

## Seat belt law a waste of taxpayer time, money

Even though we hope they're focusing on the yet-to-be-resolved state budget, it seems the state Legislature has some time left over to pass some other things, namely a law that would allow police to pull people over for not wearing seat belts.

The bill, approved by the Senate on Saturday, would have Kansas join the 30 other states with so-called "primary" seat belt laws. Currently, officers can only give people tickets for not wearing seat belts if they are pulled over for something else. Kansas today does not require adults in the back seat to buckle up.

The new law would require everyone to wear seat belts, but would make it a secondary offense. Officers couldn't pull you over for it, just ticket you if you're already stopped.

It's all well and good to have a primary seat belt law; after all, seat belts save lives and people should wear them. In this area, the majority of people in fatal or disabling car accidents weren't wearing seat belts, and many of them could have survived if they had been.

The problem with this bill comes when you examine the penalties. If the law is signed and published, the penalty for violating it would be a whopping \$5. After a year, it'll make a huge leap up to \$10.

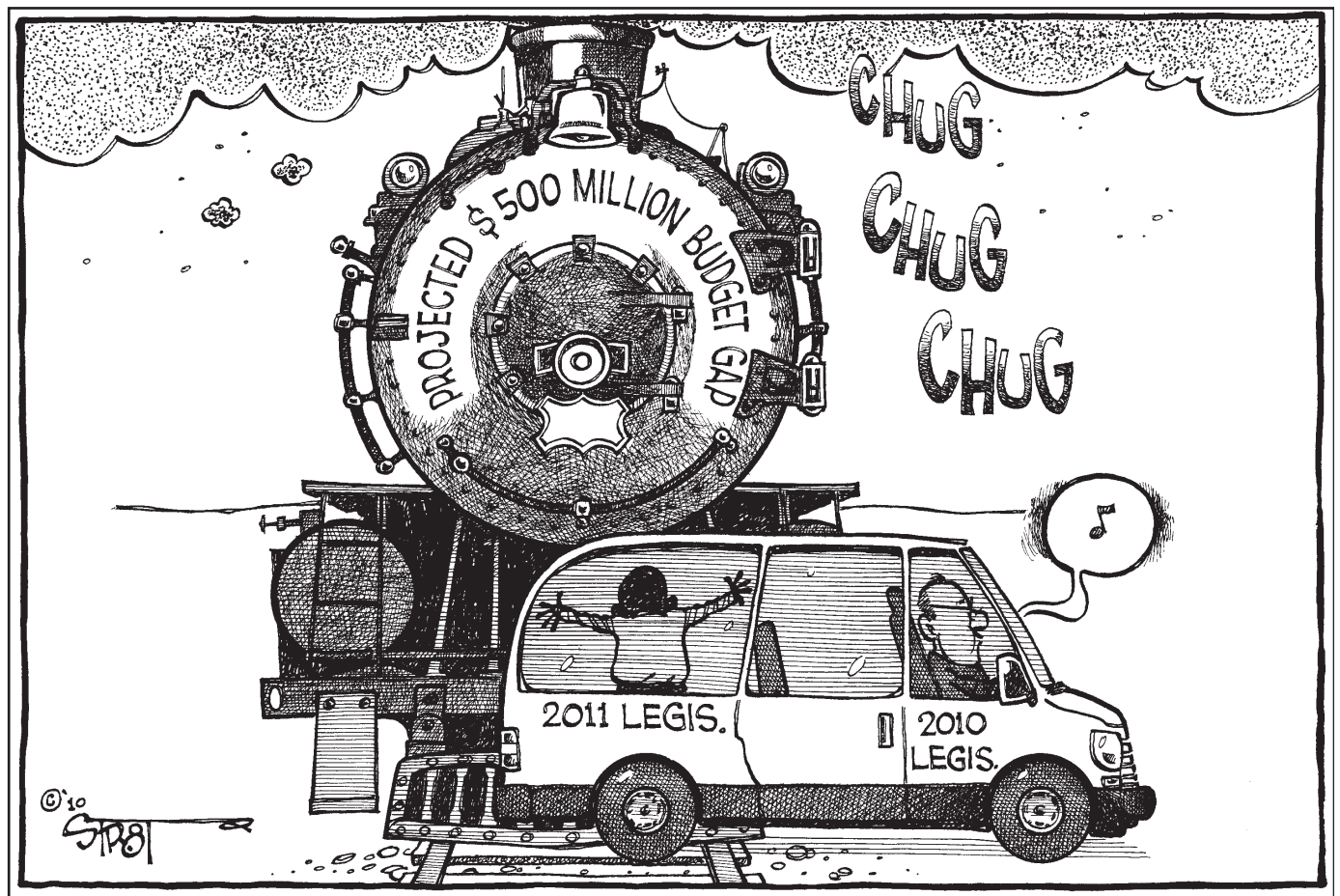
If we are going to make laws, we need to make them stick. Laws like this one are meant to be a deterrent, they are meant to change people's behavior. But a \$5 fine isn't going to deter anybody.

