

from our viewpoint...

## Iowa results mean little for Kansas

So Mitt Romney is the big winner of the vaunted Iowa Caucuses. But what does that result mean for Kansas? The short answer is... absolutely nothing.

In fact, the Jan. 3 caucuses means little for Iowa. They don't even result in delegates to the national convention. Delegates are chosen for the state caucus, which will in turn choose delegates for the national.

If you're looking for an indication of who will get the nomination, the caucuses won't help. Over the past 30 years, in unopposed elections, their accuracy rate is about 50 percent.

In 2008, Mike Huckabee won the caucuses with a healthy 34 percent, as opposed to runner-up Mitt Romney's 25 percent. In 1988, Kansas Bob Dole won the caucuses by 12 percent, only to lose the nomination to George H. W. Bush. Dole won Iowa again in 1996 and won the nomination. In 2000, George W. Bush won by 10 percent over Steve Forbes and went on to claim the nomination and the White House.

The Democratic caucuses are actually a better predictor. In 1992, Bill Clinton got a measly 3 percent in Iowa. In 1988, Dick Gephardt won the caucuses but lost to Michael Dukakis. The caucuses did predict the nominations of Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, Al Gore, John Kerry and Barack Obama.

But predicting the end result isn't the purpose of the caucuses. The purpose is to allow Iowans to show support for candidates. In this way we find out what Iowa voters think about those candidates. Iowa isn't all that different from Kansas, demographics-wise. Iowa has a little over 3 million people. Most are white, a great many live in rural areas. Kansas has about 2.8 million people. Most are white and rural. They care about the things we care about: agriculture, trade, public safety, rural development, the economy, etc.

That's part of the long answer about what the Iowa Caucuses mean for Kansas. It's a way to find out how other people like ourselves feel about the potential nominees.

They serve to narrow down the field. The morning after the caucuses Rick Perry announced he was heading back to Texas to "re-evaluate his campaign." He's staying in for now, but it could end at any time. Michelle Bachmann simply dropped out.

It serves to give Kansas voters a good look at the candidates. We've been able to learn how Mitt Romney, Ron Paul and the others campaign, what they think about the issues, etc. Santorum's unexpected second place finish has vaulted him into a new limelight, so we'll soon see a lot more on the news about him. Knowing as much as we can about these candidates helps us make more informed votes.

The Iowa Caucuses do mean something to Kansas, just indirectly. So pay attention to the coverage, to the pundits and to the horse race. One of these guys will be the next Republican nominee for president, so we should take any opportunity to watch them work. — Kevin Bottrell

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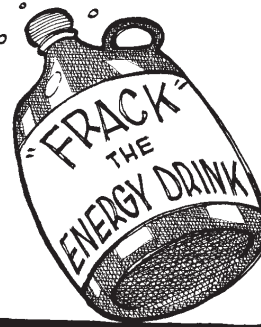
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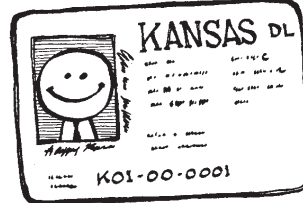


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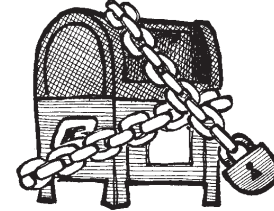
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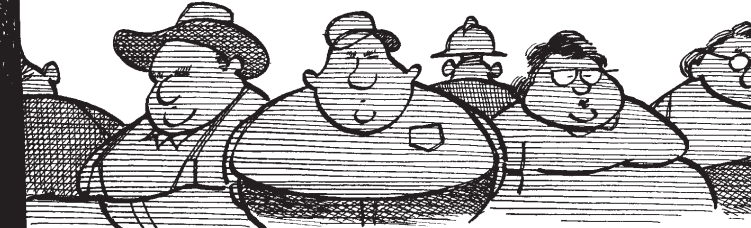
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RESIDENTS REMAIN CONFIDENT RAIN, SNOW, SLEET AND HAIL CAN'T STOP THE POST OFFICE...



A FEW PAPERS FROM WASHINGTON, HOWEVER...

STATE OBESITY RATES FINALLY STABILIZE...



DUE TO LACK OF ROOM.

## What happened to the word 'former'?

Is it just this 'Man of the Plains' who gets tired of hearing people call others what they aren't, but at one time were?

A year or so back, media folks were all excited because five presidents were together in the White House! Sorry, that can't happen and it didn't happen.

Actually, what happened was four former presidents met with the current sitting president, President Barack Obama. The former presidents were George Herbert Walker Bush, William Jefferson Clinton, George W. Bush and Jimmy Carter.

These guys were presidents but upon leaving office they also left their title behind for the next president to lay claim to. That's the way this thing works.

But we toss around titles like they are a forever charm worn around the wrist. Not so.

How often have you heard Mitt Romney called Gov. Romney in this campaign season? Often! It's been many years since he was a sitting governor.

Or Newt Gingrich called Speaker Gingrich? Far too often!

There are many former mayors still referred to as "Mayor," as is the case with governors.

Donald Rumsfeld, believe it or not, was recently introduced as Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, as a member of a panel discussing military affairs.

Even high-ranking retired military officers find themselves still referred to their rank despite wearing civilian clothes.

Whatever happened to the word "former"?

This may be an insignificant concern to many readers, but sadly accuracy just seems to



**tom dreiling**

• man of the plains

have taken a back seat. One of my instructors at Fort Hays State (not a university in 1954 when this took place), Katherine Rogers, told me that accuracy is everything and without it you have written nothing. We were briefly discussing something I had hoped would find itself into the college newspaper. It didn't, a real blow to this tiny seed in the garden of developing journalists. But I learned from that rejection.

