

Free Press Viewpoint

Republicans need to include America

Which way should the Republican Party go? The answer is pretty simple. If it wants to wither and die, it can continue down the road to becoming a party for xenophobic white men who fear immigrants and want no truck with anyone who's not of direct northern European descent.

If it wants to live, it will have to embrace the future America, which will be a far more diverse, more fragmented and more interesting society.

The demographics of America today, let alone those expected for America tomorrow, won't allow the GOP to remain stuck in the grip of an anti-immigration, anti-immigrant frenzy. It can't focus on the realm of white-faced suits, because it won't be just white Americans running the show.

Debate rages within the party. Some claim change is the only way to survive. Others say allowing even more immigrants just means creating more and more Democrats to vote for the other party.

But that's crazy talk. The immigrants and minorities are here already. Their population is increasing, though many Hispanics are not yet of voting age. A party that bases its appeal in one ethnic group will not survive.

And one more thing: there's nothing wrong with immigration. It's the American way, the vaunted melting pot we all learned about in school. So get over it. Change is here.

This does not mean the party should or can abandon its principles. At its finest, the Republican Party stands for a smaller and more efficient government, more freedom for individuals and core American values, including family and life.

These are things that should be important to Americans of any race or creed. There is no reason for the GOP to abandon even one of its principles to attract voters from any group.

But first we all have to get past the idea that race or ethnic heritage are the major determining factors in selecting a set of political beliefs. That should be far from the truth.

In last year's election, the Associated Press reports, President Obama may have won largely because black Americans, women and other minorities turned out to vote for him while white Americans, uninspired by the GOP ticket, stayed home. Two years earlier, Washington insiders were saying that election was the Republicans to win – if they had a decent candidate. It was apparent even then that Mitt Romney would not rise to the challenge.

The Republicans will have to do better. Someone like the popular Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, an ethnic Cuban, would do no worse.

The party can begin by ditching the fear mongers of immigration issues and appealing to everyone, not just one ethnic group. They cannot build bridges to Hispanics by avoiding a common-sense settlement on immigration. They cannot attract minority votes without minority candidates.

The U.S. will be a far different place in this century than the last, but not necessarily a better place if the party fails and falters. Republicans should heed the calls to change and accept the realities of the 21st century.

The opportunity will not come again. – *Steve Haynes*

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail colby.editor@nwkansan.com.

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Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander@nwkansan.com

NEWS

Sports Reporter
colby.sports@nwkansan.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansan.com

Sam Dieter - News Reporter
colby.editor@nwkansan.com

Heather Alwin - Society Editor
colby.society@nwkansan.com

ADVERTISING

Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative
kballard@nwkansan.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager
medmondson@nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansan.com

