

## More time means more money spent

Full-time Legislature. There. That ought to scare the pants off most Kansans. If it doesn't, it should. As a group, if the legislators can't make a mess out of things in 90 days, how could we expect more in a full year?

Minus time off for campaigns, of course.

Yet, faced with the growing complexity of the state budget, some members are talking about extending their time in Topeka. It's like a group of convicts getting together to extend their sentences.

Are we sure we're ready for that?

There's the old saw, purportedly written by a New York judge: "No man's life, liberty or property are safe while the legislature is in session."

Conservative Kansas lawmakers are frustrated by continued growth in the state budget, though. The budget has grown by a factor of 10 every generation since the state was founded. Still, the Associated Press reported, the budget didn't hit \$1 billion until 1974. It has doubled since 1993, when it was just \$6 billion.

Last week, House members revolted when asked to pass a \$304 million supplemental appropriation. Some claimed it would run state surpluses below the required 7.5 percent and threaten a cash crisis.

With spending already near \$12.5 billion and growth in the general fund estimated at more than 8 percent, killing the supplemental seems largely like closing the barn door after all the livestock have fled.

That's what bothers the anti-spenders. They feel helpless dealing with a budget that's too big and too complex to control. Mostly, the Legislature just takes what the governor has sent over and quibbles about a few programs. Only the appropriations committees see the whole picture, if anyone does.

Adding time to the session won't help much, not when most major decisions are put off until the late hours of the last few nights. Budget bills are cobbled together in conference, then rolled out for the troops, tired and ready to go home, for a vote.

At that point, a lot of real bad legislation gets pushed through, but especially the big spending bills which wrap up the budget. Sure, they've been debated and examined since January, but when the whole ball of wax rolls out the final week, no one — save maybe a few conference members and some lobbyists — really knows what's in there.

That's one big reason the jackpot keeps growing at roughly 8 percent every year.

A lot of other bad bills come about that time — witness the one legalizing casino gambling this year, supposedly to raise revenue for still more state spending. The Legislature should have a rule that no bill can come to the floor without full and open committee hearings, but we digress. The issue here is spending.

What the Legislature should do is set a spending limit and trim the budget to fit that. Every program has its friends, though, making real cuts real tough.

What the Legislature probably will do is extend the session, study more and keep voting for bigger budgets every year.

Legislators talk about working "to curb the growth in spending." No one talks about cutting the budget.

And guess who gets to pay the bills?

— Steve Haynes.

## Thumbs Up to . . .

✓ **Norton's flower ladies.** Give them your green thumbs and your green money. (e-mail)

✓ **"Judge Jerry,"** for his creative and constructive sentences, designed to not only clean up our kids but our city as well. (e-mail)

✓ All those who work with **Hospice.** (e-mail)

✓ **Mr. Boyd,** for that cool track picture in Tuesday's *Telegram*. He was in the right place at the right time. (called in)

(To place a name or names in this weekly salute, email tom@nwkansas.com, fax 877-3732, call the office at 877-3361 or mail or drop by 215 S. Kansas Ave.)

