

Voters in no mood to elect anyone raising their taxes

The supposed gains made by the Kansas Republican party's conservative faction might not mean much until the Senate caucus votes on a president next year, but they may be a measure the voters' mood.

That the Republicans are split so deeply is nothing new. The party is so dominant, it has to fight itself. There is nothing approaching a viable two-party system in most of Kansas, so we have two Republican parties and a Democratic faction that, most days, counts for little. It's hard to define exactly who is a conservative and who is a liberal in the Republican ranks, so you watch to see how they vote for leadership posts — and on tax increases.

The conservatives include those who vote "no" on tax increases. The liberals — they prefer to call themselves moderates — often vote yes when it comes to spending.

There are other issues. Most conservatives are against abortion, but so are many of the moderates. Conservatives may worry about issues such as "concealed carry" and the Second Amendment. Guns give lefties the creeps.

The liberal wing controls the state party office and the Senate, at least for now. The conservatives have the House. The conservatives have something called the Kansas Republican Assembly, which functions as sort of a shadow party leadership and helps conservative candidates.

The division is so deep that leaders on both sides endorsed candidates in the Republican primary, something that's just not done in many states. They lined up to back those who would vote for them come caucus time.

The moderates/liberals complain that conservative groups from out of state have poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into Kansas campaigns, but liberal candidates see no shame in taking their own thousands from statewide groups such as the teachers and the

Kansas Livestock Association.

This year, the conservatives seem to be winning. They made gains in the Legislature and the state Board of Education, ousting a few liberals who had whipped conservatives two years ago. In the Legislature, on the state board and at party headquarters, this could portend changes.

When the liberals win, the conservatives have no place to go. They vote Republican. But when the conservatives win, the liberals will cry foul. They might well vote Democrat in the general election.

That's how Kathleen Sebelius became governor. It wasn't the Democratic vote that elected her; it was liberal Republicans who couldn't stomach the conservative Tim Shallenburger as governor.

It's more complicated than that, of course. Ms. Sebelius is a rare, gifted candidate and Shallenburger was not. But that's the gist of it. Republican votes elected her; there are not enough Democrats in Kansas to do it.

That's why only liberal Republicans can become governor, at least until the conservatives produce a more charismatic candidate.

You can expect more of the same if the liberals lose their grip on the party or the Senate next year — much whining and massive defections.

But the primary indicates that voters, by and large, are not buying the liberal line that we must increase taxes.

Outside a few diehard members of the "moderate" wing of the party, and the Democrats, of course, I have yet to meet a Kansan who wants the state to raise taxes. The exceptions, of course, are mostly tax-paid employees, school officials and the like.

People think times are tough and the state ought to suck it in. They voted that way, and they mean it.

— Steve Haynes



Mom's on the mend, doing well

Mom's doing well. Thank you to all who asked about her.

For those, who don't know, my 79-year-old mother broke her hip a couple of weeks ago.

On Friday, I headed for Concordia to see her. This was my third visit since she fell. The first was the day after and the second was the day she got home from the hospital. The first trip turned into an all-night vigil to see that she tolerated her surgery and the second was mostly a one-way conversation.

When I arrived on Friday, however, she was in bed reading. Mom loves to read, and my sister and I spend a lot of time scouring bookstores for her favorites — historical romances with no sex.

These books have names like "Miss Merrywether's Secret" and "The Dangerous Duke". The covers always show a man and a woman in period dress gazing wistfully at each other.

You know one the minute you see it, but they're not as popular as they once were, and we have to look mostly in used bookstores.

When I walked into Mom's room, however, she was happy to put her book aside and spend some time with me.

We gossiped about my nephew's new job and my youngest daughter's move to Columbia, S.C. Youngest daughter's furniture was



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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picked up by the moving company the end of July. It still hasn't been delivered and she's getting a little ticked.

Then Mom suggested we go outside. I was surprised, but said it was a great idea. Then I was really surprised as she told me to position her wheelchair next to the bed.

She levered herself out of bed, took two steps, sat down in the chair, looked up at me and smiled and said, "Let's go."

We went outside, where a couple of her cronies were enjoying the flowers and cool breezes. It was time for more gossip and a dissection of the supper menu.

After the other women left, we stayed on the porch watching a couple of tiny lizards run in and out of their holes. I love little animals and Mom was having fun, too.

We would have stayed longer, but her physical therapist came to find us. It was time for her arm-strengthening exercises. If your legs don't

work so well, it's good to have strong arms.

While Mom pulled on giant rubber bands, I went to see what the nursing home cat was looking at out a window. It was a dinner-plate-size turtle, headed straight for the window.

The cat didn't seem to know whether it wanted to attack or retreat. Since the animals were on opposite sides of the glass, neither would have been very effective, but sometimes it's just fun to watch a nervous cat.

