

Poll results not gospel, take with grain of salt

The preliminary results from Tuesday's primary election just go to show that the polls don't tell the whole story - or do they?

The KWCH polls, done by Survey USA for a Wichita television station, predicted Sen. Sam Brownback's win in the gubernatorial primary and Rep. Jerry Moran's win over Rep. Todd Tiahrt for Brownback's seat in the senate.

Where things got a little fuzzy was the 1st District congressional race. The latest poll on July 27 put Jim Barnett, Tim Huelskamp and Tracey Mann in a dead heat with 24 percent of the vote. These things aren't ever certain, though, and you have to take every poll with a grain of salt. The preliminary results have Huelskamp winning with 35 percent of the vote, quite a bit off from the poll, well outside its margin of error.

Huelskamp had a good thing going for him in northwest Kansas, the endorsement of fellow state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer. Ostmeyer is a well-respected state legislator and a familiar face in the region.

The two campaigned together all over Ostmeyer's district, which has a whopping 18 counties. That's a good chunk of the Big First, and according to the secretary of state's office, Huelskamp won most of those 18 counties.

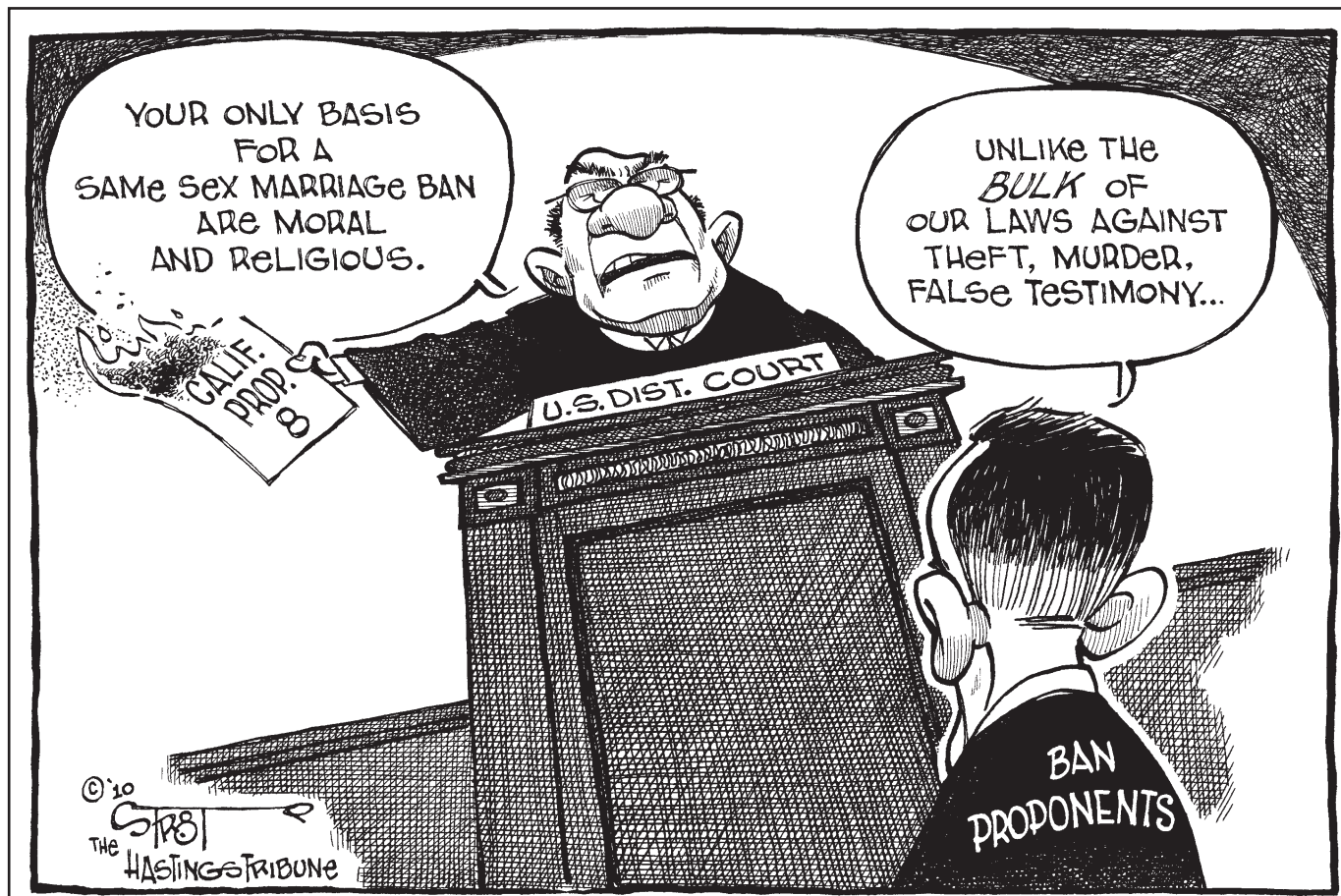
Out of Ostmeyer's district, only five counties went for someone else. It's hard to say why Tracey Mann had more appeal in Sheridan, Gove, Trego and Lane counties, or why Sue Boldra had more appeal in Graham County; elections are funny things. In any case Huelskamp took most of the district, all of southwest and south central Kansas and a few scattered central counties.

