

Taxpayers' control is the ballot box

Anytime taxpayers don't like what the Legislature or the governor are doing, they have the right to "throw the rascals out" at the next election.

That is the ultimate Taxpayers Bill of Rights, and it is built into the constitution and laws at every level of government.

Today, though, there is a new push led by the conservative group Americans for Prosperity to pass a Taxpayer Bill of Rights for Kansas in the next legislative session.

Alan Cobb, state director for the lobbying group, has been traveling the state to pump up support for this law, which would limit the growth of government and require voters to approve any tax or spending increases over the rate of inflation plus population growth.

He points to Colorado, which passed a similar law by a vote of the people in 1992, claiming our western neighbor has done well with these limits in place over the last 13 years.

Actually, the Colorado Taxpayer Bill of Rights covered all levels of government from the state down to the smallest city. In the past 10 years, many major cities and counties have gone to their voters to remove some of the limits of the law, and in more than two-third of the votes, the limits have been removed.

In the next two weeks, Colorado voters will be asked to repeal a section of the law and give the state part of the money that it has been required to be returned over the past years because of the limits the law put on state spending.

Colorado's economy may be a bit rosier than Kansas', but the state has been facing the same red ink, and with the Taxpayers Bill of Rights, it has been tough to pay for schools and highways in the budget crunch.

With most of the major cities and counties released from the limits, it appears that Colorado is doing well, and that the law has been a success. If that were true, would the state Legislature, the governor, the heads of the largest state universities, the mayor of Denver and countless teacher and education groups be pushing to have the voters remove part of the limits imposed by the law 13 years ago.

As with the Taxpayers Bill of Rights campaign beginning in Kansas, there are claims and counter claims on both sides saying the other side is not playing fair with the truth.

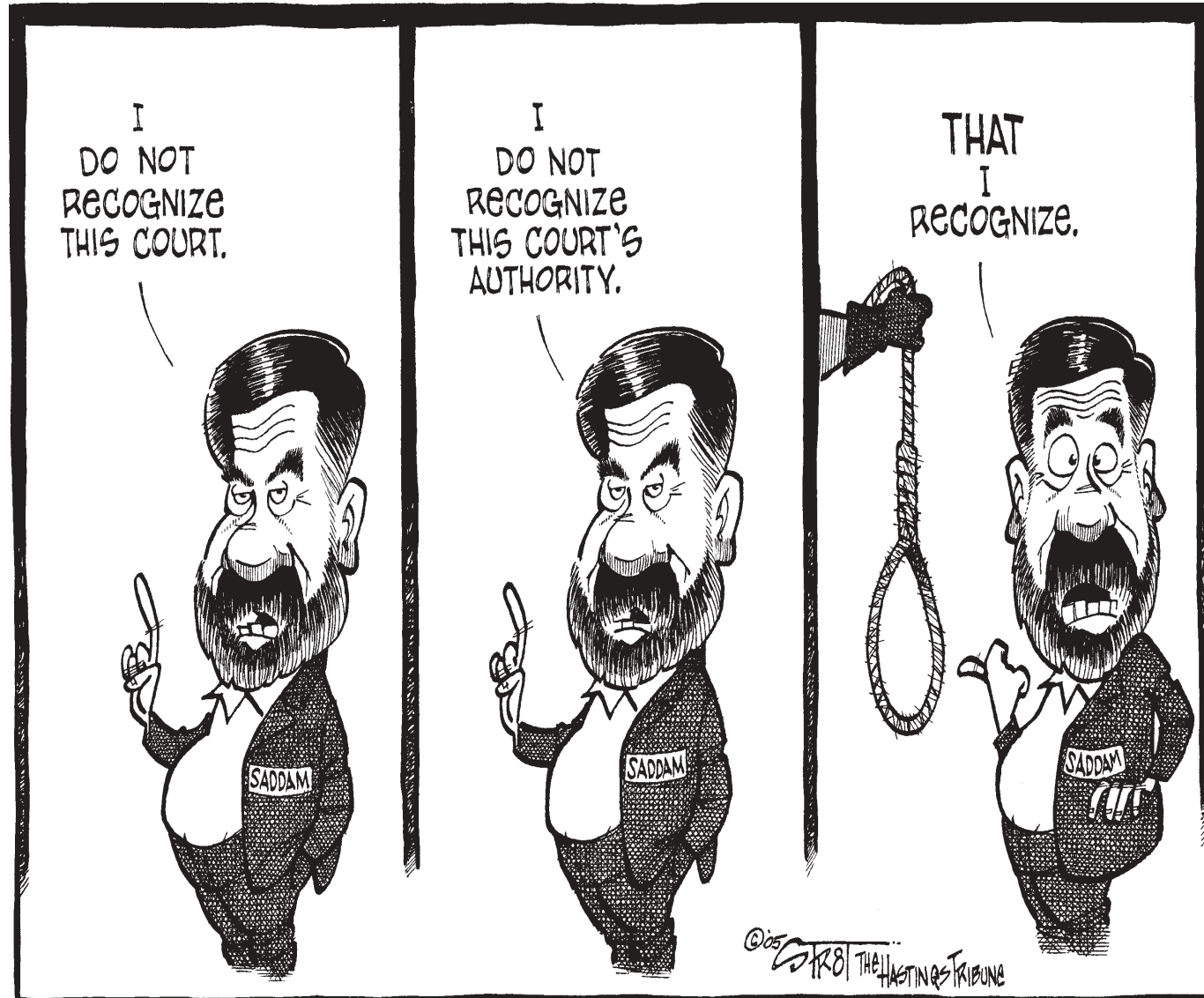
The goals of a Taxpayers Bill of Rights are to give the people the control over future state spending, and to require they be asked before there is any increase in taxes or spending. That sounds good, but with a low rate of inflation and low population growth in Kansas, the law can cause more problems than it will solve.