The conference committee, a committee from both houses that brings the bills they pass together to make final versions, reduced the fine from \$60. The current fine is \$30, but just for an adult in the front seat.

The only way these small fines would be effective is if they stack up with other fines against the driver. However, if you get pulled over just for not wearing a seat belt, you might not have broken any other laws, in which case you get a \$5 slap on the wrist and the slight delay of having been pulled over. Granted that's enough to intimidate some law-abiding folks into good behavior, but a lot of people are just going to shrug that right off.

The governor should veto this bill and demand that the Legislature send him one that will actually get people to wear their seat belts. This bill is a token effort by the Legislature to secure \$11 million from the federal government, money the state can only get by having a primary seat belt law. Getting back our federal money is fine, but doing so this way is a waste of the taxpayers' time.

— Kevin Bottrell



## Look beyond the pretty pictures

Spring is here, which leads into swimsuit season. People are running or walking to peel off those well earned winter pounds. They also tend to look more carefully at what is put into their mouths. In combining healthy eating and exercise, we strive to achieve a healthier lifestyle. How about the pets? Who is looking at what Fido or Fluffy eats? We know how to read human food labels and interpret percentages of calories and fat, but how about pet food labels? Walk down the aisles of the local grocery store. The selection of pet food is enormous. Pet food manufacturers market their products to people because dogs can't read or purchase it for themselves. How do pet food producers get you to buy their product? They put big pictures of happy dogs or yummy looking roasts and vegetables on the bag. Large lettering with words like "100 percent chicken" or "beef" are meant to entice us. This advertising is very deceiving and is doing more harm than good to your pet. The appealing pictures often keep us from reading about what is actually in the food. Pet food labels are similar to people food labels except for a few differences.

One difference is the AAFCO standard. This stands for the Association of American Feed Control Officials. These officials develop guidelines for the production, labeling, and sale of animal foods. Each can or sack of pet food should have a AAFCO statement saying that it is formulated to meet the nutritional levels set by the AAFCO standards. This means the food was tested in the labora-

Several images surface as we dust off the cobwebs of our minds and reflect back on rural Kansas and those days of long ago. Red barns, silver-steel windmills, cream separators, harvest crews, Burma Shave signs and certainly the outhouse come to mind.

While many have tried to describe the typical Kansas (or American) privy, each was as different and original as the men whose job it was to build them. This column is dedicated to those prairie dwellers across Kansas who, in the middle of pioneering this great state, still took time for moments of contemplation.

Kansas outhouses were a reflection of its people — the region of the state where they settled and where they came from back in the Old Country. Each was a classic in its own right, inherent of early settler architecture — the sturdy and inspirational "Little House on the Prairie."

To Midwesterners and High Plains dwellers the outhouse has always seemed a fitting memorial to the ingenuity and practicality of our forefathers — those restless, imaginative spirits who first caught the scent of opportunity in the westerly breeze. And for all its many charms, the privy has gone the way of the mail-order catalog with which it had such a long and intimate relationship.

