

Supreme Court over-reaches itself

The Kansas Legislature will have to decide next year what, if anything, to do about the state Supreme Court. The court way overreached its powers when it ordered the Legislature to spend specific amounts on schools. The issue is not how much money schools need, but who decides how much is enough. The court says it will decide, but that's bad for democracy. Unelected judges are supposed to decide our disputes and interpret the laws, not spend money. The court based its decision on a phrase in the state Constitution which says the Legislature shall make "suitable" provision for schools. The court defined suitable as it was outlined in a consultants' report the Legislature itself had ordered. The Legislature later decided that the consultants' figures were a little more than suitable. "Never mind," the court said. "Get more money." On the death penalty, too, the court has been out of step with Kansans. The court went out of its way to make certain that a troop of murderers escaped lethal injection. If the Legislature decided that the death penalty was proper, and several juries agreed to apply it, what place has the court to make its own rules here?

Good question. In the old days, we used to elect Supreme Court judges in this state. The good government movement saw that as a political nightmare, dragging the courts into places they ought not to go. Maybe the do-gooders were right, but the present system, where the governor picks judges from a list provided by a nominating panel, has let the court get way out of tune with the people. What to do? Well, electing district judges, as most Kansas counties still do, seems to work pretty well. It's rare for a judge to lose his job, but it can happen if one becomes out of touch. We'd go for that. A plan to have the state Senate pass on judicial appointments, much as the U.S. Senate does, seems a half measure, but it would be better than no action. Whatever it decides on the court, though, the Legislature needs to take back control of the school budget and start making decisions about how to spend state money. That's the Legislature's job, after all. The members cannot afford to default on it again. — *Steve Haynes*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Woman appreciates retirement facility

Letter to the Editor: I am writing to commend your community on the fine facility you created when you built the Whispering Pines Retirement Village. It is a very caring home atmosphere facility. They have been very good to my father, Merle Applegate, since he took residency when the facility opened in June of 2003. The residents and staff had become his extended family. When he has been sick in the past they have been very good to him. Things are never the same as your own home, but this has been a good way for him to maintain his independence and still have a home environment.

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 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.

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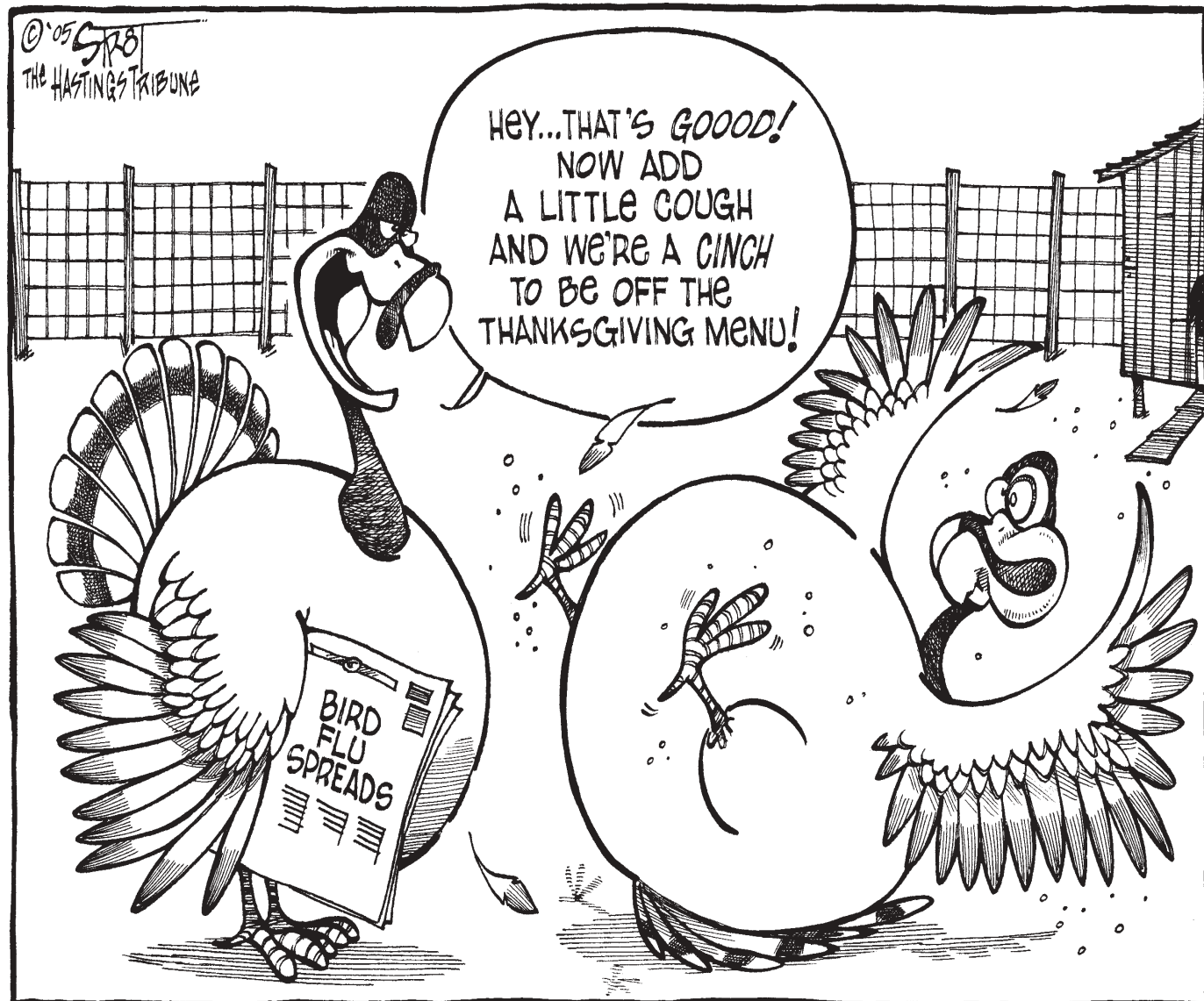
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Blazer goes out in a 'blaze of glory'

What do you do when someone knocks on your door to tell you your car is on fire?

