

## New process allows for greater diversity

On the Prairie Dog  
Steve Haynes



After the noise and the hubris pass, we'll see how Gov. Sam Brownback's selection process for state appeals judges works. It'll be a good test for when someone puts forth a constitutional amendment to apply the same change to the state Supreme Court.

The governor's plan, approved last year by the Legislature, applies so far only to nominees to the state Court of Appeals. No one is under any illusions, however, that the high court will not be the next target for change.

Conservatives have been more than disgusted with the old process, adopted in the 1950s after the infamous "triple play" pulled off by former Gov. Fred Hall, who arranged his own appointment to the Supreme Court after losing the Republican primary for re-election.

The process eliminated that sort of high jinx, but it put control of the choices in the hands of a small group of lawyers. These people have produced judges mostly cut from the same cloth over the last half century. Few, if any, were conservative; most, like those making the selections, were from the "moderate" faction of the Republican party.

The new process is straightforward, more or less copied from the procedure used under the federal Constitution: The governor appoints whomever he desires, and the state Senate gets to confirm (or not) the appointments, giving elected representatives of the people some say.

Remember, before the "modernization," voters got to elect judges to statewide office, including the Supreme Court. The changes may have cut the governor out, but they also eliminated any say for voters in choosing judges. Sure, we get to vote yes or no on "retention" every few years, and could kick a judge out of office, but that's never happened. Voters likely would remove a judge only for grievous cause.

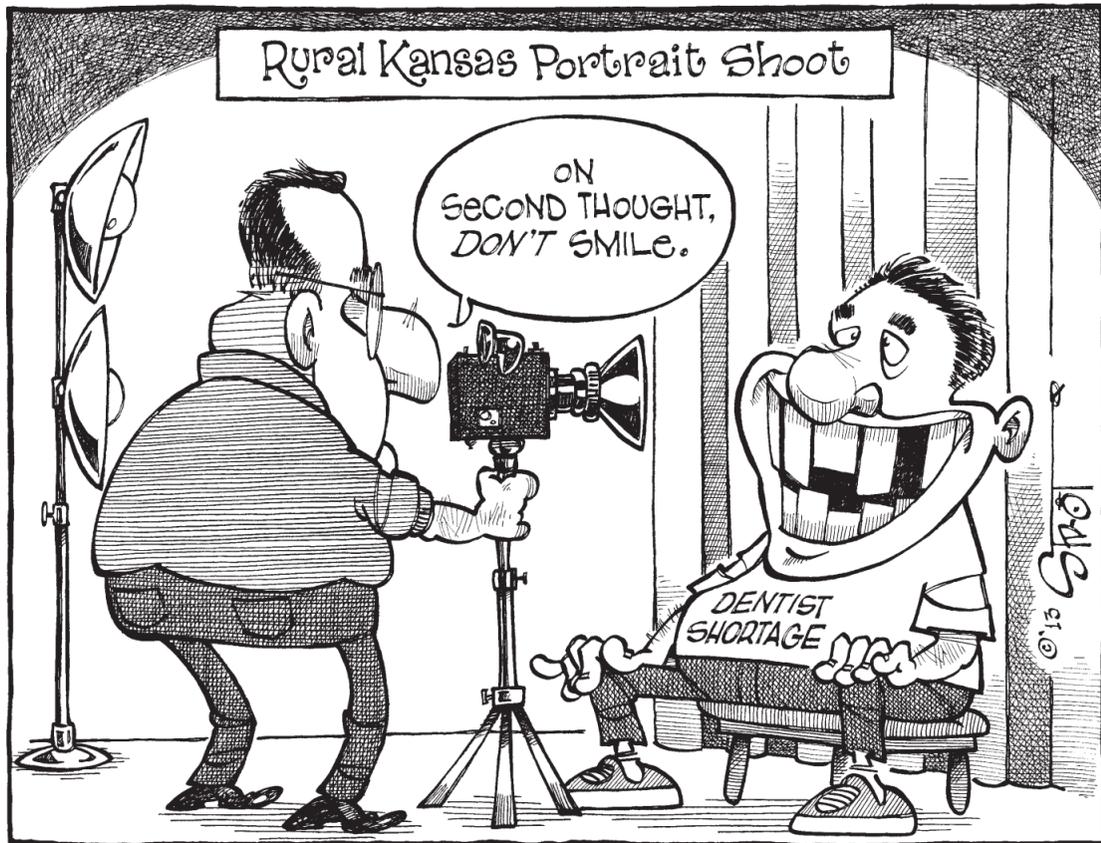
The new system actually promises a greater diversity in the views of judges, as governors change and each one contributes to the process. Sam Brownback, after all, won't be governor forever. The Senate will have a chance to eliminate any obviously poor choice, and could block any shady maneuvers.

Democratic governors likely will appoint more liberal members of their own party to the bench, as would "moderate" Republicans. History shows us we're likely to see men and women with many views occupy the governor's office over the decades.

Right now, the only people who are complaining about the new system are the groups that held the power up until now, the lawyers (to some extent) and the bunch that got to name all the judges without any public say.

So we'll see how it goes. The governor has a responsibility to all Kansans to pick wise and thoughtful judges, whatever their personal views. We should expect that.

A system copied from the U.S. Constitution can't be all that bad, and giving the voters and the elected representatives more say can't be a terrible thing, in theory anyway. Let's see how it actually works. — Steve Haynes



## Learning to live with the weather in Kansas

It's been dry! But at least all summer we could draw consolation from the mild temperatures.

