

## Balance of powers keeps the governor in his place

Editorialists wailed and gnashed their teeth.

Kansas, they said, could become a dictatorship when Gov. Sam Brownback got his friends in control of both houses of the Legislature. He'd be able to pass any bill he wanted, and that would be too much power for any one man.

The governor's agenda would have "smooth sailing" during the 2013 session, one "expert" predicted. Ha!

Anyone who thought that might happen hasn't spent much time around legislatures or politics. There's a dynamic that makes senators and representatives independent from the governor, and one house poles apart from the other, no matter who's in office.

In fact, that's what the Founding Fathers hoped for when they created our three-part government, featuring executive, judicial and legislative branches sharing power in a rough balance.

No branch completely trusts the other, each is jealous of its independence and all fear one of the others might become too powerful. Each house of a legislature eyes the other with suspicion, casting a wary eye on the other side.

That's just the way things are, even when all three are run by members of the same party and even when, as the governor and his allies did last fall, one group becomes more powerful and gangs up on another.

The governor and other conservatives campaigned successfully to defeat liberal

Republican senators who blocked many of Mr. Brownback's plans in the Senate. The old Senate leadership was ousted, replaced by a group closer to the governor's way of thinking. Democrats, as usual in Kansas, were left with too few votes to count much.

So, this year, everyone expected great (or terrible) things from a new conservative alliance dominating the Statehouse. The governor and many legislators saw eye to eye on many things, and his new allies in the Senate backed his plan to hold onto much of the remaining state spending while continuing to cut income taxes. Cuts would be paid for by retaining a 1-cent increase on the state sales tax passed under Gov. Mark Parkinson which otherwise would have expired next year.

The House balked, though, mostly because many members felt they have made a promise to let the sales tax go down.

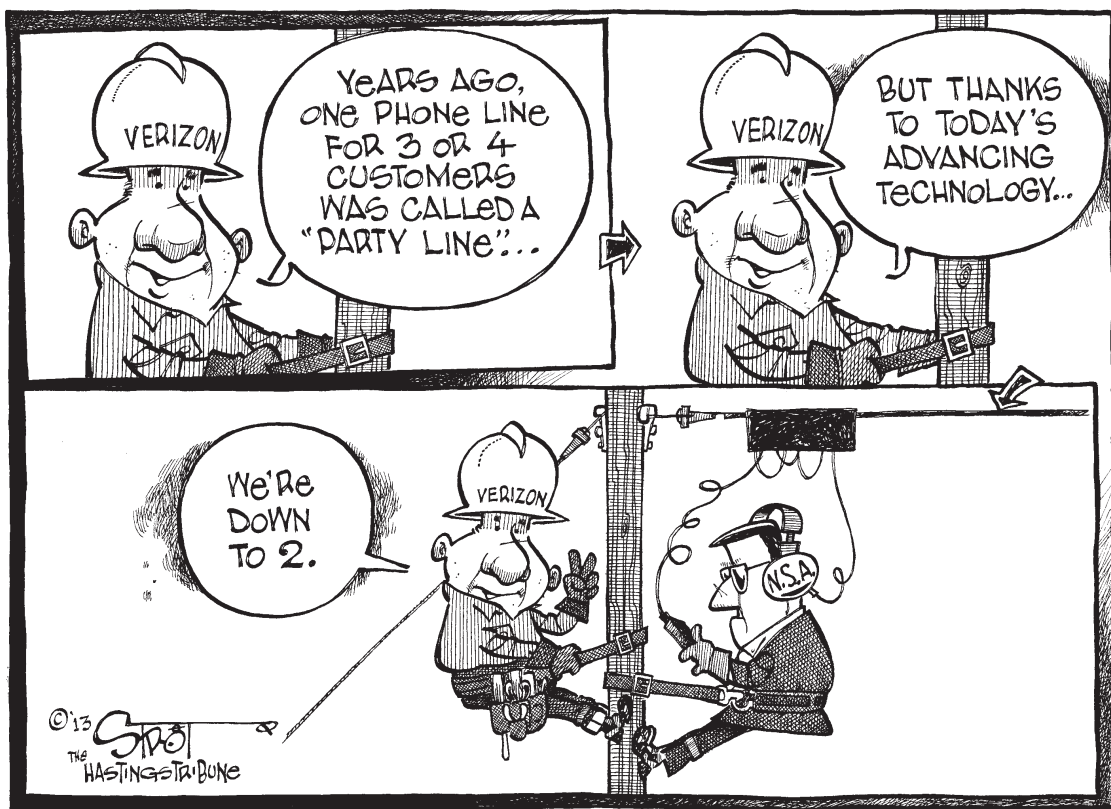
The deadlock left the session incomplete as the 80-day goal for adjournment leaders had announced came and went. Soon, the 90-day limit set by law passed. Still no agreement.

