The twists and turn of presidential politics

Snippets from a week in Washington:
With Hillary back in the race, Bill Clinton isn’t taking any speaking engagements, not for money and not for old friends. Ol’ Bill is out on the campaign trail.

One report is that the Clinton campaign can’t keep the bumper stickers in stock that say, “Run, Hillary, Run.”

Seems the Republicans get them for the front of their cars.

A political cartoon in the conservative Washington Times claims to sum up the Obama campaign: The crowd is shouting “Yes we can.” A couple is walking by.

“What?” the wife asks.

“Take all our money,” the husband replies.

Like it or not, though, there’s a very good chance the Illinois senator will be your next president. Him or Sen. Clinton. And everyone is talking about how remarkable that is, that the Democrats will nominate either a woman or a black man, something that was only a dream a few decades ago.

Everyone compares Sen. Obama to John F. Kennedy.

Theodore Sorensen, the old Kennedy speech writer and advisor, does not reject the “black Kennedy” label. He revels in it, telling assembled publishers and editors at the National Newspaper Association’s Government Affairs Conference that he’s been out campaigning for the senator.

Though his eyesight is nearly gone, he flew down from New York to talk with us, shuffling to the rostrum, but speaking in clear and certain tones. There is no doubt who he is backing, and no love in his voice for “the Clintons.”

Norman Ornstein, a conservative scholar known as a Sunday morning “talking head,” regales us with campaign stories. He’s not counting anyone out of this race, but whoever wins the Democratic nomination, he notes, it will be one of the two most liberal senators.

“No one, he said, is really focused on that. It means, among other things, that the supposed “conservative base” will have to rally around Sen. John McCain this fall. They’ll have no choice.

While far the oldest candidate, he thinks McCain will show strength. He cracks that the Arizona senator may have made a mistake by denying an implied affair with a young, beautiful blonde lobbyist.

“If I were McCain,” he says, “I’d say, ‘No, it’s true, and there were three or four more.’”

Well, then again, maybe not.

Orenstein also predicted a reaction by the national press to allegations that The New York Times was unfair in dredging up Sen. McCain’s alleged nonaffair. An article in the next day’s Washington Post detailing President Clinton’s financial dealings with some questionable stock donated to his foundation bears this out.

It wasn’t much of a scandal either, but it led Page 1. The national press, he said, will be falling all over itself to prove it can be unfair to every candidate.

Much is made of the split vote among minorities, with African Americans backing Sen. Obama in the Democratic contest while Hispanics heavily favor Sen. Clinton.

Janet Murguia, the Kansas native and University of Kansas graduate who heads the National Council of La Raza, notes that Sen. Clinton has strong ties to Hispanic causes and a history of working with Hispanic groups. But, she notes, Sen. McCain has a good record on Hispanic issues and on immigration, a touchstone for Hispanics. Many who are long-time Americans feel threatened by the anti-immigrant feeling in the nation.

The meaning of the deep divide between blacks and Hispanics remains unclear. It could be pivotal in the fall if McCain faces Sen. Obama, wiping out some of the party advantage Democrats have gained among Hispanics.

It also might mean Sen. McCain will run better than expected in many areas, but we’ll have to wait until November to see.
KU students work to clean up campus lake

By JONATHAN KEALING
For The Associated Press

LAWRENCE — Potter Lake, lined with trees and nestled in the slope of Mount Oread, is one of the most peaceful spots on the Kansas University campus.

But often that picturesque atmosphere is disrupted by beer bottles, garbage and sometimes even the odor of rotting algae. The pollution, both by chemicals and garbage, can be so bad that the pond landed on a 1999 Kansas Department of Health and Environment list of the most polluted bodies of water in Kansas.

KU students England Porter, an Independence junior, and John Kenny, a Leavenworth senior, would like to change that.

“We see a couple of problems with Potter Lake so far,” Kenny said. “That would range from water quality to accessibility to the area for students to come and hang out.”

The water-quality issue is caused by the use of fertilizer on campus that then drains into the lake. The fertilizer encourages algae growth, which can trap garbage and change the color of the lake. It also can cause an odor.

Three ideas to help alleviate the lake’s pollution are to eliminate drainage from Jayhawk Boulevard and Memorial Drive into Potter Lake, to reduce the amount and change the kinds of fertilizer used on campus, and to add native plants to the perimeter of the lake which would serve to filter out some of the pollutants.

“There are a number of things that could be done,” Kenny said. “We’re still getting ideas. We’re getting new ideas all the time.”

