

Deciding which party best suits my needs

The GOP straw poll has ended and the results are mixed, much like a salad bowl: a little bit of everything. At the outset I thought if I and my helpers could generate anywhere from 75 to 100 responses, that would be super. Well, we far surpassed that; a total of 254 people responded. I won't comment on anything at this point because I know you want to see how it turned out. I will give you the raw numbers, no percentages and I am hoping for some comments.

**Stop
Look
Listen**
Tom Dreiling



Here are the numbers:

Mitt Romney 23; Chris Christi 19; Newt Gingrich 18; Ron Paul 17; Michele Bachmann 17; Tim Pawlenty 16. Mike Huckabee 14; Sarah Palin 12; Sam Brownback 12; Mitch McConnell 12; Rand Paul 11; John McCain 10; Mitch Daniels 10; Herman Cain 8; Scott Walker 7; Jeb Bush 6; Paul Ryan 6; Jerry Moran 6; Gary Johnson 5; Haley Barbour 5; Rush Limbaugh 4; Jon Kyle 2; Judd Gregg 2. Total 242

Responding to the poll but saying it was far too early to have made a decision for a Republican nominee, 12. Total responding 254

Thanks to you 'voters'. I'll be trying this a few more times before the showdown. And each poll will reflect fewer candidates as the ranks dwindle.

Comments from you the readers

I learn a lot from writing my columns for publication in newspapers, such as the one you are now reading. Readers are quick to advise, disagree, agree, complain - you know the litany. And I take stock of some of those comments.

I am going to pass along portions of several comments generated by the column in which I said I might possibly give up my independent status. I used to have a thing called "Snippets" which would run in my columns. Snippets consists of a sentence or two or three from reader responses and no name is attached. If a reader wants more of his/her comment to be used, they would have to offer it as a letter to the editor, which stipulates names will be used. So, here we go with a few snippets.

"You are sort of undecided like me, Tom. You try political parties like I try beer. And I can never quite settle on one."

"We'd love to have you join the Republican Party. The right party for the smart crowd!"

"If you were born a Democrat, as you said, and changed, is your religious belief next? I think this is a fair question..."

"Think not of Democrats or Republicans as parties, Mr. Dreiling, because parties are fun. Our two major political parties are far from that."

"Independents need to be more vocal. Thanks for letting this independent voice become part of your mission. Please keep it an 'I', as in independent!"

"When you pick your next political party, please research the issues and the party platforms. I am so tired of people 'picking sides' like it was some sporting event. Kind of like the K-State, KU rivalry. With that mentality, it's easy to 'hate' the other side, and think your side is always right..."

"Liked your column. I read it in the Aurora Sentinel when the mailman dropped it off in my mailbox over the weekend. May I suggest you go Democrat? We'll have to kick butt again to straighten out that unruly bunch now controlling the House of Representatives. I'll buy you lunch...if you do."

"Have you heard from House Speaker Boehner yet?..."

"When a baby dirties its diaper, it gets changed. Certainly you don't have such a problem?"

"I just hope you hold no party as your identity. With too many people, their party seems to be who they are. Their identity."

These heavily edited snippets were just small parts of comments from readers of the Aurora Sentinel, The Hays Daily News, northwest Kansas newspapers in Goodland, Colby, and Norton and from my contact list. Your comments are appreciated. Send to: emailto:milehitom@hotmail.com >milehitom@hotmail.com

The decision made, but...

Okay, you are probably wondering what I am going to do politically. If you recall my last column, I ended it this way: "Give me an ?" Well, after careful, very careful consideration and reviewing the goings-on of both political parties vs. the independence of an independent, I've reached a conclusion. And while you are wondering what that decision might be, I must tell you that you won't find it in this column. Ever. I learned a lesson the hard way by revealing myself as an independent in my column a few years back. The reaction was not what I had expected. "Turncoat" was used often. The negative comments far outweighed the positive. And I would rather not go through that again, so I hold my decision close to the vest.

When sports take over the spotlight

There was this guy who managed to come onto a 50-yard seat at the recent Super Bowl game. He noticed there was a vacant seat between he and another man. He asked the other guy if he knew why that seat was empty. Yeah," he said with a solemn voice, "I bought two tickets and that seat was for my very best friend, but he died." "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," said the first guy, "but surely you could have found some other friend to use that ticket."

"No," the guy responded, "they're all at the funeral."

Closing

Have you said something good about your town today? There's still time.

Tom Dreiling is a retired journalist, now living in Aurora, Colo. He edited and published newspapers in Kansas and Wyoming during his 44-year career.

