

Kansas needs roads to get the traffic

Kansas missed the boat when other states started expanding their freeways and expressways beyond the basic Interstate system. Today, a lot the traffic goes through one neighboring state or another, and a lot of money flows with it. The federal government and the states laid out the Interstate system in the 1950s. It's been both a curse and a blessing, but many states saw that it did not plug all the gaps in the road grid. Nearly 30 years ago under Gov. Bob Bennett, Kansas drew a freeway system that connected the dots. It included four-lane roads south to Pittsburg and Tulsa from Kansas City, over to Paola, and west from St. Joseph along U.S. 36, among others. A few segments were built, but when times got tough in the 1980s, these were stranded, and remain today as two-lane, limited access curiosities. The Kansas highway system nearly fell apart in those years. The Department of Transportation was occupied with patching potholes and just preserving what it had. It took the visionary Gov. Mike Hayden to raise the gas tax and save our roads — and it cost him his job.

But the Kansas freeway plan died then. Since those days, it's taken a Herculean effort to complete a few short stretches of four-lane road, including U.S. 81 north to Nebraska as an extension of I-135, and K-10 from Kansas City to Lawrence.

South out of Kansas City, Missouri completed an expressway along U.S. 71, and today, the Tulsa traffic, along with much freight to the West Coast, flows south on the east side of the state line. Little thought it given to parallel U.S. 69, the shorter and more attractive route.

North, I-29 carries the load through Missouri and Iowa. Kansas still lacks a decent route to Omaha, and Nebraska has not seen the potential for an expressway along U.S. 75 north out of Topeka. Kansas has an expressway, but it stops at the door to a casino.

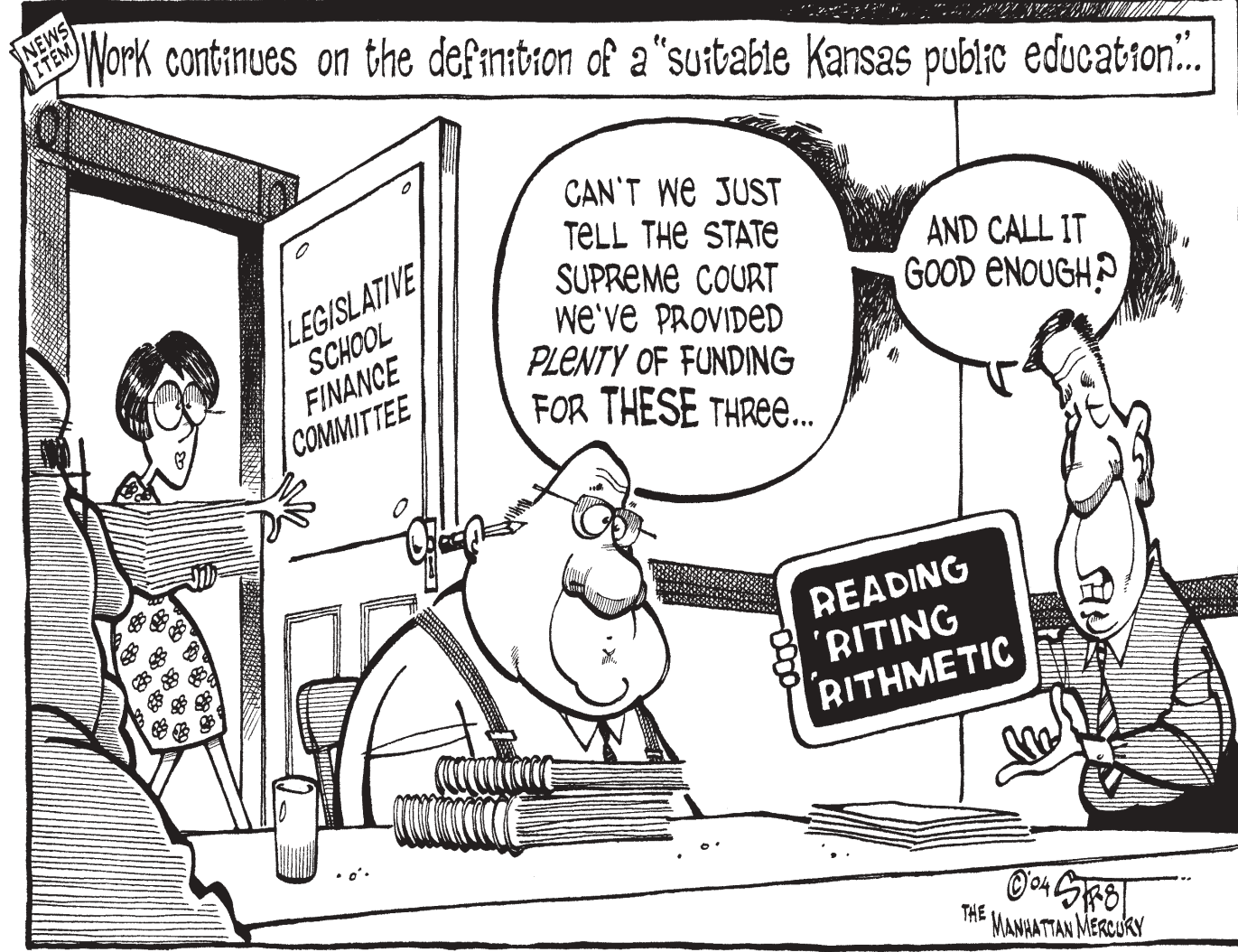
U.S. 54 west of Wichita and U.S. 50 west from Newton and Hutchinson have great potential, but there are not plans to widen either anytime soon. East-west traffic slips off to the south, through Oklahoma.

