

County Attorney speaks out on case

Let me take this moment to respond to a recent letter to the editor of Tiffany Pakkebie, a person that I know and respect. The headline provided for the letter is "Does a failed system re-victimize its victims?"



Her characterization of what she perceives my view of a victim's role or treatment in the disposition of a criminal case is inaccurate, and perhaps the result of too few words that can or should be said about the facts of the case. Rules of ethics in the legal profession prohibit my public comment upon, or disclosure of, evidence in a case while it remains pending. Since the defendant will remain charged and subject to possible trial, I'm not in a position to explain the full rationale behind the resolution that was reached.

I feel moved, however, to defend my beliefs in our system of justice and how I work within it.

In every case, the needs, interests and often, passions, will arise from those affected by someone's actions, which should be carefully considered. The impact a crime has upon the victim is always paramount in decisions that are made in how a case progresses to its conclusion. A strong effort is made to involve a victim in each part of the process, including discussions, notification and personal presence at proceedings.

I have long believed that a prosecutor has a duty to seek and discover the needs and desires of the victim. That means not only to respect the person's rights under the law, but to establish confidence that the desires are heard and understood. I consider whether I can build protection for the victim in a result, and along the way, be sensitive to unwanted notoriety for them that may occur. It can involve at times, however, the difficult task of explaining that neither the evidence nor the nature of the law may achieve a satisfying or pleasing result. Nevertheless, I strive to be there; whether it is to listen and guide them through the process, or, yes, on occasion cry with them.

Please understand also that there is an equally solemn duty to be fundamentally fair to the person accused of a crime. That process begins with a thorough evaluation of the strength of the allegation, based upon the nature and credibility of the evidence gathered. The original charge may not be appropriate in light of additional facts revealed at some point before trial. It's not a static nor predictable process. The best we can say is that it is slow and imperfect. Yet at its worst, the system does the best job we can hope for in this world of attaining a fair and just result, for both the victim and the accused.

I don't attempt to do this job alone. I have always tried to apply the principles of my faith to my professional life, with the hope that I can do the right thing. Trust is invaluable, and I will do all that I can to preserve the trust of the community in myself and our system of justice.

Doug Sebelius
Norton County Attorney



Not even illness can keep her down

Things are not always as they appear. I've had a cold and when I answered the phone the caller said, "Hi, Jim."

I didn't mean to embarrass the caller but, my voice is so raspy, I sound like a rough and tough longshoreman. Which is to say, I sound a lot worse than I feel. Although Sunday I felt pretty "tuff". Fever, sore throat, general aches, pains and sluggishness. Slept most of the day and didn't even go to church.

I better get well soon because this is one of "those" weeks. I am so overbooked I need to hire a double. My week looks something like this: a community meeting one night; two committee meetings (at different times) another night; hosting my lady's club meeting; working on our little town's website; Bible study one night; and leaving for an annual women's retreat on Friday. Busy? Yes. Would I have it any other way? No.

I have never understood people who say they're bored. It's my belief that if you're "bored" you are also boring. If you're bored, look around. There is always someone to help; a church that needs a willing volunteer; a child that needs a caring adult in their life; an animal that needs a good home.

My children knew that "bored" was not in their vocabulary. My girls

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



may have played the "bored" card once. But, they soon learned that Mother had a long list of jobs to alleviate their boredom. Believe it or not a parent's job is not to make life as cushy and comfortable as possible or provide entertainment for their children. It's to help them grow into caring, responsible citizens.

-ob-

I'm afraid my two setting hens have been laboring for naught. It's been more than a month since they began setting on their nests and not a single egg has hatched. They seemed to be on their nests constantly but, perhaps they were off longer than I thought. Usually, a setting hen will only leave her nest for brief periods of time to eat and drink. I don't know how much time can pass without a hen on her eggs before the embryo dies.

Anyway, I think they both gave up because it looks like they abandoned

their nests. Maybe next year they'll try it again. I hope so, our hens will be four years old next spring and just about time to be introducing some new layers. That way the old flock can start to "retire" and the new flock take over.

Besides, I would rather two or three mother hens raise the new flock and then I don't have to start over with dozens of chicks in the bathtub again. I almost think I'm past that.

-ob-

At the risk of making my neighbors jealous I think I'll make a BLT for lunch. Not that my neighbors would envy my culinary talents but, they do envy my tomatoes. We may well be the only people in town whose tomatoes survived the hail storm. Ever since our first tomato crop was hailed out many years ago, Jim has covered our tomato patch with hail screen supported on aluminum pipes. It worked beautifully. Everything else in the garden was smashed but, the tomatoes stand proud and tall.

For some reason they're not producing very many tomatoes but, what we have sure are good. Am I right? There is nothing that tastes quite as good as a fresh, home-grown tomato.

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No matter the market, the customer still comes first

Insight

John Schlageck

There's an age-old adage in business and industry that says and I'm paraphrasing, "the customer is the most important part of business." While this is a simple, straight-forward charge to live by, putting this into practice successfully is the difficult part.

For decades, U.S. businesses, including agriculture have strived to take care of the customer, to listen to their wishes and desires. It goes without saying that in order to remain viable, Kansas farmers and ranchers and every other segment of our economic society must adhere to this philosophy.

With the advent of each coming year, Kansas farmers and ranchers must once again look to the future with an open mind and the flexibility to develop new ways of marketing their products.

Customers and consumers are driven by changes in personal preferences and increasing income levels, although the last three years have marked a decline in income for many.

Still, give the consumer what he/she wants always rings true – even in economic downturns. It's then

consumers are even more diligent with their disposable income and will spend money on items they consider worthwhile and completely necessary.

A fairly recent phenomenon is the return of the home-town markets. Here producers bring their locally grown produce and livestock products from the farm to the consumers in the city. In such markets across Kansas, people line up to buy their pot roasts, beef bratwursts and T-bone steaks.

What drives today's consumers to forego the bargains and convenience of their favorite supermarkets is their desire to buy locally, from people who live in their community and producers whom they come to rely on for fresh food.

Today's savvy shopper wants to buy a top quality product and know exactly who's producing it. Consumers want to know all about the food they're

purchasing for their families.

They want to ask questions of the beef producer. They can find out about the specific breed, how the cattle are being treated, what they're being fed and how their being cared for – just about anything they want to know.

Consumers want to know more about the food they eat, where it comes from and who produces it today. The ability to touch and feel the products they're buying and connect with the farmer/rancher who has produced this food makes for a more wholesome buying experience.

It brings that all important piece of the production chain, the consumer, face-to-face with the hard working farmer/stockman who produced the food for their family's dinner.

Consumers believe strongly about buying locally and from people they know, trust and can visit with about the products they're purchasing. And after all, the customer remains the most important part of any business.

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