**Let your voice be heard,
send your letter to the editor today.**

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Helpful hints for a wasteful society

Remember "Hints from Heloise"? I used to love reading her helpful home-care hints. Unfortunately, none of the newspapers or magazines I subscribe to carry the column now written by her daughter. Who, I might add, has a big, full, head of silver hair. That has nothing to do with anything except to point out that I, Heloise, Emmylou Harris and Paula Dean have something in common.

When the girls were small I used ice cubes to freeze gum in their hair; peanut butter had a myriad of uses; and vinegar was good for a health tonic or rinsing clothes.

My mother was a great believer in placing layers of newspapers on the counter-top to work on. When a job was done, just fold up the top layer and toss your mess in the trash. And, presto, a clean layer was ready for the next project.

She also had newspaper or magazine liners, cut to fit, in the bottom of all her waste baskets. In fact, that was my job. Place the container on several layers of newspapers, trace around the bottom, cut just inside the line (so it would fit) and lay inside. Then, when you emptied the trash, throw out the top layer and a clean liner was ready. My mom was a recycler before the word was even invented.

All this to say I appreciate anything

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



that will save time and money. That's why I was pleased to find an e-mail message extolling the virtues of coffee filters. I already knew to use coffee filters when filtering oil from the deep-fat fryer but, the message listed 24 additional uses. Such as: wrapping Christmas ornaments for storage; cleaning windows; protecting a cast-iron skillet; holding soup stock; tying fresh herbs in to put in soup; for pressing flowers; and, as a disposable "snack bowl" for popcorn or chips. The icing on the cake is you can buy a package of 1,000 for \$1 at most national dollar stores.

-ob-

By the time Jim and I get back home on a Sunday he will have preached twice and we will have attended one additional church service. We are exhausted and usually take the phone off the hook before taking a nice nap.

This is a little personal but, I usually remove my partial plates before settling in. Sunday, I took a nice long nap and woke up to fix us a light meal. It was only when we were ready to eat that I realized my bottom partial was missing. I was so tired I hadn't removed the upper but, in my stupor, I must have removed the lower. Then, I couldn't find it. It wasn't on the table beside my chair and it wasn't folded up in my blanket. I turned my recliner upside down and felt down the sides - nothing. Now, I was getting worried. Finally, Jim stepped in to save the day. Somehow, the partial had found its way to behind his recliner but, he found it. I'm blaming the cats.

-ob-

Office update: It's totally rewired, even for internet, insulated and mostly sheetrocked. It would have been totally done, except we ran out of sheetrock. Anyway, I am so excited about this room I can hardly stand it. I'm counting on this room being the secret to us getting organized. You know, a place for everything and everything in its place.

For me, it will probably be a place where I can stuff all the papers and close the door.

Preparing for tornado season in tornado alley

Insight

John Schlageck

May 4, 2007, will be a day many Kansans always remember. On that fateful day the town of Greensburg, in Kiowa County, was all but wiped off the face of the earth.

The tornado that hit the small Kansas community of 1,500 killed 11 people and injured dozens more. Ninety percent of the town was destroyed including 961 homes and businesses. Another 216 received major damage. Wind speeds of more than 200 miles per hour accompanied this storm.

Other killer tornadoes occurred that day with a death in Pratt County and another in Stafford County. Some of these monster twisters were nearly two miles wide. Eleven tornadoes occurred May 4.

The next day another 36 tornadoes were reported in Kansas, falling just short of the all time record of 39 tornadoes in one day set in June 1992. Fourteen tornado-related fatalities were reported last year, including 82 injuries, according to the National Weather Service in Topeka. Thirteen of these fatalities occurred during the May 4-5 outbreak.

In stark contrast to this tornado onslaught of 2007, Kansas recorded the

24 in Kearny County, the last on Sept. 25 in Comanche County.

When it comes to safety concerning tornadoes, the bottom line remains the same: tune in, stay informed and keep an eye on the sky.

Remember pay attention when you hear a tornado watch because this means severe thunderstorms and tornadoes are possible over a wide area. Tornado warnings are issued when Doppler radar indicates tornadoes are forming or a trained weather spotter has sighted a twister. This warning will tell the location, and if possible, movement, estimated speed and the towns in the tornado path.

Think ahead during this upcoming severe weather season. Listen to forecasts daily, key into local weather conditions in your area. Know where your nearest shelter is and remember when a tornado threatens, immediate action may save you and your loved ones' lives.

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.



Thumbs up to Robert Blecha for his presentation to the NCHS Site Council about the FFA National Convention in Indianapolis. It was informative and easy to understand. Emailed in.

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