And there is U.S. 36 across northern Kansas, once part of the freeway plan as far west as Belleville. While I-80 through Nebraska runs near capacity, and I-70 is overcrowded in eastern Kansas, through traffic needs a bypass route. Missouri has improved U.S. 36 across three-fourth of the state, but Kansas is barely starting.

Our highway engineers, burdened by the cost of an extensive, and expensive, road system, shudder to think about expansion. Their mantra is, "Wait until the traffic comes."

But sometimes, you have to build it, and they will come.

If you want to snare traffic and build business, it seems, you have to put the cart before the horse. — Steve Haynes



Anniversary puts hubby in a slump

My husband must be in a slump this week. He hasn't said or done anything even mildly amusing. Oh, you know that's not true. Every day with that man is like a new dawn.

Our 10th anniversary is this week. Perhaps that makes me reflective about our life together. We are completely alike in many areas and total opposites in others. We share the same Christian beliefs, even though I can't express them as eloquently as he can. We look at money the same way: as a means to support the mission work we both love, to provide a home for ourselves, and eat dinner out occasionally.

We both love our children and grandchildren dearly, even when they do things we don't approve of. And most importantly, we are committed to each other. Not that there haven't been times when one or the other of us has been ready to throw in the towel. We just resolve to never have them at the same time. We are firm believers in the old adage, "Never let the sun go down on your anger; stay up and fight all night."

We took an on-line IQ test this morning. Jim answered the mathematical and logic questions while I answered the verbal/language questions. Devil is to lived as 62363 is to: (a)

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



12345 (b) 36326 or (c) 36623.

Two cars are on a perfectly straight road facing in opposite directions. They each drive 8 miles, make left hand turns and drive 6 miles. How far apart are they?

"Who cares?" was my reply. But Jim says, "Oh, that's easy. You use the 3, 4, 5 theory of right angles and there's your answer."

"Right." Anyway, together we had a combined IQ of 145. Does that mean we each average out at 72 1/2?

We received relatively good news about my brother Don and his wife Liz. She had surgery on her carotid artery last week and it went well. She is, however, still facing extensive therapy.

Don has begun treatment for what is being called a "low-grade" cancer. Last week, he was able to fly back to their home in Arkansas to check on things while Liz remained in Phoenix with their daughter

Pam. Don will return for Liz, and they plan to be back in their home soon.

Taylor was at the grocery store with her mother last week when they tasted samples of smoked ham at the deli counter. She told her mother it was really good and asked her what it was.

Kara said, "What kind of an animal do you think it came from?"

Aghast, Taylor asked, "I'm eating an animal?"

"Yes, you're eating an animal. What kind do you think it is," her mother inquired.

Taylor made several guesses like sheep, horse, or cow.

"No," her mother said, "You're eating pig."

Kara said when Taylor heard she was eating a pig, she started laughing and laughing.

Then, sobering up, looked her right in the eye and said, "That's sure good pig, Mom."

