

Defending those who defended us

By: Congressman Tim Huelskamp

In the land of the free and the home of the brave it is easy to take for granted our abilities to exercise our God-given liberties. Freedoms of speech, religion, and assembly as well as our constitutionally-enshrined rights to vote and to air our grievances with government officials are just a few of the liberties many across the world are denied. Our freedoms and liberties represent the value and importance we place on the individual. But, despite our age of individualism, we still have men and women who answer the call to serve others. These are our men and women in uniform.

The exercise of our liberties would not be possible if not for the willingness of our veterans and current service members to put themselves in harm's way in order to defend us. It is incumbent upon each of us to make sure that even as we sometimes take for granted our abilities to exercise our God-given liberties, we never take for granted the men and women who have preserved them.

This week, I encourage every Kansan to thank at least one of the quarter million veterans who call the Sunflower State their home. Our former and current service members need to know that they have the appreciation, support, and prayers of the people they fought for and fight to protect. As a member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, this week I will have the distinct privilege of taking part in a number of activities to thank our veterans, but as I do so, I want to make sure that our veterans are receiving the services and care that have been promised to them.

Too many of our men and women in uniform come home to find themselves in less-than-ideal situations. The stories we have heard before the Committee have left me very concerned for the safety of our veterans, especially in medical facilities. Earlier this fall, testimony revealed that for years poor leadership at the Miami (Florida) Veterans' Medical Center has led to serious concerns about patient safety and veteran deaths. We heard one story about how poor cleaning procedures of endoscopes could have exposed 2,000 of the men and women who have served our country to blood-transmitted diseases. Veterans already put their lives on the line in international conflicts; they should not be forced to do so again when they go in for routine medical procedures.

Our men and women in uniform have served as the defenders of our abilities to exercise our freedoms and liberties. Let's make sure that we defend them when they are home, never taking for granted what they have done for us.



Who's really to blame for the way things are

Part of the charm of eating at the local store is the "crusty old guys!" Right now there are deer bow hunters, sometimes servicemen or contractors doing work in town, and of course: farmers!

Okay in all honesty, sometimes the guys are charming but when the conversation turns to politics, as it recently did, I have to bite my tongue so hard I can barely eat. No one likes President Obama. It has nothing to do with race or political parties. It's because he is ruining this country.

I listened as long as I could. Then I asked how the current farm prices could be considered disastrous. Knowing my audience, I pointed out that things on the farm are much better than in the Reagan years.

A former bank employee recently told me in the 80's she was writing CD's for 15%, now as an investor she can barely get 2%. She was upset that there are no "safe, good" investments out there.

It is interesting that she recalls the 80's so fondly. She is a "former" banker because the small rural bank she worked in was a causality of the 80's farm economy and Reaganomics.

I asked the "crusty old guys" what

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



they thought about that? They decided the 80's farm economy was really Carter's fault. Remember the grain embargo?

Maybe these guys are evolving; taking a global view. More concerned about others than themselves! Or maybe it is sour grapes: no one bailed rural banks out in the '80's, why should Wall Street get a soft landing? Maybe the hubby and I were the only ones who had a hard time.

Before the meal was over unemployment was addressed. The hubby mentioned that his brother says they can't find workers in his plant. Good jobs with benefits. One sage said "that's because people don't want to work, they just want to collect welfare."

Do we blame people who are sick for their illnesses? Do we say: "They just like being sick!" We buy insurance to protect against hail, tornadoes,

flooding. You can even buy earthquake insurance and you should if you live in an earthquake prone area: Kansas?

We can't buy insurance for financial distress. We can save. We can try to be smart, yet get outsmarted!

We may think it is not the government's responsibility to take care of people who can't take care of themselves. If not, what do we think should happen to them? To the poor, to the sick, to the old, to children? Think about this long and hard. Where do we want them to go? Would we let them to starve to death? Euthanasia?

Back in the bad old 80's my neighbor Vesta used to say, "If I've got it you can have it!" A wonderful generous friend, she helped me out a lot. People such as this get us through hard times. I'm lucky to have known so many. I cannot even name them all.

