

Political Coaching

Though not the perfect candidate, Dr. Tom is Nebraska's best bet



On the seventh of November this year, I will stand in line at Immanuel Lutheran Church on 11th and Plum streets, waiting to cast my vote in our Nebraska elections. When I'm finally handed my ballot and the hard plastic clipboard, I will step into the cubicle and vote.

My only regret is that I won't be able to vote for the 3rd District congressional seat. But if I could, I'd vote for Tom Osborne.

Is Osborne a perfect candidate for Congress? No. There are no perfect candidates, and Dr. Osborne has his share of bad points.

The Bad Points

First, this man has no political experience. He has never had an elected office or made decisions about the laws of a state, let alone a nation.

Second, his educational background isn't what one might expect. He doesn't have a law degree or even a Ph.D. in political science.

Third, doesn't he have heart problems that supposedly kept him from continuing to coach college football? The Legislature is probably even more pressure than the gridiron.

And finally, this whole campaign has a kind of bandwagon feel to it. A famous, well-liked celebrity comes out of retirement to transform his fame into political power. That just doesn't sound right.

The Good Points

Anyone who has lived in Nebraska in the past 20 years knows Tom has good points, too. He spent numerous hours away from his family for the good of a Nebraska dynasty. He already has given Nebraska decades of his life.

More importantly, Tom Osborne has always been known as a moral man. A person can accumulate many things, but without morality nothing else counts.

Osborne stood firm at his press conference, announcing that Nebraskans would not have to worry

about campaign finance reform because he would run "a campaign that is already reformed."

When asked if he would go along with party politics, he answered, "I'm not a partisan person, and I don't understand party leanings."

He went on to declare his campaign to be closed to anyone attempting to buy influence. Osborne's positions help give us one of things we miss in most politicians - hope.

A Little Hope for the Future

We all know the American political system is missing something. Most of us don't trust the parties and the politicians. The Republicans seem too greedy.

The Democrats seem too communist. They seem to think government can solve everything by taking in more taxes and spending more on the less fortunate.

What we seem to need is politicians without party baggage.

Tom Osborne just might be a first in Nebraska. His popularity and celebrity status make him immune to party politics in two ways. One, he doesn't need the party machine to get financing for his campaign. Two, he doesn't need the name recognition that a major party grants. After all, he is Tom Osborne.

Nebraska will have a congressman who owes no debts and operates purely on conscience. Will Dr. Osborne make a major difference? Maybe. Maybe not. But the one thing that is certain is that he is in for the biggest fight of his life.

If he means what he says, his road will not be an easy one. I'm reminded of something Voltaire said three hundred years ago. "It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong." Good luck, Dr. Osborne. You will need it.



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Not lost, but found

Precautions will not keep telemarketers away



I thought I had the bastards beaten. I thought I had shrouded myself in a cloak of obscurity so thick that they couldn't touch me. I was wrong. I was sold out.

I have not used credit cards, have not made purchases with checks aside from the following institutions: the university, my insurance company and my bank. I pay cash for food, music, entertainment and clothes.

Very few people have my name on their lists. I have taken my name from the roster of phone numbers in the UNL directory, carefully greasing the hands of bureaucrats on high to keep my name to myself. If anyone asked the directory for my phone

number, the operator would conclude I don't exist.

But it has been all for naught. when I arrived home from the Campus Recreation Center, one recent winter afternoon, I found my plain black answering machine's button flashing red, indicating a message. The machine is just for show, not even supposed to work, yet here it is, flashing a cold red eye at me.

The voice is mechanical, loathsome, something out of "Oceania" or maybe the movie "Brazil." The man on the phone is living, I can hear his voice panting out breath as he reads some script about how I could make more money working at home part time than if I were a full timer. I am told how this special company changed his life. He wants this company to change my life, too.

Then came the consortium of voices, pre-recordings of countless other fellows all voicing the excellence of this opportunity, this special deal just for me. I was shaking with horror that I was discovered, that

someone had my number. The entire tape was used from end to end, nothing but recorded voices all testifying to their heathen God. I could barely discern some hidden rhythm in their chants and hymns of persuasion.

As the recording ended, my first thoughts were, "I need to get out of here. This place is no longer safe." Then came, "Get a grip! You have been sold out! Someone has betrayed you. We need to find the bastards who did this ..."

The mini-cassette bounced against the window screen of my room until I tore a hole with my Taiwan-made needle-nose pliers. I definitely have lost the deposit now, but that tape had to go.

So, while "Transformers: The Movie" plays, I'm deciding who might have sold their souls for a dime. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln comes first to mind. I've never trusted the legal clap trap here, neither should any of you. Sure, the offices are run by people who cannot be faulted individually, but the sys-

tem is a vicious predator, ready to sell our names and phone numbers to unscrupulous deviants.

My bank is from my home town, run by the Masonic guild and everyone keeps quiet about finances. There should be no problem at this end.

The next one up is my insurance company, which has recently been sued for a huge chunk of change. I haven't seen any increases in premiums for my poor Thunderbird, so maybe the brass of insurance is giving my name out to make ends meet.

Could one of my colleagues have rattled me out? Only four people know this number individually, and I have sufficient blackmail on all of them. They would be fools to cross me. No, it wasn't one of the Family (unless someone else has been found out as well ... I'll have to make discreet inquiries).

I'm left with two viable culprits. The university educating me could also be the one stabbing me in the back. These calls from companies trying to solicit me are not wanted.

Even though this institution was founded on the same month and day as I was born, I am still not paying enough to keep my anonymity. Perhaps I need to grease a few more palms.

As for my insurance company, I believe my agent will soon be visited by three large men in black bearing Louisville slugger baseball bats. God bless the Intelligence Division of the Family.

I tell you all, my loyal Droogans, no one is safe. You can hide yourself, you can build up barriers to keep the junk mail away, the e-spam, the telemarketers - but you cannot hide forever.

You cannot remain the spider in the middle of the web, because there is a mighty Orkin Man with your web in his address book, making copies and selling to the highest bidder. The best we can do is to tear up the junk mail, destroy the e-spam and delete the messages flashing on our machines, praying to the Corn Gods for favor.

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