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**Capitol View**

***Commentary by J.L. Schmidt***

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**And the Winners Are …**

The election is over,
the results are well known,
the will of the people has truly been shown.

So, let’s let bygones be bygones and evil thoughts pass…

The next line shall remain unwritten, because it’s likely not printable in a newspaper in polite society. I don’t know the origins, but my late father recited it often this time of the year.

It’s over. The results will be canvassed and published, and it’ll be time to move on. The balance of power may shift slightly between political parties. The nonpartisan nature of the Nebraska Legislature may become more tenuous, and Capitol observers will take great glee in watching the “newbies” try to find the restrooms in the grand old historic building.

There’s another rich Republican guiding the ship of state from his corner office on the second floor. We don’t know much about this guy except that he’s a millionaire pig farmer who was a University of Nebraska Regent and a former member of the Cornhusker football team back when they used to win.

That’s about all we know because he refused to debate Democrat opponent Carol Blood so we’re not even real sure what his voice sounds like, let alone whether he has any pertinent thoughts or plans for leading the state.

It looks like there will be 13 new faces in the 2023 Legislature. If the Republican senators who want to put an end to secret balloting for committee chairmanships prevail with a rules change to that effect, it will be easier for Pillen to identify Republican senators to push the party agenda, or his thoughts, not that one could likely separate them.

Eleven state senators’ term-limited out this year. Two quit after one session, one newbie had no opposition, and two incumbents ran unopposed. Two veteran senators found

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their way back after sitting out one mandatory term. Omaha’s Merv Riepe and Lincoln’s Danielle Conrad were winners, Riepe in Omaha’s District 12 against Robin Richards and Conrad in Lincoln’s District 46 against school social worker James Michael Bowers.

Riepe’s win gives Republicans 33 seats in the officially nonpartisan Unicameral. He replaces Democrat Steve Lathrop who chose not to run again. It takes 33 votes to break a filibuster and that takes away one tool the Democrats have used to hamstring mostly Republican initiatives.

Blood has two more years serving her legislative district. Sen. Mike Hilgers of Lincoln was elected Attorney General and will be replaced by an appointee for next session. That will be the 14th new face.

Incumbent Robert Clements of Elmwood, a banker, defeated Plattsmouth business owner and school lunch lady Sarah Slattery in Legislative District 2, which was redrawn to include a sliver of east Lincoln, about 12,000 constituents, as the result of redistricting. Slattery held the lead early on in challenging Clements who was an appointee of Governor Pete Ricketts.

In Omaha’s District 6, Machaela Cavanaugh won a second term in a race with former Omaha police officer and attorney Christian Mirch. Cavanaugh’s father was a state senator and a U.S. Congressman, and her brother is currently a state senator.

Omaha incumbents Megan Hunt, Wendy DeBoer, John Arch, and Kathleen Kauth all won. Senators Ben Hansen of Blair, Mike Moser of Columbus, Dave Murman of Glenvil and Mike Jacobson of North Platte also won. Another Ricketts’ appointee, Kauth, defeated Democrat challenger Tim Royers for the seat held by the late Sen. Rich Pauls.

For those of you following along at home, this all means that the officially nonpartisan Nebraska Legislature now has 33 Republicans and 16 Democrats. I’ll likely remind you of that several times as the 2023 session unfolds.

Get a paper and pencil. Keep score.

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*J.L. Schmidt has been covering Nebraska government and politics since 1979. He has been a registered Independent for more than 20 years*.