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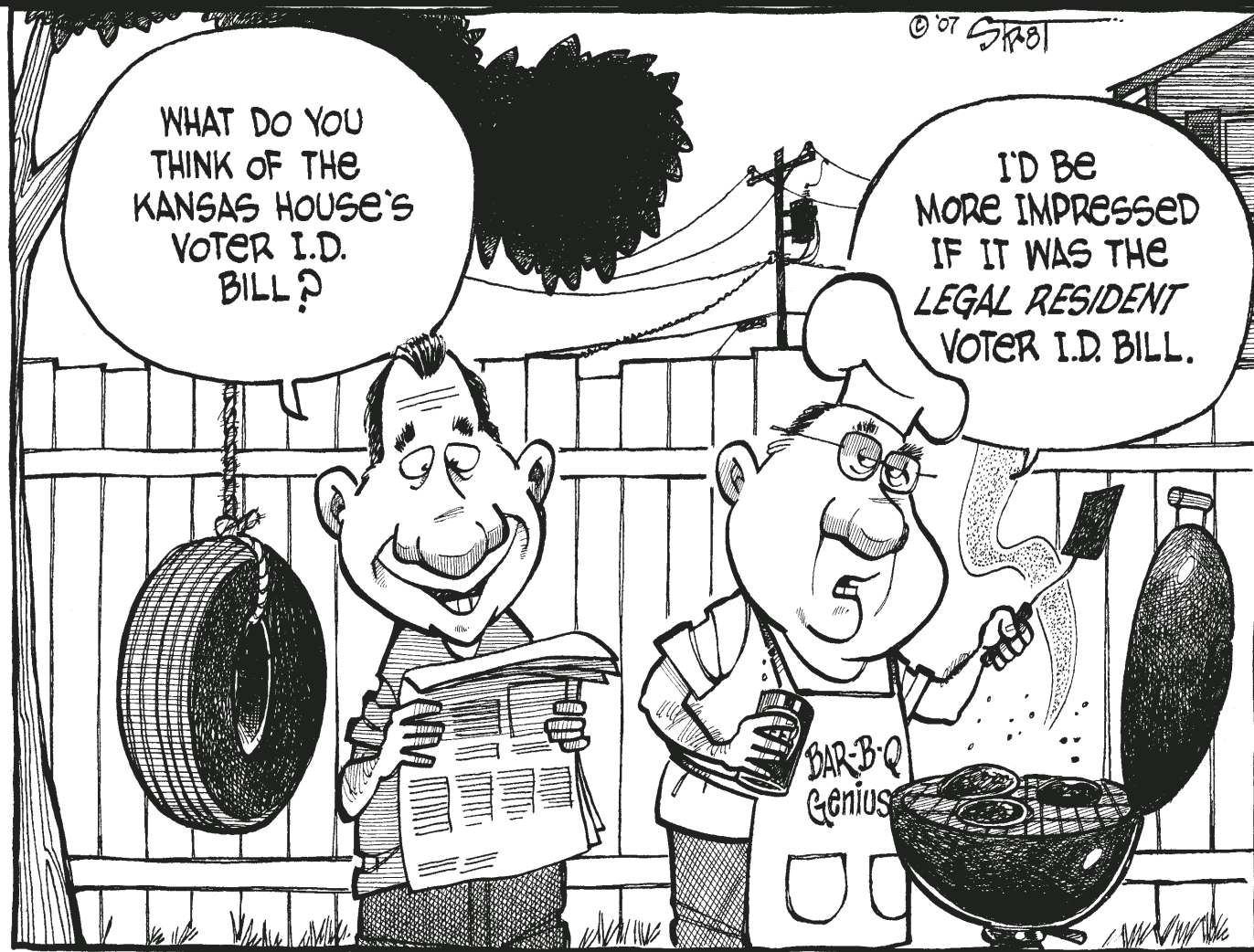
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## How did we manage to get into this mess?

Find it interesting, yet puzzling, reports of the millions upon millions of dollars our public colleges and universities and community colleges and tech colleges (and all else they are known by), need to bring some of their crumbling facilities up to date. It almost sounds like we've sacrificed the safety of our institutions for everything else that constitutes the arena of higher learning. If our colleges are bursting at the seams with students and hi-tech everything, what good is that if the facilities they are in are falling down. Doesn't make much sense to me. Now, all these years later, these institutions feel a need to get their hands on 600 million+ dollars to begin tackling the problem. Shouldn't upkeep be an ongoing thing? If it has been, why is it then as bad as they tell us it is? How do we, where the smartest of our brains function, find ourselves in such a predicament?

-td-

The immigration rallies held this week in various places around the country, were only a shadow of the earlier marches. Interest waning? Prior to the initial gatherings, illegal immigration was a hot-but-ton issue. It's still an issue but apparently not of the magnitude it was just a few months ago. Our focus continues to be the war, the 2008 election, Atty. Gen. Gonzales, to name a few.

Or perhaps the reason can be traced to the media. Broadcast and print reports on immigration leading up to the first rallies were the topic of the day. Now, however, that's not the case and I would assume a lot of us weren't even aware of Tuesday's rallies, one that got ugly in Los Angeles when the cops moved in. The police chief out there is looking closely at the behavior of his uniformed troops.

I agree with columnist Mary Kay Woodyard, who agreed with *Liza Deines & Company's* suggestion as it relates to illegal immigrants: as they cross the border into the U.S., hand them a military uniform, a gun and then ship them to Iraq. When they return, we can then talk about citizenship. If our country is indeed their

**Good Evening Norton**  
Tom Dreiling



goal, then perhaps they need to fight for it. Certainly it's more complex than that, but it's as good an idea as any. And it sure beats implementing the draft!

