



Battle over Legislature is the tip of the iceberg

The gridlock that enveloped Topeka at the end of the legislative session is just one outcropping of a battle being fought around the country as emergent conservative forces flex their muscles at the statehouse and within the GOP.

As we've found in Kansas, this process isn't always pretty and it's not always constructive.

Across the country, results have been mixed, the Associated Press reports. In Nebraska, Gov. Dave Heineman called an angry press conference to announce several vetoes after the Legislature gutted his tax plan.

In Missouri, newly dominant Republicans fought over spending and over the definition of a true Republican. In Oklahoma, Gov. Mary Fallin saw her plan to cut income taxes defeated.

Here in Kansas, Gov. Sam Brownback's tax-cut plans stalled in the more liberal Senate. After negotiations ground to a halt, somehow the Senate voted to pass a House-backed plan that even the governor thought was too much. It included most of his cuts, but few of the "adjustments" he proposed to even out revenue.

As a result, the state faces either big budget cuts on top of years of budget cuts, or the House and Senate will have to change the plan next year.

In Wisconsin, meanwhile, Republican Gov. Scott Walker survived a union-backed recall vote which left control of the state Senate in doubt. The bitter fight pitted neighbor against neighbor and friend against friend.

A common thread in all these states is a push by conservatives for lower taxes, lower spend-

ing, a more pro-business attitude and more attention to social issues such as abortion.

Beyond that, though, is a nationwide drive to elect even more conservatives, a drive which sometimes has backed more liberal or "moderate" Republicans into a corner. With heavy hitters arrayed to eliminate them, they have little to lose and no choice but to stand and fight.

That happened in Kansas, where moderate senators who have controlled the upper chamber suddenly faced primary challenges by popular incumbent House members with promises of financial backing from the state Chamber of Commerce's political arm, among other sources.

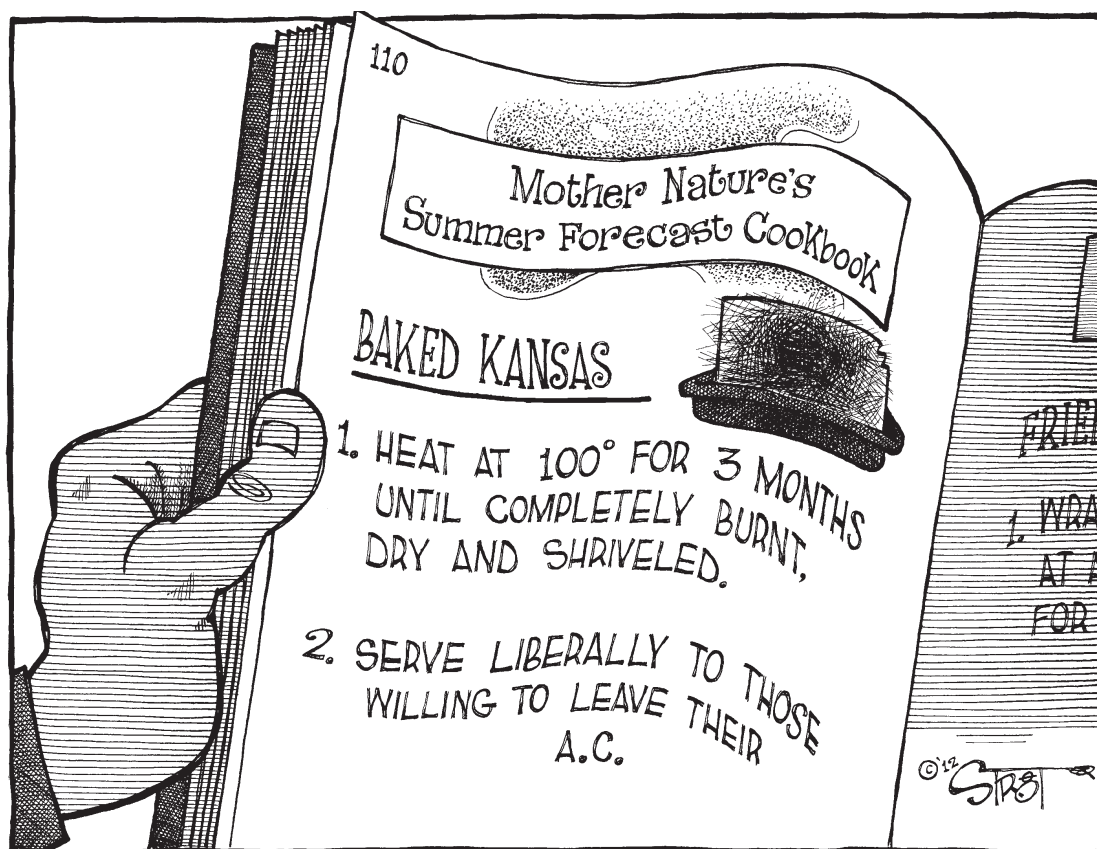
Some claim national conservative groups, backed by the billionaire Koch brothers of Wichita, are out to take over state Legislatures for the conservative cause.

The impact of that initiative remains to be seen. By forcing the federal courts to draw district maps for the Legislature and Congress, however, the conservatives may have shot themselves in the foot. Some observers say they, not the moderates, will come out as the big losers.

This fight is not just in Kansas, and it's not going away. Everyone, conservative, moderate or liberal, has the right to state their case and run for office, of course. Voters may find some of the tactics offensive, though.