Then it got hot!

We took our 4 month old grandson to Bill Snyder Family Stadium for a football game in 105 degree weather.

Just as I got to thinking it was, perhaps, child abuse; I remembered my Grandma. She lived in a dugout in the early 1900's. No fans, no electricity. Lots of dirt!

It's still like that in lots of places in the world. Babies survive. The grandmas are another story! I haven't been cool since. Not even tonight when the thermometer says it is 65.

After the sun set today it began to rain: straight down. We can open the windows and hear it. It seems like years since it's rained like this.

It's a nice change from the previous night's rain. That one came horizontally. It blew the grill off the porch. Quite a feat because first it had to move eight feet to the west between the house and the porch rail, then a couple of feet north, then west again, down three steps into the yard.

I hate to complain about rain, so I won't. But I do feel bad about the grill. It is a beautiful green. With a work area and place to store charcoal. I bought the thing because of the color. It matches the house! Doesn't look so pretty anymore!

## This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



I also feel badly for the hubby; he can no longer complain about how we haven't had more than an inch of rain at one time in 16 years or so! Never mind, he has already found a new worry---the wind blew the corn and milo over, the stalks already so weakened by drought!

Extreme weather is not all bad. For instance we missed a new record, by only hours, for the latest a tropical storm was upgraded to a hurricane this year.

In August a sudden onslaught of rain took Lake Cheney, from which the city of Wichita gets its water, from record low levels to over 100 percent full. Wichita had the second wettest August on record by mid-month. I never heard if the record was broken. I think not, because just as quickly the rain stopped.

Puts me in mind of an old line: We get an average of 14 inches of rain a year and I remember the day it came!

I recently learned something very interesting about the Sun. It switches polarity every 11 years or so. The North

Pole becomes the South Pole and vis-a-vis.

On Earth we realized this in the 1970's, so we've only seen it four times. At present it seems a switch is imminent. In fact the North Pole is shifting, but the South Pole is not. Thus at present the Sun has, in effect, two South Poles.

Because of the lack of observations, scientists have no idea if this is within the range of normal. But they do agree it could have an effect on all the planets in our Solar System.

So if we are wondering what is up with the weather, the sun may hold some clues.

In the back of my mind I am getting a picture of environmentalists attempting to prove that fossil fuels or flatulent cows are causing the Sun to misbehave.

Myself? I know the Earth revolves around the Sun. Still it's a tad alarming! How tenuous life is!

Accepting that the whole thing is out of my control I guess I just as well relax and enjoy the rain!

Over all I rather like Kansas weather; the changing seasons. Fall is my favorite. The shortening days, the smell in the air, the geese coming in for winter! I like chilly evenings and frost in the morning. It will come.

I like the climate; I just don't like the weather!

## How would you react in a time of tragedy

No one really knows how they will react in a time of crisis. I sit here on the anniversary of 9-11 and wonder how many heroes, on that fateful day, ever imagined their undiscovered courage. There were those who were killed, those who succumbed later to their injuries or the brave family and friends left to mourn their personal loss and the nation's almost unsurmountable grief. Often personal lives are framed by tragedy, but so is our national identity.

The Lost Generation, a term which originated with Ernest Hemingway's mistress, Gertrude Stein, refers both to the vast numbers of talented young men lost during World War 1, and a talented group of young writers who came of age then. Many say the Great Depression was a turning point. From September 3, 1929, to 1932, the Dow dropped 89 percent. My parents married in December of 1929 and my

## Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



brother, Duaine, was born in December of 1932. Much of their life was molded by the events of those years. The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, raised the level of patriotism and, if you will, "rallied the troops." Young men and women wanted to serve their country, no matter the sacrifice personally.

For those who fought in the war that wasn't a war, Korea, a vague sense of being forgotten looms, hence the term the Forgotten War. But they are not forgotten heroes. It matters little the title to the tragedy, heroes are heroes. The

Vietnam War was a war which forever altered our social landscape. According to Daniel C. Hallin, a professor at U.C., San Diego and author of *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*, Vietnam was "the first war in which reporters were routinely accredited to accompany military forces, yet not subject to censorship." Young people continue to fight in unknown lands around the world. In many ways, the heroes of Iraq and Afghanistan, have an even greater burden as they seek out an enemy not by physical location, but by philosophy.

Jack's dad once said, he would never trade his WW1 experiences, but he would never wish for anyone else to have to go through it. "Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way..." Deuteronomy 8:2. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net



Dear Editor,  
My name is Kent Steinke. I was associated with the Norton area for a number of years through working at the Andbe Home, and am also a descendent of early Norton pioneers. I am needing the help of your readers in completing a research project I started many years ago into the story of my family and other Norton County pioneers...

Back in the Great Depression (dirty thirties) my great-grandfather's (Dode Morse) landlord on the farm north of Norton was a man named Sam Sweeley, who died in 1956. Sam is a really important character in a book I'm writing on the story of my family in the Depression, and I need to find people still living, who knew him. If any of your readers can help out I would appreciate hearing from them.

Sincerely,  
Kent Steinke  
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ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654  
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers  
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd  
Publishers, 1970-2002

Kansas Press Association



Thumbs up to the Norton City crew for fixing the low water pressure problem at God's Pantry. The crew responded promptly to the problem with a good solution that didn't involve digging up the highway and was cost effective for the city and taxpayers of Norton. We thank you again for the deep concern and diligence resolving the problem. Brought in.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.