

Will there be another upset?

Let's call this the week of two supers, as in Super Bowl and Super Election, the latter having to do with Democratic and Republican primary elections and caucuses in nearly two dozen states today. Sunday's Super Bowl provided what many sports fans are calling, "the biggest upset in the 42-year history of the bowl." They are probably right.

Will today's super elections and caucuses provide upset #2? In other words will Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton hold onto her lead over Sen. Barack Obama, or will he turn the tables and become the front runner?

On the Republican side, it looks like Sen. John McCain is in the driver's seat, and could lock up the nomination. Then again, former Gov. Mitt Romney's message seems to be, "don't count your chickens before they're hatched." He's looking to pull some surprises.

The Democrats have only two candidates, while the GOP field includes not only Sen. McCain and former Gov. Romney, but also former Gov. Mike Huckabee and Texas Congressman Ron Paul.

Today's turnout is expected to be healthy. A lot of that can be credited to Sen. Obama who has focused much of his time showing the younger crowd the way to the polls. This tactic has rubbed off on the other hopefuls who have picked up on his call for "change" and started wooing the 18 to 29 bunch.

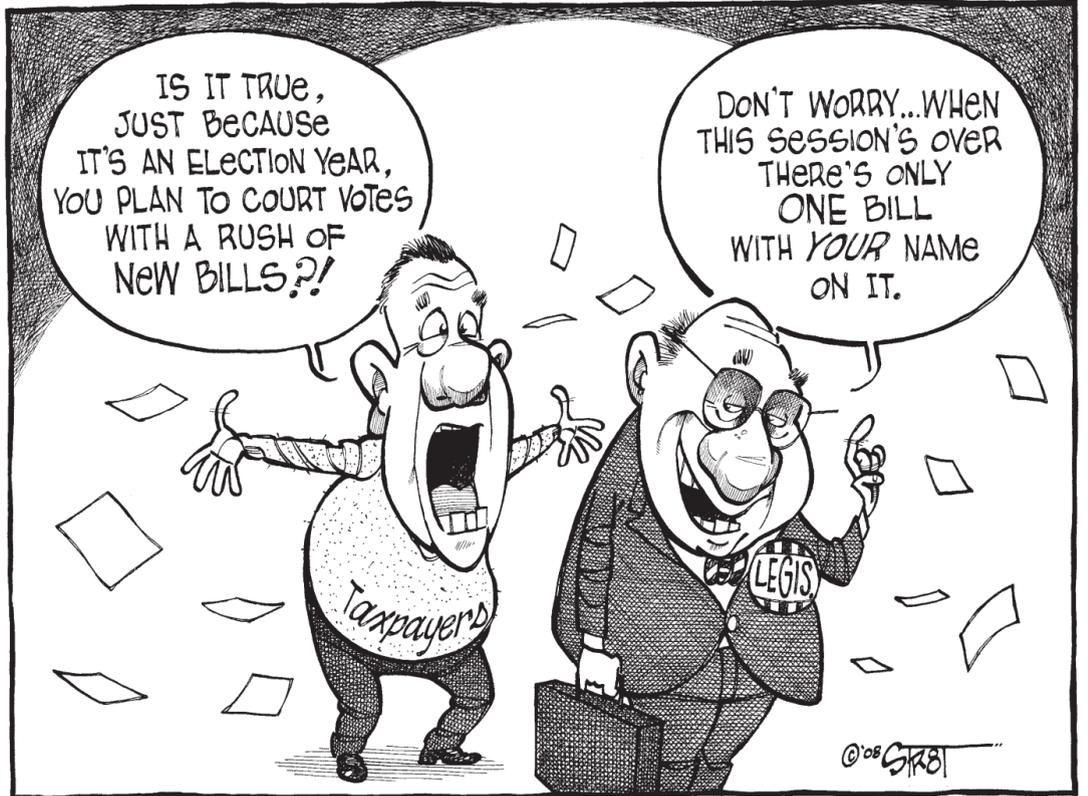
We were treated to a truly super super bowl. Now we will see if we get treated to a truly super primary day today.