Thinking this might be a good time to explain about other meats and their origins, Kara went on to explain that hamburger comes from cattle, but thought it best not to go too far. Taylor doesn't need to know that last night for dinner, the meat in the spaghetti sauce was "Bucky burger."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Voter endorses write-in candidate

To the Editor: I would like you, our community, to encourage Ivan Kingham to run as a write-in candidate for the second district in the upcoming Nov. 2 elections.

I had the privilege of working with Ivan a few years ago while flying and taking pictures for the Farm Service Agency office. Ivan is a hard working, honest man who has been involved with Farm Bureau, Norton County Coop and the airport board. In all of these areas Ivan has shown support for

our county with progressive thinking and quiet leadership.

Please contact Ivan and offer him your support and encouragement for a positive change in Norton County.

Thank you, Kathy Holste Norton

Editor's Note: Mr. Kingham ran against incumbent Leroy Lang in the Republican primary. Mr. Lang has no Democratic opposition in the November general election.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Contributions and voting record aren't the same thing

To The Editor; In the last couple weeks almost everyone in Northwest Kansas received a flyer from Democratic candidate Tim Peterson.

My initial reaction was not to dignify it with a response, but the more I thought about it the more I reasoned that many people in our part of the state don't really know Ralph Ostmeyer that well, and the sad truth is that when someone starts throwing mud, some of it will stick if its not washed off.

This little flyer that was sent loudly proclaims that Ralph Ostmeyer has been accepting campaign contributions from shady sources, like gaming interests and tobacco companies. The implication is, of course, that Ralph must be planning on putting up a casino in northwest Kansas, or is passing out cigarettes to high school

kids. Yeah right.

Ralph openly admits to accepting their money. Almost every politician does. It takes a lot of money to run for office. Every dollar donated by a big-money interest is one less that a candidate has to dig out of his own pocket, or ask his supporters to dig out of theirs.

Is Ralph Ostmeyer a pawn of these interests? It's easy to find out. Check his voting record. Check it real good. I dare say that you won't find a vote that would so much as raise an eyebrow on the dourest of Baptist preachers. If Ralph wasn't rock solid on the "values" issues, he certainly wouldn't have my vote, let alone my whole-hearted support. Over the years Ralph has regularly and consistently been a voice for pro-life, pro-family and pro-America.

It's easy for a candidate with no record to assume any position he believes is favorable. Tim Peterson may very well be pro-family in every respect. I honestly don't know. I know that most rank and file Democrats in our area have very similar interests to my own. It is clear, however, that Tim Peterson has a real affinity to Democrats high up the national chain. This is apparent from various letters he has had printed over the years. Its hard for me to think that a politician who adores the Clintons, the Kennedy's or even the Kerry's has the same definition of "family values" that I have.

Look at the voting record; the choice for a true conservative, pro-family candidate is clear. Ralph Ostmeyer.

Gale Hays Almendra

Reader backs up county commissioners' decisions

To the Editor: Environment is not only the state of our water, air and land, it is also the conditions and influences under which one lives.

Voting is a privilege for all to exercise, yet the conditions under which the "Norton County Environmentalists" are presenting for us to live, voting is just for a select few.

As not all registered voters received a flyer, some households were missed entirely and only one of the registered voters in other households were contacted.

A county commissioner is to listen to all constituents. One just needs to ask commissioners Leroy Lang, John Miller or Dean Kruse about the variety and amount of comments and complaints

lodged with them.

In case you don't want to ask them just look at the events of the past few years. The commissioners received enough complaints from both sides of the livestock issue to try to establish a compromise that would serve all constituents. A compromise is made by researching and appraising all the facts, listening to their constituents and finally taking the risk of a decision.

A decision that would give the residents of Norton county more of a say on all activities taking place at the county level — home rule.

With the county assuming extra expenditures due to state budget cuts, shouldn't we be allowed more control in our

county?

Obviously the "Norton County Environmentalists" are trying to influence us by defaming our county commissioners through the falsehoods they are spreading.

Would you rather have a commissioner who tells untruths to achieve what he desires or one who takes a stand by stating the facts such as Commissioner Lang?

Commissioner Lang not only stated the facts, but tried to reach as many of the constituents as possible. Not just a select few in his district.

When this voter goes to the polls I want a FORTHRIGHT candidate on the ballot with a NAME.

Sincerely, Rebecca Wetter, Norton

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