

Opinion

From other papers

Experience not critical for job

It would seem that the most important qualification for the state's new commissioner of education would be experience in the field of education.

Apparently not, according to some members of the Kansas State Board of Education.

Six members of the board expressed displeasure Wednesday with the criteria established by the National Association of State Boards of Education, which the Kansas board hired to help them find a replacement for Andy Tompkins, who resigned as commissioner of education earlier this year. The consultants had evaluated the applicants according to certain skills. The problem? A group of board members said they believed too much weight had been given to candidates' experience in the field of education.

Although a minority of the board argued that education experience should be the top priority and the consultant's evaluation scale was sound, the six-member conservative majority of the board voted to change the criteria and presumably set the evaluation process back to square one.

Connie Morris, an outspoken conservative member of the board, complained, "Education expertise may have been given five times the weight of anything else." She added that too few points had been allocated for business, civic and political skills.

Some might say there is entirely too much politics on the state board already.

The board interviewed four candidates in June, but couldn't agree on a commissioner and decided to restart the hiring process. That wasn't a bad move if board members didn't believe they had found a satisfactory candidate. However, it's September now, and almost no progress appears to be made.

According to Board Chairman Steve Abrams, the board has "a bunch" of applicants for the job, but the work the consultant has done so far apparently was largely wasted because it didn't meet with the approval of a majority of the board. After a four-hour meeting in and out of closed session Wednesday, Abrams announced, "We're done, and there's no action." ... What, if any, progress can be made ... remains to be seen.

... Hiring a new commissioner of education is arguably the most important current piece of business facing the State Board of Education. It's disappointing to see the process mired in political bickering. — *Lawrence Journal-World*

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail pjschiefien@nwkansan.com or pdecker@nwkansan.com.

Where to write, call

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison



Holidays are almost every day

Pick a cause, pick a day. There's probably a day or week out there dedicated to it.

The year is full of what could be considered strange days. One of the newer ones is today, Monday, Sept. 19. It's International Talk Like A Pirate Day.

Many days, even a week or a month is designated in support or in honor of something.

This one just happens to be about a little nonsense, but it's fun nonetheless.

Who doesn't want to walk around saying things like "Aaarrggghhh" or "Shiver me timbers?"

I tried last year. It didn't work too well, but luckily, besides Pirate Day, there are many, many more like it during the year.

Pirate day is one of the more unusual events I've heard of when it comes to days of note.

Of course there are hundreds of holy and religious days and there are too many for me to even try to mention.

September seems to be full of them, for some reason. A few earlier this month were National Beheading Day, Sept. 2; Be Late For Something Day, Sept. 5; Fight Procrastination Day, Sept. 6; National Chocolate Milkshake Day, Sept. 12; Defy Superstition Day, Sept. 13.

Later in the month are Dogs in Politics Day, Sept. 23; Poisoned Blackberries Day, Sept. 29 and National Mud Pack Day on Sept. 30.

October has its own special of holidays, mainly dedicated to the big one, Halloween, and similar days.

A personal favorite is Los Dias de Los Muertos, the Mexican Day of the Dead. Up until about seven years ago, I shied away from it and really didn't get it until I actually got the chance



Tisha Cox

Off The Beaten Path

to celebrate it. Then I understood it.

Other October days to celebrate are: Name Your Car Day, Oct. 2; Virus Appreciation Day, Oct. 3; Moldy Cheese Day, Oct. 9; International Moment Of Frustration Scream Day, Oct. 12; Dictionary Day, Oct. 16; Evaluate Your Life Day, Oct. 19; National Chocolate Day, Oct. 28; National Candy Corn Day, Oct. 30.

Besides Thanksgiving, there are lots of days to honor in November. A few good ones are: National Bittersweet Chocolate With Almonds Day, Nov. 7; Forget-Me-Not Day, Nov. 10; National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day, Nov. 15; World Hello Day and False Confessions Day, Nov. 21; Start Your Own Country Day, Nov. 22;

Want to do something in December that has nothing to do with Christmas or New Year's Day? Here are a few suggestions: National Pie Day and Eat A Red Apple Day, Dec. 1; Underdog Day and National Maple Syrup Day, Dec. 17; Look At The Bright Side Day, National Flashlight Day, National French Fried Shrimp Day, and Hamburger Day, Dec. 21; National Egg Nog Day, Dec. 24; National Pumpkin Pie Day, Dec. 25.

Taking a look around, it seems many are re-

lated to food or silly stuff but there are actually several worthy days, weeks and months out there that deserve attention.

For example, National Women's History Month, March 1-31; Family History Month, Oct. 1-31; Roots Day, Dec. 23; German-American Day, Oct. 6; Red Cross Month, March 1-31; World AIDS Day, Dec. 1; World Cancer Day, Feb. 4; Earth Day, Native American History Month, November.