-td-

Things to ponder:

- Thieves who steal corn from a garden can be charged with stalking.
- When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, UCLA.
- The college professor discovered that her theory of earthquakes was on shaky ground.
- Sharing office space, the dentist and manicurist often fight tooth and nail.
- A backward poet writes inverse.
- A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.

It's OK now to boo!

-td-

I generally start the work day with C-Span and its call-in brigade. That's always interesting, not so much by what is being said but *how*. At 7 a.m., I then switch to NBC-TV for a dose of news on "Today," but discontinued doing that this week when they decided to again bore me with "Where in the World is Matt Lauer?" I really don't care where he is, but he should be delivering news, not making it. So, I now mix it up a little with FOX and Friends and CNN's American Morning. Frankly, from my point of view, NBC's Today show isn't anywhere near what it was when Katie Couric was co-host. NBC's loss was certainly CBS' gain. Oh well, probably none of this matters to anyone but me.

-td-

The three Goldberg brothers, Norman,

Himan, and Maximilian invented and developed the first automobile air-conditioner. On July 17, 1946, the temperature in Detroit was 97 degrees. The three brothers walked into old man Henry Ford's office and sweet-talked his secretary into telling him that three gentlemen were there with the most exciting innovation in the auto industry since the electric starter.

Henry was curious and invited them into his office. They refused and instead asked that he come out to the parking lot to their car. They persuaded him to get into the car which was about 130 degrees, and they turned on the air-conditioner and cooled the car off immediately.

The old man got very excited and invited them back to the office, where he offered them \$3 million for the patent. The brothers refused saying they would settle for \$2 million, but they wanted the recognition by having a label "The Goldberg Air-Conditioner" on the dashboard of each car that it was installed in.

Old man Ford wasn't about to put the Goldbergs' name on two million Ford cars. They haggled back and forth for about two hours and finally agreed on \$4 million dollars and that just their first names would be shown.

So, now you know why, for so many years, you would see on all Ford air-conditioner controls the names, "Norm", "Hi", and "Max".

-td-

Clue: Without the May 13 observance, we wouldn't have those other activities so eagerly anticipated. Stumped?

May 13 is Mother's Day, those other observances are graduations. Yep, you can't have one without the other.

You've got a little time yet to shop for these honorees. And, of course, I urge you to keep Norton in mind as you ponder your gift list.

-td-

Have a good evening. And as you ponder, set a little time aside this weekend to ponder His Word at the church of your choice.

## Today's tip: Parenting is an action word

All of us who are parents have had it happen. The time in the restaurant when your child has a "melt-down," as my oldest son calls it, and everyone gives you the why-don't-you-do-something look. Our initial instinct is to reply in one of the following ways; he's teething, he has a slight cold, he didn't get his nap, etc. To be sure each of these is true at one time or another, but now scientists have given us new material. "He has faulty DNA."

Call me old fashioned, but I think professionals are focusing on the wrong elements in child behavior. Now, to be sure, there are maladaptive behaviors with their roots in biological problems, but I think we have gone to the extreme in diagnosing these.

Through the years we have gained a great deal of insight into raising children. We have watched parenting evolve and become more user friendly, but throughout this we have lost something as well.

What do I see as a loss? The child. We see parents who believe children are little

**Phase II**  
Mary Kay Woodyard



adults and should be treated as such. The parent tries to be a friend first and a parent second or last or not at all. I am a great believer in seeing the world through the eyes of a child and I strongly believe in the teaching role of a parent.

Children require, and are entitled to, active parenting. Not just the ball-throwing, cookie-baking parent, but the one who asks where the child is going. Who he/she is going with? The parent who is not afraid to say "no" even in the face of a horde of other parents. The parent who sees their role as helping a child to explore possibilities, not just the routine ones determined by other parents or older sib-

lings. And the parent who takes the child out of the restaurant and says, "This is a quiet place and other people do not want to hear you scream, so until you are quiet, we will sit in the car." The parent who teaches respect and expects their child to respect others as well as themselves.

Each day we witness the devastating results of children who lack respect. Perhaps it is something as simple as the child who talks back to an authority figure, perhaps it is the child/adult who takes a gun to school. Respect, and the expectation of respect, adds structure and self-confidence to a child's life.

If the child feels deserving of respect, he/she feels valued. Respect is the great leveler. It helps to keep us all on an equal playing field.

It would be easier if we could blame faulty DNA, preservatives or food colorings and I do believe these things play a role in children's attitudes, but that isn't the whole picture. Parenting is an action word, a get involved activity.