

Marriage license cost not standing in way of 'I do'

A state legislator from Topeka, Rep. Joe Patton, wants to eliminate the cost of marriage licenses for couples who can't afford them.

The cost of a license in Kansas is \$69. That's probably the cheapest expense potential newlyweds face.

Rep. Patton said in part, "Eliminating the financial burden to marry for those with limited incomes in our state would have a positive impact on the number of marriages in our state which would lead to stronger families and society" Maybe.

The representative pointed to one study that found, "Even small changes in the cost of a marriage license can have significant effects." Kansas reportedly has seen a decline in the number of marriage licenses in recent years.

Maybe that's because more couples are opting to live together outside of marriage, and probably the cost of a license has nothing to do with it.

Under Patton's plan, those who are not able to pay the fee would be able to file a poverty affidavit and have the fee waived much like Kansas courts currently do with docket fees, he said.

And he continued, "Evidence-based studies show us marriage is positively associated with a large number of outcomes, including the improved well-being of children, better mental and physical health for the married adults and greater earnings for family members. However, many couples don't marry because they can't afford to pay the marriage license fee."

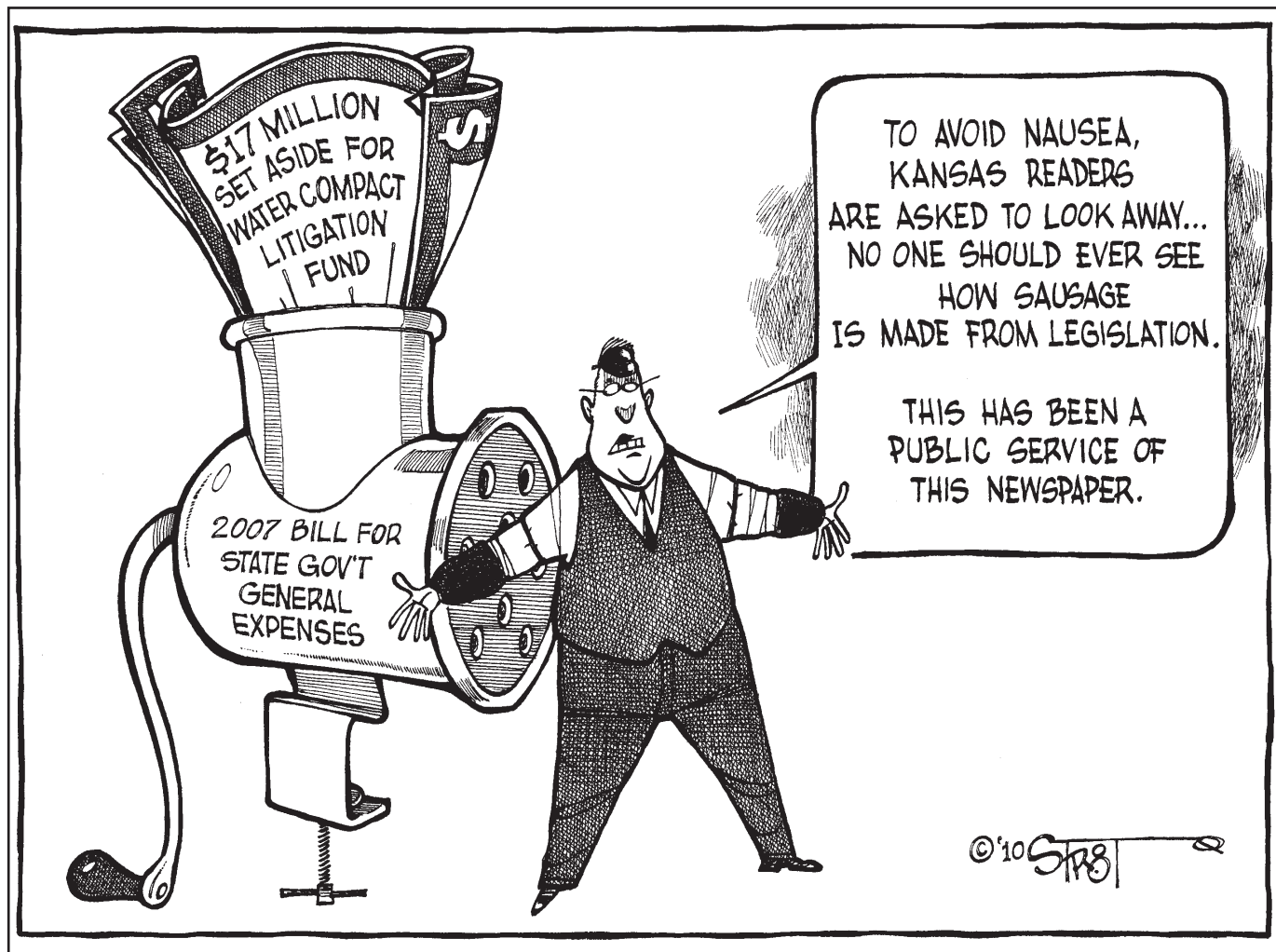
Not so fast there. Instead of eliminating the fee all together — especially at a time when the state is financially strapped — it would make more sense to simply reduce the cost of a marriage license for those unable to pay the \$69 fee. That way the state's piggybank would get fed, too.

Who would have thought the cost of a marriage license would become an issue, especially in a society that seems to give little notice to the many couples living together marriage free.

Maybe what is needed in those locations that issue licenses are two windows, instead of one, carrying the following notations:

- License to marry, \$69
- License not to, \$69
- What's wrong with catching them coming and going?
- After all, it all goes for a good cause — keeping the state operating.
- And all of this over \$69?
- Give us a break!

