

from our viewpoint...

Senate campaign talk turns ugly

The campaign for the U.S. Senate in Kansas has turned ugly, with U.S. Rep. Todd Tiahrt slinging much of the filth.

That's what you do in American politics when the polls show you're gonna lose: go negative. And Mr. Tiahrt has gone way negative. Check his website; it's pretty much all negative these days.

Maybe it's working. A poll by a Wichita television station Sunday showed Mr. Moran leading 50 percent to 36, with 9 percent still undecided, but was a shift of 6 points from Moran to Tiahrt in the last month.

Still, 50-36 is way beyond the 3.5 percent margin of error claimed by the statewide poll using random telephone calls. (Your editor was among the respondents, whatever that says about the poll.) Even if all the undecided jump on the Tiahrt bandwagon, Mr. Moran is the likely winner.

Add to that the fact that the Moran campaign has a \$1 million edge in its bank account, with more than \$2.4 million left to spend in the next few weeks, and you begin to see why the Wichita congressman is so suddenly attracted to mud.

Mr. Tiahrt's campaign statements and his website have been full of attacks. He trumpets an endorsement from anti-immigration poster boy Tom Tancredo, the former Congressman from Colorado whose campaign for president got exactly nowhere two years ago. Former Gov. Sarah Palin is another conservative hero backing Tiahrt.

Campaign spokesman Michelle Schroeder accuses the Moran team of putting out false figures from an internal poll, which she claims is a "push" poll biased for one candidate. The figures weren't that far from the KWCH television poll, though.

A television ad features former Bush political strategist Karl Rove endorsing Mr. Tiahrt and attacking Rep. Moran. Nearly every entry on the main page, in fact, is an attack.

Mr. Moran must be doing something right, we think.

Meantime, his website and his releases focus mostly on the candidate and his record. The Moran campaign spends some time trying to defend the candidate from Tiahrt attacks last month, but today, it's mostly positive stuff on his page. The latest ad features Mr. Moran talking about his record, what he's stood for and his steadfast opposition to President Obama's liberal agenda.

That's another theme of the campaign, who's the real conservative. The Tiahrt campaign attacks Mr. Moran's record at every turn, claiming he's not that conservative.

We think Mr. Moran has chosen the wise course here, pushing his positives and spending his cash to get his record out.

Kansas voters will make the final decision, and we think they'll base it on the candidate's records, how they behave and not how much mud they can sling. Kansans are smarter than that.

Mr. Tiahrt should get back to talking about himself, unless he's just out of positive things to say. — *Steve Haynes*



Travelers actions, complaints unbelievable

The chutzpah of some travelers is unbelievable.

You see it driving, on the bus or subway, but nowhere is it more apparent — or more appalling — than on the airlines.

Just a few examples:

My sister flew out to Colorado to meet us last week. She said in Denver, since she had a four-hour layover, she got to the gate before the airline agent. When the poor woman got there, passengers peppered her with questions and complaints before she could even log onto the computer.

Sis said she stuck up for the agent, and later, when she got her boarding pass, found herself "upgraded" to a front-row seat in the little Beech 1900 she flew on up into the mountains.

She put her bag in the overhead and took her seat, then a woman passenger boarded, found "her" bin full, removed Sis's pack and tossed it at her.

"Here," she said. "You can find someplace else for this."

The flight attendant and the passenger behind her stood mouths agape, but Sis just took her bag back to a bin in the center of the plane. She said it wasn't worth a fight.

Later, the guy behind her told her the last time he'd seen something like that on an airplane, it'd caused a fist fight.

So, where do people like this get the idea they own the world? You got me.

The next one is not uncommon. Some people don't bother to read their seat assignments. They just board the plane and take the seat they want, usually a desirable aisle seat.



steve haynes

• along the sappa

When the real seatholder comes, they simply refuse to move. Usually, it's not worth a fight.

Just as common are the people who complain about things over which neither the airlines nor anyone else has much control. A friend's son related that on a flight home from Germany, he'd witnessed some appalling behavior.

It seems a woman passenger had given birth over the Atlantic. The pilot decided to divert to a Canadian city to allow the woman, her husband and the tiny "premie" to get quickly to the hospital.

The flight was hours late, and apparently, some of the passengers complained bitterly.

What did they want? To have the pilot make the woman hold that baby all the way to Denver?

Don't people have any common sense?

Don't they care about anyone but themselves?

Guess not.

Whatever happened to virtues like compassion, respect for the rights of others, common decency?

Another issue: It's disappointing that the Oberlin City Council apparently decided how to handle a complaint about events at the cemetery without public discussion last month.

