

Republican party must change its ways or die

Which way should the Republican Party go?

The answer is pretty simple. If it wants to wither and die, it can continue down the road to becoming a party for xenophobic white men who fear immigrants and want no truck with anyone who's not of direct northern European descent.

If it wants to live, it will have to embrace the future America, which will be a far more diverse, more fragmented and more interesting society.

The demographics of America today, let alone those expected for America tomorrow, won't allow the GOP to remain stuck in the grip of an anti-immigration, anti-immigrant frenzy. It can't focus on the realm of white-faced suits, because it won't be just white Americans running the show.

Debate rages within the party. Some claim change is the only way to survive. Others say allowing even more immigrants just means creating more and more voting Democrats.

But that's crazy talk. The immigrants and minorities are here already. Their population is increasing, though many Hispanics are not yet of voting age. A party that bases its appeal in one ethnic group will not survive.

And one more thing: there's nothing wrong with immigration. It's the American way, the vaunted melting pot we all learned about in school. So get over it. Change is here.

This does not mean the party should or can abandon its principles. At its finest, the Republican Party stands for a smaller and more efficient government, more freedom for individuals and core American values,

including family and life.

These are things that should be important to Americans of any race or creed. There is no reason for the GOP to abandon even one of its principles to attract voters from any group.

But first we all have to get past the idea that race or ethnic heritage are the major determining factors in selecting a set of political beliefs. That should be far from the truth.

In last year's election, the Associated Press reports, President Obama may have won largely because black Americans, women and other minorities turned out to vote while white Americans, uninspired by the GOP ticket, stayed home. Two years earlier, Washington insiders were saying that election was the Republicans to win — if they had a decent candidate. It was apparent even then that Mitt Romney would not rise to the challenge.

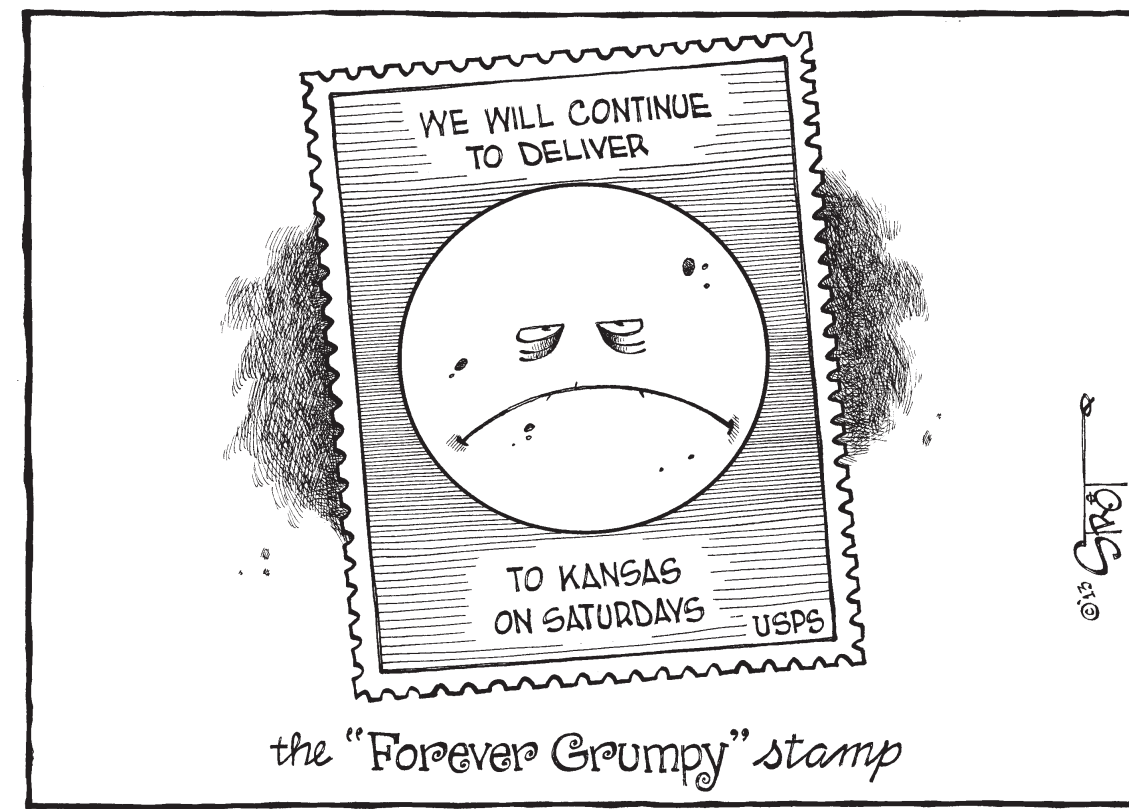
The Republicans will have to do better. Someone like the popular Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, an ethnic Cuban, would do no worse.

