

# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### Life of the party

#### From The Lawrence Journal-World

A group of Kansas Republicans apparently has decided that desperate times call for desperate measures.

After a number of years of failing to reunite the Kansas Republican Party, a group of moderate Republicans has formalized the party's philosophical split by forming a new group called the Kansas Traditional Republican Majority (KTRM).

While conservative Republicans in the state have been represented by a number of small groups, including the Kansas Republican Assembly, this is the first time moderates have organized to represent the opposing view. The organization of KTRM sets up a formal battle for the philosophical heart and soul of the Kansas Republican Party.

The list of those involved in the new group is impressive: former U.S. Rep. Jan Meyers, former Lt. Gov. Gary Sherrer, former state Sens. Dick Bond, Mark Buhler, Tim Emert and Audrey Langworthy and former state Reps. Rob Boyer, Jim Lowther and Lloyd Stone along with other former GOP officials and party leaders. The group includes statewide representation that stretches from Overland Park to Dodge City and Lakin. Its executive director, Ryan Wright, is a former press secretary for U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran.

These people want their party back and are willing to fight for it. Their first order of business is to elect Republicans who share their moderate views to replace four current Republicans on the Kansas Board of Education who are part of the six-member board majority that has supported altering the state's science standards and the hiring of Education Commissioner Bob Corkins, who opposes higher funding for public schools.

As part of their effort, KTRM will battle a number of what Wright called "radical" groups that influenced the Republican primaries in 2004.

Predictably, conservative Republican leaders are portraying the formation of KTRM as a sinister trick.

What's at stake here is control of the state GOP. Conservatives now hold the party reins, but the traditionalists want them back. One of these two groups will end up in control, and the other will be pushed out, and perhaps marginalized, to pursue their agenda outside the party structure.

It's too bad that it's come to this, but the moderate Republicans believe they are doing the right thing by pressing their claim to be the true representative of Kansas Republicans.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail [jvannostrand@nwkanssas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkanssas.com) or [pdecker@nwkanssas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkanssas.com).

#### Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774

**U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521

**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

**State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: [jmorriso@ink.org](mailto:jmorriso@ink.org) web: [www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso](http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso)

**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 [ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us](mailto:ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us)

### COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
Colby, Kan. 67701

[freepress@nwkanssas.com](mailto:freepress@nwkanssas.com)

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**John Van Nostrand - Publisher**

[jvannostrand@nwkanssas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkanssas.com)

#### NEWS

**Patty Decker - Editor**

[pdecker@nwkanssas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkanssas.com)

**Tisha Cox - General Assignment**

[tc Cox@nwkanssas.com](mailto:tc Cox@nwkanssas.com)

**Jan Katz Ackerman**, Area Reporter

[ackermanjk@ruraltel.net](mailto:ackermanjk@ruraltel.net)

#### ADVERTISING

**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director**

[crystalr@nwkanssas.com](mailto:crystalr@nwkanssas.com)

**Jasmine Crottinger - Advertising Sales**

[jasminec@nwkanssas.com](mailto:jasminec@nwkanssas.com)

**Cindy Davis - Advertising Sales**

[c.davis@nwkanssas.com](mailto:c.davis@nwkanssas.com)

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager**

[lea@nwkanssas.com](mailto:lea@nwkanssas.com)

**Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building**

[japplegate@nwkanssas.com](mailto:japplegate@nwkanssas.com)

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**

[support@nwkanssas.com](mailto:support@nwkanssas.com)

#### NOR'WEST PRESS

**Jim Bowker - General Manager**

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

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### Nor'West Newspapers

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## The color of Christmas

Wash repeatedly with soap and water, the box stated.

"I can't have green-stained fingers. I am the publisher of a newspaper. What if someone important comes by Monday and shakes my hand and notices the green on my fingertips," I thought to myself Sunday night.

Then, in a microsecond, it hit me.

