

Expensive campaign isn't what Kansas needs

Kansas is poised to unveil a new state slogan and a new advertising campaign.

Here's hoping it creates fewer snores than some of the late and mostly unlamented campaigns foisted off on the state by big-city advertising agencies with grand ideas and few scruples.

Kansas used to be the Wheat State or the Sunflower State. A lot of people still think of us that way; those are identities that spring from our nature, and they seem to stick.

Tourism promoters desperately want Kansas to be something it isn't, however, and advertising agencies are perfectly willing to play along — as long as big bucks are involved.

So it was that Kansas once became the "Land of Ahs," a not-so-subtle play on words involving a famous film. But the slogan "Ah, Kansas!" was loosely translated "Aw, Kansas?" in the back seat by children strapped in for a run across the Great American Desert.

Kansas is a beautiful state, but our highways avoid the best parts — too many hills to build through — and bereft of trees, our roughest terrain seems mild compared to neighboring states.

Kansas has history, hunting, fishing, scenery, open spaces, peace and solitude. It has a pioneer farming heritage and a clean, invigorating spirit that deserves to be shown.

Unfortunately, what we're liable to get from the state's latest effort is another expensive slogan and the need to spend millions of dollars "updating" the signs at entrances to the state.

Every administration, it seems, has to change those signs. The current version was designed with the aid of Linda Graves, wife of the previous governor. It features a sunflower that's rather cold and abstract, in pale yellow on a blue background that fades purplish.

The best that can be said for the Graves signs is that they were a big improvement over the "confetti Kansas" signs put up under Gov. Joan Finney. The idea was that Kansas was so exciting that it was fairly bursting at the seams, but the visual impact on a sign was disquieting. Another ad agency triumph.

Then you get back to the "Ah Kansas" era, which featured exciting brown signs and even more exciting slogans.

The real Kansas is out here. It's a nice place, though we suspect, it'll never rival Colorado or Wyoming (Slogan: miles of empty desert before you get to Yellowstone!) as a destination. For one thing, the skiing is never going to be any good.

The best border signs we ever had date back to the Bob Docking era, when a simple green sign was crowned by a big sunflower. The slanted "stems" of those signs still hold up most of the border greetings.

Sometimes the simple approach is best. We need to market what we have, and we need to draw more people to our state. We don't need another expensive slogan from some high-priced agency that wouldn't know a purse from a sow's ear — or a cow from a pheasant.

— Steve Haynes

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

She feels blessed to have known woman

To the Editor:

There are certain people who cross our path, that leave an indelible mark on our lives and for me one of those was Mrs. Alice Foley.

It was my fortune to know her both as a teacher and the mother of my friend.

Inside and outside the classroom she encouraged me to be my very best and always treated me with respect and care. It was in her nature to make all of us feel as if we were someone special.

She was a gifted teacher, who I believe, awoke every morning understanding that she was not just going to a job, but that she was playing an important role in molding a child's life.

I knew her as a person, who not only dedicated herself to teaching her students

the fundamentals of learning, but also concentrated on all aspects of their lives. If you were privileged enough to have been in her class, you will remember that discipline was an essential part of your learning, but it was done with both encouragement and assertiveness, never with a harsh word or a loud voice and never to degrade or belittle.

She worked toward raising your self-awareness and self-esteem. We were all very blessed to have her in our lives, not only for the gift of learning, but for her thoughtfulness, and guidance.

She truly was a woman with a pure heart, honesty and integrity.