The party can begin by ditching the fear mongers of immigration issues and appealing to everyone, not just one ethnic group. They cannot build bridges to Hispanics by avoiding a common-sense settlement on immigration. They cannot attract minority votes without minority candidates.

The U.S. will be a far different place in this century than the last, but not necessarily a better place if the party fails and falters. Republicans should heed the calls to change and accept the realities of the 21st century.

The opportunity will not come again.

— Steve Haynes



Cleaning starts in one room

Ever since our return from Guatemala, I've been planning to clean house. I mean really clean the house; the kind of house cleaning where you move the furniture, wipe down the walls, wash the windows and dust the baseboards.

This weekend seemed like the time to do it, and the bathroom was the sensible place to start. First I had Jim move the cute little bench and towel cabinet I have in there out to the family room. Then it was sweeping, mopping and sanitizing. The shower stall received a thorough cleaning, even the shampoo and conditioner bottles. How they get so grimy, I don't know.

By this time, I was running out of steam and said, "I'll finish this tomorrow." Which meant the cute little bench and towel cabinet were still in the family room. Sunday is a full day for us, and it was after 5 when we got home. A nap is usually our first priority, and after that a light supper. That made it about 8 p.m. before I could drag myself back into the bathroom to finish what I had started.

When we built the addition to our house, Jim designed and crafted my one-of-a-kind dressing table/vanity. I call it a diorama. It sits at a 90-degree angle to my sink vanity with a three-tiered, raised-panel cabinet in the corner. It is about five inches deep with a glass top. Inside are sand and seashells, reflecting my bathroom décor theme. He even wrote a little "love message" in the sand. It's my favorite thing.

However, (there's always a "however"), it's also a flat surface. In our house "flat surface" translates into: a place to put things when you don't know where else to put them. I began by sorting things into small plastic baskets, according to pur-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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pose. Lotions went into one basket. Who needs six bottles of hand/body lotion? Hair products into another basket. Candles, clippers, Kleenex, address labels, paint can opener, thumbtacks, ink pens, sun visor, sunscreen, the list goes on. Where does it all come from? The bigger question: where does it all go?

The bathroom was mostly done Sunday night, but a few things remained. Early Monday morning, thumping and scraping sounds awakened me. It was Jim moving that cute little bench and towel cabinet back into the bathroom. Oh, I still have a window to wash and the walls to wipe down, but all-in-all, I'm feeling pretty good about it.

However (there's that darned "however" again), at this rate it will be next spring before I get the whole house done, and then it will be time to start all over again.

Get the nursery ready; boil the bottles; mix the formula; we're going to have a baby!

Had 'ya for a minute, didn't I? We're going to have a baby calf.

Our farmer/rancher friend, Dave, called to say he had a "bum" calf. Not sure what happened to her mother, but they had been bottle feeding it, then tried to put it with an adoptive mother, but she would have no part of that.

When he asked if we wanted her,

the answer was, "Give us a little time to get a pen ready. We'll pick her up tomorrow."

That was the push we needed to move the young chickens (who were in the calf pen) into the grown-up chicken coop. I'll watch them closely for a few days to make sure they play nice.

It will be fun to have a "baby" around the place again.

I saw a quote from P.J. O'Rourke on Facebook. He is an American political satirist with a "pithy" outlook on life. He wrote, "If you think healthcare is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free." I like this guy.

From the Bible

And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

— Acts 8: 38-39

Weather has no normal here

They say it might snow tonight. I know it's May; so do "they." But hey, it's northwest Kansas, and there's no such thing as normal weather here.

