

It's about money, not education

Appalling. Greedy midsize school districts that have been pushing for more money have asked the Kansas Supreme Court to take over Kansas schools and order the Legislature to spend nearly a billion dollars more on education this year.

We hope the court will realize the wrongness of this position, but there are no guarantees in the crazy age we live in. It's time for Kansas taxpayers to wake up.

There is no crisis in education, except the one created by this lawsuit.

Kansas schools function well. They are among the best in the nation.

Sure, they could use more money. Couldn't we all? But it's the Legislature's job to divide the pie, and the Legislature has done what it can for schools without raising taxes.

There is no way to get the billion dollars these greedy school districts want without a huge tax hike. The people running them don't care. They just want money.

Rural school districts and school boards ought to wake up, too. The money the midsize districts want is the money our schools used to get for "low enrollment weighting." This is supposed to cover the extra costs of running a small, isolated district.

The latest school finance bill does away with this differential and covers it with a one-time increase in the per-pupil base. That's a scam that will come back to haunt rural schools.

To be fair, the midsize districts are not really out to destroy western Kansas schools, but we will suffer for their wants.

Their real targets are the growing, popular "ex urban" districts that surround city schools in Salina, Topeka, Wichita and other eastern cities. The districts lack the "city" problems like drugs, violence and crowding that plague larger districts. They draw students — and money — from city schools. And because of low-enrollment weighting, they get more money for each student.

City schools see this. They hate these smaller neighbors.

Make no mistake. This is not about the disadvantaged or the downtrodden. It's not about minority students or special education.

It's the money.

And if we don't do something now, our schools out here won't have any.

The way our government is supposed to work, the Legislature decides how to spend the state's money and how much to tax citizens. Not the courts.

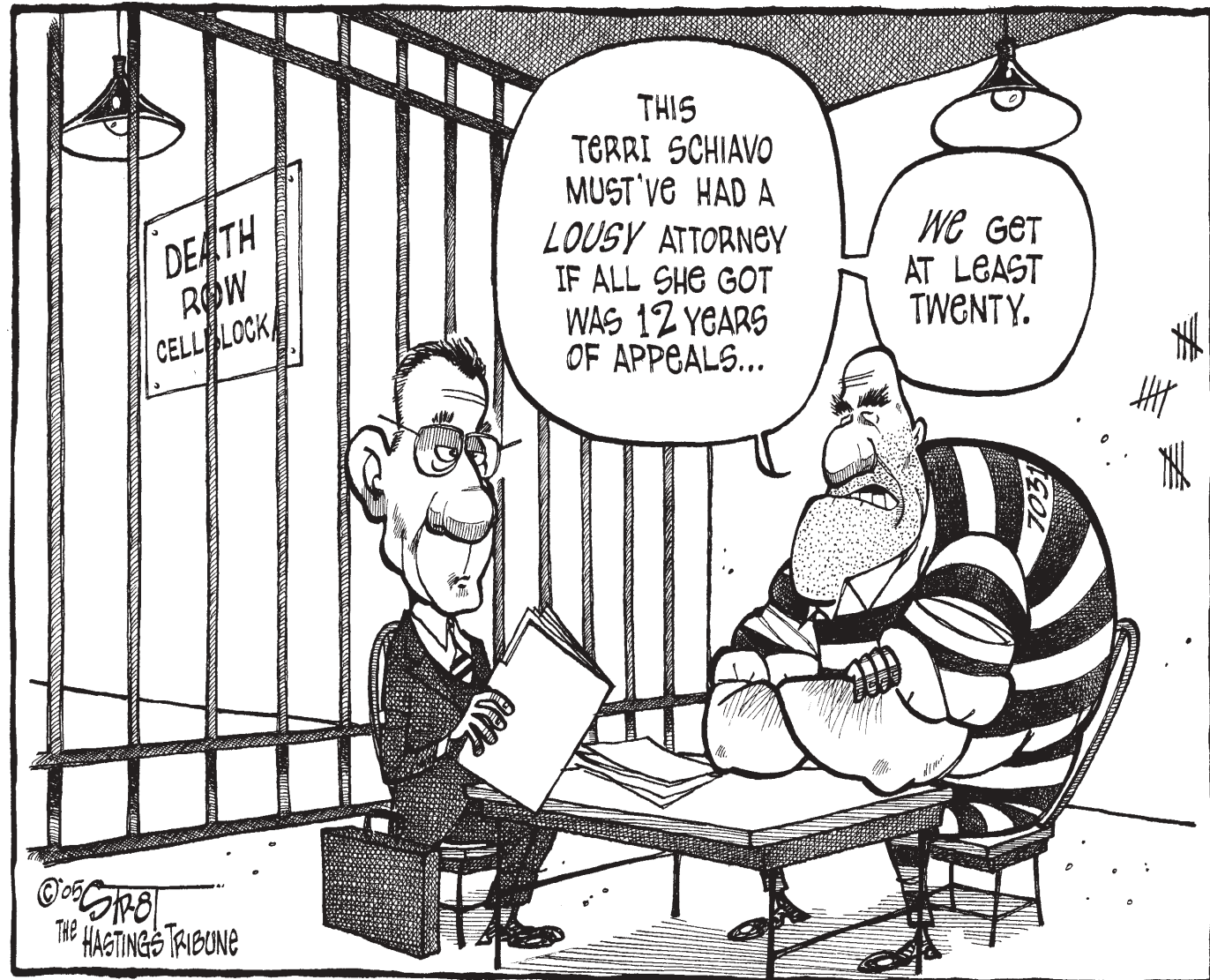
Unless we want to be taxed to death, that's the way it should stay.

