

The battle between conservatives and liberals is on

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 of 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 others 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 until 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



Things need doing as the season ends

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 over 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

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



a water shortage. Even though it might be a little pricey when it comes time to pay the 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.

There are benefits to an empty nest

Sherry Rushton and I were commiserating on the empty nest syndrome the other day. She said she didn't know why she should miss Bruce because he was never home anyway.

Sherry had three boys so she is not getting the fringe benefits I discovered. At our house we had Jr.'s bathroom and the girls' bathroom. Now that the girls are gone we have Jr.'s bathroom and Nancy's bathroom!

What they took and what they left behind baffles me. They took all the tweezers and the good hairbrushes. They left scrunchies for ponytails. I know those aren't mine, I haven't had a ponytail since fifth grade.

There are still four toothbrushes in the holder. I hope dental hygiene is not being put on hold.

They left a lot of nail polish and I gained a curling iron. It had been missing for months. I think Kate took it to Hays with her, then she forgot and took another one. When she unpacked at her new place she realized she had two.

Oops. "Mom is this your curling iron.?" Tricia insists she is still short a curling iron but she is fussing about one with a big barrel — not my problem.

I cleaned the bathroom; as usual everything was lacquered underneath layers of hair spray. But from now on all the messes are my own.

Actually I cleaned the whole house. Whatever I didn't claim, I put in the appropriate bedroom. The girls are going to have one chance to redeem it on their first trip home.

I can be ruthless. I can watch whatever I want to on television (unless the hubby is home). I can cook whatever I want (even if the hubby is home cuz he is not a picky eater). I can get on the Internet whenever I want. They turned in all the coop gas cards

Back Home Nancy Hagman



and there is hot water.

Life is getting better and better.

The phone is always free.

I have to admit I am a little miffed about that. It used to be if Kent couldn't get hold of Tricia he would talk to me.

Well, for some reason he quit calling, at least he quit calling here. Go figure!

There may even be another fringe benefit. Remember how accident prone Jr. tends to be? Cathy Holste claims Jay is

the same way.

Now Jay has come up with a theory that it has something to do with having three daughters. Typical of a man — blame your problems on women.

But I was thinking if this is true and the girls are gone maybe we will have fewer medical bills and even more money (I'm telling you that gas card thing alone is going to make a huge difference).

Since this is a family column I won't even get into answering Mary Vanover's question. It was something like — What are you going to do with Jr. now that the girls are gone?

So even though I know Sherry is going to miss Bruce and I am going to miss Kent, er — I mean Tricia, let's keep a positive outlook.

Don't think of it as an empty nest, think of it as an empty bathroom!

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