



Free Press Viewpoint

Tea party based mostly on tax fight

Commentators decry the success of the “tea party” movement across the country, predicting that it will mean defeat for the Republican Party in some races this fall and doom for the country if the movement ever succeeds.

Tea-party candidates are portrayed as right-wing zealots unfit for office. The people drawing the portraits are, however, mostly liberals in both parties who’re on the losing side of this argument. Of course they think these people are dangerous.

They may be right about some of the candidates. Dr. Rand Paul, who won the GOP Senate primary in Kentucky, came across as an undisciplined thinker. (He’s the son of Texas Rep. Ron Paul, a long-time libertarian who ran for the Republican presidential nomination; the father has a more sober image.)

Most of these candidates have in common a decided bias against the “tax and spend” philosophy so prevalent among both parties in Washington today. Most exhibit a refreshing lack of social-conservative baggage: abortion, religion, prayer, immigration and other “hot button” issues don’t mean as much to them, though we suppose you could find tea partiers who talk about every issue.

But the genesis of the movement is in its name, taken from the historic Boston Tea Party, a colonial anti-tax movement.

Tea partiers and tea-party candidates worry more about big, growing government in Washington and the statehouse than anything else. They rail at the burden of heavy taxation and big spending. And they see high taxes and big spending not as fiscal policy or a tool for re-election, but as just plain wrong.

Of course, the spenders see this as dangerous. They love spending and fear restraint.

Perhaps it is simplistic to think you could just go to Washington and vote against high taxes and big deficits. Maybe even tea-party candidates will want to spend money to get re-elected, once they’ve seen the mountaintop.

But for now, several of these “outsider” candidates are riding high: Sharron Angle in Nevada, Christine O’Donnell in Delaware, Joe Miller from Salina in Alaska, Christine O’Donnell in Delaware, Ron Johnson in Wisconsin, Ken Buck in Colorado.

Many are inexperienced, say things they shouldn’t, making easy targets for party regulars, who are only too happy to torpedo them. But if they are a danger to anyone, it’s the leadership-bound regular Republicans, especially the incumbents.

In Alaska, Sen. Lisa Murkowski – after losing to Mr. Miller in the primary – promised to run as a write-in candidate, perhaps giving the Democrats an edge. It comes down to that: undercut the winner, let Democrats win, rather than lose control.

How those who won the primaries will fare in the fall against Democrats remains to be seen. Undoubtedly, they’ll be smeared as wackos who would ruin the republic.

But with the unbelievable level of spending, with the threat of higher taxes and more deficits, with the culture of incumbents buying their way to lifetime seats, what’s left to ruin?

Some of the tea party candidates doubtless deserve to lose. Some won’t. Their popularity has pushed the rest of their party to the right. Come January, it’ll be interesting to see who’s organizing the House – and who’s sworn in for the Senate.

The country does not need any more nut cases and wackos in Washington; enough of those already. But we do need more people who value liberty and Constitutional restraint, honesty and integrity over re-election at all costs. — *Steve Haynes*

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JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THE HEALTH CARE DEBATE WAS OVER



Great recipes ready for cooler weather

I’ve found a great new (old) way to make corn bread and keep my cast-iron skillet seasoned at the same time.

I know this is not a new trick, but I just discovered it, and I’m so excited. And, it’s so simple.

You just oil the skillet and heat it up before putting the corn bread mixture into it.

For years, I’ve used a glass or Pyrex pan to make my corn bread, and I haven’t been unhappy with the results.

However, I found a recipe that said to put a tablespoon of oil into a cast-iron skillet and make sure the sides are oiled. Heat the skillet at 400 degrees for five to 10 minutes. Carefully remove it from the oven and pour the corn bread mixture in. Return it and cook according to the recipe (or package) directions.

The corn bread doesn’t stick; it comes out with a wonderful crunchy brown crust and soft inside. The skillet gets a good oiling and comes out well seasoned. Then if you just rinse it with warm water and dry carefully, it’s ready



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

to go for next time.

On Sunday, I made corn bread from a package of Jiffy Mix and added about half a cup of frozen corn. It was great, but doesn’t hold together quite as well as the regular recipe.

The old skillet I used was in bad need of a seasoning, but it came out dark and shiny.