The Supreme Court needs to keep out of school finance and let the Legislature do its job.

This is a money issue, not a legal problem, and the court needs to see that.

Otherwise, we are facing a constitutional crisis in this state.

— Steve Haynes



Life without TV is not that bad

The other night, I asked Jim to take me someplace expensive. He did. To the gas station.

Did you ever think you would live to see the day when \$2-a-gallon gas sounded like a bargain? I hate to be the voice of gloom and doom, but prices are expected to peak at \$2.35 a gallon this summer.

A very smart lady talked to me the other night when we were eating at a local restaurant. I know she was smart, because she agreed with me. She too had been practicing the "slow down" theory of gas consumption. She is a stay-at-home, home-schooling mom who can make a tank of gas last more than a week.

I can't top that, but I am definitely getting more miles out of each fillup. Jim sleeps while I drive, anyway. This way he gets a longer nap.

—ob—

For some time, Jim and I have discussed the pros and cons of eliminating television from our lives. We have lots of friends who have done it, and their lives seem better for the change. We're both kind of "news junkies" and couldn't bear the thought of life without "Fox and Friends" or Bill O'Reilly. Jim is a history nut, and

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



I can't get enough of "Decorating Cents" and "Clean Sweep."

One week, two days, four hours and 19 minutes ago, we decided to go "cold turkey" and give up television.

Actually, that's not quite true.

To say "we decided" is somewhat of a misnomer. The satellite company actually decided for us. I guess I misplaced the bill (it got lost on the table), it didn't get paid and our reception was discontinued. After much discussion, our decision was to NOT hock the family sterling to get enough money together to have the service restored within the hour.

It's going pretty well. We're rediscovering the art of conversation. Jim says

something, I reply. Then I say something, he responds. It's really quite something.

I'm reading a book. I love to read. Always have. But, over the years, I claimed to never have enough time to read. It's true, I didn't have enough time ... I was wasting it all watching TV.

I'm not to the point where I'm ready to say, "Sell the TV set! We're never watching it again." But, I think we're both ready to say, "Let's not ever allow that little box to control our lives again."

—ob—

Did you remember we are feeding two baby calves? From the first day we had them, Jim began calling one Suzy-Q, which left the other needing a moniker. Our granddaughter Alexandria usually names them, but she conceded when a friend, who demanded to remain anonymous, came up with a name for the other calf. He suggested Barby. You know, Barby-Q.

It stuck. But out of respect, and so they don't get nervous, we just call them Suzy and Barby.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Professional athletes should be heroes, not drug addicts

To the Editor:

I was in shock when I heard some of the testimonies given recently in regard to the use of drugs by our major league baseball players, as well as other sports.

The report that as many as 500,000 of our young student athletes had used drugs really shook me up. There was a report that as many as 1 in 15 had used illegal enhancement supplements of some kind. This is staggering.

The major league policy is puny; it is ridiculous. Major league baseball is in denial. It has traded integrity for dollars.

I would like to see all professional sports adopt the Olympic International

policy. They now govern over 150,000 athletes worldwide. Last year, only one-half of one percent of the athletes tested positive.

For those caught cheating, I would like to see at least one-year suspension. If they are caught a second time, I would like to see them banned for life.