After Mom's physical therapy, we petted the cat for awhile and got her ready for supper.

When I left, she was looking at the menu with a jaundiced eye. But, that was OK, since I had bootlegged a malt in to her when I came. I just wanted to get out and on the road before the nurses found out and came after me.

Like the cat, I like to keep something between me and them.

It's time to get out canning jars

Summer might be winding down, but canning season is just getting started.

We didn't put in a garden except for nine tomato plants, and are they ever loaded. We must have been late getting them in, though, because nothing is ripe yet. I know lots of neighbors who are eating slicers and canning the rest.

There is nothing better than a vine-ripened tomato, fresh from the garden. I have been known to take a salt shaker to the tomato patch and eat one right on the spot.

The only thing that might be better is a juicy, home-grown peach, something I won't get to enjoy this year.

We lost all three of our peach trees and our plum tree. I blame it on the spray used on bindweed in our town, but I can't prove it.

—ob—

The rain this summer was wonderful. It hasn't been quite enough, but with the technology of sprinklers we can make our own rain. That has been my lot this weekend, moving the sprinkler all over the yard, allowing that much-needed moisture to saturate grass, trees and flowers. Thank goodness our town has never had a water shortage. Even though it might be a little pricey when it comes time to pay the



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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water bill, at least we can save our lawns and gardens.

I still think there should be some way we could irrigate with the "gray" water from our homes. How many gallons of water from each load of clothes go down the drain every day? There's nothing wrong with that water. Detergents are biodegradable now and wouldn't harm plants. There's probably some Environmental Protection Agency rule against it, but it seems like a simple solution.

—ob—

My sister Kathryn's oldest son Claude and his wife Sandy live in Florida, in the northern part of the state, and were not evacuated. They did lose electricity and a large tree in their back yard was uprooted, but they were fine. Sandy's brother, who lives in Tampa, came to their house to weather the storm. Haven't heard what he found upon returning

home.

Hurricane Charley makes our little Kansas tornadoes seem kinda puny.

—ob—

Ask me if I'm excited. Go ahead. Ask me.

Jim is starting work on the kitchen cabinets for our house while he builds some for another family. I have such a hard time envisioning the finished project, he has promised me a set of "mock" cabinets out of cardboard boxes. Jim's mind thinks in three dimensions, but as for me, it's just flat.

—ob—

My daughter Kara picked up little Taylor after one of her first days of school. Kara asked, "How was school today?"

In her most solemn voice, Taylor replied, "Mom. There are a lot of rules in kindergarten."

Welcome to the world, Taylor.

He's some kind of Republican

With all the talk about the split in the Kansas Republican party, I can't figure out where I belong.

Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe neither side would want me.

When I look through the readers' comments for the year, I usually find a couple that can't stand "those lousy, liberal editorials," and some who think the worst thing about the paper is the "liberal editor."

I'm against high taxes and big government, so maybe that makes me a conservative.

But I believe the state should provide good schools and good roads and great universities. Maybe that makes me a liberal. I might even tumble to a tax increase or two, but not often. Not often.

I'm all for order and tradition in society, and that's conservative. But I see no reason for a concealed carry bill. I don't think we need to carry heat in Kansas, not the Kansas I know and live in. It scares me.

I get kind of hinky when someone wants to push his idea of religion and morals off on me. "God said so," is not necessarily good government.

And because we can't all agree on what God wants, I think people ought to have to make up their own minds on moral issues. Separation



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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of church and state is a good thing.

Abortion? Bad. I hate it. But I don't think the state can or should do anything about it. Same for gambling, liquor, drugs and sex.

What people do on their off time is between them and their maker. He said he would judge us all, and I believe he will.

I have better things to do.

If people want to place a friendly bet, it's OK with me. I'm not much for casino gambling, which liberals keep pushing as a "revenue enhancement." Like the state lottery, it amounts to taking money from people who often can't afford it to line the pockets of big corporations and the state.

I remember when the state ran the vice squad and the mob ran the numbers racket. Today, they call it Lotto, and the state takes half, but the Mafia gave better odds.

The so-called progressives in the Republican party keep pushing for more social programs, more spending on schools, more money, more taxes. I think our state government is plenty big enough. The tax cuts of the 1990s helped to slim it down, but there's always pressure to grow.

Our schools are topnotch compared to most states. Overall, there's no evidence that they need more money, and certainly not another \$1 billion a year.

Maybe I am a conservative. But I worry about the Patriot Act, the excesses of Homeland Security, the ever-growing presence of Big Brother in government. I think we are losing our rights to spreading regulations and insidious.

Does that make me a liberal?

I'm not sure. I don't think I belong.

I'm not sure I want to.

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800

E-mail: obherald@nwkansas.com

170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals mail postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers
Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcatur, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$28 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$32 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$35 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$20 extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
(Also open most Saturdays when someone is in.)

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