We have weather, and it's all weird.

Last year, it was all hot, at least until it turned off cool in August. Warm spring. More 100-plus-degree days than anyone could remember. Most summers, we only get a couple. Last year, we got 'em by the dozen. Remember?

This spring, at least, it's all snow. We've hardly had a thunderstorm, and tornado "season" is nearly past. And they say it might snow tonight. May 1!

OK, it's only a 20 percent chance as this is written. By today, the whole forecast might change. Weather forecasting is partly the art of honing your predictions as more data comes in.

And then comes the weather, and the forecaster hopes it makes us forget what he or she called for. It's an interesting game.

Weather itself is not a game, however.

Weather makes us hot or cold. Either one costs money. Weather makes crops grow, or not. That can cost farmers big money. Weather can tear up the town and leave us in tears. It can freeze us or bake us, blow us away or ice us over.

We get all that here on the High Plains, and often in the same month. Sometimes in the same week. It was just a little more than a week ago the



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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last time it snowed, right? And this weekend, the temperature soared into the 80s.

I don't know about you, but I got my shorts out to mow the lawn. (The lawn mower shot craps, but that's another story. I had plenty of other chores waiting.)

Weather fascinates us, probably because we usually have absolutely no idea what it will do. Oh, the forecasters take a stab at it, but really, it's just an educated guess. Weather doesn't often do what you think it will.

I know modern forecasting is a science. I have friends who are weathermen. But it's an inexact science, even with computer programs that help make the predictions. (One problem with those is there are dozens of them, and no two agree on the average day's forecast. The forecaster is left to make his educated guess among them.)

Me, I've given up trying to figure the weather out. I know it'll be crazy, and that's enough.

Oh, I still read the forecasts. Otherwise, how would I know it's supposed to snow tonight? But you

can't focus your life on the weather doing what it's supposed to do. Make plans that way, and you can waste a lot of time.

Will it snow? It probably has snowed here in May before, but I'm not qualified to make a prediction. The one thing I do know is that Cynthia put the snow shovels away Sunday. In my book, that all but guarantees snow tonight.

(She's put them away twice before this spring, by the way. An eternal optimist, that woman.)

So if I was going to bet, I'd bet on snow. And hope I can find a shovel in the morning.

In the U.S.A.

"Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or justice to our enemies, justice will be done."

— George W. Bush
U.S. President

It's governor's turn on bills

An update on the bills sent to the governor for signature at "turn-around":

The House and Senate passed a measure addressing sovereignty concerns if federal agents attempt to confiscate firearms, accessories or ammunition manufactured and possessed in Kansas.

Originally, the bill required state and local law enforcement officers to arrest federal agents acting on orders of superiors. It was altered to block arrests and gave local and state prosecutors authority to seek court orders prohibiting out-of-state agents from taking Kansas-made weapons.

Both houses also agreed to a bill creating a four-year glide path to imposition of a law requiring state and municipal buildings to have metal detection or trained guards at entries or lift any ban on people with concealed-carry permits from entering with a weapon.

Public schools, correctional facilities and jails would be allowed to retain policies prohibiting concealed handguns on the premises. A school board, university chief



Letter from Topeka

By State Rep. Ward Cassidy
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executive or community college president could authorize licensed employees to carry concealed handguns at work.

There were so many bills introduced pertaining to public schools this year it will take several articles to highlight them. Today, I'll cover the governor's "Read to Succeed" proposal.

The House and Senate passed HB 2140, a substantially amended version of the original bill. The measure provides that beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, districts that have a higher percentage of students scoring in the lowest achievement level on state reading assessments will have to adopt a policy for possible retention of certain students in

first grade, rather than third grade as proposed by the governor and adopted in some other states.

The bill also creates a grant program to assist struggling readers in the early grades, a task force to study reading interventions and a recognition program for schools demonstrating the most improvement in fourth grade reading results.

Whether the bill is signed and then funded remains to be seen. It certainly has drawn attention to how important it is for students to learn to read, and I would hope parents and schools continue to focus on reading and its importance.

As of April 22, the governor had signed 120 bills into law.

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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.

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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