I’ve also come up with a recipe for zucchini brownies that are rich and chocolatey without being overly sweet. I got it from a friend, who got it from a friend, so I’m passing it on to a few more friends.

Zucchini Brownies

1 1/4 cup sugar

1/2 cup oil
1 egg
1 teaspoon. vanilla
2 cups shredded zucchini
2 cups flour
1/2 cup cocoa
1 teaspoon. salt
1 1/2 teaspoon. baking soda
1/2 cup nuts.

Cream sugar and oil. Add egg and vanilla and mix well. Stir in zucchini. Mix flour, cocoa, salt and soda together and add to wet ingredients. Add nuts and pour into 9-inch-by-15-inch greased pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until done.

Cut, enjoy. These brownies are soft and moist, not crunchy, and they keep well.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor’West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes @ nwkansan.com

No excuse for avoiding flu vaccine

People who turn down the flu vaccine year after year tend to rely on one or more of six common excuses to justify their decision.

This year, as Kansas gears up to immunize more people than ever before against influenza, these excuses are all looking increasingly feeble. Let’s examine each one in detail:

Excuse No. 1: “I never get the flu, so I don’t need the vaccine.” If you’ve been living on this planet for more than a couple decades and you’ve never been infected with the influenza virus, you are a very rare individual. Congratulations!

Unfortunately, your past performance in avoiding this disease is no guarantee of future success. With no prior exposure and no artificial immunity from past immunizations, you are setting yourself up for a potentially serious encounter when the flu comes to your town in the months ahead.

Why take the risk of missing work or school, feeling miserable and possibly landing in the hospital, when you can avoid all that by simply rolling up your sleeve and getting the vaccine?

Excuse No. 2: “I got the vaccine once, and I came down with the flu anyway. The vaccine doesn’t work.” Do you know for sure that you became infected with the flu that year? Many common respiratory infections masquerade as influenza, but none of these can be prevented with the flu vaccine.

Chances are you never had the flu that season, but there is a small possibility that you did. The vaccine doesn’t protect everybody, especially in the first two weeks after you get a dose, or if you are older than 65. But getting vaccinated definitely improves your odds against getting seriously ill or dying from the



Jason Eberhart-Phillips

• Kansas Health Officer

flu, regardless of age.

This year, for the first time, there is a high-dose version of the flu vaccine for people over 65. Clinical trials show that it induces a stronger immune response. So now you have a new option to consider if you’re old enough and you really believe that the regular vaccine didn’t protect you well in the past.

Excuse No. 3: “I hear that sometimes people get the flu from the vaccine.” This is utter nonsense, like alligators in the sewers. Give it up. The vaccine stimulates your body’s immune system to protect you against flu viruses, and sometimes causes a brief and very mild flu-like reaction. But it does not cause the disease itself.

Excuse No. 4: “I hear that the vaccine causes serious side effects. I’d rather take my chances with the disease than risk harm from the vaccine.” After tens of billions of doses have been given to people throughout the world for decades, there’s ample proof that flu vaccines are very safe.

Sure enough, bad things like neurological events, heart attacks and car accidents do happen occasionally to people who take flu shots. But these same things happen at roughly the same frequency to people who didn’t get the shots. They appear to be only coincidental with immunization.

Even if there is a link, the chances of serious harm from getting the vaccine are hundreds or thousands of times lower than the chances of harm that may come from getting the flu.

Excuse No. 5: “I don’t like shots.” Who does? But a little needle stick once a year sure beats several days of being sick in bed – or worse.

Still, if you’re seriously phobic about needles and you’re between age 2 and 49, ask about the nasal spray vaccine. It’s just as safe and just as effective as the injection, and it may be right for you.

Excuse No. 6: “I don’t think I’m in a high-risk group. I don’t want to take vaccine away from people who really need it.”

A few years ago, this altruistic excuse had a ring of truth. But this year there will be plenty of vaccine for everyone. And for the first time almost everyone in America over the age of 6 months is advised to get the vaccine, regardless of your underlying health.

Unless you are one of the rare people who has a genuine medical reason not to be immunized, there is no good reason this year not to get the flu vaccine.

So go ahead. Get the vaccine now from your doctor, your county health department or your pharmacy.

You know it’s the right thing to do to protect yourself, your family and your community from a potentially serious infection. This year, you haven’t got any more excuses!

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