

The Republican race for Senate is heating up

The Republican race for Senate heated up last week, with the No. 2 candidate showing just how desperate he is by launching attack ads against Rep. Jerry Moran.

How desperate? Some of the “charges” involved votes in the state Senate nearly 15 years ago on tax changes that even Rep. Todd Tiaht once said he would have supported.

The truth is, as a congressman, Rep. Moran has a nearly unblemished record of conservative thinking. He’s voted against every kind of tax and spending increase, even the multi-billion-dollar “bailout” plans promoted in the last Congress by President George W. Bush and the Republican leadership of the time.

Mr. Moran noted that during the Bush years, he’d been one of the few Republicans against the No Child Left Behind Act, basically a multi-billion federal takeover of local schools, and had even voted against the hugely expensive federal “COBRA” rules governing privacy at hospitals and clinics.

But desperate candidates will do desperate things. Mr. Tiaht has denied that he’s the underdog, but more and more polls show him trailing the veteran western Kansas congressman.

It’s true that Rep. Moran seems to have a much broader base of support across Kansas, appealing to both conservatives and moder-

ates. His conservatism seems to be based in sound, traditional GOP thinking about spending and taxes. He’s never been afraid to buck the White House or the leadership, even when it’s his own party.

We can remember talking to Rep. Roy Blunt of Missouri when he was the Republican whip in the House, basically the enforcer for the speaker. Mr. Moran, he said, caused him a lot of trouble because he followed his own conscience, not the party’s.

What’s wrong with that? Out here in the Big First district, we know Jerry Moran. We know his record and we know what kind of congressman he’s been. He’s the guy who’s visited every county in the huge district—now 69 of ‘em—every year, staying in touch with Main Street. The guy whose family remained in Hays, to keep him in touch with home. The guy who came back nearly every weekend of the year.

And the guy who voted against taxes, spending and outrageous earmarks every chance he got.

That’s the guy most of us will be voting for in August, not some fellow from Wichita who puts out shrill attack ads. Our friend, neighbor and representative, Jerry Moran.

We’ll be proud to see him advance to the Senate. — Steve Haynes

Stress test leads to day at clinic

Seems I flunked my stress test, so I had to go to Kearney and have a cardiologist look at my heart.

I got the stress test because I flunked my electrocardiogram. Well, not flunked exactly. I had an enlarged “P wave,” whatever that is. Might indicate an enlarged heart.

When I took the stress test, though, the “EKG” was good. I was encouraged. The cardiologist was not. When he read the X-rays taken before and after the stress, with radioactive dye in my blood vessels, he said the bottom of my heart was not beating strongly. Maybe I had blocked arteries, he said.

I was surprised, since I’ve never had any indication of heart trouble, pains, shortness of breath, or the like, and we exercise a lot, walking 15 to 25 miles a week.

So I got an appointment to be in Kearney at 7 a.m. the next Tuesday, which meant leaving work early and missing two days for the test and recovery. I didn’t mind.

When we got to the heart clinic, the nurses welcomed us, gave me a hospital gown and showed us to a private room, really sort of a cubicle, Cynthia called it. Small, but comfortable. A nurse gave me a couple of Benadryl capsules to get me drowsy.

They took my vitals, asked a lot of questions, inserted a needle in my hand for an intravenous drip and then we had show and tell. One of the nurses brought in examples of the catheters used to inject dye into your heart, the sleeve used to guide them into an artery and the needle used to make the first hole.

It’s a pretty slick setup, really. The catheters are just long, thin, flexible tubes that can go right up your arteries to your heart. Three have special tips, however, each built to fit into just one of the three main arteries



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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supplying the heart. The fourth has a high-capacity nozzle made to go right into your heart and flood the ventricle with dye. More about that later.

Somewhere in here – I’m a little fuzzy on this – a nurse came in and gave me a shot of sedative which, she said, wouldn’t put me to sleep but would make me drowsy. After that I’m a little less clear on what happened, but about 10 a.m., as promised, they led me into the room next door for the “procedure.”

I hopped up on the table, where you lay down so the special X-ray camera can see your heart. When it starts, the doctor can see you’re little ticker pumping up on an overhead monitor. He can see the catheter snaking up your aorta and where to aim the little tips. And then he gets to watch what happens when he shoots dye out into an artery.

I got to watch the video clip later, so I know what happens: The dye fans out into all the little arteries that feed your heart. They do this in three spots, the two main arteries on the left side and the big one on the right.

Then they shove in the big tip and and flood your right ventricle with dye. The nurses had warned me that would produce a warm sensation that often makes people think they’ve peed their pants. No luck on that, but it was quite an experience as my blood carried that dye all the way to my toes and back in under

a minute. I had no blockages, but if I had, they were prepared to wheel me over to the hospital and put stents, little wire mesh cages, into those spots to clear them of fatty deposits and hold them open.