In the end, they'll decide who they want running the states, not the money guys or the national groups. And that may surprise a few people.

— Steve Haynes



Hangin' With Marge

By Margaret Bucholtz



margeb@cityofstfrancis.net

Harvest

One more time I get to see that wonderful thing called wheat harvest. For anyone that has never had the opportunity to partake in a true wheat harvest I will try to explain it to you.

As a child it was the most fun thing to do. You got to spend the whole day in the hot field with your parents. Everyone drank out of the same old jug and who knows how much back wash you got.

Then when it really was hot you got to pass the time getting in the back of the truck and pretend that you were wheat swimming. My brother and I would have to get out long enough for dad to dump another load of wheat out of the combine. (Which in my day was pulled with a tractor)

Then it would be time to go to the elevator at Wheeler and dump the wheat in a pit. Some times you would have to wait a long time in line because not everyone had hoist on their trucks. In order to dump them you had to drive on a big bar thingy and they would lift the front of the truck up and the grain would slid out.

Finally as a teenager I really enjoyed it because I got to drive one of the trucks and there were really cute harvest hands out there. Of course I couldn't have dated one if they would have asked but it was fun looking.

As a teenager you didn't ride with the windows down blowing your hair, and you had to have a hair brush beside you. Then a wash rag was a must because you had to wipe the sweat off your face. Nothing any tackier than a girl sweating.

After the vane years, it became a little less fun, but none the less the women in my family still had the truck driving job. By this time the combines were upgraded to

self propelled and they also had air conditioners.

The trucks however all had hoists but air conditioning was just not needed. After all just roll down the windows and you won't notice the heat or the itch. WRONG

In past few years I wish I was a bear and it was time to hibernate. The old trucks still are not air conditioned and most people have semis. I know they aren't real happy waiting for me to get out and untarp the truck. Most of them have smiles on there faces however because they can't believe this old lady revving the engine and trying to get the truck over to the elevator to empty. The crew at the elevator are wondering why on earth I can't remember how to lift the truck box up and about the time they come to see what I am doing I have it figured out so they have to hurry back to watch the wheat go into the right spot.

Two years ago I quit. I told Kurt I would cook, whatever but I wouldn't drive a truck anymore. He got someone to drive and I loved it. This year he couldn't find anyone to drive so I told him I would try. That wasn't the first mistake I ever made but it was right up there to being a big one.

This morning I got up and got dressed. Didn't want to talk to anyone, wanted to kick the dog but I didn't. I realized that wouldn't make me any happier so I marched out and got in the truck. Kurt got it loaded and then he said, "I will start it because it is hard to start anymore." That should of been a sign. He started it and I went down the road and then I made the decision to go the short way to town.

I made it most of the way up the hills until I was by the church

and then it backfired and died. The truck has no brakes without the engine running, so it was a great trip backward to the bottom of the hill.

I survived that and because my phone was dead I walked back up the hill and went to the church. No phone. I walked back to the truck and would have stayed there but I knew Kurt wouldn't notice I hadn't come back until he had the next truck full. After all men LOVE harvest. They look at the wheat like a mother looks at her new born baby.

I finally walked the mile and a half up and down the hills to the house. My clothes were wet from the sweat. My face was red from the heat and my attitude we won't even talk about.

Kurt took me back to the truck and he got it started and he went to town. I got home and got into the other truck and this time I went the right way so I could make the hills.

Sure enough I made the hills and turned onto the highway. I got about a half of a mile down the highway when it died. I got the truck off the road and this time my phone was charged enough to call Kurt. While waiting people drove by looking and one nice couple stopped to see if I was in trouble. I told them, "Nope I am just watching the traffic." Then I told them Kurt was on the way and so they went on.

To end a long story, Both trucks are being worked on and I am in the house happy, cool and I don't think I am going to be allowed to drive a truck again.

My mother-in-law always told me Don't be so capable. I understand what she was talking about now.

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



mccormickcasey@rocketmail.com

The country of Greece has been taking a lot of knocks lately. Actually they've had a run of misfortune going back to the Nazi occupation of World War II. That was followed by civil war and instability that has made it hard to have a solid government and economy.

But being the keepers of the birth place of Western society, the Greek people have plenty going for themselves. One of the credits to that Mediterranean race is their food.

Last weekend our family grew again as our niece, Lauren, married Adam Janzi from Scottsbluff, Nebraska. One of the wedding gifts that the families got to enjoy was the rehearsal dinner prepared

by Adam's grandmother, Sophia.

Denver has a large Greek community and I got to know several members over the years that owned restaurants or taverns. The Greek festival was a big draw each year, held in the parking lot of their huge Orthodox church.

However, never have I tasted anything like grandma Janzi's feast.

She served tender souvlaki (meat kabobs,) mouth watering spanakopita (spinach pie,) delicious dolmades (meat, rice and herb stuffed grape leaves) along with several other dishes. Then the desert almost showed up the rest of the meal. Her baklava could have come down from heaven above.

Layers of paper thin phyllo dough encased an amazing nut mixture that was drizzled with honey.

Needless to say, after the supper, if I had stumbled into a sharp object in my over loaded and happy condition, fat boy would have popped.

Here's to the Greeks and all they have given to us. Especially grandmother Sophia and her gastronomic talents!

And best wishes to the newly weds who will always be blessed with good food at family gatherings.

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GOD SAYS
If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.
John 12:26

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Nathan Fiala Sports Editor
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