Finally the houses compromised, shaving the sales tax to 6.15 percent and setting a schedule for further income-tax cuts. So much for the governor's unlimited power.

Will Kansas be better off for the changes pushed by Gov. Brownback? Only time will tell. But for sure, we're in no danger of him becoming some sort of all-powerful dictator.

The system just won't allow that.

— Steve Haynes



## Kids provide flowers for mom

Steve and I both love flowers. We have crocuses, daffodils, tulips, a huge snowball bush, grape hyacinths, phlox, lilacs, irises, spiraea, blue flax, roses, lilies, mums, columbines, purple coneflowers, daisies, some purple ground cover, odd feral bunches of bachelor buttons that are basically pretty weeds and some purple thing that came up in the yard.

I added a couple of real hyacinths this spring with hopes of having them come up next year.

What we don't have are orchids or hydrangeas. Orchids would not make it in my house, and I've never seen a hydrangea bush in Kansas.

So, of course, that's what my daughters gave me for Mothers Day.

They were trying. They really were. The eldest loves orchids and has several on the desk in her home office. They are beautiful, but she babies and nurtures them. My flowers are lucky if they get weeded. Forget about babying or nurturing. They live outside. I live inside, and we all get along great that way.

The youngest got me a beautiful blue hydrangea, secretly hoping, I think, that I would decide that it would look better in her new — in great need of flowers — yard in Augusta, Ga., than in my Kansas



## Open Season

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ground.

She was right. I love hydrangeas as much because of a story my mother told me as for their huge, colorful flowers, but I don't think that it would do well up north, so I asked her to find a spot for it.

My mother told us the story of her wedding. It was 1945. The war was over, and like so many young women, she was getting married, but there was not a lot of money for a fancy wedding.

She wore a beautiful white satin sheath, which later became the base for my wedding dress. The church was dressed in hydrangeas, she said. It had been a great year for hydrangeas. They were beautiful, huge and plentiful. And, with permission, every bush on her block was denuded to dress up the church.

I've seen the old black-and-white photos. The bride and groom look so young, and the flowers were fantastic. I look at those photos and

smile.

Back in Georgia, eldest daughter says my orchid is doing fine on her desk and youngest daughter said that she planted the hydrangea out under a pine tree, where it is slowly turning pink. Right now, it's a lovely light purple, she said.

Hydrangeas are a strange flower. Their color depends on the soil. If the soil is acidic, the flowers will be blue. If the soil is alkaline, the flowers will be pink. If you plant a blue one in alkaline soil, like where a pine tree has been dropping its needles for several years, it will slowly change color.

I'm looking forward to going south to visit my flowers this fall.

And, as I said, Steve loves flowers, too, and Father's Day is just around the corner.

I wonder what kind of flowers the girls will get for him — and where will they wind up being planted.

## Hectic four days were great

I knew it would eventually pay off to take all those vitamins. We drove over 1,800 miles, attended a graduation for 699 high school seniors, ate a celebration dinner, jostled our newest great-grandson, attended a gala wedding, ate another celebration dinner, waved "Hi" and "Bye" to our kids at the same time, all within a four-day time period.

And, surprisingly enough, Monday morning, I felt pretty good.

When we were invited to our granddaughter Alexandria's graduation in San Antonio and the wedding of a dear friend's daughter in Dallas on the same weekend, we said, "Sure, we'll be there."

One was Friday night, the other Saturday night. No problem.

As usual, the hardest part of any trip is getting ready to go. Packing is the easy part; cleaning out the car isn't. I "live" in my car. I mean really live in it. It's usually a mess. Sometimes a winter coat and gloves live there all summer, joined by old sandwich wrappers, sunflower-seed shells, music sheets from chapel service and empty water bottles.

What I would like to do, when it's time to clean out the car, is open all the doors and windows; drive down the road at 65 mph and let wind power do the job. But since it's a crime to litter, I get an enormous box or trash bag and do it by hand.

After it's bagged and/or boxed, I'll haul it into the house where, upon our return, I can sort through it, piece by piece: Bottles to recycle, song sheets to file cabinet, winter coat to a closet and sunflower-seed shells to the trash.

The other half of trip preparations



## Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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include telling your boss you'll be gone, stopping the mail, watering all the plants and arranging for someone to care for the cats, the calves and the chickens. Luckily, our next door neighbors, willingly volunteer for animal duty, and we know they'll be in good hands.

Alexandria graduated magna cum laude from high school along with 698 other seniors, and we were her biggest cheering section. She received a generous scholarship to a good university in San Antonio and is anxious to get started on the rest of her life. So are we. With her brains and beauty, there's no telling what she might accomplish.

