

Now that election is over, what happens to country?

Now that the election is behind us, every talking head and pounding pen will be telling us what it means.

No, they already are.

Liberal commentators, which is most of them on television and at big newspapers, news magazines and in public broadcasting, know that the nation continues on the road to ruin.

The vile Republicans will lead us to financial and foreign disaster, just as they have the last four years.

But, hey, their side lost.

Conservatives, at newspapers, on talk radio and a few tokens on television, will say the vote was a victory for moral values and tax cutting.

They won, but only by 3 percent. This is no mandate.

It's going to take more than five votes in the Senate to get much done. Democrats will still try to block President George Bush's judicial appointments, and their votes and cooperation will be needed to get anything passed.

GOP leaders can't run the House with the iron fist speakers of yore used. Sam Rayburn has been dead for years. Our own Rep. Jerry Moran has defied the leadership more than once, and good for him.

But Republican tax policies are aimed at the two-income working family that makes up the bulk of the American middle class. These are the people who Democrats write off as "rich" and want to tax.

And, yes, the Republicans favor business, too. As the economy continues to grow, that should pay off in more jobs and robust growth.

Phony charges apparently did not stick to Mr. Bush — the youth vote did not turn out against a make-believe threat of a Republican draft — but the president still has to deal with Iraq and the war on terror.

It's far from clear that he can resolve Iraq by the end of his term. The terrorist threat is likely to outlast the next president, though, and all he can do there is make a good start.

Mr. Bush has had his foreign policy successes as well, and he needs to capitalize on those, as he did with Libya.

On the domestic front, it wasn't his policies that put the country in a recession. That started under Bill Clinton, runnings its course, and turning around, under Mr. Bush. He will need to deal with the growing deficit. That means there can be no expensive new initiatives until the economy is a lot better and the war winds down.

Both sides, the fighting Republicans, and the social-spending-but-deficit-hating Democrats, will have to accept that.

The country will go on, and Congress will remain bogged down, evading decisions on most issues until they become a crisis. The bureaucracy will continue to push for more and more regulations, from the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act to the dishonestly named Patriot Act to No Child Left Behind.

With luck, though, gridlock will slow the growth of government that neither party seems capable of dealing with.

And life will go on.

That's what the election means.

— Steve Haynes

Are Americans really frugal?

As I was trying to squeeze the last drop of toothpaste out of the tube the other day, it occurred to me how saving we can be.

In this land of Styrofoam cups and paper towels, where every pill we take comes in an individual plastic holder, and even screws at the hardware come in unopenable cardboard-and-plastic packages, we are really cheap. We save in small, strange ways.

Who can throw away a shampoo or conditioner bottle without adding water and shaking it to get the last little bit out of the bottom?

When was the last time you saw someone use half of a packet of sugar or artificial sweetener and throw the other half away? How about those little things of liquid creamer?

Do you throw the bar of soap away when it gets so thin it breaks in two, or do you put the two halves one on top of the other and keep scrubbing for another week?

Who throws away the crusts on bread, even when they don't like the crusts and leave them to the end?

Do you change the bag on your vacuum on a schedule, or when it gets so stuffed that the machine won't suck up one more speck of dust?

Do you try to empty that disposable bag and reuse it?

Were you the one who jumped up and down on the trash to get a little more in because trash day is tomorrow, and you didn't want to waste

Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
chaynes@nwkansas.com

another bag?

Do you try to use those last two sheets of toilet paper on the roll, even when you know it's not enough to do the job?

Are you the one saving used dryer sheets, paper towel and toilet paper cylinders, empty thread spools and old newspapers because you just know you'll have a use for them sometime?

Do you try to straighten bent paper clips and safety pins?

When a knife can no longer get anything out of the soft margarine or cream cheese tub, do you get a flexible spatula? How about the peanut butter, mayonnaise and mustard jars?

Americans are really frugal if you judge them by the half packages of stuff in their basements and garages — partially used cans of paint, glue, bug spray, carpet cleaner.

Up in the cupboard, you'll find spices that were bought for one recipe that flopped 10 years ago, diet food for the diet that died on the second week, crackers that weren't as good as they looked, baby food and

the "baby" is 10 now, plus boxes and jars of stuff we don't quite know what to do with but can't bring ourselves to toss.

Sure, we've all grabbed an envelope or napkin to write on, but I think that is more because we're too lazy to find paper, or don't have a clue where the note pad is.

So next time you add water to the liquid soap to get that last drop out — remember: you're not cheap, you're frugal.

From the Bible

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh of upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you... Hebrews 6: 7, 8, 9a



Veterans deserve our thanks

Thursday is Veterans Day.

For the last two weeks, I have been interviewing World War II veterans and writing brief stories of their remembrances, experiences and opinions. These little slices of their lives will be printed in a special section of the paper this week.

I am too young to remember that war. Vietnam was "my" war. However, I remember my folks talking of sugar and tire rationing, the war effort and War Bonds. My mother was a columnist all during those years, and her perspective of the war was representative of the country's support of their military.