And with the quasi-holidays almost every day, the biggest ones of the year are yet to come. Already I've seen the telltale signs cropping up around town.

Halloween is the most obvious and I saw candy and costumes out before the end of August, along with fall-themed stuff. I'm sure before the end of this month there will be Christmas stuff out.

Maybe it's because I'm older and tend to notice now, but is it me or do they put out holiday items earlier and earlier each year?

It is kind of fun to be able to take a look at all the holiday stuff well before the holidays and serves as a reminder time flies much too fast.

To me though, this is the best part of the year. Everything is in full swing, the seasons are changing and it's a reminder to stop and take a look around every now and then.

It's also a reminder that no matter what's going on, there's always something to celebrate.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tc Cox@nwkansan.com.

The source for parts of this column was http://library.thinkquest.org/2886/INDEX.HTM.

Marriage can change insurance needs

Our daughter is getting married in September and that has motivated me to think about the insurance needs of a newly married couple and what might be some of the things I need to share with them.

If you are engaged to be married, a newlywed, or if you know someone who is getting married soon, read on. When two people exchange their vows, in addition to making a commitment to each other in terms of a relationship, they are also making a commitment to take care of each other financially. And life insurance should definitely be a part of that commitment.

Life insurance is very important for couples who are just starting out. Whether you're thinking of buying a house or planning on having children, the financial obligations you face as a married couple will increase considerably. Life insurance is one of the least expensive ways to provide financial protection to ensure that your lifestyle doesn't have to change if one of you is no longer there.

Purchase the Coverage That's Right for You While you don't want to underestimate how much life insurance you need once you get married, you also don't want to buy more life insurance than necessary - especially if you're on a budget.

For couples who are just starting out, many options for life insurance are available. The best thing to do is talk with an agent who can best explain all of the options. Term insurance is many times a good choice for new couples because the rates are reasonable and you can convert a term policy to a permanent life policy.

Sandy Praeger

Commissioner's Corner

While a permanent life policy can be more beneficial over the long term since your rates are designed to remain level and you have the ability to accumulate cash value, many new couples find that term insurance fits their budget more comfortably.

Don't Rely Solely on Employer-Provided Group Life Insurance

Group life insurance policies provided by employers are a nice supplement to individual life insurance, but, relying solely on employer-provided group life insurance can give you a false sense of security. First, group life insurance typically provides protection worth between one and two times your salary, far less than the recommended or necessary amount needed to ensure a secure financial future for your loved ones. Next, as a rule, group life is not portable - which means if you change or lose your job, you may not be able to take your life insurance with you.

Individual life insurance, on the other hand, is tailored to your financial situation. With individual insurance, you have the freedom to choose how much coverage you need to protect

your family's financial future.

If you're getting married soon, here are some other insurance considerations to keep in mind:

- * Will you need to add your spouse to your auto insurance policy?
- * Will you need extra coverage for the engagement ring or wedding bands?
- * If you already own a home, will you need to review your homeowners coverage?
- * Will your address change? Your insurance companies need to know.

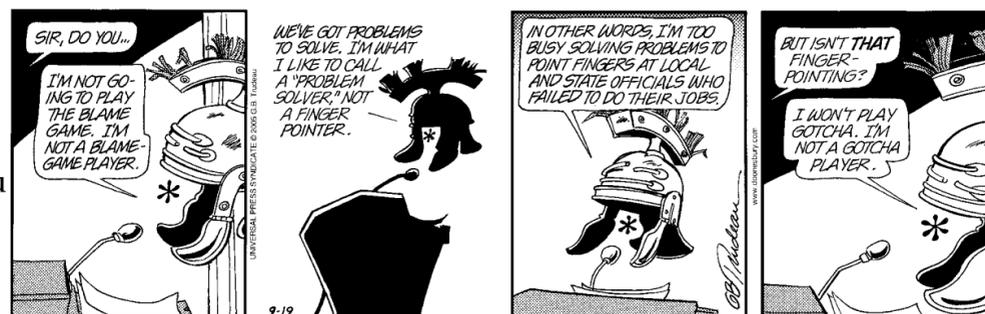
Kansans are encouraged to call the Kansas Insurance Department's toll-free Consumer Assistance Hotline at 1-800-432-2484 or visit the Department's web site at www.ksinsurance.org if they have questions or need further information about insurance. The hotline is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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Sandy Praeger, Kansas Insurance Commissioner, oversees the activities of the Kansas Insurance Department (KID) which is headquartered in Topeka, Kansas. The overriding objective of Commissioner Praeger and KID is to protect consumers, and help maintain the financial stability of the insurance industry. KID regulates and monitors the activities of 23,000 resident agents, 42,000 non-resident agents and 1684 insurance companies licensed to do business in the state of Kansas. The Department offers financial, actuarial, legal, computer, research, market conduct and economic expertise. For more information, visit www.ksinsurance.org.

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