commentary

from other pens...

Moran decision leaves GOP field wide open

The Wichita Eagle on governor's race:

Jerry Moran would have brought a lot of things to the Kansas governor's race in 2002, including Capital Hill experience and a real connectedness to his 1st District constituents. But it took his decision not to run to bring one particular attribute into focus: Mr. Moran's unifying presence within the Kansas Republican Party.

In the wake of Mr. Moran's Sept. 17 announcement that he'll be running again for Congress next year rather than gunning to replace the term-limited Gov. Bill Graves, the GOP's conservative and moderate wings have signaled the depth of their internecine enmity.

Taking the democratic view — as opposed to the Democratic one in this decidedly Republican state — it can be argued that a Republican primary brimming with candidates guarantees that the voters will have the benefit of a full-featured and lively debate. We'd like to view it that way. But certain events and comments in recent days have challenged such optimism. ...

Unless party officials in this decidedly Republican state come together, Republican voters should brace themselves for a divisive, costly primary next August. Indeed combine the philosophical fissures with the state's worsening economic picture and the Kansas Legislature's uncompromising opposition to tax increases and the summer campaign could get downright ugly.

The Hays Daily News on buyer beware:

It seems amazing, but people continue to be bilked by others offering too-good-to-be-true promises.

The latest is Miss Cleo, the Caribbean-accented telemarketer who claims to be able to reveal your future based on a tarot card reading over the telephone.

She's now being investigated by the Kansas attorney general's office.

No, the state isn't taking issue whether she really can look into the future. It's a matter of fraud.

Miss Cleo says that callers to her psychic hot line can receive the first few minutes of a reading for free. However, much of that free time is exhausted by the caller giving personal information, so that once the reading actually begins, excessively high telephone charges apply.

Attorney General Carla Stovall's office has received about 160 complaints, and 40 of them currently are under investigation.

Missouri has sued Access Resources Services Inc., the Florida company behind the hot line, for violating the state's telemarketing law. The company has been fined \$75,000.

Missouri's law prohibits telemarketers from contacting residents who have put their names on a "no call" list. Kansas doesn't have that law, but it has been proposed.

... Kansas might not get anywhere with its investigation, because the company does what it says and does not charge a customer during the first few minutes of the phone call.

But at the least the state's investigation will help spread the word that businesses like this simply prey on the naivete of the public.

The adage, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," still applies.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: <daily@nwkansas.com>.



In his own words

The assignment to the Crittenden Middle School's eighth-graders was to rewrite "I, Too," the 1954 poem by African-American poet Langston Hughes. They were to alter the words to reflect their own lives.

Ali Rafi knew the poem was assigned every autumn at the Mountain View Middle School. It was only a coincidence that the assignment arrived the exact day his place in the world had been thrown into turmoil.

He took the work home and turned in a poem that, just two days earlier, he couldn't have imagined writing.

Rafi is a quiet cut-up, the kind of kid who, behind the scenes, would write the smart and funny lyrics for the school revue.

He has dreamed of becoming a stand-up comedian. Sometimes he pictures himself as a rap singer. He makes little differentiation between himself and his diverse group of friends, many of whom live on the military base at Moffett Field.

But the horror of Sept. 11 suddenly set him apart, particularly from the sons and daughters of those likely to be deployed to the Middle East to fight a war against radical Muslim murderers.

"You probably helped the terrorists crash those planes into the twin towers!" a boy joked loudly to Rafi on the school quad before class.

Then another boy: "Hey, look, it's Ali, the terrorist."

One of Rafi's friends told the boys to shut up, but Rafi said nothing. He has never hidden the fact he is Muslim. He doesn't eat meat at school, and



his mother and sisters show up at school events with their heads covered in traditional Muslim scarves. But, until that day, his religion had never been the source of ridicule.

"It took me completely by surprise, but I kind of shrugged it off," Rafi said.

At lunch, and then in gym class, the joking escalated. "I felt embarrassed," he said, "because suddenly I was different, and I don't feel different." Rafi resembles his mother, Yvonne, a California blonde who grew up in Carmel and Santa Barbara as the daughter of a career Air Force serviceman. She converted to Islam after marrying an Iranian classmate at UC Santa Barbara. At home, she and her husband denounced the attacks. "It was horrific. Unfathomable," she said. She taped an American flag to the antenna of her car and hung a flag in a front window of their home.

So she was taken aback when, at a grocery store, a woman nodded toward her and remarked out loud to a friend, "If I was younger, I'd slap her face." And she was deflated again when several firefighters in a nearby town, passing around their boots to raise money for their brothers in New York, turned away when she approached.



Even when she shared with Ali and her five other children the insults directed at her since the attacks, her son said nothing about the taunts he was weathering at school.

"I guess it's part of being the cool middle-schooler not to snitch," she said.