It's hard to tell the character of the voters who went with a certain candidate. They usually come from all walks of life and gravitate towards a candidate for different reasons. During the primary Huelskamp courted the far right of the Republican party, speaking to their issues such as health care and immigration and saying he had a more consistently conservative record than Barnett. He largely ignored Mann in his television ads and interviews.

What Huelskamp will do next will be interesting. He's now facing Alan Jilka, a man who has repeatedly said he's a centrist rather than a liberal. A moderate viewpoint may resonate with undecided voters.

The fact is, though, that Huelskamp only captured 35 percent of his own party. Will the remaining 65 percent who voted for someone else fall in line or was there something about Huelskamp they didn't like. He shouldn't think he has it in the bag just because he's a Republican. He'll have to do some fence-mending, or Jilka may have a decent chance of winning.

- Kevin Bottrell



Reflecting on life in a small community

Insight

John Schlageck

Reflection is a good thing. It allows you to see where you've been and hopefully chart a better course on where you're going. While on vacation recently I had a chance to think about the small community where I grew up.

Located in northwestern Kansas, Seguin was a small farm/ranch community of approximately 50 hearty souls. It was located in Sheridan County, three miles south of Highway 24 and the Union Pacific railroad used to run through this small town.

Seguin was a community where families were raised and values - good and sometimes bad - were instilled. Looking back, those fortunate enough to grow up there like I did in the '50s and '60s were surrounded by people with core values that helped guide us throughout our lives.

At the top of this list of virtues my community provided was spiritual in nature. A spiritual quality like, seek ye first this kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things shall be given unto you.

We all grew up with Monsignor Mulvihill and the Sisters of St. Joseph, went to mass six days a week and learned to abide by the golden rule.

Next, came the courtesy level of our town. This was measured by the ordinary civilities a total stranger could expect. Residents of Seguin and the outlying community always welcomed family and friends back for special events - many centered around our church and its congregation.

Transient laborers, especially during wheat, milo and corn harvest, were also treated well because of their valuable contributions during these critical periods.

Rootedness or a sense of commitment on the part of a town's people was another cornerstone in our little community. Dependent on the fertile, sandy loam soil of the High Plains, Seguin's families lived by the unspoken agreement that this was a place to stay, put down roots and build a

family, a farm, a business and a future.

This quality is closely related to a sense of place, which now grows more rare with each passing day.

Diversity - not necessarily in the form of many nationalities - but rather in the form of creative disagreement was another building block in our community. This meant our little town enjoyed a certain confidence that all of its inhabitants didn't have to echo one another in order to make progress.

On the contrary, a community, like a country, can profit by its differences. Believe me, nearly everyone I ever knew in Seguin spoke up, voiced their opinions and let their ideas be heard.

Loyalty was the fifth attribute our community was blessed with. Loyalty is often confused with conformity, though the two are really opposites.

It is precisely loyalty to the community, to posterity and to principle that moves a citizen not to conform. A dissenter may never be so loyal as when refusing to go along quietly.

