

commentary

from our viewpoint...

Fall governor's race should be interesting

The fall elections should be among the more interesting in Kansas history.

With a race for governor apparently between Tim Shallenburger on the Republican side and Insurance Commissioner Kathleen Sebelius as the Democrat, voters will have a clear choice on styles, party and issues.

Sebelius, who reports raising more than \$1.3 million already, may be seen as the front-runner, but conservative voters may not be ready for her.

The Republicans will get together and try to catch up. That's OK. We'll have a choice between a staunch conservative and a mildly liberal Democrat. It might not have been that way.

Until she pulled the plug on her campaign, Attorney General Carla Stovall had the Republican nomination in her hip pocket.

A Stovall-Sebelius race would have been a contest of the alikes. Sebelius, the moderate Democrat. Stovall the moderate Republican. Both proven campaigners with statewide name recognition. More importantly, strong candidates with that certain something, call it star quality, charisma, whatever you like.

It would have been a battle to the end, and who's to say which of the two strong and gutsy ladies would have been standing at the end?

But Kathleen Sebelius wants to be governor, and Carla Stovall did not, at least not bad enough to put up with the race.

Now Sebelius seems to be headed across the street to the governor's office while Stovall is planning her honeymoon.

The abrupt announcement by the attorney general, after a European vacation, that she was leaving the race took the rest of the GOP by surprise. Her withdrawal left the party without a single strong candidate in a race where the Democrats already had their star.

Sebelius looks good, her team is crack, her positions are pat. She should be ahead. And why not? She was born to the race.

Daughter of an Ohio congressman and governor, she grew up with politics. Then she married into one of the best-known, and best liked, Kansas political families. Her husband's father, Keith Sebelius, took Bob Dole's place in Congress. After he retired, they named the federal reservoir near his hometown of Norton after him.

She's proven that she knows how to run a race, winning election to the Kansas House four times, then winning the job of insurance commissioner.

She may not hold onto her commanding lead, but the money in the bank says she won't lose it all or easily. She's already raised more than three times what the richest Republican candidate had, and before the primary, she spent very little from that war chest.

There is only one flaw in her performance to date: she's a cardboard cutout candidate, beautiful, but not deep. Her public pronouncements are pap, and she ducks the tough questions, like, will you raise taxes to maintain state services. She's always saying she'll "fight for the right of Kansans to do" whatever, but she won't say if she'd increase our taxes.

It's bull to dodge the obvious questions. Either she will or she won't, but people deserve to know.

So far, her statements are long on bombast and short on substance.

Between now and the election, that has to change. We need ideas from the candidates, not sound bites, and that's what Sebelius has been handing out. — Steve Haynes



Those darn cats!



cynthia haynes

• open season

Those dang cats!!*%#^*&%!!!
The kittens were getting older and needed to be gone. It was more than time for son to come home and pick them up. However, he broke his car and had no way to get here from Lawrence.

I suggested that we drop the kittens off on our way to Omaha. It was a little — like four hours — out of the way, but we could have dinner with the kid and still get to our hotel before midnight. And, best of all, the kittens — July and Autumn, or Jewel and Frank, take your pick — would be gone.

It was a good thing that we had made that decision. It spared a couple of little lives when I found out what the dear little bundles of fur had been up to.

Since son has been in Lawrence all summer, I used his bed for storage of things we brought back from China. Mostly it was paperwork — brochures from the hotels, newspapers and itineraries. It was stuff I wanted but most of it wasn't particularly important.

It's not a room we go into most of the time. We just sort of ignore it.

I had to go in there to get some things to take to son. That's when I noticed the smell — Cat, with a

capital C.

I started looking around and found several piles of old cat doo on the rug behind stuff that had fallen on the floor. I cleaned it up and went to the bed.

The kittens apparently had decided that the bed was their litter box, though we have two in the basement. They had used it for both calls of nature, and not just once or twice. The bedding was soaked with urine and there were little black piles among my papers.

I was furious. Kittens, curious to know what I was doing in their bathroom, peeked at me from around the door.

I screamed. Kittens ran like little rabbits for other parts of the house.

All the papers on the bed were ruined, but because I had a lot of bedding that soaked up the mess,

the bed itself was OK. I cleaned it anyway, along with all the bedding. Several times.

There were three pillows on the bed, and unlike the bed itself, they only had pillowcases on them. Two were worthless and went in the trash. The third I thought I could save with hot water and bleach. I threw it into the washer along with the sheets, mattress pad, blankets and comforter.

It was a feather pillow. It sprang a leak. I screamed.

There were feathers everywhere in my washer and on the clothes. As I tried to fish them out, they got on the floor, all over me, and still there were feathers.

