

What do we base our vote on for certain offices

Who should we vote for in the "minor" state offices, the ones below governor and attorney general where many voters may not have a clue who's running, let alone who's best?

It's often a decision made on the basis of acquaintance, looks perhaps or a fleeting image — or party label.

Candidates don't have the budget to blanket the state with advertising like those running for the Senate, governor or even Congress. Many are not that widely known across the state.

But voters have to choose, and there's no shortage of candidates to run.

Take the race for state treasurer. Longtime incumbent Lynn Jenkins left the post to become the U.S. representative in the second district two years ago after unseating Congressman Jim Ryun in the Republican primary. Jenkins herself had been a mostly unknown factor, the Shawnee County treasurer, when she won the office.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius appointed Mr. McKinney, then a state representative and minority leader of the House, in January 2009 to replace Jenkins, a Republican. Kansas law gives the governor discretion to appoint someone from either party to a state vacancy. (Interestingly enough, for a vacancy for county office or the Legislature, the governor must appoint the choice of the incumbent's party.)

Thus, while he's the incumbent treasurer, Mr. McKinney has to run his first statewide race against a candidate with more party backing and more money. He's apparently done a good job of working the treasurer's position, tirelessly promoting programs to return unclaimed property and establish education spending accounts.

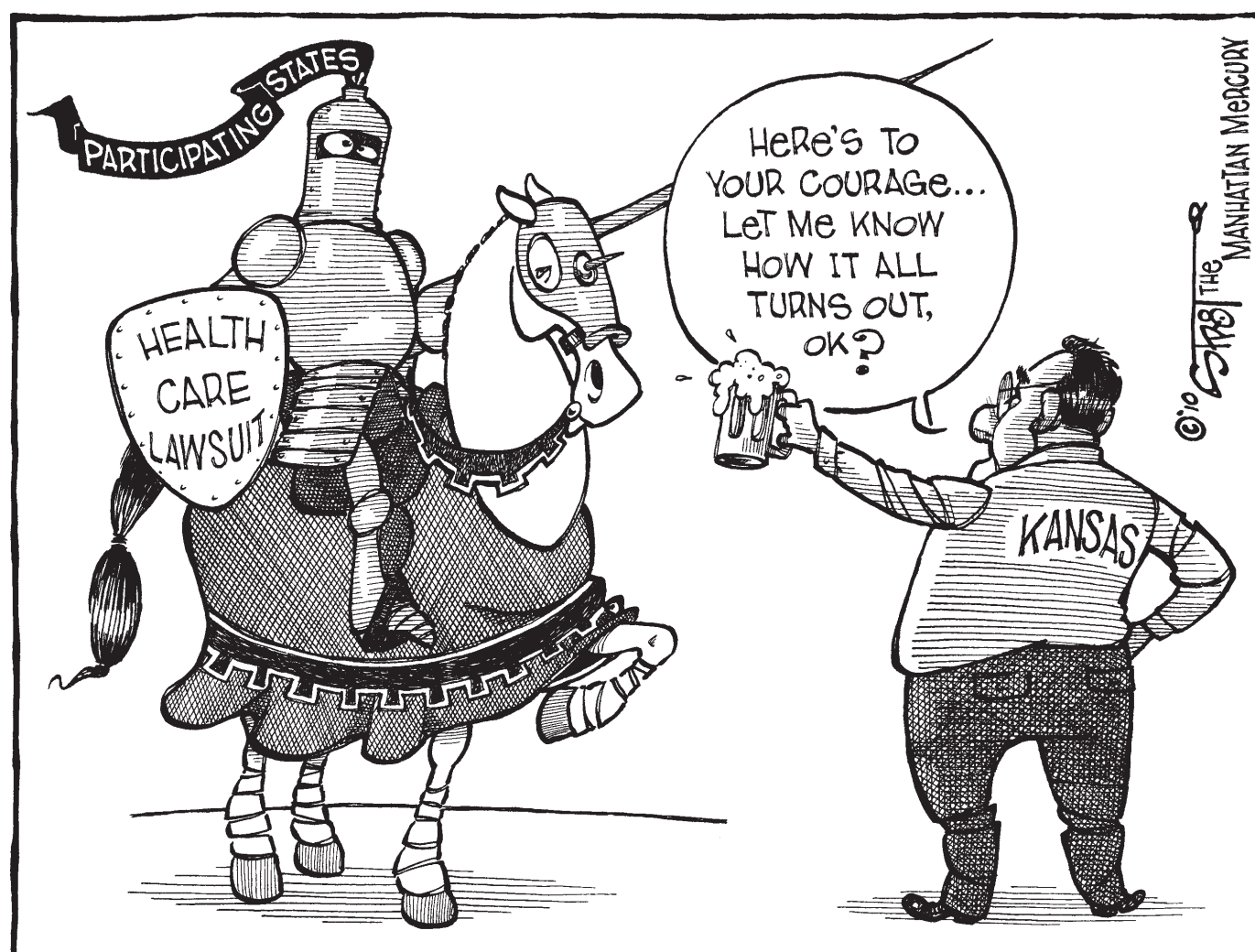
His opponent, Ron Estes, may have even less statewide name recognition, but his membership in the Republican party more than makes up for that. One poll a couple of months ago by Wichita television station KWCH showed him leading 58 percent to 37 percent.

There's not much on the race since. Mr. McKinney continues to work the state, county seat by county seat. That's one thing that sets him apart out here in the western half of the state is that he is one of us. He is from Greensburg, west of Wichita, so we know he's aware of where and what western Kansas is.

He has been to Oberlin, Colby, Goodland, Norton and St. Francis several times each. He knows the area as well as anyone.