Loyalty is a virtue, but not a simple one. Certainly it is not as simple as those who use it as a club to enforce their will on an individual or a community.

Generosity was the sixth attribute and not just with material support but a generosity of spirit akin to humility. This broader, deeper attribute sets aside not only personal interests for the sake of community, but personal grudges, slights and obsessions.

One might call this trait charity, but charity in our society has acquired an unfortunate connotation of being optional - not obligatory. Some believe charity is what you do with what you have left over. Those who believe they owe a debt to their community and embrace the op-

portunity to repay it practice charity, the real thing.

Pride in our little burg was also readily apparent. Self respect may be a better word for this civic virtue. It has to do with much more than clean streets, green lawns and painted buildings. It also explains good schools, honest law enforcement and other amenities that make for a proud, self respecting community.

Openness was the final attribute in our small northwestern Kansas community. Without openness all of these other virtues would only be a façade.

Our community was an open book. Everyone knew everyone else and everything that was going on. Candor, candidness, frankness, sincerity and plain dealing were the only way of doing business and conducting each day of your life.

Everyone who lived in Seguin was a member of the community and part of our town. Didn't matter who you were, where you lived, how old you were or whatever else. Our community was a place of human and humane values.

Sometimes in the rush of every day life we forget to live by such values. Know your neighbors, coworkers and the members of your community. And, yes it's all right to argue with them and disagree with them about what is best for the community.

What is important is to care about your community. Think of its best interests and don't let your mind be diverted by lesser concerns or scattered holdings.

Just like the little community I grew up in and the family and neighbors who helped shape who I am today, each of us live in communities that have values and fine traditions to uphold. Be part of yours.

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.

Now let me tell you the rest of the story

At last! The rest of the story.

Remember when I wrote about giving the three French girls a ride? Well, I finally got word about the remainder of their hitchhiking adventure across America. I guess they had tried to reply to my e-mail but, as usual, my mailbox was full and I didn't get their message.

Marion, the spokesman for the trio, wrote me a lovely letter detailing how they got to Denver the same day I gave them a ride. After a couple days rest, she said they took a bus out of the city to Buena Vista, Colo., and got off the bus out in the middle of nowhere. Luckily, they caught several rides and made it on to Las Vegas in a couple of days. She said they never had to wait as long for a ride in either Colorado or Nevada as they did in Kansas. Wonder what that says about Kansas.

She said they enjoyed Las Vegas but didn't elaborate. Perhaps what happens in Vegas really does stay in Vegas. They

flew from Vegas to New York where they spent two weeks before flying back to France. Marion said her mother was glad she didn't know what they were doing or she would have worried. That kind of concern knows no geographic boundaries.

Marion said she showed my column to her mother so she would know they met some nice people during their travels. Sure glad I fell into the "nice" category.

They were lovely young girls. So full of life and adventure. Still, I'm not sure I would want my granddaughters to try the same thing. But, if they do try something

like that, I want to be like Marion's mom: don't tell me until it's over.

- ob -

I'm trying another new recipe for our noon meal. It's a beef-noodle bake containing tomato sauce, cream cheese and sour cream. Anything with cream cheese has to be good. Right?

Jim is always willing (if not eager) to try whatever I set before him. Sometimes, he laments, "Why do you have to keep trying something new? You make such good (fill in the blank). Don't mess with a good thing."

Last night I tried "Orange Spice Carrots." It has a brown sugar glaze with nutmeg and cloves over steamed carrots. I'm afraid that one went to the chickens.

One of my favorite things to do is to read and clip recipes. I'll never live long enough to try them all but, I'm gonna try. Anyone for portabello burgers and lemon-basil pasta?

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



THUMBS UP!

Thumbs up to the Telegram staff for the coverage on the election. Called in

Thumbs up to the ladies at American Family Insurance for their great generosity towards those living on the Rosebud Indian reservation in South Dakota. Dana Paxton.

Thumbs up to Lucas Maddy and Michael Sprigg for their great job of MC-ing (hosting) the Norton Idol at the Norton County Fair. Emailed in.

- ★ **Governor Mark Parkinson**, 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
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399
- ★ **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

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