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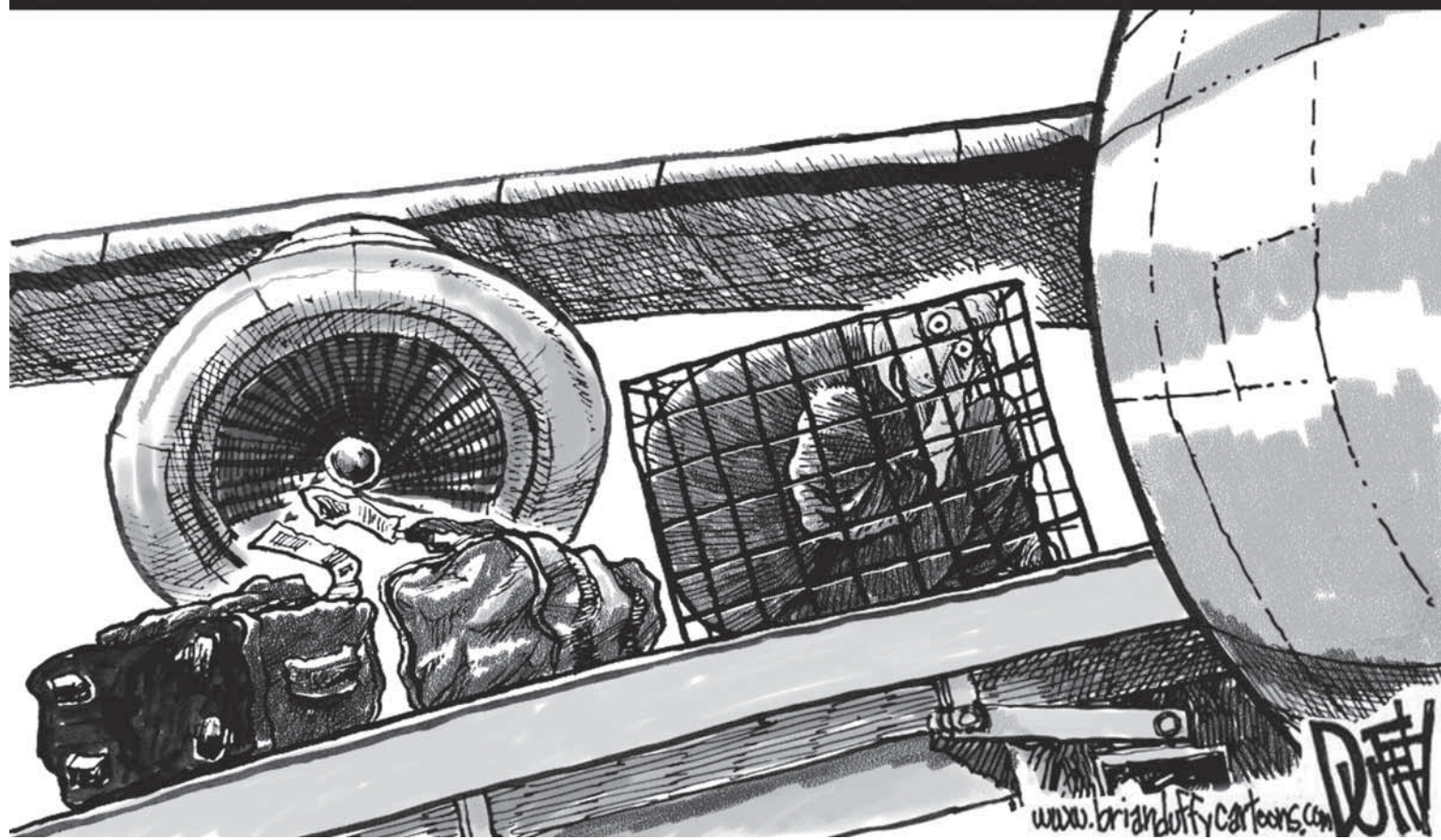
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READY FOR A VACATION, CONGRESS VOTES TO END THE SEQUESTER-RELATED FURLOUGHS FOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS IN TIME TO BOOK A FLIGHT AND GET THEIR SEAT ASSIGNMENTS.



Wonderful, exhausting teen – cat – visits

Having Tommy in the house is like bringing home a 3-year old – fun and exhausting.

But he's just visiting, and soon will go to his new home in Lawrence.

A couple of weeks ago, a man came into the paper to place a want ad: Free to good home, young male cat, neutered, declawed, has shots.

So, I asked, why are you getting rid of him since you've obviously spent time and money on this pet.

It seems the man and his wife had gotten a new cat, a young female, and Tommy was trying a little too hard to play with her. He was basically beating her up and causing continuous strife in the house. Someone had to go, and Tommy was elected.

Don't put the classified in yet, I said. Let me check with my husband and son. This cat sounds perfect for our 30-something bachelor son.

Steve and I visited the couple and met Tommy. He's a sweet cat, friendly and curious. And playful. Real playful. We took his pictures. We described him to our son.

"Let's do this," was the return text, so Tommy came home with us.

Now, it's been a few years since we've had a kitten (or in Tommy's case, a teen cat) around the house. Our old ladies Molly Monster and



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

Jezebel, mostly sleep and eat and hiss at each other.

Tommy is a whole different story. He's a busy cat.

Every open door is an invitation for him. He's spent almost as much time inside my cupboards as my pots and pans. Yesterday he got into the compartment behind the trash and recycling bins. It's hard to push them back in with a cat back there.