In Rafi's language arts class, the students broke into groups of four. Each group chose a poem from among the four to share aloud with the class. Rafi's group chose his. So he sat on the stool in front of the room and read:

"I, too, am an individual./ They embarrass me the way they tease./ When they say I'm a terrorist, I shrug it off,/ But I count them as friends./ And so, the ridicule continues/And I must shrug another day off./Tomorrow/ When they joke,/ I will joke back./ Then they won't say to me/ "You probably helped them,"/ Then./ Besides,/ They'll stop after I show them/ who I am/ And lower their heads./ I, too, have dignity."

When Rafi finished, the class fell silent then erupted in applause. The principal asked him to read the poem over the PA system during the "words of wisdom" portion of morning announcements.

The taunts stopped without Rafi's ever raising his voice or his fists.

He knew he couldn't control the attacks, only his response to them. The fact that an eighth-grader understood this so clearly is enough to feed my faith and hope through another anxious week.

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A lot of us have reached the age at which we have to deal with the parent problem. Not the parenting problem, when your kids come home with blue hair. I mean the parent problem, when your aging mom and dad come home with ... well, blue hair. It's a fact of life that when senior citizens can't take care of themselves anymore, they often have to move in with their middle-aged kids. This can be especially tough for you late bloomers, who may have only left home a couple of years ago yourself. But, in any case, you and your parents are bound to have different lifestyles, so the watchword here is patience. You may not understand why anyone needs to be up for the day at 4 in the morning, but then, you've never eaten dinner at 3 in the afternoon just to save a buck-and-a-half either. Likewise, try not to get upset when they complain about your food. Or the wallpaper in their room. Or the temperature in the house. In their own way, they're really just trying to tell you that they love you. And that you know nothing about anything. Oh, and also, you should prepare yourself for a little rolereversal. Remember how annoyed you used to get when you were a kid, and they told you to turn down the TV? You'll understand what they were talking about when you hear Andy Rooney's voice at 120 decibels. But the main thing here is to remember that this isn't a crisis. It's an opportunity. Here's a chance to show your own kids what could happen to them if they don't do the smart thing and start saving for your retirement home in Florida NOW.

SEE NO EVIL

I'm not sure whether this is specifically a male trait, but a lot of men I know have this behavioral response: They believe that if they see somebody do something, then there's a pretty good chance that they'll know how to do it. Just from watching.

Thank you so much for your contribution to the

2001 Goodland Junk Parade. Your energy, and

enthusiasm made this year's parade a rousing suc-

cess. The board of the Goodland Development

Corp. joins me in sending you our gratitude and

thanks. We are particularly grateful because we

The day was an outstanding success in every

way, primarily due to people like you. If you can

possibly face the thought, we would like you to

participate in the next junk parade, which is going

know of the many demands on your time.

To the Editor:

Thanks for supporting junk parade



This makes it very dangerous for most men to watch how-to shows or to even look over the shoulder of a plumber or an auto mechanic. Rather than stand in awe of, or at least appreciate, the skill level of another person, they're convinced that the mystery has been revealed and they are now ready to carry on alone. Whenever you see something that's been built or repaired, and it just doesn't look right, there's a pretty good chance that it happened from some guy seeing something he never should have.

LISTENING IS GOOD

Communication is an important ingredient in successful family life. Unfortunately, it doesn't always happen, especially with guys my age. Here are a few ways to spot the homes of men who have trouble communicating:

- The house is painted the color of a Smartie.
- There's a pony in the backyard.

— There's a couch on the front porch and a person on it.

—There's a rusty vehicle lying on its side on the front lawn.

— The grass is three feet high, and there's a guy in the garage trying to fix a lawnmower.

- The flowerbed has a satellite dish in it.
- There's a "For Sale" sign in the yard. WORDS ESCAPE ME

On the news the other day, the reporter said that the stock market had plummeted. It went down 15 percent. What are they talking about? Fifteen percent is not a plummet. It's a dip. But, of course, they

from our

readers

to the editor

to be an annual event. We will let you know about

specifics during the planning stages next summer.

Thanks again for all your support!

Schyler Goodwin, president

Goodland Development Corp.

want to exaggerate to

want to exaggerate to get our attention. And they do it only on the down side. If the market went up 15 percent, they'd call that a "modest gain." Well exaggerating bad news may be useful when you're talking to young people, but for guys my age, we need you to back off on the ugly stuff and pump up the bright side. I deal with the plummet concept every time I look in the mirror. I don't need to hear it misused in a news report.

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "If you smile ten times a day, people will assume it's the medication." - Rec Green

Red Green is the star of "The Red Green Show," a television series seen in the U.S. on PBS and in Canada on the CBC Network, and the author of "The Red Green Book" and "Red Green Talks Cars: A Love Story."

berry's world

