

## Just who is in charge here?

Maybe we'll get one thing settled in Kansas this year. And that's who's running this state. In civics class, we all learned how a state is supposed to work. The governor proposes a budget and leads the bureaucracy. The Legislature makes laws, adjusts and approves the budget. And most of all, the Legislature raises taxes. The courts referee everything. They interpret the laws and, when asked, decide whether they fit in the state's constitutional structure. Courts have no power to draw up a budget or increase taxes. Or so we thought. In Kansas today, the state Supreme Court has ruled that the Legislature isn't putting enough money into schools. The court based its decision on one sentence in the Constitution. It says the state shall make "suitable" provisions for educating all students. What happens if the Legislature doesn't move fast enough? The court set an April 12 deadline for making things suitable, whatever that means. The judges aren't saying. Presumably, the court can't just order the Legislature to raise taxes. We all learned that in civics class, or thought we had. If the court finds schools not suitable, perhaps the judges will shut them down. Right. That would be good for our kids. At best, the court should be able to rule on dividing up the money the state has, not on a tax increase. The whole legal process was begun by a group of medium-sized school districts that felt they lost out in the legislative process. This brazen attempt to circumvent the process and get more money ought to be stopped. Someone needs to stand up to legal blackmail, and to activist, liberal judges who would back such a suit. Many in the Legislature are mad. One bill would require judges to be confirmed by the state Senate before taking office, as federal judges must be. Another would return the high court to the election process, giving voters more say. Both ideas have merit. There's no evidence Kansans want to pay more taxes, even for schools. It'd be interesting to see, at the polls, what they think of our high judges and their self-imposed role as spending advocates. Whatever happens, we'd suggest that any judge who thinks we need more taxes should step down from the bench and run for the Legislature. That'd give a better picture of what people want.

— Steve Haynes



## Boys and girls a dancin' together...

Mention kids and 4-H to me in the same sentence and, if possible, I'm there.

I think 4-H is the best organization for developing leadership skills and youngsters' self-confidence.

A few weeks ago, a 4-H leader called to see if I would help teach their club a dance for 4-H Day competition.

"Sure," I said. "Is it a square dance? Maybe the Cotton-eyed Joe? How about the Schotische?"

Visions of my own days as a 4-H dancer popped into my head. We wore cute three-tiered checked skirts in a rainbow of colors. Mine was green. Of course, our partners wore a string bow-tie to match our skirts.

"No," the leader said. "Will you teach the kids how to do the 'Hand-Jive'?"

Anyone who went to high school in the 1960s knows the hand-jive. It was not so much a dance as something you did sitting down. The movie "Grease" introduced it to kids in the '80s, and now their kids think of it as a golden oldie.

## Out Back Carolyn Plotts



Last week was our first practice and, typically, the girls were all excited while the boys hung back. Way back. If they could have, I think they would have "hung" right out the back door. But, their mothers told them they had to do it, so for the most part they did it in good spirits. That is, right up until the time we told them they had to hold a girl's hand during a couple of maneuvers we choreographed into the routine.

After much cajoling, and maybe a little bribery, we got three boys to actually touch a girl while they did twist-overs, pull-throughs and the stroll.

You have to remember these boys are,

I'm guessing, from 6 to 12 years old. They haven't learned yet, nor do they want to, that it's the guy who dances that gets the girl.

This week's practice went smoothly, with everyone remembering their places and the steps. Costumes are coming together, with mothers of girls busily making poodle skirts and mothers of boys looking for plain white T-shirts and butcher wax.

I won't be there for the next two practices, but I've served my purpose. The moms just needed an "out-of-town expert" who wasn't related to anyone to come in and get things going. Kids always listen to someone else better than they listen to their own mom.

I will try my best to get back in time for their performance. If they do as well there as they did in practice, it's a purple ribbon winner for sure.

—ob—

Grandma used to put her pies on the windowsill to cool. Her granddaughters put their pies on the windowsill to thaw.

## Representative serves on same committees

Congressman Jerry Moran today announced his committee assignments for the 109th session of Congress. He will continue to serve on the agriculture, veterans' affairs, and transportation and infrastructure committees.

House Agriculture Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) has also reappointed Mr. Moran as chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management. The subcommittee will help craft the next farm bill. Mr. Moran will also serve as a member of the Conservation, Credit, Rural Development and Research Subcommittee and the Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Dairy, Nutrition and Forestry.

"Protecting and preserving our farms and ranches is vital for the survival of the economy and our Kansas way of life," Congressman Moran said. "As Chairman of the General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee, I will be able to continue my work toward achieving these goals. This will become

## Capitol Views

Rep. Jerry Moran



especially important as we enter into hearings on the 2007 Farm Bill."

He will continue serving on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and he will be on the Subcommittee on Health, which serves nearly 250,000 veterans in Kansas, and on the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

The congressman will also serve on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the subcommittees on Aviation; Railroads; and Highways, Transit and Pipelines.

For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at [www.house.gov/moranks01/](http://www.house.gov/moranks01/).

## Housewives make the world go 'round

After much thought and soul searching, I've decided that stay-at-home moms are the glue that holds this country together.

I've always been a working woman. I quit my job just before my first child was born, but by the time she was 2 weeks old, I was on the phone to my old boss, begging to be taken back.

I hate housework, I'm no expert on child rearing and I'm no good at clubs and groups.

But looking around, I see dozens of mothers taking care of their young children and volunteering their time to help the Little League, PTA, Cub Scouts and other groups.

I'm not saying there aren't lots of working moms doing the same things. But, let's face it, by the time you get the husband and kids ready for the day, put in 8 hours at a job and get home to fix supper, help with homework, throw in a load of laundry and do the dishes, you don't have much time or energy for other projects.

We visited Steve's sister and brother-in-law last week, and I started to realize how much she does.

Barb is Steve's much younger sister. She lived with us for several years and she seems more like my sister or one of my older children than an in-law.

A smart, good looking woman, she has a master's degree in city planning and had worked for several towns in the Kansas City area. Then her husband got a job in their old home town.

Instead of getting another job, she turned her time and energies into raising her son and doing volunteer work.

She's the secretary of a dog rescue group and drives hundreds of miles every month or so to pick up or deliver Hungarian vizulas, a breed about the size of a pointer, but with the lean looks of a greyhound and the dark red of an Irish setter. Besides finding new homes for displaced

## Open Season

Cynthia Haynes



dogs, she keeps them for up to three or four months adding them to her menagerie of three indoor and countless outdoor cats, two vizulas of her own and five to eight horses.

She's the president of the Lake Kahola Homeowners Association, having inherited half of her parents' cabin at the lake. With her knowledge of planning and development, she keeps folks from building

garages on the public right-of-way or somebody else's land and other such nonsense.

It doesn't make her too popular sometimes, but she just keeps working to make things right.

She's a member of the parent-teacher group, and when we were visiting, she had designed, copied and was mailing 1,800 flyers for the school carnival.

I realized that she and hundreds of others like her are keeping things going across the country, volunteering their time to guide children, protect animals, enforce the rules and bake the cookies.

Thanks, Barb, and all you stay-at-home moms, who just never seem to spend that much time at home. You all keep us glued together.

## 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.

## ELECTED OFFICIALS:

★ Governor Kathleen Sebelius, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-2332

★ U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

★ U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

★ State Sen. Ralph Ostmeier, State Capitol Building, Room 128-S, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

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