With the spring air, he thinks he should be outside, but without claws and not knowing where he's at, we won't allow that. Or at least, we try not to allow it.

One day last week, he escaped four times. We caught him in the garden twice. Once I got him just after he slipped out the back door and once I got a frantic call from Steve.

"Help me, come home quick."
I didn't even ask what he wanted. I knew.

He had to leave for Colby and Tommy had gotten out and was hiding under the back porch. I lured him out with a cat toy.

His former mistress called to see how he was getting along with our other cats.

Not too well, I had to admit. Like I said, they're old ladies. They don't appreciate a young whippersnapper in the house. There's a lot of growling going on. But, like I said, it's just temporary.

Today, Tommy is stealing rocks from one of our potted plants and chasing them around the room. Soon he will be under my feet as I try to fix supper.

I'll be really sorry and really relieved to see him go to Lawrence. He and son will get along famously.

I'll miss him when he's gone. But, for now: "Tommy get off that counter. Stop that. That's hot. No, you can't go outside. Don't bat her tail. Give me back that rock."

Just like having a 3-year old in the house – wonderful and exhausting.

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

Large classes are educational malpractice

"Time is up. Turn in your papers."

The few remaining students dutifully filed down to add their test booklets to the stack on the professor's desk at the front of the large lecture room. That is, all except one at his seat in the far back.

Despite protests by the professor that the student was out of time, he kept writing. Finally he came down the aisle to the front of the hall.

"You know I can't accept your paper now," the professor proclaimed.

The student leaned forward saying, "You don't know me, do you?"

He slipped his booklet into the stack of test papers and left.

This story may be an academic "urban legend," but it brings home a message about class size. Teachers should know their students. And when classes grow larger than 30 to 40, they become ineffective.

Academic classes are more about questions than answers. Whether it is science or literature or history, the teacher's task is not to just spout information, but to verify that the students understand – in depth.

In a good "lecture class," the teacher regularly solicits feedback. When a teacher poses questions, students get to hear concepts explained and explored again in classmates' terms. Teachers often try to get students to analyze what they have learned, to question if the text is correct and ask new, probing questions themselves.

Too many lawmakers, parents and even students think an education is about learning answers. But in most academic disciplines, a quality education is about learning to ask questions, productive questions based on an in-depth understanding of the content – questions structured in a way that leads to new knowledge. Memorizing what is known is a task that ends at the final exam. Learning to apply knowledge in daily life to answer new



John Richard Schrock

• Education Frontlines

questions is what makes classwork valuable throughout life.

A class bigger than 30 to 40 is too large to allow all students to participate in discussion and interaction. And any classroom more than five rows of students deep is too big. The reason is simple.

Remember when your teacher filled the blackboard with notes and then, while erasing it, tossed a question to the class. Scanning the students, the teacher could almost always pick out the one student who did not know the answer. How does a teacher do that?

I bet that you know. If you were the student who did not know the answer, you probably tried to glance down or away.

The clue is in your eyes. When you understand the concept and are mentally involved in the flow of ideas, your pupils are dilated larger. A teacher can even read the "ah ha" moment when a student "gets it."

But if you do not understand – or could care less – your pupils constrict. It is hard to hide that fact that you are thinking "huh"? So a good teacher can gauge whether the bulk of the class understands or is lost.

Some students say that, "I would rather be in a large lecture hall with a great teacher than in a small classroom with a mediocre teacher." Yes, it is possible to be entertaining in a large lecture hall for a day, but it is not possible to be a great teacher to these masses for a semester. The failed educational-television experiment of the 1960s proved that canned "great lectures" were not great teaching.

A student has a right to be known by his or her teacher – and a right to the attention of that teacher throughout the course.

Unfortunately, some Kansas universities have class sizes in the hundreds – sometimes over a thousand. Assistants scurry around to take attendance and hand out quizzes. These are theatrical productions, not classes.

To communicate with unique students, real teachers have to know them.

Huge class sizes are institutionally sanctioned educational malpractice.

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966.

Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 136-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov

State Rep. Ward Cassidy, (120th District) State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 151-S, Topeka, Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7616 ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov

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