



Free Press  
Viewpoint

Brownback won:  
get used to his ideas

Even before he takes office next week, new Gov. Sam Brownback is getting a lot of advice from groups and papers that didn’t support him.

The gist of all this is that to succeed, what the incoming governor has to do is drop his long standing beliefs and become “more like them,” that is, the liberals and so-called moderate Republicans who held sway in Topeka for so long.

But Sen. Brownback won election by a huge majority, 2-1 over his Democratic opponent, state Sen. Tom Holland. He won the Republican primary with 82 percent of the vote after other prominent candidates backed out, recognizing that they had little chance to win.

So in a very real sense, the people have spoken. Now, what does that mean?

First, we think, it means what it says. People liked the governor-elect’s message of smaller government, a stronger economy and a better, more livable state. They bought into his “Road Map for Kansas.”

In short, the people of Kansas apparently wanted Sam Brownback to be their governor, and since he got 63 percent of the vote, that includes most Republicans, a whole lot of independents and, yes, even a bunch Democrats.

Second, Mr. Brownback is what he is: a principled conservative. He’s never pretended to be anything else, not when he ran for Congress, not when he ran for the Senate, not when he ran for President.

He’s a guy who believes in smaller government, a more efficient bureaucracy, a leader state and a less intrusive approach. He’ll sign laws making abortions harder to get and requiring voters to show a photo ID at the polls.

Not all of us will agree, but he’ll be the one with the pen.

The new governor also is a smart and successful politician. He’s won all his recent races, emerged from his battles mostly unscathed, his popularity intact. He promised to step down from the Senate after two full terms (and after serving out the final two years of Sen. Bob Dole’s last term), and he’s done so.

Not many in American politics have built their popularity and strength by giving up one powerful office to take one with more perceived risk. Sam Brownback has done so. People seem to like him.

It may also be that being governor is a more certain path to the presidency. Between John Kennedy and Barack Obama, no senator has been elected president. Lots of governors have. Dick Nixon had to serve time as governor of California before he got elected. Maybe people prefer executive experience.

But a presidential race will have to wait. Today, Mr. Brownback faces a state budget deficit for the coming fiscal year approaching \$500 million. How he’ll balance the budget without a tax increase remains to be seen. His term will be judged, in large part, by the answer to that question.

Meantime, he’s been getting a lot of advice from once-unfriendly places, including the editorial page of *The Kansas City Star* (which endorsed his opponent, by the way). The gist of all this advice is that the governor-elect needs to become more liberal and buy into more taxes, more spending.

Anyone who believes that is going to happen needs to go back and read the election results again. Sam Brownback is about to be governor because he’s Sam Brownback, and because people apparently like him just the way he is.

It’s going to be an interesting four years. — *Steve Haynes*

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Steve Haynes - Publisher  
s.haynes @ nwkansas.com

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Kevin Bottrell - News Editor  
kbottrell @ nwkansas.com

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter  
aheintz @ nwkansas.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor  
mballard @ nwkansas.com