Other proposed changes include additional benches, a gazebo where musicians could perform and new paths with permeable surfaces to increase access to the south and west sides of the lake.

“The places where people could sit, where there’s grass, (are) often muddied because of a lot of foot traffic and a lack of paths,” Porter said. “In general, we want to make Potter Lake the icon it once was and really restore what it once had.”

During the past 100 years, Potter Lake has been home to athletic events, including swimming, diving and fishing. But since the lake has become so polluted — cars were pulled out of it in the mid-1950s — those activities are not advised. The lake once was 16 feet deep but now averages less than 3 feet deep.

While there’s not yet a price tag for how much these improvements would cost, Kenny and Porter would like to fund the project through the Student Senate Reserve Account. The account is built up from student fees not expended at the end of the year. The account has a few hundred thousand dollars right now.
Kansas bioscience honors research by K-State graduate students

MANHATTAN -- Their search for chemistry solutions to alternative energy production and to targeted cancer drug delivery brought Kansas BIO accolades recently to two Kansas State University graduate students.

The Kansas BioScience Organization selected the poster presentations by Pubudu Siyambalagoda Gamage and Matthew Basel for recognition during the Capitol Graduate Research Summit at the Kansas statehouse March 13.

Both chemistry doctoral students are conducting their research with chemistry Professor Stefan Bossmann as adviser. K-State Professor Deryl Troyer, anatomy and physiology, is co-adviser to Basel's studies.

* Siyambalagoda Gamage's work is directed at developing new catalysts for alternative energy sources. He explains in his abstract that measurements from the experiments show it is possible to thermodynamically oxidize water and reduce carbon dioxide by using chemical complexes with superior reactivity as sensitizer-relay-assemblies.

"The ultimate goal of the project is to generate highly efficient and long-term stable photo-electro catalytic cells for making either hydrogen or combined production of hydrogen and methane," he writes.

* Matthew Basel's research is on developing very potent and highly selective chemotherapy agents that also have lower toxicity. He is investigating a new method for targeting cancer cells selectively combined with an incredibly potent toxin found in mycobacteria. In lab studies using breast cancer cell tissue, he determined that very low concentrations of the new agent disrupted vital cell membrane gradients and thus caused total cell death.

"The modified peptide appears to be a very potent and selective chemotherapeutic agent, as the toxicity will only be activated at the cancer site," Basel writes in his poster abstract.

Annually in March the research summit convenes for a day in Topeka. The forum is designed for the interested public, legislators and state officials and showcases current research from graduate students enrolled at K-State, the University of Kansas, KU Medical Center and Wichita State University.

Kansas BIO recognized the top poster presentations from each university.
KU students plan to cycle coast to coast

By KARREY BRITT
For The Associated Press

LAWRENCE — Two Kansas University students plan to spend this summer pedaling for a cause.

Stephanie Meehan, a senior from Topeka, will ride from Boston to Santa Barbara, Calif., with Bike & Build, a nonprofit organization that helps provide affordable housing.

Meanwhile, Josh Schoenfelder, a senior from St. Joseph, Mo., will cycle from Seattle or San Francisco to Washington, D.C., as part of the Journey for Hope, which benefits people with disabilities.

Both are athletic but have never been big bicyclists. Meehan competes in triathlons. Schoenfelder runs and lifts weights. The students said they expect the approximately 4,000-mile trips — that's 80 roundtrips from Lawrence to Topeka — to be challenging but rewarding.

"I will just have to struggle to get up a mountain, but somebody in a wheelchair fighting a disease has to struggle every day, so I guess that is what will motivate me," Schoenfelder said.

He also finds motivation from family and friends: His grandmother has been in a wheelchair for nearly 10 years; his mother was diagnosed with pemphigus vulgaris, a rare autoimmune skin disorder two years ago; his teenage cousin is fighting an unidentifiable disease that requires several hospital visits a year; and his roommate has cerebral palsy.

"It has really affected me personally," he said.

That's why he wanted to participate in the Pi Kappa Phi fraternity's annual charity event that started in 1987. Each member — there are three teams of 20 participants — raises at least $5,000, and 88 percent of the proceeds benefit organizations that help people with disabilities. So far, he has raised $4,025, but his goal is to raise between $8,000 and $10,000.

Beside helping financially, participants stop and visit with groups that serve people with disabilities. One of the three Journey for Hope routes will go through Kansas and stop at the Topeka Association for Retarded Citizens and the Kansas State School for the Deaf in Olathe.