High-profile athletes in college and professional sports send signals to our youngsters, who dream of being like them.

Over my years, I think of true role-model athletes who have given me much enjoyment and memories.

In baseball were Elden Aufer, Babe

Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Stan Musial, Ted Williams, Jackie Robinson, Hank Aaron, Willie Mays and Cal Ripken Jr.

Football players I admired included Bart Starr, Joe Montana, Barry Sanders and Gale Sayers.

Men basketball players of note include Jerry West, Oscar Robertson and Michael Jordan. Standout women players include Jackie Stiles and Lynette Woodward.

Track stars in my memory include Jesse Owens, Al Oerter, Nolan Cromwell and Jim Ryun.

In golf, you have Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Tiger Woods.

Men who I admired as their mentors and coaches were Phog Allen, John Wooten, Jim Valvano, Dean Smith, Tex Winter, Tom Osborne and Alex Francis. And, the list goes on and on.

It would be good to see the NCAA implement strong standards for use of illegal substances.

Twenty-nine states have now adopted standards for illegal substances for their high schools. I hope we will soon see this in force in all states. Maybe sometime soon we will have zero use by athletes of illegal substances and alcohol.

I urge you to contact Congressman Jerry Moran or Senator Pat Roberts. They can pass on your comments to Mr. Davis and Mrs. Waxman, chairmen of the committee.

I hope this will help our young men and women student athletes live their dreams.

I thank *The Telegram* for the privilege to express my views.

P.S. Don't forget to thank our coaches for their time, efforts and guidance of our young athletes.

Jack Ward
Norton

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Trees bring thoughts of someone special

To the Editor:

Seeing the beautiful cherry trees in full bloom this year reminds me of the late Dr. Kate I. Hansen of Logan, who served as a missionary of music in Japan from 1907 to 1941 — and also for a period of time after the war.

She keenly appreciated all things beautiful, especially music, literature and nature.

Here is an excerpt from two of her letters written in 1947:

"I think our spring came earlier this year than yours, from your description. In Tokyo, the first of April the cherries were in full bloom. In Sendai the early cherries are just gone. They were much more pink than the Tokyo ones this year for some reason. We have two very large old ones of the Tokyo variety in the yard, which were in very full bloom and stayed on for two weeks or so. But we do miss the ten varieties we have in our Junikencho garden!

From her book, "Kate Hansen, the Grandest Mission on Earth - From Kansas to Japan 1907-1951 by Dane and Polly Bales and Calvin E. Harbin, pages 287-289, she wrote, "Yesterday Lydia and I went in the afternoon to call on Mr. Yukio Ozaki, 91 years old, who is known here and in the U.S.A. for several things — as the only member of Parliament who has served without a break since Parliament was organized in the 1870s; as the outstanding liberal leader who led the opposition to the war with America, and escaped being killed time after time, perhaps because of his age; and in America, as the man who gave the cherry trees to the city of Washington, when he was mayor of Tokyo, and who was invited to visit America this spring, and addressed both houses of Congress.

"Lydia and I had known his late wife,

the authoress Theodora Yei, in our early summers here, and had met him, but had not seen him since Mrs. Ozaki's death some years ago. But on a Monday, a rainy day, I happened to meet his secretary at the entrance on the road to Usui Pass, and had asked if Mr. Ozaki was in Karuizawa. The secretary insisted that I come in for tea. Mr. Ozaki spoke excellent English.

"He told us that he felt that his whole political life had been a failure, when his party couldn't prevent war. 'The best thing I ever did,' he said, 'was to send the cherry trees to Washington. But I never dared to explain to my countrymen my reason for sending them, if I had, mobs would have been coming from every direction to kill me. I sent the trees as an expression of gratitude to President Theodore Roosevelt and the American people for saving Japan by mediating at the close of the war with Russia. I knew that Japan was exhausted, and at the end of her resources, and could not have continued the war. But the Japanese Army had concealed the facts and made the people believe the Japanese were winning the war and would get much territory and a great indemnity. So when the treaty terms were announced, there was rioting in Tokyo and almost a revolution. Now, at last, I can tell why I was so grateful to America and wish to express my gratitude; but I never could before.'

"Yesterday as Lydia and I were at lunch, here came the secretary with two cards signed by Mr. Ozaki, to thank us in his name for our visit, and to apologize for Mr. Ozaki that he could not thank us in person, as his legs were not strong enough to permit him to climb our hill."

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ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor' West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor