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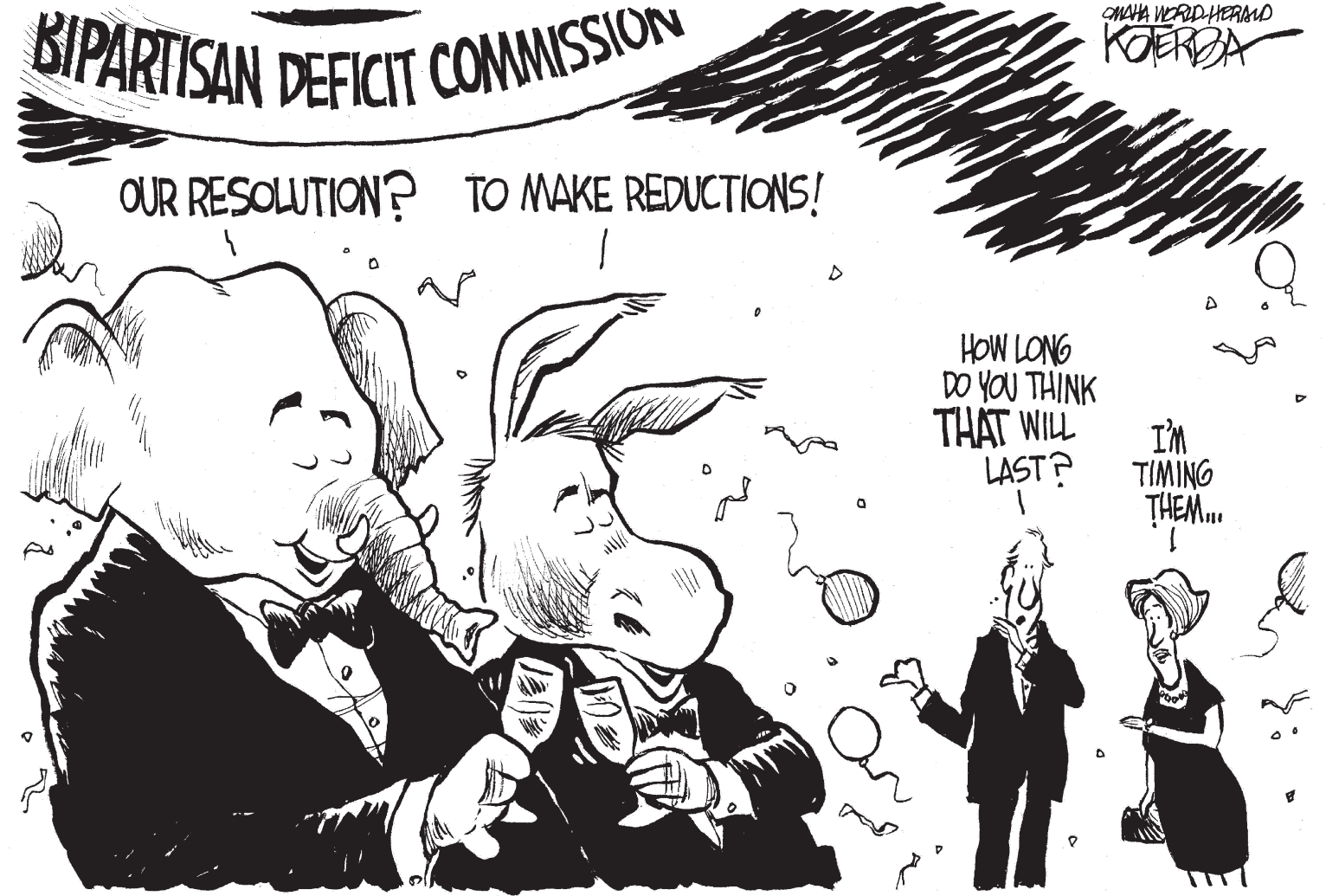
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Does the couch know its owner?

I stole my husband’s couch Sunday afternoon. I felt so sneaky.

It’s not that there’s anything written down, or even spoken, but we’ve just come to accept that the upstairs couch is mine and the downstairs one belongs to Steve.

We try to take the chance on Saturdays and Sundays to grab a nap. One hour on the couch can do wonders for your outlook and makes even a busy, working weekend seem special.

We’re lucky to have two couches.

When we only had one, Steve had to take his nap in the bed. Not that there’s anything wrong with napping in a bed; it’s just that they’re too soft and comfortable.

You take a nap in a bed, and an hour can turn into three real easy. And a three-hour nap means you wake up groggy and can’t get to sleep that night. It’s generally not a good idea.

A couch, however, is perfect for naps. A good couch is long enough and soft enough that when you lie down on it, it’s a welcoming friend. Top yourself with soft throw and grab a pillow and you’re good for about an hour.

After an hour, though, the couch starts to turn against you. Where it was soft and welcoming just a short time ago, it starts to develop lumps,



Cynthia Haynes  
• Open Season

bumps and hard spots. It knows that you need to get up – and it makes sure you do.

Steve’s couch is an antique. It belonged to his grandmother and his mother remembered it being recovered when she was in high school. Since his mother was in high school before the War, that couch has been around a few decades.

We had the couch recovered after several generations of cats made it look its age. It’s a great couch, and after getting the upholstery bill, we vowed never to have another cat with claws in our house. We’ve kept that vow, and the couch looks as good as it did 25 years ago.

It gives a great nap.

My couch is actually a studio and makes out into a bed. We seldom use the bed part, but the

couch is popular for naps and as a folding table on laundry days.

That’s why I usually have to move clothes before taking my nap: Socks, underwear, T shirts and jeans go onto a chair or the floor while I inhabit the couch for a blissful hour.

