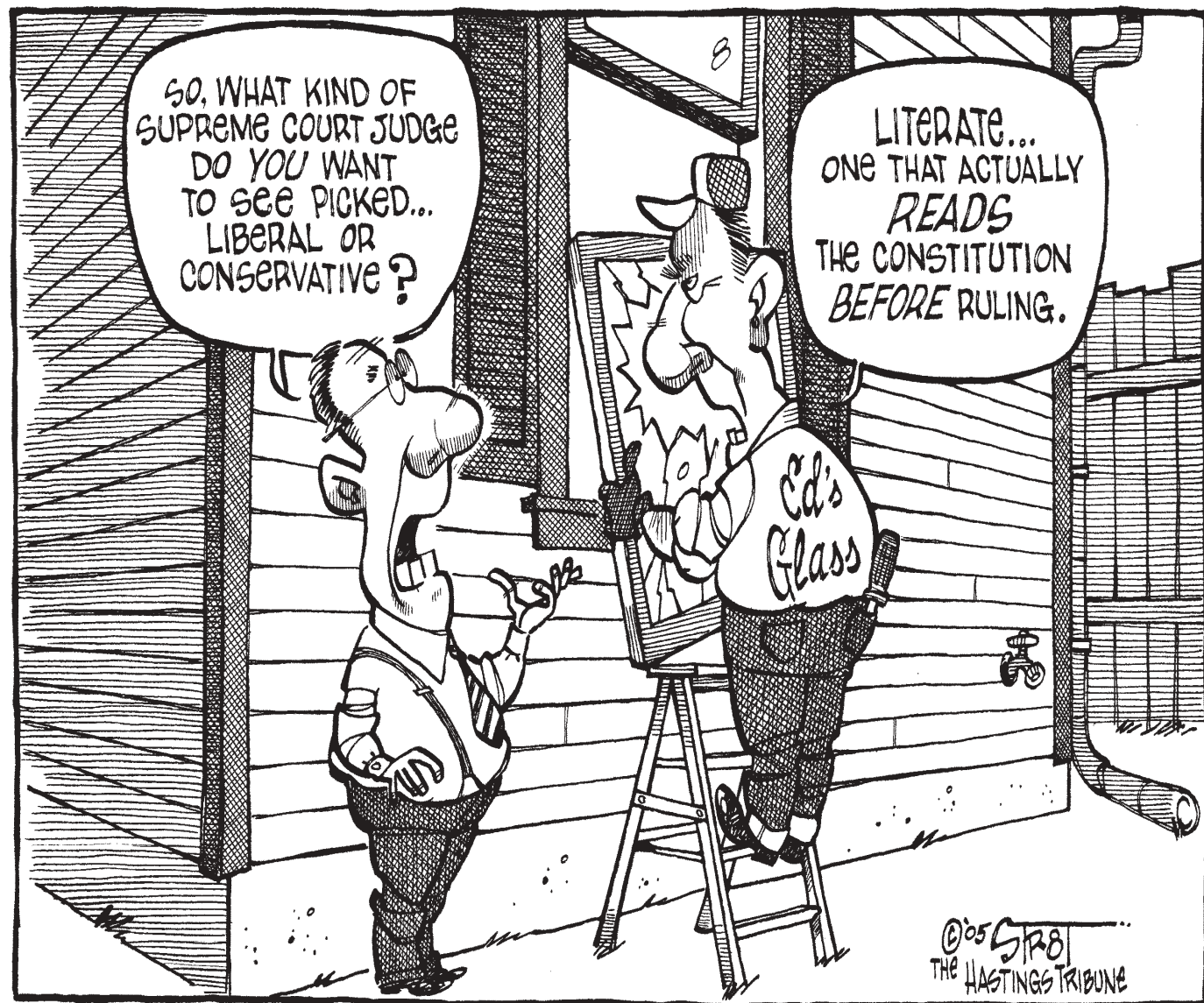


Legislature folds and gives court what it wants

The Kansas Legislature did its duty and has gone home. The mess it left behind will be with us for years. Conservatives in the House blinked, and came up with very little. Schools suing for more money got the state Supreme Court to enshrine a "duty" to fund education at whatever level some consultant says is "suitable" in the Constitution. And the Legislature no longer has control of state spending. The results? Quite possibly, a tax increase to pay for the \$146 million the court insisted the state add to school spending this year, plus millions more over the next five years. Budget cuts for social services, higher education, highways, economic development and other state programs, as schools take a larger and larger share of the pie. A continual fight over how to pay for ever-increasing demands on the state treasury. It's hard to say what will put a stop to the budget spiral that could ensue. Conservatives, when they folded their tents, vowed to continue the fight to limit the court's power over spending next year. The reality is, there won't be any more votes for a constitutional amendment to curb the court in January than there were this month. It lost by 11 votes this time after breezing through the Senate. That means the House was nearly a dozen votes shy of the two-thirds required to pass the measure. That's not going to change. Demand for school spending won't go away, though there is little demonstrated need for the extra billion or so the court could wind up ordering. It's true, one consultant report found that kind of need. The Legislature looked at it, and decided the taxpayers couldn't afford it. Some school officials were adamant that they needed more. Having lost in the Legislature, they sued the state, using \$2 million in state money to pay the legal fees. Another study under way might come in higher, might come in lower. The state *still* wouldn't have the money. And the taxpayers *still* couldn't afford it. That's the missing link. What the taxpayers want. What people can afford. And right now, the tax-and-spend crowd, led by the Supreme Court, is in the driver's seat. Kansas taxpayers can expect to have their pockets picked over the next couple of years. They should remember who is in charge. And who paid the bill for all this. — Steve Haynes



Get that recipe before it's gone forever