In 1944, my brother Jim was only 4. Mom wrote, "Jimmy has about as good an idea for disposing of Hitler as any. He says, 'If I ever get hold of Hitler, I know what I'd do. I'd just tell him to smell of my gun barrel, and then when he got his face up close, I'd just pull the trigger.' That simple."

I have five brothers and a sister. Everyone was involved in doing their part. In this column from 1942, it's apparent how much impact it had on the kids. She wrote, "Gee whiz, Bill," said young Dick as he watched his brother sugar his oatmeal. "You put a whole machine-gun shell on there."

Another column from 1942 reflected how men viewed their commitment to the war: "A young lady was feeling sorry for her brother, who had just enlisted, and asked him if he didn't wish he were being sent somewhere else than so close to the danger zone. He settled the question quite simply. 'That's not the idea,' he said."

Later that year she wrote: "Then



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
cplots@nwkansas.com

there is this matter of sacrificing till it hurts... no matter how much money a family has or does not have, if they have a boy in the Army or the Navy or any other branch of the service, they truly are giving till it hurts."

If anybody had a "can do" attitude, it was my mother. In 1943, she wrote, "I heard someone say, a few days ago, 'Maybe this is the last Christmas we'll ever have.' But there are millions of boys, in Ireland, Australia, Alaska, Africa or in training camps from coast to coast, that are seeing to it that we shall (have Christmas again). We hope these boys had all the turkey and fixin's they could eat, that the packages and letters they were hoping for arrived on time, and that with the New Year, they may start a victorious march that will stop only in the streets of Berlin and Tokyo. And let's hear no more of this, 'Maybe there won't be any next year' stuff. What we will accomplish, we will accomplish."

In May of 1945, right after V-E Day, she wrote about the mostly quiet celebrations. "...people everywhere are figuring up how many points their boys have, and hoping they will be the lucky ones."

When news of the atrocities of Nazi concentration camps began to

reach the States, she wrote, "I've been trying to read 'Dachau: Experimental Murder,' a magazine article. It took three different tries... It's hard to read, it's hard to believe. We find it hard to believe things we read in magazines, maybe think they are even exaggerated, but a letter from a boy we know... that we believe unhesitatingly, and we know it must be true. Anyway, after thinking about the horrors of the other world, doesn't a June morning in Kansas look nice and clean and bright?"

Finally, at the end of the war she wrote, "So all's said that can be said, but along with everybody else, we're doggoned glad to see the boys begin to come home. Now we will begin to see how patriotic some people really are. Will they be willing to move over and make room for the serviceman who wants a job, or wants to farm or go into business?"

If I got a little misty while writing those brave men's stories, I'll not apologize. I learned patriotism where I was supposed to, at home, from a good teacher.

And to the men and women of World War II and all subsequent wars, including the present one, I honor you, I salute you and I thank you.

Radio reception is crystal clear

I have a new toy.

No, not a new truck. Just a new radio.

My truck came from my uncle, who died a couple of years ago.

He bought it new in 1997, and when I got it, it had just 23,000 miles on it. He didn't drive much.

The only thing wrong with the truck, a nice black Ford Explorer, was the back bumper.

Uncle was a pretty careful driver in his final years. He drove to and from the country club to have lunch with his old golfing buddies. But apparently they had some wicked steel posts along the parking lot there, and he kept backing into them.

Both sides of the bumper are bent and pushed in. My friends, when they finally notice the bumper, always ask me what I hit.

I just blame my uncle.

So there's the bumper. And the radio.

It's the worst radio I ever had had in a car.

Most cars have good radios. They all pick up AM and FM stations with great range and reception.

Most cars.

This truck had a terrible radio. I could hardly pick up ball games, day or night, and you know how I love to listen to the Rockies.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
schaynes@nwkansas.com

So after fighting declining reception and last-inning fades all summer, I threw in the towel and went to get a new radio.

It was a good idea. I get nearly-clear reception on stations 200 miles away and I'll never have to strain my ears to hear a game again. It's the best reception I've ever had in a car.

While I was buying the radio, the salesman mentioned that they had a special on satellite receivers. He had me when he mentioned that next season, they'll have all the baseball games.

I was hooked, even if I'll hardly use the NFL package, which is free with the regular monthly service.

These people have so many channels, they don't just broadcast a game. They offer a choice, home or away announcers, for each game.

The same thing applies to college football. The next Saturday, I listened to the KU broadcast, but I

could have had the Iowa State announcers. Might have been better.

Music comes through loud and clear. The only thing that stops the signal is the metal roof of the garage.

The sound is worth cranking up, though the unit has enough power to blow my speakers clean out of the truck. The highest I've dared crank it is about half power.

Plus, if I ever get bored with all that, it plays CDs and MP3 files. What more could you ask for?

Well, simplicity, maybe. This thing has more buttons than you can shake a stick at. I read the manual, and I still can't run half of them. It took six tries just to set the clock when Daylight Saving Time ended. But I keep working at it. I think pretty soon I'll have the menu functions down, as soon as I figure out what they all mean.

And all I wanted was a good AM radio.

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

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

E-mail: obherald@nwkansas.com

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STAFF

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