-Tom Dreiling



Northern Valley begins Prom planning

Dear Friends of Northern Valley High School

Plans are underway for an exciting post-prom party for the students at Northern Valley High School. This year's theme is Valleystock and it will be held on April 17. It will be a celebration that is both fun and safe. The idea of an all night, chemical-free party is not new. The Northern Valley post prom party began many years ago and was founded by concerned townspeople and parents in our area wishing to give our students a party after Prom providing a safe, supervised environment as an alternative to after prom activities that might endanger the lives of our young people. Most all of the high school students and their dates do attend and participate. This post prom party can only be a success if everyone



comes together for one common goal - the safety and happiness of our kids and that is just what we have planned.

It is our hope that you would like to contribute to our post prom party to help defray the costs of food, decoration, postage, prize purchases and scholarships. If you would like to make a monetary donation, gift certificates, free passes, percentage off, etc., please send to Vicky

Gallentine, 10000 Rd E12, Prairie View, KS. 67664 or Northern Valley High School, attention Post Prom committee, 512 W. Bryant, Almena, KS 67622. Everyone who contributes will receive a "Thank You for Your Donation" poster to be displayed at your home or business. We will be supporting our local businesses when making purchases for our event.

If you would like us to pick up your donation, please contact Vicky at 785-664-8340 or Stacy at 785-664-8808 and we will pick it up at your home or business. Thank you for joining our efforts to make this a fun, memorable and safe night for our kids.

Sincerely,
Northern Valley Post Prom Committee



To...one of the school board members for voting NO to cheerleading next year with budgets tight, this seems to be an area there is always trouble with girls. Lets save the money. (E-mailed)

For...the great concert put on by Mr. Will and the band. (Called in)

In case you have forgotten, the addresses for this column are:

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There is no charge to render a thumbs up; names of those providing the information are not used, only the method of transmission

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Oral care important, even for cats

My cat Remington gives me little nips when he is not getting enough attention. I love the bond we share, and I especially enjoy the fact that Remington is 6 years old and has healthy teeth and fresh breath. When Remington was a kitten, I made a very important decision about his health. I decided to brush Remington's teeth once-a-day and perform a complete dental prophylaxis at least once-a-year. I have kept my promise to Remington. In return, our family has a healthy happy cat.

Have you ever noticed your pet having trouble eating, or maybe your pet is not as interested in playing fetch anymore? These can all be indications of dental disease pain. According to the American Veterinary Dental Society, "doggy breath" is not unique. Studies show that more than 80 percent of dogs and 70 percent of cats by the age three show some signs of gum disease. Bad breath is an early warning sign of the dangerous gum disease gingivitis that can lead to serious health issues if left untreated.

During National Pet Dental Health Month each February, pet owners are reminded that dogs and cats need good oral

Vet tips Dr. Sara White



care, too! Your pets' teeth need to last a lifetime. Improper care for teeth can lead to dental disease, which includes tartar build-up, inflammation of the gums and dental pain. In addition dental disease can have detrimental effects on the rest of the body. Bacteria from the mouth can lead to disease in the kidneys, liver, and heart. Because the lesions often begin beneath the gumline, owners usually are unaware that there is a problem until the tooth is seriously damaged and the bacteria have spread throughout the body.

Prevention is the cornerstone to helping pets maintain good oral health. The first key step is to visit your veterinarian to ensure the health of your pet's teeth. Your veterinarian will conduct a thorough physical examination of your pet as part of the dental evaluation. At this time professional care may be advised.

This is a multipurpose procedure. It includes scaling of the teeth to remove tartar both above and below the gumline followed by polishing to smooth the enamel surface and to remove residual tartar. The gumline is also probed to detect any pockets around the teeth. If present, these pockets are flushed with antibacterial solution to prevent bacterial growth. Extractions are also performed at this time if deemed necessary. Once teeth have been professionally cleaned, the second essential step is home care to maintain good oral hygiene. Ask your veterinarian about the procedure for brushing your pet's teeth. Dog and cat owners also may feed specially formulated dietary foods that help reduce the accumulation of plaque and tartar from teeth as the pet eats.

Once your pet's teeth display the warning signs - bad breath, a yellow brown crust of tartar around the gumline, pain or bleeding - dental disease is present! Remember, pets need dental care too and February is National Pet Dental Health Month. For a professional dental check-up, call your veterinarian today to give your pet the healthiest life possible.

Separating what is good for the country

I've come up with a way to force statesmanship on those elected to represent the people of this country. A continuing problem we have by both parties is the inability to separate what is good for the country versus what is good for the individual, (all too frequently the congressman).

Too much emphasis is placed on reelection, political contributions and party devotion. It is easy to see those dedicated to partisanship...they have a constant record of voting no on the opposing party ideas and yes on their own. No party is right all the time, nor wrong all the time. They should have learned this in Kindergarten 101, but perhaps politicians are born, not made, and were unable from the beginning to discern good ideas from

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



not so good.

If congressmen didn't know the location of an intended bill's project and could determine its worthiness based on merit alone perhaps we would be able to use our money more effectively.

Of course initiating a gag order on a politician is a bit like herding cats. Too many politicians want only their pet projects to be funded. Unfortunately

this trait is not limited to one party... truly an equal opportunity operator. Remember the democrat congressman from Nebraska.

When we look at the politicians who endorsed an idea (such as bailouts and stimulus packages) in a Bush White House only to oppose it in an Obama White House, one can only assume it is partisanship or racism or to state it more blatantly, a group more dedicated to seeing the nation fail than Obama succeed.

We need action in government, not reaction from both sides. If only they could wear blinders and choose quality programs based on need not location we would all benefit especially congress. They could look on their legacy as one of hope and promise.