I laughed. Granted, it was a bit hysterical, but a laugh none-the-less. The only problem is the hysterical laugh turned into a bit of a sob and then about a five-minute crying binge.

It scared one of my friends, who came to see if it was really my Blazer that was on fire and to see if I was all right.

"Are you okay?" he asked when he saw me crying.

Gees, how embarrassing. I was "having a moment", told him so, and said I would be fine in a minute. And I was and it wasn't too much later that jokes were flying.

The good firemen who showed up to put my car out kept asking me where my camera was.

Where was my camera indeed. It was inside my house actually. I was a bit shaky at the time and didn't feel the need to oblige them by taking their picture yet again. I'm generally used to going to where they are, not having them come to where I am. It was a new experience and I think I would prefer not to repeat it. So, what happened.

Weeeelllllll, my dash was smoking slightly earlier that day, but it quit, so I

Age can be tough when pointed out

They say at 20 you have the face God gave you. At 35 you have the face you gave yourself. At 50 you have the face you deserve.

Never having been exceedingly vain I don't spend a lot of time in front of the mirror. However lately I wonder — do I really deserve this?

We ended up with an extra food freezer. I tried repeatedly to sell it before moving. It sat on my front porch for almost three months so I finally got on the radio and made a pitch. And here came some people to look at it.

I plugged it in when they called and it cooled right down to a frosty 10 below zero. Of course, after sitting on my porch it wasn't so clean, but quite obviously it worked.

The fellow asked, "Why are you selling it?"

"My mother-in-law left her freezer in the basement when she moved to town and I don't need two."

He looked at me and marveled, "She just moved to town? She must be really old and yet she was staying on the farm."

It took me a minute. What was he saying? My mother-in-law must be really old. Why would he think that? I could only come up with one conclusion. He thought I was old and therefore my mother-in-law would be "really" old.

Well who knows what he considers old? But I think he is probably only 10 or maybe 15 years younger than I at the most. Do I deserve this?

I sold the freezer so that helped sooth my hurt feelings a little.

The really bad thing is the hubby has the

Night Noise Veronica Monier



thought it would be okay until the next day, when I could take it to someone who would know what they were looking at. Apparently, that wasn't going to be needed.

It was an electrical fire, by the way. Next thing I know, a city fireman who was on his way back into town was banging on my door to tell me we had a car on fire. I went outside, saw flames, went back inside for some unknown reason, went back outside, heard the sirens and then just stood there with a dumb expression on my face.

The fireman had put the flames out with an extinguisher he had in his car. The police pulled up, the fire department came, and then a city official and several neighbors showed up to enjoy the smoking pile of burnt char that my car had become. It was a real party.

It was really great when the airbag blew up. There was a semi-loud bang, sparks,

Back Home Nancy Hagman



cutest little baby face. He is in fact slightly older than I but people never think so.

And how did I get this gray hair and all these wrinkles? He has to be responsible for at least half of it — the rest is due to the kids.

See, I really don't deserve this face. But when we discuss his adventures he always says, "Your hair probably would have turned gray anyway."

Probably? We don't know that for sure now do we?

One thing I have always loved is clothes but when you are mostly at home it is easy to get into a rut about that too.

Tuesday we were getting ready to run into town and he looked at me and asked, "Are you wearing that?"

We were just going to pick up something at his aunts and to grab some lunch. I had put on a clean shirt and combed my hair.

So I said, "If I have to get started on a whole beauty routine it's going to take some time."

And he said "Well, those are the pants with the paint on the butt."

Oh, OK, fair enough. I keep forgetting. (Another sign of old age I fear.)

I grabbed a brand new pair of sweat

a little more fire, and lots more smoke. It was fabulous.

I ducked a little, not quite knowing what was happening. I figured it out a little bit later when I got my first look at what was left of the front of my car. That would be not much.

People have been asking — "Do you have insurance?", "Is it good insurance?", "Are you insured?", "Do you have insurance?" (did I say that one already?), "Were you in the car when it happened?" and "Do you have insurance?"

I think I've gotten the insurance question about a million times now, but that's okay. I'm sure everyone is just concerned.

The next day there was a slow parade of people driving by to check it out. It's pretty gruesome and it still smells.

Ah well, I suppose it's fitting that the Blazer went out in a blaze of glory. After all, it has been through a lot — creeks, pastures, a field here and there, a ditch or two and a high speed chase. The chase was before I owned it, thankfully.

Now, all that's left is to see how much the insurance company thinks its worth. Or rather, how much it was worth before it blew up and then melted.

And to get a new car to have new adventures in.

pants, pulled the price tag off and away we went.

Only one problem — as we walked into the store for lunch I put my hand on my leg and realized there was a strip of tape about 15 inches long proclaiming the size. As discreetly as possible I peeled it off.

You know how guys wear jeans with the waist and inseam branded on the waist? Not me, maybe they are guessing, "She's an X-tra large." But they aren't going to know for sure if I can help it.

After we got home I found another price tag. Just call me Minnie Pearl. I was sort of proud of that because I bought those pants for only \$2.99. (Clearance in May at Sears)

Age does have its advantages. I may be gray and wrinkly but I have learned how to shop.

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