Heck, some old timers in the community I grew up in went so far as to label an outhouse the very seat of government — a place where equality of all people was understandable and indeed undeniable.

### Vet tips

Amber Nuttycomb, RVT



tory and was found to have the recommended amounts of protein, fat, etc. As mentioned above, a combination of shoe leather, used motor oil and coal would meet this standard. There is a second label on the food that says it has gone through trials to guarantee that it is nutritionally edible. There are still loopholes in this label information. Even by reading the label, it is hard to tell if it is accurate or not. If one type of cat food has passed the test to receive the AAFCO labels then the manufacturer can place the label on the entire "family" of food without any further trial or testing of proof.

As long as the food is for the same species of animal, that same label can be used without additional testing. The ingredients list of what is actually in the food is also important. The top three listed ingredients are the ones that make up the greatest percentage of the final product. Many manufacturers will then divide up the listing of by-product ingredients so it looks like the consumer is buying a quality food. An ingredient list might have six different corn products, that when added together would weigh more than the chicken, even if it was first on the list.

So what is better for my pet — wet or dry food? Wet food is 20 percent dry food and

80 percent water, whereas dry food is 6 percent water and 94 percent dry. Both wet and dry food are good for your pet as long as the owner reads the ingredients and makes sure the food has the AAFCO labeling.

The biggest difference between wet food and dry food is the cost per pound. When buying wet food, the pet owner pays for the water, which makes wet food more costly. Wet foods are notorious for being full of fat. Some have levels that are over AAFCO standard levels. Carefully read the percent of fat and proteins on the label. Pets are not made to be on the Atkins diet. What brands of food are safe for my pet?

A good food is one that veterinarian recommended. The one we recommend and have available is Hills Science Diet which is made in Hillside. This is the best food for the money. It is made using only the best ingredients and does not include fillers. Fillers in the food create more waste material in the yard for the owner to clean up. With Hills food you will see less waste, which in return is less money lying in the grass. Science Diet foods have labels that are easy to read. Each bag or can of food also includes feeding instructions. Hills food lets the consumer know exactly what he is getting. It's all there in the fine print. Other optional brands that are veterinarian recommended include Iams/ Eukanuba and Royal Canine. Regardless of what food you buy for your pet, just remember what you buy is what you get. A more expensive brand is much better for you and for your animal.

## Jalapeno questions

Reader, Diana (Black) Jolly, in Hugo, Colo., wrote to ask a couple of questions about my recipe for stuffed jalapeños. Perhaps I should answer them here in case anyone else has the same queries.

Diana asked if I served them hot or cold. I have to admit I don't know how they would be cold: they've never had a chance to cool off.

We eat them as soon as they come out of the oven and we can take a bite without scalding our tongue.

Her next question was, "Do I use fresh or canned jalapeños?" I have always used fresh, but she went on to say that she used canned ones and everyone liked them, so I learned something new from Diana.

She said she also made a batch of mild peppers. So for those of you who "think" you don't like jalapeños that might be your answer.

My youngest daughter, Kara, called to say she wanted to make them but because she and her husband, Adam, were on the Atkins Diet she wouldn't roll the peppers in the brown sugar.

"Then don't bother," I told her. "It's the brown sugar that gives them the "special" flavor."

Actually, they would be just fine without the sugar. In fact, I've eaten jalapeños just stuffed with cream cheese and put

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



on the grill. They were delicious, too. Paula Dean and I share the same philosophy: "Everything is better with cream cheese on it."

— ob —

Jim is on the last leg of our tile job. The bathroom is done, most of the hallway and one third of the utility room. My contribution to the project has been to stay out of his way, bring him plenty of iced tea and "pray that he not sin with his mouth." That's what he always tells me when I ask him what I can do to help.

However, I do get to paint the baseboards. And, that's something I better get done as soon as possible so he can put the washer and dryer back where they belong without having to move them again.

— ob —

Sunday was Mother's Day and I heard from every one of the kids. That, alone, made it a good day. To all the other mothers out there, I hope you had a great day, too.

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