

from our viewpoint...

Government must get back to work

When the dust clears from Tuesday's election, it'll be time for Kansas government to get back to work.

A couple of things must be done next spring, before our citizen-legislators go home to their jobs and farms and businesses.

One is to fix the income tax system, which the last Legislature left badly broken. It's fashionable to blame Gov. Sam Brownback for this, since he's the one who proposed eliminating or slashing the state's income tax.

In truth, however, what passed wasn't the governor's program at all. It included most of the cuts he wanted, it's true, but none of the balancing changes, including closing many popular "loop-holes," or tax breaks.

The result was a mishmash of cuts without balancing revenue "enhancements" that would have made the changes more or less "revenue neutral," as the governor had proposed.

Instead, the liberal-dominated Senate passed drastic cuts on the premise that the conservative-controlled House would negotiate later. Instead, the House slam-dunked them to the governor, who signed them. Senate leaders said they'd been double crossed, but House leaders claim they'd made no promises.

Afterward, the nonpartisan Legislative Research Council estimated they could leave the state \$2.5 billion short over the next 10 years, the source of many statements about "the governor's tax cuts." So far, however, the biggest cuts to Kansas schools and other state programs have come under the former Democratic governor, Mark Parkinson, and not on Mr. Brownback's watch.

Of course, that \$2.5 billion estimate assumes the cuts won't have the projected impact of boosting the state's economy, as the governor claims. It's hard to blame him for a rouge tax plan shoved through the Legislature by opposing forces in the Senate. He did sign it, however, and for that, he'll have to bear part of the burden.

None of the supposed dire consequences need happen, however, if men and women of good will take their seats in the new Legislature two months from now. The tax plan can and should be fixed both to make it closer to what the governor proposed to stimulate the economy, and to avoid any future shortfall. Many legislative leaders agree.

And now that the battle for control of both houses is over, or nearly so, maybe everyone can get busy and make the tax code more sensible. It will take the entire session, the way our Legislature works, to make a decision on this divisive question, but it must be done.

Before anything else, however, the parties will have to caucus and organize for the session. The betting is the conservative Republicans will hang onto control of the House, electing a new speaker, while their compatriots form a new majority in the Senate. Voters still have a say on that, of course, and it's doubtful the governor will be able to summon a majority at will. Kansas Legislators are too independent for that.

But perhaps, with the fight behind us, those who are elected this fall will find ways to work together for the common good of the state, instead of the last session, where partisanship was everything.

Then maybe we won't have a repeat of the tax mess this time.
— Steve Haynes



American is past the tipping point

Our house, like millions of others, had a very sleepless night Tuesday night. Once the sky started to crack a little light we found ourselves in mourning as we contemplated the gravity of the election results.

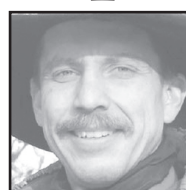
It is now perfectly clear that America has made it past the tipping point. Just two short years ago, candidates that espoused and supported the historical American principles of self-reliance, free-markets, Constitutional adherence and limited government were elected in droves.

Not so this time.

In just the last two years, the national mood has made it past the tipping point where those who depend on government have outnumbered those who government depends upon. Since 2009 our nation has added 75 times more folks to the food stamp rolls than we have added jobs. It used to be said that Americans voted with their pocket books and that really hasn't changed. What has changed is that private business no longer fills the majority of Americans' pocketbooks — government does. Those who vote for a living now outnumber those who work for a living.

Like a re-showing of a bad movie, those of us who have studied history know where this is all headed and that's what makes us mourn for the loss of the America that lit the stage of humankind for these past two centuries.

We know that the forces that desire us to be serfs to an all powerful government will grind America down until it is a mere shadow of it's former self for there are millions who have fallen for the lie of socialism. Dictators



guest columnist

• ken klemm

and tyrants the world over are rejoicing today as they eagerly pursue their twisted designs without interference from the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.

Our debt will crush us. Our accepted dependence on someone else to pay for our food, our housing, our babies, our childcare, our college, our healthcare, our business profits and all manner of things we rightly should pay for ourselves is what got us into this mess. In a very short matter of time, the financial zombie we know as the American monetary system will fall over dead. It will have died a death of a thousand cuts. There will be lies spun as to what happened but many of us will know the truth and we will be madder than heck.