Doylene (Quenzer) Foreman
Augusta

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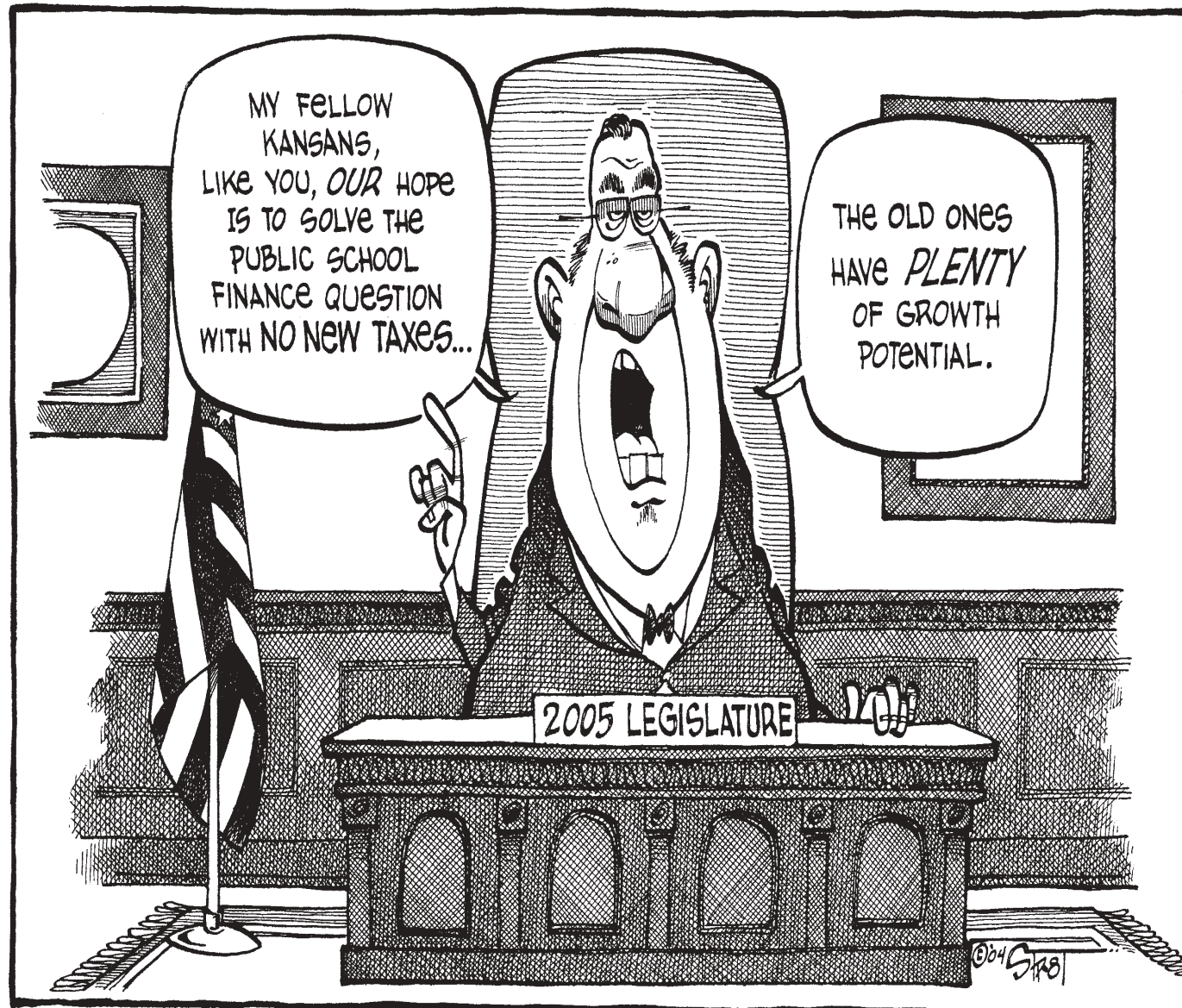
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Holiday confusion works out okay

Strange how Christmas on a Saturday can confuse you. At my office, it was decreed by our boss that Friday would also be a holiday.

Her "Monday Memo" is an inter-office communique intended to alert the staff to upcoming events, potential stories and assignments. Last Monday the memo read, "The office will be closed Friday — don't even think about coming in." It went on to say we would have our office party Thursday and to bring food.

From that point on, the whole week kicked into high gear to cram five days of work into four. Thursday came and everyone brought their particular specialties. Cynthia provided a ham, Sonya brought her "little smokies," Vicki made a bean dish, Susie brought a cooker full of potatoes, Veronica (actually Veronica's mom) made cheese/spinach dip, Dick and Mary Beth provided a fruit bowl, Carol was sick and missed the party, and I fixed shrimp dip. Some of our families came by for lunch, and it was a day of celebration and well-wishes all around.