The doctor said the good news was no blockages. He said he thought he could see some slow clearing in the lower part of the heart, where it wasn’t pumping as fast. That could clear up, he said, if I can manage my diet and lower my blood sugar level.

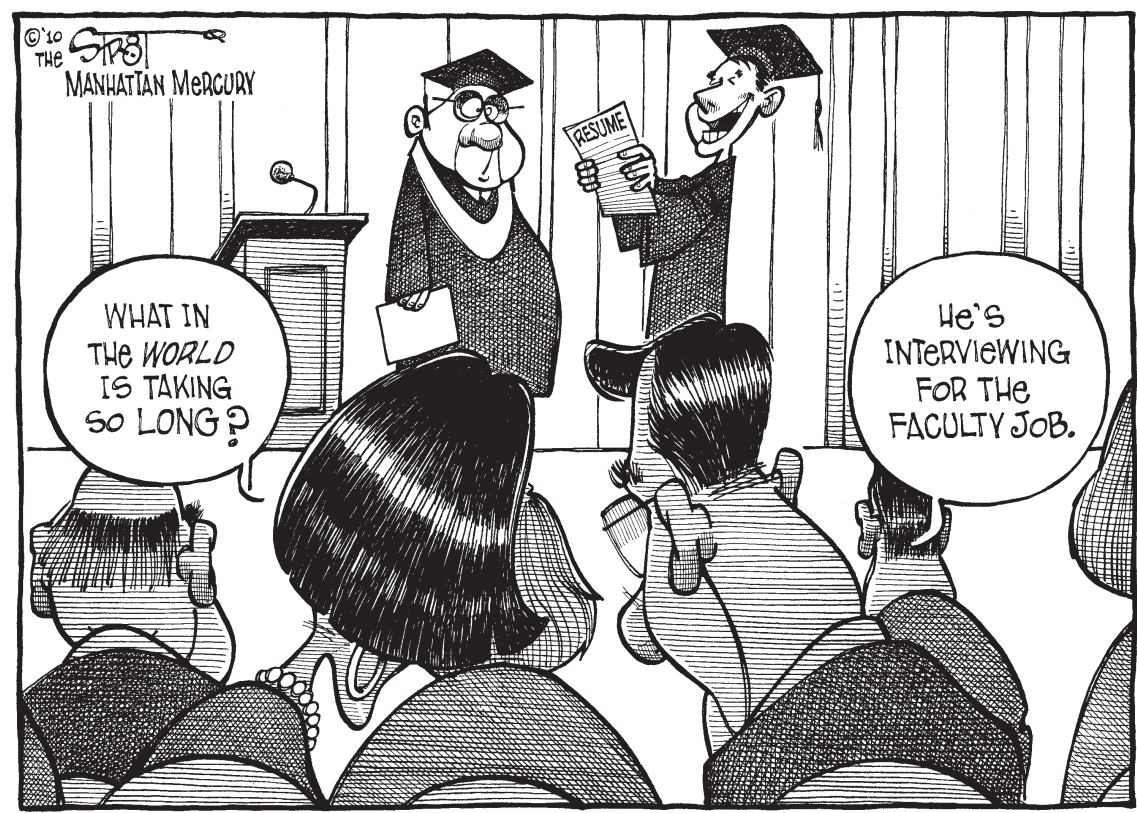
Diet and exercise? Isn’t that what they always say?

Still, I was glad to have another chance to make things right.

About a week later, I went to my doctor here to get the final report. I asked for copies and read them, medical dictionary in hand. They said pretty much what I expected, with one bright note.

The nurses, I mentioned, asked a lot of questions, starting with my age. If you answered no, they wrote that you “denied” having, say, chest pains. I took that to be medical lingo, or maybe they just don’t quite believe you. But the nurse who took my history was nice. She wrote, “the patient is a 61-year-old male who appears younger than his stated age.”

I think I’ll go back to Kearney and give her a big hug – long as it won’t stress my heart too much.



High country isn’t blooming

We took the Memorial Day weekend off and headed for Colorado for a few days in the mountains.

It’s as weird going from grass-green Kansas to the high country as it was going to Georgia in early spring.

Here at home, my garden is growing, the trees are all leafed out and the flowers are blooming.

That’s what we saw in Georgia in late March, while we were still struggling to get the garden tilled and most of the trees were bare.

At 8,000 to 9,000 feet, the aspens and cottonwoods (about the only leafy trees up there) are just starting to leaf. Many are still winter bare and there are few flowers except the ubiquitous dandelions.

It’s like returning to Kansas in late March or early April.