The hubby recently accused me of believing the worst of people just because I was suspicious of something on the internet. This bothers me a lot. In my mind I will always be conservative, but in my heart I am liberal.

People can and will do terrible things. But I think there is hope for almost everyone, even "crusty old guys".

A deeper look at so called inappropriate behavior

No one has ever accused me of writing my columns in an effort to win a popularity contest and today's will be no exception. Herman Cain's run for the presidency has been fraught with problems in recent days. The higher his numbers go, the more women come forward to accuse him of inappropriate behavior. He blames the 'democrat machine', but I would suggest he might want to look closer to home. His candidacy at this point probably holds less threat to Obama than to his fellow GOP contenders. But I am straying from the issue.

In recent years using inappropriate sexual advance accusations has become a favorite of political strategists. The problem with this is the vague definition of inappropriate and secondly, who do we believe. If, and I say if with no actual belief one way or another, Cain is innocent, accusations of his guilt are blanketing the print and screen media. Recently similar accusations killed a man's possible bid for the French presidency to say

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



nothing of Dominique Strauss-Kahn's long time career with the International Monetary Fund. No one would deny his propensity for sexual entertainment, but between two consenting adults this is not a crime, merely poor judgment. It sometimes screams of the prostitute who didn't realize she had been raped until the check bounced.

A friend of one of our son's was fired from a job for sexual harassment. His crime? As he passed behind a woman, he placed his hand on her back to get past her. She went to her boss, threatened to file a suit, the young man was dismissed; a mark on his employment record for life, a company afraid to stand up to the woman because of the climate in that

place at that time, the 1990's. Did the situation arise because of his action or was it more a response to her fears and sense of inadequacy.

Now before you say, "How can she be so crass and unbelieving," let me make it clear, I am not standing up for inappropriate behavior or sexual harassment. Nor am I saying the women who are accusing Cain are lying. What I am saying is we have muddled the boundaries of sexual behavior/harassment to such a degree we don't have a clear cut definition of appropriate behavior. In addition, we don't always hold a woman accountable for what may have been her role in the action. We are naive if we believe every accusation against all individuals is valid. Can we really label a man resting his hand on a woman's back as he passes sexual harassment? These accusations make for good side shows but what about the issues. mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net



Editor:
I am in agreement with Carolyn Plotts about TV programming. (Tuesday's Telegram) I have watched some of the shows that she mentioned and with her, I wonder why are these and a number of others considered entertainment?

Not only that, but has anyone but me noticed how a number of channels are repeating ad nauseam, various movies and programs? For example, ABC family is again going to Harry Potter us for the rest of the week and on Saturday. It wasn't more than a month or two ago that they played all of the Harry Potter movies during the week and on Saturday. And then of course there are the "holiday" programs and movies at Christmas time. However, this year we now have programs and movies pertaining to scary things for Halloween, which I'm sure will be played every Halloween from now on.

With all of the repeats that most of the channels are playing again and again and again and again, I figure they are simply filling in time. In other words, there are too many channels that don't know what to do with all the time they have. And the so-called geniuses that are supposed to be thinking up new and entertaining ideas have run out of steam.

The history channels which have been among my favorite channels, have apparently run out of history, because they're the ones that are responsible for some of the most content lacking, repetitive junk on TV. I'm afraid I can't say much more for some of my other favorite channels like Animal Planet, Discover, and National Geographic.

Oh, I have also watched the two cartoon channels and I wonder if people who have children actually let their kids watch these channels. The artwork on most of them is appalling, and actually some of the content is something I don't think I'd want my kids to be exposed to on a consistent basis.

I have wondered for some time now, if it's really worth the money I am paying for cable service and HD to be constantly bombarded with dull program content and constant repetition. Not only that, but we have to pay for channels that we are not even interested in and don't watch. With all of our modern technology, I have a hard time understanding why we cannot have our choice of channels so that we don't have to fish through channels we are not interested in.

Perhaps we all need to use the off button on our remotes more often and go do something more interesting and fun. It shouldn't be too hard for most of us, unless we have watched TV too long and turned our brains into goo.

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