Here in Kansas, only the Democrats will be holding caucuses today. The Republicans will hold their caucuses on Feb. 9.

And speaking of Kansas, we will see tonight if Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' endorsement of Sen. Barack Obama carried any weight. Polling in the Sunflower State seems to favor him.

We'll see.

— Tom Dreiling



Be careful when tossing stuff around

I am more like my mother than I thought. One time she threw her handbag (I don't think they were called purses until the '60s) into the back seat of the wrong car. Another time, she put her hat (when was the last time you saw a woman wearing a hat) in the wrong vehicle.

Keeping the tradition my mother established, I did something very similar last week. On my way to work I needed to run about three errands and stopping at the grocery store was one of them. I quickly made my purchase and was headed for the van when my cell phone rang. I answered it and was talking while I got in the vehicle. After fumbling with the keys, I tried to start the engine. Funny — the key wouldn't go in the ignition.

I turned the key upside down and tried again. No luck. All the while, I'm not

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



missing a beat in my conversation. I try again, this time leaning over to see the ignition more clearly, thinking I must be

That's when I see it. The eyeglass case. The eyeglass case resting in the cup holder. What's unusual about that you ask? I don't have an eyeglass case. I look around and notice loose change in the bottom of the cup holder. I don't put loose change there. Nor, do I have a sweater like the one laying in the passenger seat. Oh, no! I am

in the wrong van. It's red, just like mine, but definitely the wrong van.

Quick! Look around. Are there any witnesses? No. Thank goodness. Quickly, I gather my things and exit. Sure enough, parked right beside the vehicle is MY red van. By this time, I'm laughing so hard my friend on the other end of the phone can't understand what I'm saying and probably thinks I've had a stroke.

I explain what I just did and now my friend is laughing too. I said, "Don't tell a soul. This will be our little secret." So, don't you tell, either. I wouldn't want anyone to know. Especially, the owner of that other red van.

-ob-

I just had a sobering thought. In about 40 years, we'll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos and rap music will be the "Golden Oldies."

There are ways to handle stress

For some people, stress on the job often carries over into home, family and marriage. A recent report that appeared on-line in Science Daily describes the results of a study that compared marriage quality and satisfaction with cortisol levels, a key stress hormone produced by the body. Cortisol is often called the "stress hormone" as it is involved in the body's physical response to stress, such as increasing blood pressure. Long-term elevated levels of cortisol have been associated with a number of illnesses including depression, chronic fatigue, and burn out. When a person is actively stressed or busy, their levels of cortisol go up. As a person's day slows down and they have a chance to relax, the levels go down.

This study tracked levels of cortisol in 30 couples where both partners were working full-time jobs and also raising children. Arriving home following a hard day at work, the expectation would be that their stress level, and thus their cortisol level, would lower due to no longer being on the job.

For the men in the study, their cortisol levels showed a significant decline, regardless of how they described the quality of their marriages. It appears that just coming home from work results in a significant decrease in stress levels for men. However, only the women who described their marriage as "happy" showed a significant decline in their cortisol level

High Plains Mental Health

Ken Loos

once they returned home after a challenging day at work.

The implications of this study still require further analysis, but it is important to recognize the inherent benefits of having a strong relationship. Women who are happily married identify how important it is to have a partner who will equally share the demands of raising children and running a household. Past research has also found that men generally live healthier and longer when married as opposed to being single or divorced. Therefore, if you want a "sure fire" way to decrease work related stress, having a satisfying marriage is a key factor.

(The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help.)

Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Prevention, Education, and Outreach Department (PEO), 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601 (Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality) Internet site: www.highplainsmentalhealth.com.)