"Why not have green stained fingers? I'll tell them it's proof that I am celebrating Christmas and am proud of it at all. It will tell whoever is important that Christmas is a part of my family's life. Besides, today was pretty darn good."

Sunday, wife Jennifer baked sugar cookies and we let our children, Kari, 3, and Grant, 4, take the lead in decorating them. We provided them various colored sprinkles, tiny candies and colored frosting for their pallet. The cookies were their canvas.

I had trouble opening the tiny bottle of green food coloring. When I did get it open, it dripped on some of my fingers, hence the stains. On the back of the food-coloring box, in tiny print, it stated how to remove it from hands.

But there was more to appreciate rather than worry over the color green.

I forgot about my fingernails while watching Grant and Kari turn the light tan-colored cookies into what they thought was a work of art. They sat at their little table and put on their serious look. They mixed the colors to make new ones, and like landscaping, put different combinations of the sprinkles on for a certain appearance.

They like attempts at being creative and spreading sugar-loaded frosting on a cookie was no different. They even ate a few of them.

I enjoyed the moment so much, the next gal-



### John Van Nostrand

#### • Line in the Dust

axy seemed closer to me than fretting over the next car payment and the deadlines at work this week.

Making cookies was the end of a memorable day in the Van Nostrand family. That morning, Kari and Grant participated in the Wesleyan Church Christmas program. As part of the preschool portion of the program, Kari and Grant each had a line to say. We have been working on their line with them for weeks. They both confidently stepped up to the microphone and said their words to perfection.

Kari, the public showboat of the two, was not done. During one of the short songs the preschool kids sang, she walked up to the microphone and was not afraid to sing into it. And, of course, she gave a gigantic bow once the congregation applauded at the end of the song.

Christmas leads among all activities with traditions and our house and family is no different. Jennifer did a fantastic job decorating our home and Christmas tree. We will have chili on Christmas Eve, a tradition in my family for decades.

Jennifer has always looked forward to Christmas Eve church services, but this year Christmas falls on a Sunday. I applaud those churches

and preachers for scheduling services on Christmas Day in addition to their traditional Advent schedules.

If you haven't paid close attention the past month and weeks, Christmas and its traditions have taken a beating across the country. Many places and people are trying to reduce or eliminate Christmas. Some of it is subtle and other attempts are obvious.

Certain retail stores are afraid using Christmas in advertising and marketing will upset their non-Christian customers. Those stores are actually upsetting Christian customers. (There is so much more irony in that issue.) A late night radio talk show host put it best. He said the stores that are afraid to use Christmas are implying their non-Christian customers are not strong enough people to hear the word Christmas. That is a nice way of defining bigot.

Other people don't want nativity scenes in public places even though that is what Christmas is all about. It's a Christian holiday. (I'm waiting for the lawsuit over a nativity scene on private property that barely encroaches a city-maintained sidewalk)

Christmas, its symbols and the uproar over how the word is used in advertising and promotional spots will fade away for another year when the sun rises Monday. My green-tinted fingers will probably be back to normal by then too.

But how Christmas colored my heart this year won't be forgotten.

Merry Christmas.

*John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.*

## Sounds of the season

Charity Hospital in New Orleans had nearly three centuries of dedication to providing health care for the poorest of the poor. Now it is destined to cease that dedication and become what might be termed a "middle class" for profit institution.

Politics and greed just might be the driving force that will shut off the access to reliable and decent treatment for many who have nothing. The political winds in Washington, D.C. seem to be wafting in the direction of more centralized power in the hands of a few power brokers and bureaucrats. That centralized power is being courted by the business world in hopes of economic gain. There is money to be made in demolition and rebuilding. There is profit to be made with subsidized construction in place of providing social welfare in less than gleaming new and modern facilities. There is no political prestige for the doctors and nurses and individuals who voluntarily cleaned up the mess left by Katrina and were readying the hospital for business.

