

Senator applauds new water laws

By Senator Ralph Ostmeyer

I joined Governor Sam Brownback Monday, March 5th in Garden City to sign into law legislation that provides regulatory relief to irrigators and ensures rural Kansas communities continue to thrive economically. I have often said, “Irrigation is crucial to the health of western Kansas. Without changes that allow farmers to adapt to the recent drought, our communities will be facing a serious economic situation.”

The first bill, SB 272, amends water law to provide Kansas farmers and ranchers with the flexibility they need to carefully manage their water resources and balance usage in years where a lack of rainfall may require additional resources. Known as multi-year flex accounts, this legislation gives Kansas producers the option to spread the amount of groundwater they pump over a five-year period, allowing them to fully protect their crops in dry conditions while holding the line on overall water usage.

The second bill, HB 2451, would amend “use it or lose it” practices in Kansas. Current law encourages the overuse of water, particularly of the Ogallala Aquifer. This amendment to state water law would instead encourage conservation in normal and wet years and protect our state’s water supply for future generations.

As the chair of the Senate Natural Resources committee, we are reviewing another plan currently in committee. Senate Bill 310 would amend water law regarding water use control in Groundwater Management Districts and ensure that the Chief Engineer of the Division of Water Resources of the Department of Agriculture would approve all recommendations related to water quality or water supply made by a Groundwater Management District.

I hope to return to western Kansas and witness the signing of this bill in Colby. I am pleased to join with the Governor in emphasizing the importance of water in our state.

Carnival Rides

There has been much discussion about SB 356 –carnival rides- for my district. The definition will remain “home-owned amusement ride” in the statute. This would mean that home-owned amusement rides would not be subject to all of the inspections and training regulations. A new section might be added to the regulatory act that would require home-owned amusement rides to file proof of insurance with the KDOL. It could include posting of the insurance certificate, too. Technical amendment changes would help with conformity to 44-1613 and 44-1614.



Making choices to better our future

I planned to attend the Republican caucus last Saturday.

There were several reasons I wished to attend: I had never before participated in such an event, I was personally invited by a county committee person, and I wanted my voice to be heard: my voice of reason and moderation!

I did not attend the caucus because the Hubby was off on another adventure; picking up parts and pieces accumulated from on-line auctions and the Nex-Tech classifieds. (If I don’t go with him he will get lost!)

Upon seeing the results of the caucuses it’s difficult to say who is more lost: the Hubby or the Republican Party.

The realization that my positions are so far from the majority consoles me about missing the caucuses. I do not think my voice would have changed a thing, I speak a different language.

It’s not Rush and Sandra Fluke that pushed me to the edge. Sure Rush over-stepped. But Liberals have called conservative women worse. Sandra Fluke’s actual testimony was almost silly. She could see the distress in her classmate’s eyes as they dealt with the burden of paying for birth control.

Pro-choice? Here is a choice: choose not to have sex. That’s a choice. Lack of insurance coverage for birth control cannot be equated to things like cancer, arthritis, heart disease, etc. Those things are not choices. Those things cause actual distress.

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



Another choice: find an insurance carrier that will pay for your birth control. Or go to your county health department for inexpensive and accessible options. If one can only afford Georgetown Law School by forgoing sex, then choose. Which is more important: a first class education at one of the country’s finest universities or sex?

I recognize that my life is not one anyone else might aspire to. I’ve never had high paying or respected jobs and only one that provided health insurance. Still I feel privileged. I’ve had the love and support of a good man for 40 years. I’ve lived June Cleaver’s life as a traditional person, a Republican.

Conservative Republicans are upset that their positions on women’s issues have been interpreted as a “War on Women.”

Right or wrong, their stance does seem to be: keep married women “barefoot and pregnant”! Or if single, chaste via an aspirin between the knees!

I recently watched a movie about spring break, circa 1960 “Where the Boys Are”. Women were in college

until they got married. They were expected to keep their virtue. A comedy, the movie dealt with the serious issue of what we would today call date rape. The consequences for the man were a bit fuzzy but for the woman it was devastating.

Is this the kind of world we want? I understand the desire to return to simpler times. I agree the traditional family was ideal. However that 1960’s world was not perfect; though we could all probably repress ourselves, just a little.

The turnout for the caucuses was not good. And the results were disheartening for moderates. Every county that reported, except Lane, chose Rick Santorum. EVERY COUNTY: even Douglas, even Johnson. I harbor the faint hope that is because moderates did not bother to caucus.

For a long, long time I have thought moderation would return to the GOP. So I stayed a registered Republican, something I now feel gives silent approval to things I do not approve of.

Semantics is part of the problem. We want to be pro-life or pro-choice not anti-choice or anti-life.

Many of us are confused about what we are exactly. I’m pro-choice in that I choose not to sit in judgment of what other women decide. I’m pro-life in that I believe we should live and let live.

That’s what I am and this is what I can no longer be: A Republican!

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nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

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OFFICE HOURS:

8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

STAFF

Dana Paxton..... General Manager
Advertising Director/
email: dpaxton@nwkansas.com
Carleen Bell..... Managing Editor
cbell@nwkansas.com
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
Michael Stephens..... Reporter
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mstephens@nwkansas.com
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Mixing religion and constitutional values

I don’t know why anyone would be surprised that Rick Santorum won the GOP primaries in Alabama and Mississippi. I lived in Alabama and the Alabama I knew was very inline with Santorum’s views.

In both states the majority of those voting for Santorum identified themselves as born-again or evangelical Christians. Additionally, in those states, three quarters of those voters wanted someone who shared their religious beliefs. There was a time when the born again label was not compatible with Catholicism. It was more the identity of the Fundamentalists Protestants, but Santorum has evidently bridged that gap. The one thing both sects have in common is a belief in the patriarchal form of church and family and, undoubtedly, government as well.

Santorum wrote in a 2002 essay, that many Catholics were practicing “uninspired, watered-down versions of our faith”. He continued that, “for

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



the sake of our souls,” it was time for Catholics to take back religious institutions such as colleges, schools and hospitals.

Santorum’s dedication to his faith does not necessarily reflect a dedication to the Constitution. While 50 years ago voters feared a commitment to the pope, now Santorum’s allure to Fundamentalists Christians seems oddly misplaced as he seemingly dedicates himself to Catholicism rather than constitutional values, particularly freedom of religion.

What is interesting about this faithful mixture is that Santorum, a self

proclaimed staunch Catholic, does not have a faithful following from within his own church. According to an article in the New York Times in early March, “Mr. Santorum, polls show, has lost the Catholic vote in every primary contest so far, some by wide margins.” For a man so dedicated to his faith the lack of following by fellow Catholics raises questions. Involvement in and support of extremist Catholic societies such as Opus Dei and Regnum Christi might make him suspect in the eyes of his fellow Catholics.

Second Vatican Council from 1962-65 was the beginning of moving Catholicism into the modern world acknowledging the Church is its people and not just the bishops and priests.

Perhaps an analysis by Garry Wills, a Catholic, a cultural historian and professor emeritus at Northwestern University says it best, “Santorum is not a Catholic, but a papist.” Mailto:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.



Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kansas 67654

