

## Voters don't really want big changes in country

Republicans should not assume that their victories in the midterm elections signal a "mandate" to change the nation.

While the vote certainly signals a rejection of what's been going on the last two years, it's far from a license to change everything, repeal all Democrat-passed laws and return to an era of small government.

American voters don't usually give that sort of mandate. Perhaps Franklin D. Roosevelt, taking office in the depths of the Great Depression, came as close as anyone to having a license for change. Even he lost 81 seats in his second midterm.

What many don't understand about American politics is the country is more or less evenly divided. The left pushes for more social programs, more government control, more spending. The right preaches lower taxes, less spending, smaller government.

But most Americans are not ideological. They lean strongly neither to the left or the right. And, no matter what the ideologues say, change is the last thing they want.

Elections swing one way or another. Either party may be in power today. Voters may move the other way two years, four year, 10 years down the road. It doesn't take much to swing control.

The last few elections tell us as much. Republican took over after years of Democratic majorities. They ruled for a decade, then at the start of a recession, the voters shifted enough to give the Democrats an ironclad majority.

Voters were not happy with the Republicans performance, but they were even less impressed with the Democrats.

Last week's elections show how quickly the mood can change, and how a small shift in sentiment can produce a big swing in House seats, governor's mansions, even the more stable U.S. Senate.

But no one should confuse that kind of shift with a call for change. And while the Republicans may talk about smaller government, but the last time around, under George W. Bush,

they did nothing but grow the government.

Democrats talk about their social goals, primary among them the health care bill. Voters were not impressed when it happened.

No party can control enough votes long enough to simply have it's way. Our system is not built for that kind of power. Yet the parties have shown they don't know how to work with each other. Each has it's own pet beliefs; each is willing to sacrifice its effectiveness to push them.

Thus, the Democrats will cling to their health care boondoggle while Republicans insist on maintaining each and every tax cut passed under Mr. Bush. There is no bipartisan spirit, but that may not be a bad thing.

A deadlocked Congress may be less threatening than a double-majority, veto-proof juggernaut.

Now, the Republicans will try to repeal the health-care bill and cut spending. The Democrats in the Senate won't allow it, and little will be done without compromise.

With control of the houses split, there's little chance the GOP can trim programs or cut spending much, despite the demands of the "tea party" movement. Every program has its constituency, people who back it or benefit from it. From Social Security to Amtrak, killing a federal program is next to impossible.

So what will happen in the next Congress? Expect two years of bombast and inaction, deadlock created by the split in power among Republicans in the House and Democrats in the Senate and the White House.

While change is needed, from some of the more odious provisions of the health-care bill, to repeal of the No Child power grab over local schools, to massive spending cuts, it mostly won't come.

The health care bill represented change, and it scared America, but the voters won't countenance radical moves by the other side, either. That is the great fault, and maybe the genius, of our system. — *Steve Haynes*



## Paint fast; weather won't last

Tick, tock, tick, tock. The climate clock is ticking, and our window of opportunity to get the house next door painted is slowly closing. We've been blessed with unbelievably good weather since our return from Mexico and should have finished the project last week.

But, as usual, our plans don't always work out. First, the color of the paint didn't suit us. I know we approved the mix at the store, but once on the house, it changed. Too bright of a blue. Jim brought home a quart of charcoal and a shade of green he thought it needed and mixed it all up. It's not perfect, but it's a shade we can live with.

Too bad the front side was done before we decided it was too bright. Oh, well. The third coat went on really fast.

It seemed every time we would try to get out the door, paint brush in hand, something would stop us. Next thing ya' know, the sun had gone down and another day had passed with no progress. The good news is — when we actually get to work, we work very fast. The front and south sides are done (except for the trim), leaving the north and back sides. Nobody sees the back, but I'm sure our northern neighbors would appreciate a better view.

A good friend received the diagnosis of cancer. In the matter of days, she went from happy-go-lucky homemaker and wife to patient. It was a Monday when she had a routine check-up. The next day, her doctor's office called to say she needed follow-up tests, and five days later she had surgery.



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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She's home now, with an excellent prognosis. But, thank God for that check-up.

When I told her how long it had been since my last physical, she jumped my case. "OK, OK," I said. "In honor of you, I'll make an appointment before the week is out."

Now, to you women out there who have always put yourself last — stop! If it's a matter of money, call your doctor's office first and set up a payment plan. If you're worried the doctor will be upset with you because of your weight, remember, "better fat than a fatality."

If I can do it, you can too.

Egg production at the Plotts farmstead has come to a screeching halt. I threatened the old girls with the "noodle bath" if output (eggs) didn't equal input (feed). Luckily for the hens, Jim intervened on their behalf.

"Don't be too hard on them..." he said. "See all these feathers? They're molting. The reason they're not laying is all their energy is going into putting on new feathers before winter."

OK, so they caught a break on that one. I'll give them time to fluff their feather coat, but after that, I'd better see some results.