So, now that I am retired, do I now consider myself a former journalist? I am still writing, aren't I?

Did you look over the greeting cards you received in the mail this Christmas season? I mean, really close? I did, although I usually don't. I was speechless to read on the back of several of my cards these words: Hallmark, MADE IN CHINA. China? You got to be kidding! What's more American than the name Hallmark? I rarely read the back of cards so I don't know if this is something new or if it's been in play for quite a spell.

Regardless, it turned my stomach!

I've been following newspaper and television reports as they relate to the OCCUPY bunch and I am still waiting for them to occupy probably the most important place around. I'll give you a hint: my bottom and a

seat in the place I call "most important," were made for one other. Give me a newspaper to read and I'm good to go.

Snippets  
"...At least Ron Paul has an excuse for his insanity; he's from Texas!..."

"Gingrich might be what the last four letters of his name spell, but he still hasn't got enough to finish the job. ..."

"Romney reminds me of a high school kid who just got his first kiss. So excited he swallowed his words. ..."

"...Looks like House Speaker Boehner is between a rock and a very uncomfortable place. The Tea Party's out to get him after he caved in to the Democrats on the payroll tax holiday issue. ... The stage is being set for a GOP/TP showdown!"

"The Bachmann girl needs to take some night classes to bring her up to speed on the courses she apparently flunked while wasting a desk in school. President? She's gotta be kidding! ..."

"...Texas Guv Perry is nothing more than political waste."

"Some call Joe Biden the best vice president ever. Now that's what I call a real gaffe!..."

Snippets to milehitom@hotmail.com. Please keep them within three sentences.

Peace!

Tom Dreiling is a retired journalist, now living in Denver. He edited and published newspapers in Kansas and Wyoming during his 44-year career. E-mail is milehitom@hotmail.com.

## Kansas voter ID law protects elections

Some have criticized the new Kansas Voter ID law written and backed by Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach.

Others have praised this legislation and many states have taken his lead and are implementing similar laws. It passed the Kansas legislature with broad support from both parties.

As I awoke this morning to news of the massive unrest in Russia due to the alleged vote rigging of their recent election, it provided a useful, real-world example of what can happen when the electorate loses faith in the election system.

It is one of government's prime responsibilities to ensure elections are conducted in a legal and lawful manner. By so doing, voters will accept the results and the transition of power that has always been so remarkably smooth and peaceful here in America can continue to be so. Untrusted election results favor anarchy and despotism.

It seems the sticking point with the law is it



**guest columnist**

• ken klemm

requires voters to show a photo ID at the polls. To address the possibility a person of voting age may not have a photo ID, the State has provided a path for one to be easily obtained at no cost to the voter. I've always marveled that a photo ID was NOT required to vote considering the importance of our elections.

There are some who see the requirement of producing a photo ID as blatant racism. I find that odd since I see folks of all colors driving cars—presumably legal—and each are required to carry a photo ID to do so. If the act of producing a photo ID is racist then I guess most hotels, all car rental companies, banks which

require an ID to cash checks or open accounts and any business that requires a photo ID to write a check are racist as well. Why don't we hear folks screaming about how racist their policies are?

Perhaps it's due to the fact there is one party that benefits much greater from illegal voters than the other?

Other people are concerned we are descending into a police state where we must produce our "papers" everywhere we go. History will show the opposite to be true. When people lose faith in their government, anarchy ensues and then only a police state can restore the peace. Watch what happens in Russia this time around. I can't say what will happen for sure but as Mark Twain once said, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme."

Ken Klemm  
Goodland, KS

## Ogallala Aquifer committee presents plan

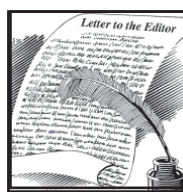
To the Editor:

As the Ogallala Aquifer Advisor Committee wraps up the Governor's 2012 Proposed Water Legislation public meeting tour throughout the state, I believe now more than ever we are going to see changes in the decisions stakeholders make and how they manage their water rights.

The drought this past year has shown farmers the value of the Ogallala and the need to make sure it is available into the future.

The Governor's 2012 water legislation package is a big step in offering more flexibility and stakeholder control. These proposals are fundamental in changing from a culture of consumption to a culture of conservation in order to conserve and extend this vital resource that supports the entire western third of Kansas. They create an environment of positive change to support future economic growth.

It has been evident through the public meetings in order to see a change; it has to be a locally led effort. Kansans living and working



**from our readers**

• to the editor

in these areas have provided valuable input in the policy development as more than 400 attended the Governor's Economic Summit on the Future of the Ogallala Aquifer this past summer. Two consistent messages taken from the summit were "something needs to be done" and "locals need to have control."

While some may suggest the Governor's proposals don't go far enough in water savings, if the proposals are implemented the results could be significant. Local Enhancement Management Areas or LEMAs provide the opportunity for locally defined water savings. A current proposal led by locals in northwest Kansas is an example that would reduce water

use by 20 percent. We believe when successfully implemented others will follow suit and similar savings will be replicated throughout the Ogallala Aquifer.

The Governor's proposed expansion of the Kansas Water Banking Act can provide for locally developed water markets that will by law have a built in 10 percent water savings. This is a step in placing a value on water.

It's true every great journey begins with one small step. This legislation is four steps in the right direction and allows producers more confidence to make water conservation a part of their business decisions.

The advisory committee will reconvene in the upcoming months and look for more ways to conserve and extend the useful life of the aquifer while keeping western Kansas' economy strong.

Gary Harshberger  
Kansas Water Authority Chair  
Ogallala Aquifer Advisory Committee Chair