The complaint involved a letter to the council about placement of some trees around a grave. The council treated the complaint as a personnel issue involving a particular employee and went into closed session.

While in closed session, the council apparently agreed to handle the matter by having the mayor write Dr. Jay Anderson, a former councilman, telling him to move the trees.

While apparently no vote was taken in closed session, it's clear from the mayor's letter that a decision was made about the complaint, which was not entirely a personnel issue.

The Kansas Open Meetings Law requires council decisions to be made in open session, even decisions on personnel matters which can be discussed in detail behind closed doors. And discussions in a closed meeting must be limited to the subject stated in the motion.

The dividing line between a complaint about a city employee and a complaint about cemetery policy is a gray area. That should be resolved by bending over backward to follow the spirit of the law.

And the discussion of cemetery policy ought to have been done in open session, as it eventually was at the next meeting, because the whole town needs to know what the policy is and how it will be enforced. The council's reasons for this should be on the record.

Our hope is, in the future, the council will come out of closed session to talk about and "decide" how to handle any policy issue or complaint. Then there will be no question what happened, no murmurs around town about secret meetings, as there were following this letter.

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No doubt you've noticed all the soft drinks, flavored water and sports drinks today. They're everywhere.

You can't walk into a supermarket or convenience store without bumping into the many drink offering displays.

And flavors. Wow.

Just think of some taste you desire — fudge malted gumball, cheese yogurt yummy or silvery satin strawberry. It's out there and you can buy it and drink it down.

Without question, the best part of these drinks for me is the packaging.

It's unbelievable. And the creativity? Almost too much for one to digest.

Anytime, I don't even care what's in the container. I just want to hold it in my hand, caress its coolness, admire its latest, unique logo and look good doing so.

While many are content with the multitude of diet sodas, and flavored waters like blackberry blush, my drink of choice is chocolate milk. I really enjoy it by the way. I have since I was a small child.

Today's explosion of new soft drinks, flavored waters and sports drinks has one major worrisome aspect I cannot help but point out.

Pitchmen, women and yes kids are filling our

Healthy choice



Insight this week

• john schlageck

heads with the idea these flavored drinks can be part of a well-rounded, balanced diet. Their ads and infomercials are as numerous as the products they're selling — and it's working.

The most alarming part of this sales pitch is much of it is aimed at our youth. In case you haven't been in today's schools this drink deluge is very much a part of the contemporary scene.

Soft drinks have no business being considered part of a balanced diet at our schools or anywhere else. These drinks have little, if any nutritional value.

Look at the ingredients in a soft drink the next time you pick one up. Most people wouldn't have a clue what these ingredients are, myself included.

If students or adults want a treat — something out of the ordinary — that's where soft drinks play a part. To be part of a balanced diet, a food product must have nutritional value. I believe soft drinks have such a negligible amount, if any, they cannot be considered seriously as part of any "balanced" diet.

Unlike water, soft drinks won't even quench your thirst. They leave you longing for a tall, cool glass of water.

Talk to a nutritionist or physician and what's the ingredient they'll tell you we're supposed to drink at least eight glasses of?

That's right. Nature's own liquid — water.

What about that wonderful white liquid chocked full of calcium we call milk? Where does it fit in our daily diet?

Milk belongs in almost everyone's diet. Nutritional research has stressed that men and women between the ages of 11 and 24 need the

equivalent of five servings of dairy products daily. This can be milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream and a whole array of other good-tasting dairy foods.

Juice from oranges, grapefruit, lemons, strawberries and other fruits is another item that belongs as part of a balanced diet. Food products from natural primary crops — not always secondary, highly processed food products — are essential to our youngsters' diets. We owe it to them and their good health.

Other vegetable drinks made from tomatoes, carrots, celery and other vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals and fiber. Vegetable drinks belong as part of our daily diets.

But let's return to soft drinks. What a brilliant stroke of marketing, linking soft, sports and flavored drinks with a well rounded, nutritionally balanced diet. Infer something often enough and people will begin to believe. Soft drinks linked with a balanced diet and nutrition is about as palatable to me as the drink manufacturers laughing all the way to the bank.

There is no substitute for healthy, nutritious food in our daily diets. Students and adults should reach for a tall glass of water, juice or milk the next time they're thirsty. These are truly nutritious products that belong in a daily balanced diet.

If you need to treat yourself, add chocolate to the milk. Mix a couple of the fruit juices together or just drink water. You'll be doing yourself a favor and you'll be supporting farmers and ranchers who supply these fresh, tasty, nutritious drinks.

Bottoms up.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for more than 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas

Letter Policy

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