

Republicans aren't happy with new idea

More craziness from Topeka. The secretary of state has the Republican party embroiled in a court battle over whether to open its primary for any voter who asked for a Republican ballot.

It's a dumb idea, and wholly unnecessary. In Kansas, voters can declare for a party — and vote in its primary — at the polls if they so choose. Later, they can change their registration at will. What more freedom do we need?

But Secretary of State Ron Thornburg told both major parties they should make a decision on whether to have "open" primaries, where any voter can get a ballot regardless of party registration.

Mr. Thornburg was responding to a federal Court of Appeals decision voiding an Oklahoma law that limited participation in primaries. The court said, basically, that parties, not the state, had the right to decide who could vote in a party primary.

Why the secretary was so concerned is anybody's guess. The decision applied only in Oklahoma at this point, and no one had sued to change the situation in Kansas — yet.

Once Republican state Chairman Dennis Jones opted for an open primary, though, he — and the state — faced a lawsuit. Go figure.

Other Republicans complained that an open primary was a bad idea, and that Jones was out of his authority making the decision anyway. They probably are right on both accounts.

First of all, it seems to us like there is no need to change the way Kansas does things. Voters have the right to choose a primary under the existing system, so why change?

Secondly, until a federal court orders Kansas to do something, why should the secretary of state jump the gun and stir things up?

No reason that we can see.

And thirdly, if states see fit to regulate their elections, why should a federal court interfere? The Oklahoma decision strikes us as another in a long string of meddling maneuvers of activists judges.

There is nothing in the Constitution that says that all things must be done the same way in every state. And there is nothing in our system that says the federal government must set standards and rules for each and every state action.

The whole mess makes little sense, but that's about what you can expect these days from Topeka — or a federal court.

— Steve Haynes

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Who'd a thunk it? A heater in June

The old adage about Kansas weather proved to be true this week. You know the one, "If you're tired of the weather, wait five minutes, 'cause it's gonna change."

Who would have thought we would have to run the furnace on the first day of summer? There was no gentle slide into it, either. We literally ran the air conditioner one day and the furnace that night.

Our granddaughter from Texas only brought summer clothes, and I had to buy her a long-sleeved shirt. She has borrowed jackets from her older cousin, whom she idolizes, but they're about six sizes too big for her. I think I'll stop by the thrift shop and pick up a couple of things.

—ob—

This cool snap was welcome in one sense, though. Back in March, it was our turn to host the Koinonia (fellowship) group from church. We had been planning a bonfire and hot dog roast, but Jim got terribly sick that day and we had to trade with another family. Ever since then, we have been trying to find a date where everyone could come and finally settled on last Saturday night. I didn't think a bonfire in the middle of June would be too pleasant, but the menu was set for hot dogs, potato salad and baked beans, so that was the plan.

You know, that bonfire felt pretty good Saturday night. Everybody stayed pretty

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



close to the heat. With seven kids and six adults, there was plenty of laughter and fun. I think I can safely say, "A good time was had by all."

—ob—

We had such a good time, in fact, that we did it again the next night with a Father's Day wiener roast at Jim's dad's place. "That's Pa-Pa's daddy," Alexandria explained to Taylor.

Dad is 87 and still puts in a full day. The one concession he makes is to take a break in the afternoon to watch "Gunsmoke."

A few years ago, Dad gave us two little cherry tree seedlings. Those seedlings are now over six feet tall and produce some nice fruit. My present to Dad was a jar of cherry jelly from this year's crop.

—ob—

Speaking of the cherries, when Taylor and I arrived home last Sunday afternoon, we walked around looking at all the things she remembered from last year. I introduced her to the two new calves, Ollie and

Molly, and let her look in the chicken coop for eggs.

During our "walkabout," we discovered that the cherries were ripe and had to be picked before the birds got them all. No waiting until tomorrow.

Armed with plastic containers, Jim and I tackled the two taller trees and we set Taylor to picking cherries from a dwarf tree that had been added to our orchard. She was diligent in her efforts. We oohed and aahed at the appropriate times about how much she had picked and how hard she was working. Evidently that wasn't enough, because after several minutes of silence she said, "Hey, you guys. I sure could use a little help over here."

—ob—

We do a lot of driving, a fact that is not lost on Taylor. She lives in the Dallas area, and it is "city" everywhere. But she understands that we live in one town, her Aunt Jennifer and Alexandria live in another town, and Grandma works in yet another town.

The other day, we were leaving Norton, heading for home. Taylor asked, "Is this Norcat, Grandma?"

"No, this is Norton," I said. "But, in 20 minutes we'll be in Norcat."

She had obviously been thinking about it, because a few miles later she said, "No (pause for emphasis). I think we're in the middle of nowhere."

How many will the black hole claim?

My cat has been spending more time at the neighbors than at our place lately.

Not voluntarily, however.

Molly Monster, our gray-and-white alpha cat — at least, she thinks she's the alpha cat — was missing two weeks ago. She wasn't at nose count Sunday night, nor was she around when I checked on the feline population Monday morning. By Monday night, we had started to worry and I was ready to make the rounds of the neighborhood.

I wrote out the classified for a lost cat, but it was too late to get it in that week's paper. I figured if we didn't see her for a week, we would never see her again.

I was upset. Molly was the fifth cat we had lost in 10 years of living in Oberlin.

In the previous 20 years, we had only lost two cats. We had had cats run over, poisoned, and die of injury, infection and old age, but we had only had two that just disappeared.

Why was Oberlin the black hole of catdom?

The first cat we lost here was Baby, a nice little male Siamese. He was daughter Lindsay's cat and she figured somebody stole him. Steve and I, however, remembered that there was a big rain before Baby disappeared and the street out front acts as the storm sewer for this side of town. We think Baby got caught in the current.

Next we lost Dixie.

She was a very careful cat, always cautious and spooky. We never found a clue of her whereabouts.

Then a couple years later, Pomeroy disappeared. This was the first babysat cat

Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



we'd lost. Pomeroy belonged to son Lacy, who had to send the cat home when it kept getting arrested up by the animal control officer in Lawrence.

Pomeroy may have just wandered off, and since he had lived in five or six homes in his three years of life, he may not have known how to get home. Still, I looked everywhere. No Pomeroy.

Last year, Kubla Khan, another male Siamese, disappeared. Again, there was no clue or guess as to his whereabouts.

A FUNNY FOR TODAY

Once upon a time there was a priest who loved to play golf.

He awoke early one Sunday morning about 4:30. He would just love to go golfing this morning, but he knew he couldn't. Then an idea came to him. He called his Bishop and said he was very ill and would not be able to have masses this morning. The Bishop said he hoped he got to feeling better soon and would have another priest take his place.

Before dawn the "ill" priest got in his car and left town. He drove for about 3 hours to a golf course where he was sure no one would recognize him. When he

arrived there was no waiting and he was able to tee off immediately.

St. Peter had been watching all of this and he asked God if he was going to let the "ill" priest get away with this. God said, "No, I suppose I will have to punish him."

The first hole was 495 yards and par 5. The priest took his best swing ever, and miraculously the ball bounced twice on the green and rolled into the cup for a hole in one.

Immediately St. Peter says to God, "I thought you were going to punish him."

God replied, "I am. Who is he going to tell?"