If your mother is still living, stop and take a moment to call her and find out how she makes a particular dish you especially like. You won't regret it. Yesterday, a friend at church brought what looked like a bushel of fresh zucchini and garden lettuce to church. "Help yourselves," he and his wife both said. They were even kind enough to provide grocery sacks. I know I took our share. The thoughts of fried zucchini and wilted lettuce danced in my head. But later, staring at a sink full of crispy lettuce leaves, thoughts of "Now, how did Mom make wilted lettuce?" bounced around in my noggin. I remembered bacon was involved and there was something about vinegar and sugar, but quantities and sequences were fuzzy. A call to my friend Dee left me with another good recipe, but it wasn't quite what I remembered. Maybe Donna Kelley, my brother Dick's wife, would know. Sure enough, she said her mother made it the same

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



way my mom did. They fried some bacon in a skillet, removed it and crumbled it for later; added salt and pepper, sugar and vinegar to the pan and cooked it down some. That's right. I remember now. Here is where Donna said she parted ways with our mothers' techniques. Her mom and mine both put the lettuce in the skillet, tossed and stirred and covered until it was wilted. They added the bacon at the last. Donna said she puts the lettuce and chopped green onion in a bowl and pours the hot mixture over. It practically wilts before your eyes.

Either way, it's sure good eatin'. So call your mother. Don't let those old recipes be lost. *Bon appetit.* —ob— Our 10-year-old granddaughter, Alexandria, was on a swim team this summer. She finished her season with several medals and the satisfaction of knowing she got better each time she competed. We got to go to one of her closer competitions and could see why she thought it was so much fun. Team mothers arrived at the pool early to stake out the best site. Tents and canopies went up, coolers came out, food appeared and the day-long party began. Kids in goggles, rubber swim caps and matching suits dashed in and out. Someone had always lost a towel or sandals. A loudspeaker announced upcoming events and mothers would frantically urge a dawdling child to, "Hurry up. You're going to miss your race." Besides watching Alex, we had as much fun watching all the other people.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: New effort to help reduce tobacco use