Some will say that God has done what the anti Huey Long politicians and activists were not able to do. Thus providing proof that it is His will to force those lazy, good for nothing, underserving, sinners to change their ways and join the

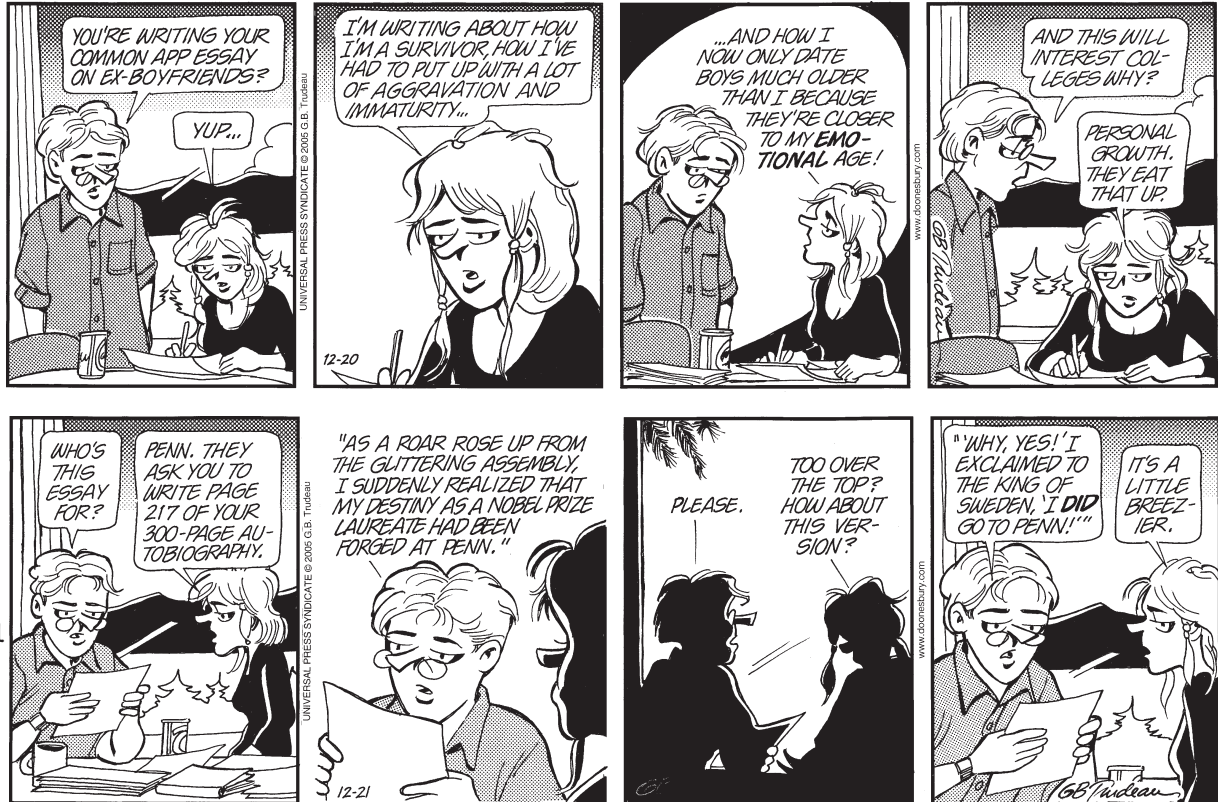
### Ken Poland

#### • Ken's World

pious religious capitalist ranks and provide their own medical and health needs.

I don't have space in this column to go into detail surrounding this controversy over whether to clean up the old building and provide the critically needed facilities now or to tear it down, get government funds, build a new facility, and change the mission from charity to profit.

Our society is embroiled in heated argument over the semantics of proper greetings and slogans for this season. We seem to live in a bi-polar society that can't decide whether this is a religious celebration, a secular tradition, a time of capitalistic opportunity, or just simply the most distressing time of the year for both the rich or the poor and the Christian or the non Christian. We can't even find "peace and good will" in our religious community. Look around you! Where is the peace and good will in the world?



### Doonesbury

#### • Gary Trudeau