I took the sodden and leaking pillow outside and tossed it on the porch to dry.

Steve asked me which cat killed the chicken. Steve is a very brave or a very foolish man. I haven't decided yet.

The bed is remade. The floor has been cleaned. The kittens are in Lawrence. I thought I was going to make it.

Then son called. He wants to bring the kittens home. It's time for their shots.

Oh, well, it's his room.

Making observations around the city

To the Editor:
I as a citizen of Goodland have some more concerns as to what is going on here. In April I wrote a letter about our trash problem. Since that time, I received a notice that they evaluated my property up \$1,000. More good news.

Around the middle of April, I took a trip and visited some friends in the Phoenix area and found out they pay \$14.95 a month for trash pick up but no charges from the county. They have two roll out containers, one for recyclable which they put paper, glass and cans in it and it is sorted out later. The other one has garbage. I visited a friend in Las Vegas, and they put everything in their garbage dumpsters.

I received a 17-page information sheets at my door on waste management for Sherman County and the City of Goodland. The city picks up my dumpster, shared with three households, on Tuesdays. Most of the time during the weekend it is rather full. I have taken the time to recycle paper



from our readers

• to the editor

and cans. My wife does not want to; she says the prisoners can do the sorting. I do not rinse the cans out when I take them to the recycle bin. I have committed a no-no, it looks like. I may be dragged to court for that, as a person was cited for dumping yard waste, which she claims it was not hers.

We have a water shortage and I have been making observations around town and noticed that Ritchie Paving and their crew used a lot of water for packing and making concrete. The installers installing lines for S and T telephone have a lot of water tanks.

An article in the paper said electricity usage is down, but apparently due to less people in town. I

notice there are a lot of houses for sale. People look around before they decide to locate in Goodland. I learned that our hook-up rates are higher than in Colby. It looks like that has been rectified.

J. Darel Graves
Goodland
To the Editor:
I went to the fair parade on Saturday with my family. I thought that it was great!

The only problem was, we could not see the parade from the sidewalk because everyone had parked their cars on Main Street. We had to stand in the street.

On our walk home, the wind started to blow and candy wrappers started to blow past us. We have taught our young daughter to throw her trash in a trash can, no matter where she is.

My question is this: If a 2-year-old can throw her wrappers away, why can't the older kids?

Amanda L. Stephens
Goodland

Tiger would-be



jim mullen

• the village idiot

Here in small-town America, we hear stories about golf courses in the big cities: the players who have to sleep in their cars in the public course parking lots on Friday nights to snag a tee-time on Saturday mornings; the tens of thousands of dollars the private clubs charge for membership, the hundreds of dollars they charge for green's fees; the screaming matches between foursomes; the knife fights on the greens; the harmless black swan clubbed to death in a fit of "golf rage" at Donald Trump's club in Miami. But we don't get to see much of it. Most of the time, Willie and I have our rural course to ourselves. Many Wednesday mornings, the only cars in the parking lot are the owner's and mine. We can usually tee off at 9 a.m. on a Saturday morning in the middle of July without calling ahead.

This year, some of the members complained when Ralph raised the price of a cart from \$5 a round to \$6. This is on top of the \$11 greens fee. Carlton was particularly upset. "What do I look like, a millionaire?" He was wearing a blue plaid shirt from the Kmart, a pair of brown, waffle-weave acrylic pants and an ancient John Deere baseball cap. After a lot of discussion, it was pretty much agreed that he did not look like a millionaire.

Today, some weekenders from the city are on the first tee ahead of us. Their golf bags are beautiful — black leather, their initials tooled in gold. Their clubs, nothing but the most heavily advertised. The leader of the pack climbs out of his cart, grabs his \$499 ERC Titanium driver and hits a worm-burner 35 yards through the grass. He goes ballistic. The club goes flying, swear words fill the air in an obscene spew that would make Ozzy Osbourne blush.

"I can throw a \$40 club farther than that," Willie says.

"You've got to practice. Don't think you're going to throw a club very far just because you spent a lot of money on it."

"I thought his swearing could use some improvement, too. No technique, no rhythm, no inspiration. In a word, flat. Oh, it may work on his office mates back in the city, but I don't think his ball is going to fall for it."

Big Swinger takes his second shot, a mighty swing. He throws his back out. Game over, they load him whimpering in pain into a giant SUV, spinning gravel in the parking lot as they leave.

Willie, a long-retired New York City fireman, and I lug our clubs over to the first tee. I pull out my driver, an old, wooden Ben Hogan that I bought for a quarter at a garage sale. With my lousy follow-through I send one out about 180 yards down the right side of the fairway. I'll be on in two.

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