

Issues covered in Drop Dead Week

Wednesday, March 21, was Drop Dead Week. Drop Dead Wednesday is when most bills have to be acted upon by the opposite of their house of origin.

The House Tax Plan was passed last week. I voted for it, but I have many issues with the plan. I like the reduction of state sales tax and keeping several key exemptions. I received many emails supporting the Earned Income Tax Credit that was proposed for elimination in the Governor's Plan, and that is in the House Plan. The gradual reduction of the State Income Tax rate is a big part of many tax plans. I would rather lower property tax than take income tax to zero. A constituent sent me the following comment, "When I am making money, I can pay my income tax; when I am not making money, I have trouble paying my property tax."

Last year, the Legislature passed a budget that, for the first time since 1972, decreased all-funds state spending by nearly a billion dollars and turned a \$500 million deficit into a \$100 million surplus without raising taxes. Since then, we've been fortunate enough to have a number of good months, and revenues are finally headed in the right direction. However, we still have very serious obligations facing the state, which makes it important for us to remain committed to keeping our spending in check. For too long, government has lived beyond its means.

That being said, I do support the increase of benefits to our state workers. We almost passed an amendment to restore the market-pay adjustment, and I will work to see if it can be done during Omnibus. Even with the \$8.5 million cost, we would still be in line to have the 7.5 percent required ending balance.

KPERS was debated for several hours. I will post an update on my website www.wardcassidy.com as soon as the final House brief is completed. Remember, it still has to be in conference with the Senate version and then signed by the Governor. I did have some input to include that 80 percent of the sales of state lands will go directly to KPERS.

The redistricting committee held hearings of 17 congressional maps submitted for consideration and voted on over a half-dozen maps, with only the Eisenhower B gaining enough votes to pass. Because the First Congressional District had the most significant population loss and the Third Congressional District experienced the most population gain, it was difficult to draw a map with clean district boundaries. The Eisenhower B plan includes the northern part of Wyandotte County in the First District. That is a bad fit for the First District, but it might be the only way the redistricting can be resolved.

I testified before the Senate State and Federal Committee about our Home Owned Carnivals this past week. We dismissed all of the issues that would be a problem for the carnivals. It passed out of the Senate Committee with the provision that all Home Owned Carnivals would be required to send proof of insurance to the Department of Labor.

News from your legislator
Ward Cassidy



Lift yourself up by first lifting others up

Sunday two little girls were baptized, an eight year old and her little sister. The pastor turned to the parents and explained that the younger child should be "lifted up".

Did he realize that his instructions (practical as the water poured over her head would trickle back into the baptismal font) held another more powerful meaning?

"Lift her up!"

I have been reading "Somewhere More Holy" by Tony Woodlief and rereading my tattered 900 page copy of "I Know This Much Is True" by Wally Lamb.

My sister lent me "Somewhere More Holy". Her church just finished studying it in Sunday School class.

Lamb's book, a torturous look at anger, arrogance and reconciliation, is my personal study of life. Much as I love the book, I don't recommend it to everyone, mainly because the language and many of the situations are shocking. Despite that, to me, it is one of the most spiritual books I've ever read.

Of the people I have recommended it to, the only one that I know of who read it is daughter Kate. We never discussed

This Too Shall Pass
Nancy Hagman



it but she must have enjoyed it because she has read some of his other books. As have I: all of his fiction! None of which I cared for half as much!

We can find high holy moments everywhere: in Sunday School books intended to "lift us up", in simple instructions from a pastor, in a novel. We never know when or where they may reveal themselves.

The struggle to find life's meaning is unique to each person. The need to be "lifted up": universal. The ability to lift or oppress: within us all.

Last week I wrote about the conundrum of my political beliefs. My daughters and sister inform me that I maligned Sandra Flock. Her testimony before a Congressional committee was not about her desire to have free birth control but about a friend's medical

issue. The treatment involved oral contraceptives and her insurance would not pay for it.

I apologize. I always get in trouble when I am completely sure I am right--arrogance. The results of which are the opposite of uplifting every single time!

It is wise the Founding Fathers opted for the separation of church and state. Affairs of the state are about power. The one percent wants to keep power. The 99 percent (or those who have appointed themselves the leaders of the 99 percent) want to take power and beat the one percent into submission.

No one is interested in lifting others up! But think of the world we would have if we put aside our quest for power and domination, our arrogance and our pride.

After 899 pages Wally Lamb's character, Dominick Birdsey, comes to this conclusion "...power, wrongly used, defeats the oppressor as well as the oppressed."

The best way to show power is to humble yourself, then lift someone else up.

You will be lifted up also.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- ★ **Governor Sam Brownback**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. roberts.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-4774
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, Russell Senate Office Building Room C-4, Washington, D.C. 20002. moran.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-6521
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 300 SW 10th St., Room 262-E A., Topeka, Kan. 66612. ralph.ostmeyer@senate.ks.us (785) 296-7399
- ★ **Congressman Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. huelskamp.house.gov (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124
- ★ **State Rep. Rick Billinger**, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka, Kan. 66612. rick.billinger@house.ks.gov (785) 296-7659
- ★ **State Rep. Ward Cassidy**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Topeka, Kan. 66612. ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov (785) 296-7696

Living as God would have us or as our government would

Although he probably is not going to go down in history as a great president, he will undoubtedly be labeled the most humanitarian of ex-presidents and an interview about his most recent book, NIV Lessons from Life Bible: Personal Reflections with Jimmy Carter," reflects that. At a time when the GOP portrays democrats as un-Christian, former President Carter reminds the public, being Christian is not about being judgmental, opinionated or unmoving, but rather about loving God and living as Jesus taught.

The interview also reminds us of the evolutionary nature of our walk with God. Some criticize this very natural evolving of faith as changing the rules. Not so. It is rather using the information God has provided down through the centuries to better explain the world, and the people around us.

As President Carter said, "When we go to the Bible we should keep in mind that the basic principles of

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



the Bible are taught by God, but written down by human beings deprived of modern day knowledge. So there is some fallibility in the writings of the Bible. But the basic principles are applicable to my life and I don't find any conflict among them."

Too many people try to put God in a box, not allowing Him to work within His world, through His people. When faced with issues seemingly foreign to us we sometimes resort to contempt or criticism. We fear that which we do not know or understand. Thus has been the case of gay marriage, an issue the former president reflects upon in his

interview.

Former President Carter reminds us homosexuality was very prevalent in Biblical times, but Jesus never said anything about it. Although the Bible does, Jesus doesn't. The Bible according to St. Paul, but then that's another column. The former president believes the government should recognize civil union marriages for gays and let the religious ceremony be determined by individual churches. Thus allowing a church the right, or perhaps more importantly, the responsibility, to determine their stand on gay religious unions.

Democrats are frequently criticized for too much federal government and yet, it is the GOP which seeks to control the private aspects of our lives, such as gay marriage. Once again a clear division needs to be made as to what is the government's business and what is God's. [Mailto:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net](mailto:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net).

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Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

Kansas Press Association

