mental retardation. Brain damage at such an early age can also cause behavioral problems such as increased irritability and anger. Some symptoms even mimic Attention Deficit Disorder, such as being easily distracted, difficulty staying focused, and poor reasoning skills.

Once this type of brain damage has occurred, it is often too late to reverse the effect. The good news is that lead poisoning is preventable as long as parents have the right information and take the necessary steps to keep their young children safe.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as many as one out of every 23 children nationwide has lead poisoning; indeed as many as one out of six low-income children, living in housing built before 1946, has been poisoned by lead. Other estimates suggest that as

many as four to five million children have blood lead levels associated with impaired neuropsychological functioning.

The most common source of poisoning occurs when a child breathes in lead dust or ingests paint flakes from peeling paint on walls, baby cribs, older toys and furniture. A child could also be poisoned by ingesting water carried by lead plumbing or pipes connected by lead solder.

Finally, a child may be exposed to lead if they consume food processed, preserved, and/or stored in containers that have lead components.

Parents who have questions about lead poisoning or think their child has been exposed should contact their local public health department or family physician for assistance.

Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601.