The upstairs couch is a little harder than the one downstairs, and it’s in the same room as the police radio, which gives broadcasts from fire, police, road crews, emergency medical services, trains and a few ham radio operators. Sometimes, the upstairs isn’t the quietest place on the planet.

So after the snowstorm, the road crews were out, Steve was out of town and I took over the downstairs couch for some quiet nap time.

I was doing pretty well, too, until the phone rang.

It was Steve. How did he know?

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 @ nwkansas.com

Newspapers are far from dead

Other  
Opinions

• Kevin Slimp  
University of Tennessee

It’s been an interesting month for me. I’ve spoken at several newspaper conferences, including a national conference for free papers, another national conference for paid weekly newspapers and a third conference for daily newspapers. At all three, I was approached by publishers asking, “What is the future of our industry?”

That seems to be the question of the day. Lisa Miller, general manager of New Century Press in Rock Rapids, Iowa, made an interesting comment at the Institute of Newspaper Technology. She noted that it seemed like every conference she had attended this year, other than the institute, had focused solely on online journalism. Lisa added that she keeps hearing that print newspapers will be but gone within the next 10 years.

Like many newspaper publishers and managers that I meet, Lisa was concerned about what this meant to her paper. She mentioned her concern that newsprint would no longer be available, thus making it impossible to produce a community newspaper.

Let me share something I said to a conference of daily newspapers in Portland, Ore., a few weeks ago. After discussing issues related to online journalism for over an hour with the publishers and ad managers gathered in the room, I asked if I should call it a day and leave it at that or tell the group what I really thought about the current state of daily newspapers. Voices from the audiences called out, “Tell us!”

On the screen behind me appeared the letters “Y2K.” I asked the group how many of them re-membered the Y2K scare of the late 1990s. Every hand in the room went up.

“Do you remember,” I asked, “how everybody stored bottled water, food and blankets in their basements because they were sure the end of the world was around the corner?”

The audience nodded in unison.

“I didn’t buy water,” I told them. “And do you know why?”

I waited for an answer, but the room was

silent.

“Because I knew it wasn’t real. It was something that people believed because we told them it was going to happen. Everyone kept reading in their newspapers and hearing on TV that the end was near. And they believed it.”

Heads moved in agreement. Like in a southern church service, I heard a voice say, “That’s right.”

“Well for the last three years,” I continued, “you’ve been telling your readers that newspapers were dying. That the end was near. And guess what. It took a while, but they finally believed you. And guess what. Your advertisers believed you, too.”

For the next few minutes, I shared what. I thought about the importance of improving our print products. Now is the time to put more resources into making our newspapers more attractive to our readers. It’s time to invest in staff, equipment and training to create a product that’s more attractive to our communities.

Our print product is still vital to our communities. I was recently featured in a series of columns and stories in the Knoxville News Sentinel concerning summer travel mishaps with Delta Airlines. For weeks, people would stop me on the street, in restaurants or wherever to tell me they had read about me in the newspaper. I’d take the time to ask, “Did you see it online or in the print edition?”

To the person, the answer was the same, “I read it in the newspaper. I didn’t read it online.”

Like Y2K, we can convince ourselves that the end is near. And we can create a self-ful-

filling prophecy that will make that a reality sooner than later.

Matt Yeager, a friend and publisher in West Virginia, told me last week that he didn’t understand why everyone thought print newspapers were dying. At his paper, ad revenues are at an all-time high. Circulation hasn’t dwindled. People are reading the newspaper.

I asked him if he had told his readers that newspapers were dying.

“No,” was his response. “They’re not dying. Why would I tell them that?”

My thoughts exactly. Matt. I ended my keynote to the group in Portland by reminding them to create an online product that engaged the reader and advertiser, but to remember that it’s the print product that pays the bills. It’s the print product that most of our readers turn to for their community news.

The dean of a major school of journalism told me two years ago that he felt all print newspapers would be gone within two years. He was a little surprised when I told him that might be the dumbest thing I’d ever heard.

“Why would you say that?” he asked.

“Because if all the print newspapers die,” I said, “I’m starting one. I’ll make a fortune.”

Enough said.

Kevin Slimp, of the Institute of Newspaper Technology at the University of Tennessee, is a speaker and trainer in the newspaper industry. He can be reached at kevin@kevinslimp.com.

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