It was the weekend for exciting beginnings. A wedding is always a beginning. The setting was perfect: a glass-walled chapel in the woods, a beautiful bride and handsome groom and friends and family gathered to celebrate two young people starting their lives together.

Every detail was attended to, even the seating arrangements. Jim and I and our granddaughter Taylor were seated at Table No. 7. As we were locating our places, I picked up the sound of a familiar voice. I had been talking to Jim when the woman looked at me and we both

said, "Don't I know you?" Then recognition kicked in and she said, "Carolyn?"

"Paula?" Then it was old home week, talking about the good old days. We had both worked at the March of Dimes in Dallas at the same time. I left to return to Kansas. She stayed and, is now part of upper management for the entire organization. She is too modest to have mentioned it, but my friend Sonia (mother of the bride) is Paula's assistant, so I think I have it right.

Paula's husband Bill was a great tablemate, too, along with Patty, who had been the bride's daycare provider; Patty's sister, Alice from Mississippi, who came along for the fun of it; and Norma, another March of Dimes employee and her husband, Larry. We talked about how we knew the bride, Alice's goats, going fishing, ObamaCare, my chickens, the weather, and a myriad of other topics. A fun bunch, indeed.

During the evening, I found Sonia and said, "Guess what. Paula is at my table."

"Carolyn," Sonia said, "The seating arrangements were no accident."

Remember when you just went to the store and bought shampoo?

We used Prell for years. It was green and good for your hair. The tube said so.

And just to be clear, I'm talking about my parents and my siblings here, not the family I raised. They grew up in a far different world.

Remember when you washed your hair, combed it and let it dry?

If it didn't behave, you'd grab something like Vitalis or Brylcreem or some other kind of grease or goo and slicked it down. Or up. Depending on what was in style.

Life was simpler then. Just shampoo. Rinse. Repeat.

But I imagine that many of you out there do not understand what I'm talking about at all. Most of you probably grew up in the era of hydrating shampoos and nitrifying conditioner, or cream rinse, as we first called it.

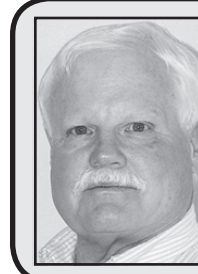
Most of you probably don't even remember Prell, may it rest in peace. (OK, they still make the stuff, but Proctor and Gamble ditched it years ago. Just say it's no longer a market leader.)

It's been a long time since men discovered conditioner, still longer for women.

My hair is fine, and it's gotten finer as it's gotten grayer. Without conditioner, it just sticks out, levitated by the static it generates.

So let's just say the two-step shampoo-and-conditioner regimen is here to stay for me.

But having complicated our lives, why do the manufacturers insist on selling shampoo and cream rinse in



## Along the Sappa

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similar bottles. The print these days is so small, no one over age 32 can read it, to start with. But many of them make the shape and color of the bottles identical.

And then you find yourself in the (dimly lit) shampoo aisle, looking for a magnifier.

Maybe that's what happened to me last year. I bought several bottles of rinse and several shampoos of the brand I like.

I buy small shampoos and large conditioner, because you need a drop of the concentrated shampoo and a handful of conditioner to do the average head of hair.

I had finished off a bottle of conditioner, rinsed out the last drops and thrown it away. I went to the cupboard, and got a new, large bottle, put it in the shower. The next day, I washed my hair, then worked a handful of cream rinse into it. It seemed a little foamier than the last bottle, but my hair looked OK when I combed it.

The next morning — maybe I was more awake — I noticed that the conditioner was a LOT more foamy than usual. I looked at the bottle. Shampoo. I'd been rinsing my hair with shampoo!

I checked the cupboard, and the other large bottle in there was conditioner, so I put it out to use. I asked Cynthia to get me a couple of bottles of conditioner next time she was at the store that carries it. Then I was called away.

When I got back, I was beat after facing the sun all day, driving home from Lawrence. I needed a shower. When I grabbed the shampoo, I turned it over and out ran — a stream of water. How odd.

I managed to pour most of the water off, but the remaining shampoo was a little thin. Then Cynthia popped in.

"I filled the small shampoo from the big bottle so we didn't have to have the big one in the shower," she told me brightly.

"You mean the watered-down, nearly empty bottle I'd left in there to be used up?" I said.

Oops.

It will be easier to use than the big one, however, and though it's a little runny, it does a great job.

Then Cynthia told me what'd happened when she went to get the conditioner. When she got home, she said, she found she had two conditioners and one shampoo. And when she took the shampoo back, she found that the stocker had put them on the shelf that way, alternating bottles of cream rinse and shampoo.

No wonder we had been fooled.

The store traded her for what she wanted. Maybe they'll even have the stocker straighten out his mess. But me? I think I just want my Prell back.

## Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of

these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in The Herald are available, first come, first served.

## From the Bible

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

— II Corinthians 5:1

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