Schoenfelder won't know which route he will be on until next month, but he is looking forward to the approximately 100 visits on his journey and the culmination of the event at the U.S. Capitol.

"I've heard that's quite the moment," he said. "I've traveled a little bit, but nothing like this. I am going to meet a lot of interesting people but also while promoting a good cause."

Joey Smith, director of logistics and a former participant, assures Schoenfelder that it will be a life-changing event.

"You just really grow up quickly and learn how to work with other people," he said. "You learn to appreciate people from all kinds of walks of life. Honestly, it's pretty phenomenal."

Schoenfelder said KU fraternity members Steven Pfeiffer of Oklahoma City, and Matthew Wulff, of Prairie Village, also plan to participate in the Journey of Hope this summer. Meehan is the lone student from KU participating in Bike & Build, which began in 2003 and has seven routes this year. After she graduates in May with degrees in speech-language-hearing and English, Meehan said she wanted to do something "fun yet worthwhile," before attending graduate school in the fall. Bike & Build sparked her interest because she will help build nine houses during the 67-day trip which will go through Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.
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Back to Square 1

LAWRENCE — The six-month search for a new dean of the School of Fine Arts at Kansas University has run into a hurdle: The candidates who were brought to campus this month aren’t a good fit for the university.

John Gaunt, dean of the School of Architecture and chairman of the fine arts dean search committee, said more would be known about a new timetable for the search when an interim dean is announced later this week.

“As the provost said, the search committee had not recommended the hire of the people we’d interviewed,” Gaunt said. “They were terrific people, all very good. It’s a question of the fit.”

— The Lawrence Journal World

www.liworld.com
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"It wasn't just raising money and raising awareness. It was actually, physically building and seeing what those efforts were going to," Meehan said.
LAWRENCE — The University of Kansas Alumni Association has selected students to serve on its 2008 homecoming steering committee.

Among them is Emily Schuster, sophomore in pre-business, daughter of Paul and Sue Schuster of Larned. She is the community and campus outreach co-chair.

Homecoming Week will be Oct. 19-25 this year and will include daily events at sites on and off campus, concluding with the KU-Texas Tech football game in Memorial Stadium.

Jennifer Alderdice, assistant vice president of student programs for the alumni association, is the steering committee’s principal adviser. Returning for a second year as alumni adviser will be Elissa Hudson of Olathe, who received a bachelor’s degree in design from KU in spring 2004. She was homecoming parade co-chair in 2002 and co-director in 2003. Graduate adviser will be Kim Demaree, a master’s degree student in higher education administration from Noblesville, Ind.

The alumni association began oversight of homecoming activities in 2006. Before then, KU’s annual homecoming tradition, which began in 1912, was coordinated by various campus organizations.

For more information and updates, go to www.homecoming.ku.edu.
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Driven to Cure

Kansas license plates supporting breast cancer research now available

KANSAS CITY — Kansans can now show their support for breast cancer research with a “Driven to Cure” license plate benefiting the University of Kansas Cancer Center (KUCC). The breast cancer license plates are now available and can be purchased for a $50 annual fee in addition to normal vehicle registration costs.

Upon payment of $50 to the University of Kansas Endowment Association (KUEA) for the specialty plate, drivers will receive a certificate from KUEA showing proof of purchase. With that proof of purchase and payment of regular state license fees, drivers will be issued their breast cancer license plate by their county treasurer.

Royalties from the specialty plates support a statewide coordinator for the Midwest Cancer Alliance (MCA), the outreach arm of KUCC. The coordinator will serve as a liaison among the Cancer Center, hospitals, physicians and clinics across the state to ensure the latest information regarding cancer prevention, early detection and treatment is being shared with cancer care professionals and patients across Kansas.

Legislation for the plates was championed through the Kansas legislature in 2007 by Senator Barbara Allen (R-Overland Park), a breast cancer survivor, and the Kansas Medical Society.

University of Kansas Cancer Center Director Roy Jensen, MD, said the license plates are an important step in raising awareness about breast cancer.

“We are eternally grateful to Senator Allen for her commitment and dedication to this cause and to our efforts in achieving NCI designation as a Comprehensive Cancer Center.”

Driven to Cure license plates can be purchased at https://www.kuendowment.org/licenseplate/default.aspx or by calling 1-888-588-5249. Once purchased from KUEA, plates may be picked up at the local county treasurer’s office.