The results in the upcoming Colorado election should be instructive. No matter what our neighboring state does, the question will be at the forefront in Topeka next year. As it is an election year, people running for state office will face a new litmus test when they are asked if they support the Taxpayers Bill of Rights.

The best way to limit government is to keep the people we elect accountable. Putting into writing limitations based on outside economic factors is asking for more financial trouble.

It would be as good to ask the candidates if they understand how to balance a check book rather than tie them to a law that will take away the incentive to be fiscally responsible.

— Tom Betz



Dishes are both healthy and good

We may have been on vacation, but I was watching what we ate. Thanks to me, Steve lost four pounds and I only gained one last week.

Curse you, kitchen full of food and nothing to do but cook.

I love to cook, but I seldom have the time. Last week, I had nothing but time, and a well-stocked kitchen to boot.

Since I was trying for healthy things, recipes that had lots of vegetables caught my fancy.

I started off trying one out of an old copy of the *Rocky Mountain News*. The dish is called Okonomiyaki ... it's Japanese for ... heck I don't know what that means or even how to pronounce it, but it's sort of like a potato pancake made with cabbage. The writer said this is big in Japan, and I can see why. It's tasty and reasonably healthy.

Okonomiyaki

- 1/2 cabbage, shredded
- 1 large peeled carrot, shredded.
- 1/2 onion, thinly sliced.
- 3 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups whole wheat flour.
- 3 to 4 eggs
- Milk or water
- Cooking oil

Combine everything except the milk or water and cooking oil in a large bowl, mixing well to distribute the eggs. Add milk or water slowly to make a batter that

Open Season Cynthia Haynes



binds the vegetables.

Heat oil on a griddle or frying pan until a drop of the batter sizzles on contact.

Pour about 1/2 cup of the batter onto the griddle and flatten into a pancake. Flip when the first side has browned. Makes 10-12 cakes.

Serve with soy sauce or mayonnaise.

The original recipe called for cooking 1 cup of batter at a time. I tried that the first time, but the cake was too big to turn, so I went with half a cup and the result is a cake about the size of an average salad plate — easy to turn and browns nicely.

We ended up with 10 cakes and two people. I decided to freeze the extras between sheets of waxed paper. When the cakes were all frozen, I stored them in a plastic bag with the waxed paper still in place.