Our tyrant in chief will now be unrestrained in his selective enforcement of law, his penchant for class warfare, his love of Islam, his disdain for our Judeo-Christian foundation and his outright contempt for our Constitution. Karl Marx and Mao Tse-tung would be proud.

But before he and the ilk that lurk in his shadows fully extinguish America's light, there is hope. Real hope. Hope that comes from above. For there is always hope so long as there are willing patriots left on the battlefield with breath left in them. The forces of tyranny

are not assured of their success, as the forces of freedom are not yet done with the fight. There are yet millions of patriots who, like our original Founders, are willing to pledge "our lives, fortunes and sacred honor" to restore this Nation to it's rightful and God-given role as the light of all mankind.

Therein lies our task. Do not take counsel from your fears. Do not despair. Strengthen your resolve to stand for freedom and righteousness. Sacrifice what you have to leave something for generations yet unborn.

Last night this humble author succeeded in being elected to his first official position. I take this small step as a simple man with very little spare time or finances and with children in college and some yet at home. I, like hundreds of others throughout this great Nation, have understood the gravity of our National situation and have put what I have on the line and have stepped up to fight.

Take heart. There are yet soldiers on the battlefield and there are reinforcements on the way. Not all need serve on the field in plain sight but all are needed to serve. Patriots, hear the voice of our God calling! Put on your white shirt and face the new America of today with courage. Work with all that you have to restore America to greatness. Be forceful in thought and sure in action and we, like our Founders of yore, will one day be remembered as the generation that, with God's strong arm, gave something to mankind of incalculable value.

May God yet Bless America!

Bird hobby becomes spectator sport

Those of you who read these pages know, probably, that Cynthia has taken to feeding the birds the last couple of years.

I find this hobby to be mildly amusing. Birds are interesting, and while she has bought a lot of seed and a whole forest of double-shepherd's-crook bird-feeder holders — empty ones dot our yards — it's on the whole less expensive than, say, shopping.

Even our cats seem to tolerate, or at best, ignore, her new pursuits. But to be fair, we lost our two "best" hunters this year. Of the two we have left, Jez is too paranoid to spend much time outside, and Molly mostly just sleeps these days.

One positive result of this new pursuit is that Cynthia writes more about the birds today than she does the cats. This has resulted in a 99 percent reduction in letters to the editor from angry old men who hate cats without loss of support for her column from women who adore them.

One group that has wildly endorsed her efforts should not be overlooked, however. That would be the two young cats that just moved into our neighborhood. One is black, the other a dark tabby. Both fancy themselves as mighty



steve haynes

• along the sappa

hunters.

At least, they've taken to lurking under the bird feeders enough that I'd say they, at least, have reclassified them as cat feeders.

There is no record of a kill for either of these two in the four or five days they've been hanging out in our yard, but that does not keep them from trying. Both seem fascinated, entranced, even, by the multitude of feathered friends that flock to the seed site.

So there they crouch, ready to pounce on the first sparrow that touches the ground or swoops a hair too low on his approach.

The bird population this time of year seems to be equally made up of assorted sparrows, red-wing blackbirds and a whole flock of Stellar's jays. And while the first two species might be a tasty snack for an admittedly well-fed cat, those Jays are big. They'd put up a fight. And there is a mighty gang of them, half

a dozen at least.

I keep waiting to see what will happen, but so far, nary a pounce.

These might be nice cats. I'm not sure we'll ever get to know them, though, because they are not the type to just come up and purr at strangers, even while hanging out in your yard for hours on end.

They're pretty little things, to be sure, but hunters? We'll see.

They don't seem to be giving up the hunt, anyway. Maybe for them, it's more the thought of birds than the catching.

I know their presence has cut down on the bird-seed bill, because the flock has gotten mighty careful about when and where they peck. They hang out in flocks, 20 or 30 sparrows and finches, half a dozen jays, whole families of redwings. Which makes this hobby all that much cheaper, and makes me happier, and watching the cats watching the birds is kinda entertaining in its own way.

I'm just not sure how this story ends. Badly for some sparrow, I'm sure, but you never know. Those jays might just get a cat.

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