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The Kansas Corporation Commission put in force a new program in January 2006, specifically aimed at regulating Kansas farm vehicles (namely large trucks) used to transport crops. With this in mind, grain transported by the producer during harvest to the local elevator, or feedlot that is processed or consumed in Kansas, is considered intrastate commerce and meets K.S.A. 66-1, 129 (1) exemption, which allows the farmer to tag that truck and use it "not for hire." Keep in mind this exemption applies only to the first time that grain is hauled to the bin, elevator, or feedlot.

If and when a farmer hauls that same grain back out of the bin, elevator, or feedlot, that falls under the interstate rules, and must be hauled in a truck properly tagged under FCC regulation. This is a concern for me as I know many family farms that utilize semi-trucks to haul their binned corn to feedlots during the winter.

I plan to meet with Kansas Department of Transportation Secretary Deb Miller, the Kansas Corporation Commission, and Congressman Jerry Moran to encourage them to extend the deadline on this new regulation and have the U.S. Congress readdress this issue. We all agree that the safety of all large vehicles is of utmost importance, but this new law seems a

Senate Doings

Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer



bit harsh, considering it will negatively impact most family farms. Keep in mind these farmers do not truck 365 days a year.

There will be meetings scheduled throughout Kansas focusing on this issue, and I really encourage all farmers to attend. You really need to voice your concerns in hopes that we can work towards some sort of compromise. Please feel free to contact me on this issue so I know your thoughts, as well.

-so-

I have been appointed to a special sub-committee to study virtual schools in K-12 education. Virtual school attendance by Kansas students has increased from around 60 students during the 1998-1999 school year to over 2000 students in 2007. There is concern that virtual school students are not getting enough hours of instruction compared to their public and

private school peers.

The committee wants to know:

- 1.) How many virtual schools are actually operating in Kansas?
- 2.) What requirements are being enforced by the Kansas Department of Education for all virtual programs?
- 3.) Any discrepancies in the costs of the different programs.

The focus of the committee will be to ensure a consistent level of quality for students utilizing a virtual school program.

-so-

The Senate caucused this week to discuss SB-515, the Sunflower Electric bill. We will begin hearings this week and my hope is that there is enough compromise in this bill to satisfy all groups. With the many important issues facing the state, I feel we need to resolve this issue immediately and move on.

The proposed Holcomb plant is no doubt the cleanest and most modern and safe plant in the nation, if not the world. This affects five utility cooperatives in my district alone, and without compromise it will have a negative impact on the rising costs of Kansas power.

-so-

Senator Ralph Ostmeyer,
40th District

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Educate yourself before marking ballot

Each day we are bombarded with stories of democrat and republican candidates and their actions and reactions. With 24-hour news channels on everyone's TV and campaigns with so much at stake, the use of advertising plays a crucial role.

Years ago, when I was working for a newspaper in Sparks, Nev., political ads were what kept us afloat. So the impact is far beyond just the choosing of a leader.

In today's world with less and less time to devote to serious investigation, we all tend to turn to electronics for our information. It is so much easier to listen to an ad on TV or the radio or "log on" to gain information.

Our decisions are based on ads and news analysts' proclamations. When news anchors come into our home each

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



day, or even several times a day, we tend to almost develop a relationship with them and place a certain degree of trust in them. We believe they would not support a candidate not worthy of that position. Charles Gibson, Anderson Cooper and Katie Couric's presence in our living room establishes a sense of authority.

A CNN analyst, if he is to be believed, says there is no screening of political ads. Money talks and there is big money in

political advertising. There is no "truth in advertising" when it comes to political ads. The federal government site regarding the use of political ads only addresses the authorization of the ad and who paid for it.

There is much at stake in the 2008 election, which makes it so important for us to seek the truth about candidates and their positions. It isn't enough to listen to friends and family's "findings" and assume they are accurate.

It isn't enough to listen to the newscasters "tell" what the candidates are saying. Read the text of their speeches or listen to them. Decide for yourselves.

Make sure you are registered to vote and, if not, get registered. Then find out what the candidates support, make your choice and let your voice be heard.