I tried reheating two in a skillet for lunch and that worked well. I also tried to substitute cooking spray for oil when reheating. That worked well as long as I remem-

bered to spray both sides of the cakes. We were out of soy sauce, and I didn't feel like adding extra calories with mayo, but Steve said the mayo was good.

The other vegetable dish I tried was an idea from the Nov. 1 *Woman's Day* magazine:

Cut a head of broccoli into florets. Toss with a sliced red onion, two tablespoons oil, one teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper.

Spread on a foil-lined, rimmed baking sheet and roast at 450 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes, until vegetables are tinged with brown and crisp-tender.

This seems to be another way to serve broccoli, which I always steam, without adding too many calories.

The last recipe idea was given to me by a friend. She said that she puts everything in her slaw that she would normally put in a green salad — carrots, onions, green peppers, celery, radishes, cucumbers, even pickles, plus cheese. She said it was delicious. It sounds a little strange, but I think it will work and I'm planning to try it, but I think I'll leave out the pickles, radishes and cucumbers. I'm not big on pickles and Steve won't eat the other two.

Now if I can just find a recipe for calorieless cheeseburgers.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Scam mailing should be stopped

Letter to the Editor:
In the mail today, I received a mailing from an outfit called 'The Nouveau Tech Society'. It is five pages of gobbledygook trying to make you think you are something special and that you are rare with very special talents. It is a "secret" society and everyone and everything in it is anonymous. It doesn't take much to smell a scam. A few minutes on the Internet

confirmed my suspicions. It is definitely a rip-off!

I, for one, am going to turn my letter into the post office and also send a copy to the state attorney general's office. I urge anyone who received this mailing to do the same. We need to stop this in its tracks.

June Prout
Norton

Fishing was great, though tough

I got to go fishing the other day. It was great. Okay, it was a tough day. The sun was shining, the sky was bright, but the shadows were already down on the canyon.

I fell in the creek, lost my pole and bruised some ribs.

But worse things could happen.

Like not going fishing.

I like to fish. It's relaxing and fun, and sometimes you catch something.

I like fishing in Kansas. You sit on the bank, or on the dock, and watch your bobber. If you're lucky, and the fish are biting, you catch some crappies. Maybe a bass or a couple of walleye.

But on a soft summer evening, with the sun setting and the water warm and inviting to your toes, what better thing to do?

The dock is especially good if there's a baseball game on the radio.

It helps if the fish are biting, but it's not required.

I like deep sea fishing. There's drama and sport in finding the fish, a tuna or marlin or dorado.

A lot of days, you don't catch much. But the sun is warm and the boat might stir up a school of porpoise. Whales might jump.

On the Prairie Dog Steve Haynes



A marlin might bite.

Last week, though, I was fly fishing for trout in the warm autumn sun.

It should have been a perfect day, even if I got out a little late. The fish were biting, and I was just letting them go.

I was there to watch them rise to the fly, strike and run. To see them fight and flash in their shiny glory

And watch them swim away.

You don't have to keep fish to have fun. When they're spawning in the fall, it's better for you and for them to let them go.

Then I came to the big hole, dammed up by some big rocks.

They looked solid.

I stepped up and started to cast.

And the rocks moved. I tried to balance, but to no avail.

I went one way. My pole went the other.

I landed in the creek, on some rocks.

My chest hit first, and when I got up I could feel it.

Not broken, probably, but you could tell it would be sore.

My pole was nowhere to be seen, and I started to figure out how I'd explain to Cynthia that I needed a new fly rod at what, \$250 or \$300?

I thought I'd better look around.

It wasn't downstream.

I came back to the big hole, a four-foot aspen rod in hand, and started fishing.

I can't tell you how glad I was when that pole came up.

Then, I figured, since I was all wet, I'd better get back to the car before hypothermia set in.

There were a couple of holes in the way, and I caught two more fish.

See. It wasn't such a bad day.

I had my pole, nine fish on the scorecard and the cliffs in the late evening light, those were spectacular.

What's a few bruises and some wet clothes compared to that?

It was great.

I guess you have to love fishing to understand.

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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, 215 S. Kansas, 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