Mr. Estes, we're not so sure. We haven't seen him, though he has made a few brief stops in the northwest. That's not to say he wouldn't be a good treasurer; just that he has not made much effort in our area. Maybe he doesn't need to.

Many people, even if they didn't meet a candidate, will be influenced by which one made the best effort in their area. Out here, for state treasurer, there's no doubt in our mind who that would be. — Steve Haynes



Public opinion polls attempt to sway voters

Elections are upon us. I'll vote even though it will be surprising if there is a single race on the ballot in my county that is close.

No matter how things look locally (and all politics are local) candidates and causes are apparently still trying to get a bead on public opinion and how to sway it. The hubby got a call soliciting his opinion about two weeks before the election. I could tell he was less than enthusiastic about what the other person was saying when he answered the phone.

But as the call progressed he got much more animated. I surmised they touched on a hot button issue!

The call took awhile and I heard him say more than once, "I don't know how the candidates stand on that issue but I hope both of them consider it important."

After he hung up he explained that the call was about the Kansas Attorney General's race. The issue they kept returning to was: should the Attorney General work to decrease school bullying. The hot button issue: Obama Care.

I got to offer my opinion on a similar survey before the primary. Though they claimed it would only take about 8 minutes I was on the phone for half an hour. It's been said I talk too much. Perhaps that was the problem. I think it's because I've developed ADD.

I was to tell them if I agreed or disagreed with some statements using a range of 1-5, one being I strongly agreed, 2 agreed,

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagan



3 neutral, 4 disagreed, and 5 strongly disagreed. After they explained that they asked some long question about if poll workers should be allowed to turn registered voters away because of mental incompetence or incapacity.

"Can they do that and who has the right to do it?" I asked. The gal doing the survey did not really seem to know (she was only hired to ask the questions.)

I've sat on election boards; though all I did was count. Denying someone on the list of registered voters a ballot was not covered in the training. Not that we were necessarily trained. Actually I was a little uneasy about the whole thing. We live in small towns and everyone knows everyone but I can see how there could be a great deal of unintended voter fraud just because of the mistakes of well intended poll workers.

By the time we got through that conversation I'd forgotten if one was agree or disagree. And by the time she covered that again, I'd forgotten the question

I had a discussion with someone who voted absentee. There is a question about

voting rights on the November ballot. And it is confusing! By the time we were through discussing the issue neither of us was certain if we were competent to vote!

I absolutely believe people with mental illness should be allowed to vote if they are considered mentally competent. I have no idea who should get to decide that. I can't give you a number on a range from 1-5 and I don't feel comfortable checking yes or no on a ballot!

The hubby seemed a little disgruntled after his experience as a "representative likely voter" as was I. I suppose we agree to answer these sorts of questions because we find it flattering if someone asks our opinion and it is nice to think one has some influence.

The hubby thought his survey was conducted by Democrats.

Within minutes of the time his conversation ended the phone rang again. He requested I answer it. "It's the Republicans," he said. "You can tell them what you think!"

Wrong--it was my sister. I asked her if she was a Republican. She laughed when I explained but she never told me if she was or wasn't.

Good thing I'm not employed as a pollster. I can't find out the most basic information and I can't stick to script. But, as you all well know, I definitely have opinions!!!!

Too bad not everyone can admit their mistakes

I have a very dear friend in a nearby town. I consider her one of my best friends, but on most issues we are about 180 degrees out of synch. The one thing we do agree on is a mutual respect of one another. This past week she forwarded an email to over a hundred people outlining a tax bill which supposedly was pending. It had all the dire predictions as well as accusations. There was only one problem, it wasn't true, at least not in its entirety. Because she does not do this thing normally, the email carried even more ammunition.

But a wonderful thing happened. When a few people pointed out the discrepancies in the piece, she retracted it to all the recipients. This woman believed it was true, and, in her desire to inform her friends, forwarded an erroneous piece and yet her desire to make things right was greater. She was able to admit her error; this is real strength.

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



We have all seen those frightening, if not threatening, emails, from both sides. Some forward them to all of their addressees, however many if not most, when the mistakes are revealed, will not notify the recipients of the error. Mmmm, I wonder if my friend would run for office.

I think most of us want politicians who would respond the same as my friend. I don't necessarily need someone who believes or supports the same causes I do, but I do want someone who will listen, change their mind if necessary and

always want to do the right thing.

Although Kansas candidates have had their moments, the campaign has, for the most part, been conducted with civility particularly in comparison to other states. Some ask why we even care about these other states, but when you see the caliber of some candidates you realize you don't want them representing any part of our country. Although I differ with some of our own state's candidates' beliefs, I have to say most of them would represent us honorably and hopefully, like my friend, admit their errors.

As I've said before, I rarely vote a straight ticket and once again that will be true. I may not believe in the GOP platform, but I do believe in those who listen to both sides and work for compromise, someone like my friend. Our beliefs differ, but we share our desire for good. Don't forget to vote.

Correction to my last column: My mother always told me time goes faster the older you get. Well, I'm using that as my excuse for my significant error in last week's column in which I mistakenly used as an example the Elizabeth Dole/Kay Hagan Senate race. That particular race occurred two years ago with Ms. Hagan securing the Senate seat. It seems like only yesterday. I apologize for the error and will be more careful in the future. Mary Kay Woodyard



Thumbs up to the First Security Bank for sharing their flowers. Called in

Thumbs Up to Miss Cochran, the junior high and high school chorus and the Jay Singers. Great Job on Tuesday night! Emailed in.

Thumbs up to the Norton city crews who picked up a lot of the "clean up days" limbs and trash despite the very strong winds Monday afternoon. Emailed in.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- ★ **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

Don't Forget to Vote
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