Which makes it understandable that Friday seemed more like Saturday. I slept

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



late Friday morning, but when I woke up and went into the kitchen, Jim was busily chopping onions and celery.

"What are you doing?" I asked in disbelief.

"I'm getting the turkey and dressing ready. Dad's going to be here for dinner in a couple hours," Jim said.

"Whoa, Chef Boy," I said. "It's only Friday. Christmas is tomorrow."

"Are you sure?" he asked, suspiciously. "Positive," I assured him.

He immediately relaxed and bagged up the diced veggies and stored them in the fridge. At least they were ready for the next day. We sat down with our coffee and really enjoyed the moment ... until noon when the doorbell rang.

Guess who? It was Jim's dad. Jim had invited him to dinner on Friday. And it was Friday.

We all had a good laugh and a nice afternoon with Dad. He promised to come back the next day for our "real" Christmas dinner.

—ob—

Jim and I don't go overboard on presents, but when my husband does buy me a gift, I'd kinda like to get it.

This year, Jim picked up a couple little things for me way ahead of Christmas. Then he forgot where he hid them. It was late in the day before he finally found them.

—ob—

A Christmas Day call from my daughter, Kara, reminded me of the excitement felt by a child.

She said her 5-year-old, Taylor, got up that morning, put on her slippers and robe and came into Kara and her husband's bedroom, woke them up and said, "Come on guys, get up. I just can't wait for this... for this final moment."

We should all be so excited for the final moment.

Home is smaller when kids come back

Having all the children home for the holidays was fun — and nerve-racking for all of us. The children are no longer youngsters.

Our oldest is 30, married and living in Georgia. She has been out of our home for a dozen years.

In fact, she hasn't lived in Kansas (except for one summer during college) since she was 6.

The next daughter is 27. She graduated from college and taught for three years before going to graduate school. She has a steady boyfriend and lives in South Carolina.

Son lives in Lawrence, where he works, hangs out with his friends and raises cats. He's 24.

Son came home for Thanksgiving and he and youngest daughter were home at the same time last year.

However, because of her job, husband and distance, oldest daughter hasn't been home for a year, so we haven't had our family together since she was married in August 2002.

This weekend, they were all here, and we were all wondering how we lived together, mostly in harmony, all those years.

Not that they fight. They all get along quite well.

It's just that they take up so much room

Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



these days.

For the last five years, Steve and I have had the house to ourselves. Children's bedrooms have been converted into storage and an office.

Suddenly, we had people sleeping in beds that haven't been occupied in years. There were five adults needing to use one shower within an hour.

The grocery cart was overflowing and the fridge holds stuff I can't even pronounce. (What is humus, anyway?)

Our dining room table usually has plenty of room for us, the daily mail and a pile of newspapers.

This week, even the poinsettia I put out had to be moved to a side table. We filled all spaces and piles of Christmas cards were shuffled from place to place.

I was proud of us all, however. We were five adults used to living apart, and we got along beautifully for four days. We even

took everyone on a road trip and no one got upset, even though three adults in the back seat of an Explorer is a tight fit for a three-hour drive.

The kids were home because it was my mother's 80th birthday, and we all jammed ourselves in the truck and went to visit Grandma in Concordia on Christmas Eve.

We grabbed Mom out of the nursing home, went out for Chinese food, took family pictures and piled back into the Explorer for the three-hour trip home.

We skidded into town in time for church, then went home for our traditional Christmas Eve meal of steak, twice-baked potatoes and green beans.

Oldest daughter is back in Georgia now. Son left for Lawrence on Sunday, since he had to work Monday.

Only youngest daughter remains. She will be hitting the road this week for South Carolina. Since she's a student again, she has a little more time off.

I'm a little sad that they're all gone or going, but I've got to admit, there's a lot more room around here now. And I suspect they'll all be glad to get back to their own places.

It's nice to visit, but it's nice to be home again. And in our family, home is where the cats are.

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to

the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.