Dear Editor, A new initiative is underway in Kansas designed to limit Kansas children's access to cigarettes and other tobacco products. "It's Everybody" Business," is an effort by the Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services/Addiction and Prevention Services, the Kansas Regional Prevention Centers, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment/Tobacco Use Prevention Program, the Kansas Department of Revenue/Alcoholic Beverage Control, the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition and Kansas Family Partnership. This coalition will be working to educate retailers about the consequences of selling tobacco products to minors. We've established free resources that retailers can use to educate their employ-

ees about the law on tobacco sales to help them comply with the law. Onsite training programs for clerks and managers will be conducted by prevention specialists. Print materials will be made available in stores to deter illegal sales. Kansas ranks almost last in the nation for compliance with underage tobacco sales law. Through this initiative, it is our goal to achieve a higher standard of compliance that will make our children healthier. To see how you can help, go to www.itseverybodysbusiness.org. Janae Talbott, community prevention consultant, Regional Prevention Center of Northwest Kansas Hays

Adulthood is something to be obtained

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



I recently read an article by CNN in a paper about the difficulties many school districts are facing regarding a dress code — not for the students, but the teachers. Colorado Springs schools for example, prohibits sexually provocative items including clothing that exposes "cleavage, private parts, the midriff or undergarments." My first response to this is, "And?" Common sense would direct that, wouldn't you think? Hmm, maybe not. My mother had definite ideas about what was considered appropriate dress. For years she never wore slacks and then finally succumbed to the temptation when she was cold so much of the time. I remember clearly when I was in high school. The rule in our home was I could never wear pants and certainly not shorts on Sunday. You can imagine the dilemma when I

was invited to a drag race in Hays on a Sunday. Obviously it wasn't the place for a dress but my mother was unbending. She would not tolerate me wearing pants. Never without solutions, she found one. As if on cue my Mother and I went down to Browne's Clothing Store and they had a denim skirt and vest outfit. In today's world that doesn't seem unusual, but in 1964, it was very unusual to find a cute anything denim. I can't help but wonder what has happened to good old-fashioned common

sense, to promoting an air of professionalism? What happened to the idea of making a distinction between student and teacher? When I was a kid we spent a lot of time playing pretend — I'm the mom, I'm the teacher, I'm the fireman. Being an adult looked like an exciting life. It was fun to think of growing up. It is important for our children to see adulthood as something to be attained, a rite of passage. Our role is to teach children the positive attributes of becoming an adult, not portraying childhood as an infinite era. The place to impart common sense and professionalism is in the home. It isn't up to daycare or the school — it is the parents' responsibility to raise responsible, caring and common sense kids. It takes time, not money. It isn't done in the grandstand, but in the home and most importantly by example. Our example.

Legislation to increase local control

Congressman Jerry Moran has sponsored legislation in response to growing concerns by educators about the restrictions placed on schools by the No Child Left Behind education plan. Congressman Moran's legislation, the State and Local Education Flexibility Act of 2005, works to increase local control and flexibility in education, while maintaining the high standards Kansas schools have always worked toward. "In all the rhetoric and discussion about school funding and No Child Left Behind, we must remember one thing — Kansas already has great schools," Mr. Moran said. "This legislation will help Kansas schools maintain their already high standards and ensure that control over education remains with the local teachers and school districts." While Mr. Moran voted against the no

child bill because of concerns about too many federal restrictions on the classroom, he has been working with teachers and school administrators to make sure that the law works. The legislation sponsored by Mr. Moran allows schools greater flexibility to implement the no child law, while still ensuring that children learn and schools in need of improvement are identified. The legislation ensures that school administrators have the flexibility to include special education students when calculating high school graduation rates. It gives states the option to assess the educational needs of non-English speaking students differently, or not at all, if the student is in their first full year of schooling in the state. The legislation also provides states with the flexibility to consider special educa-

tion and rural teachers who teach multiple academic subjects as "highly-qualified" in all subject areas if they meet certain requirements. This is particularly important in rural Kansas, where teachers often teach several subjects and it is difficult for that educator to become certified in all areas. "Kansas teachers already must pass rigorous standards before they ever step into a classroom," Mr. Moran said. "This legislation allows our educators to spend more time with students and less time completing additional credentialing requirements and coursework. The last thing we want is for classrooms to become a bureaucracy where teachers spend more time filling out paperwork than teaching our children." For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at <http://www.house.gov/morank01/>.

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