Speaking of noodles, I'm ready to try my hand at some homemade noodles. Perhaps I inherited my Grandma Davison's talent for making what my mother called "hame strap" noodles. You know, the big, thick, chewy ones.

I've passed off the store-bought frozen kind as my own for years. It's time to "fess up" and give it a shot. Of course, Grandma never had a recipe: an egg, some salt, flour and half an eggshell of cream or milk. Mix it up, roll it out, cut to length, dry and voila! Noodles.

Sounds simple. That's what they said about sending a man to the moon, too.

## From the Bible

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *Philippians, 2: 11-12.*

## Editor goes on language rant

We were visiting the granddaughter last week. Oh, and the daughters, too. They all live in Georgia.

I could write all day about how cute she is, but you'd be bored. Instead, random observations on the state of whatever.

The language, this from a sticker on the front page of a newspaper: "Stop! October is Let's Talk Month! Parents take the time to talk to your children about sexuality topics."

Ugh. Why not just talk with them about sex, every parent's favorite? Language isn't allowed to be simple anymore.

I remember the day when our eldest was about 8. We were headed home after a day's work when she piped up and asked, "Mom, what's sex?"

After her mother melted into a little puddle on the front seat, guess who had to answer that question? And all the rest, I might add.

Rule 1 fortoday's language seems to be, "never use a clear, strong, simple word when a longer one will do."

Language again: "This species is



## Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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dependent on its habitat for ..."

Why would anyone write that way? Depend is still a verb, isn't it?

But it would be too clear, to simply say, "This species depends on ..." and it'd take half the space. When you're supposed to turn in 900 words, I guess, you need all the padding you can find.

Like unto that one is "mandated by the government." Twenty years ago, no one wrote "mandated" when they meant required. Maybe it's a government mandate, er, rule.

That tagline on all those campaign ads: "I'm Joe Smith, and I approve this ad."

Ugh. Apparently, it's required by federal law, which may explain why

it's so dorky.

It seems that back in the '90s, politicians were running attack ads and trying to avoid taking credit for the negatives. Now an ad paid for by a federal campaign has to have the "I approve" verbiage by law. So candidates have to take credit for the garbage they throw out.

Of course, no one wants to be thought of as negative, so candidates try to dodge that whenever they can. It's supposed to promote truth in political advertising.

As busy as most candidates are, you wonder if they look at all the ads before they go out. What the law might require is something like this: "I'm Congressman Joe Smith, and I have no idea what's in this ad."

## Boards should rule schools

Last month, I talked about the federal government's increasing involvement in public education. This month I would like to ask you to consider the other side of the spectrum — your local board of education.

This is where our founding fathers, and the statesmen instrumental in drafting our Kansas Constitution, believed the power should lie. In Kansas, boards of education have seven members.

They can be elected by areas or at large. In our district, they are all elected at large.

In April of odd numbered years, school board members are elected. They take office on July 1 and serve four-year terms. Three members are elected in one election and four members two years later. In April, we will hold a general election for four board members to serve our schools.

According to the Kansas Association of School Boards, "Boards of education have several functions: set both short- and long-term goals for the school system, establish clear policy for the school system, select and evaluate the superintendent of schools, and hold the superintendent accountable for accomplishing district goals.

Perhaps the most important work a school board member can do is to help build public support for, and understanding of, public education.



## Red Devil Diary

By Duane Dorshorst  
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This requires effective two-way communication that carries the school district's message to the public and vice versa."

The logistics of an election year are fairly straightforward. By Jan. 1, our board clerk must certify with the county election officer the list of vacancies that must be filled. This year, those seats are held by Monte Moore, Dan Grafel, Dan Nedland and Jerry Chambers, who is filling a one year vacancy left by Barbara Olson.

There are no term limits for board seats, so all of these members are eligible to file for re-election. The deadline for filing is Tuesday, Jan. 25.

There is a \$5 filing fee or the candidate must have a minimum of 50 signatures of registered voters in the district.

The board would like to extend an invitation to anyone interested in becoming a member to sit in on our meetings.

We meet on the second Monday

of the month. During the winter months, meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. at the district office at 131 E. Commercial.

You will have an opportunity to see how the board operates and what type of agenda you can expect.

We have brochures available at the board office from the Kansas Association of School Boards entitled, "So You Want to Be a School Board Member." This piece outlines in detail the legal requirements and the "new realities" of being a school board member. We encourage you to drop by the office and pick one up.

Local boards — local control. The uniquely American way education was meant to be governed!

Duane Dorshorst taught biology and earth-space science for 11 years at the Decatur Community High, then spent two years as assistant high school principal and athletic director. He has been the grade school principal for 15 years and superintendent for two.

## THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

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

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers  
Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, 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, \$38 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$42 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$48 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in U.S. dollars only) 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.



## Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like.

(We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us.

Please remember that we need a

clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return.

Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in The Herald are available, first come, first served.