We did enjoy a day of wild-asparagus gathering. We got enough out of fence rows and ditches along a county road to make four or five meals. That added to the lettuce and spinach we brought with us from our garden made enough greens on our plates to make up for any lack in the trees.

For the most part the trip was uneventful. We went for a lot of walks,



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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talked to a lot of old friends and generally kicked back and relaxed. Then we packed up and headed home through all the wildlife we hadn’t seen while walking in the woods.

We weren’t five miles into the trip when I spotted the deer right beside the road. She seemed to be looking both ways before deciding to cross the highway.

Which made her a lot smarter than the young mountain sheep ram we had to stop for 20 miles farther along.

He couldn’t decide whether he wanted to be on the uphill or the downhill side of the road, so he kept going back and forth, stopping traffic and getting his picture taken in the process.

As we came into the plains, we noted the prairie dogs, hundreds and

hundreds of them. It was a beautiful day and the little rodents were all out enjoying it.

Then on the curve of a shortcut I like to take, I spotted some large birds crossing the road. I thought they were turkeys, either wild or tame. Nope; when I got closer I realized that a half dozen peafowl (I think they were all hens) were making their stately way across my path.

We also spotted quail and lots of antelope out on the plains so we felt that our trip had been an animal-watching success, even if it wasn’t until on the way home that we saw anything more interesting than an lazy dog and an unidentified orange, black and white bird at the feeder while we were spending time in the mountains.

Hair spray defied the wind

My ONLY complaint regarding the entire Memorial Weekend was the wind. As it is wont to do in western Kansas, it blew incessantly. A kind friend said, “My, your hair sure looks nice considering all this wind.”

To which I replied, “Honey, I’ve got so much hairspray on, if you see this hair move, you better take cover.”

– ob –

My high school graduating class held its 45th reunion Saturday. We celebrated with a luncheon and an afternoon of looking at pictures and reminiscing. It caused me to have a flashback to our fifth reunion.

Back in 1970 we didn’t have much to say to each other besides: “Are you out of college yet? Are you married?” and, “Do you have any kids?”

Conversation was not a problem this time. The problem was getting people to stop talking long enough to conduct the little program the planning committee had put together.

One of the highlights of our reunion was the display of a “friendship quilt” made by the mother of one of our classmates when we graduated. In fact, that quilt came into my possession in a “round-about” way. You see, that classmate was Jim’s ex-wife. And, somewhere in the disposition of belongings, the quilt was stored with his things.

Remember my spring project of going through boxes in our basement? Well, in one box was “The Quilt.” I knew immediately what it was because I remember embroidering my name on a block during our senior year. In fact, my signature



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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looks much the same today. My handwriting analyst friend might have fun with that.

Anyway, Jim made an easel for it and mounted it to a board. Our class picture was taken in front of it and we decided that The Quilt is now class property. I will keep it and protect it and bring it out again in another five years at our 50th reunion.

Part of the program I prepared was statistics regarding our class. Sounds exciting, doesn’t it? I found that 56 percent of our class had been divorced; 11 percent had died; 33 percent had married other alumni from our school; 15 percent live in Colorado; 35 percent live in Kansas; and 11 percent live in Decatur County.

Following the program, Jim whispered in my ear, “There’s one statistic you forgot.”

“What’s that?” I asked. “What’s the percentage of two out of your class of 55 graduates? That’s the percentage that’s been married to Jim Plotts. And, you can’t put that in the paper.”

But, as you can see, I’m going to try.

Editor’s Note: That would be 3.6 percent.

– ob –

While doing my chores this week-

end, I learned a new lesson: Never go into a chicken’s domain wearing open-toed sandals and bright red polish on your toenails.

Evidently, the old hens thought my toes were little red bugs, because they chased me all over the pen, peck, peck, pecking at my toes. I barely escaped with my life. Perhaps a bit dramatic, but scary, nonetheless.

From the Bible

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Revelation 21: 2-4

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Director urges safety for children

To the Editor:

I want to express great gratitude to everyone who contributed to Child Abuse Prevention efforts in April.

Northwest Kansas Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect successfully distributed 9,000 blue ribbons and could not have done so without community help. A huge statement for child abuse prevention was made by all who wore their blue ribbon during April.

Unfortunately, child abuse remains in all communities. But anyone can make a difference in children’s lives by giving them a voice. Children are our future. And as a community, it is our responsibility to keep them safe.

If you suspect or know a child is

being abused or neglected, please report the facts by calling the Kansas Protection Report Center at (800) 922-5330. In an emergency, call 911.

Now that April has passed, please remain committed to keeping children safe. For more information on how you can get involved in

child-abuse prevention, contact the center at (785) 460-8177.

Paige Campbell,
Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Director
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