

### Agreements come through negotiations and compromise

This is the time of session that the committees attempt to finalize the various pieces of legislation by holding conference committee meetings. The main participants are the chairman, vice-chairman, and the ranking minority party member from each chamber.

The rules allow negotiations and compromise as this small group works to represent their chamber's position. Once an agreement is reached the revised bill is brought back to each chamber for a floor vote.

In these meetings several proposed bills can be "bundled" and load up simple proposals with numerous bills to make it possible for some other legislation to get passed into law. Many legislators think this is wrong, however many others believe as long as the bundle includes legislation that endured committee hearings it is OK.

As I write this update, the news is that we have reached a compromise agreement on the 2012 budget with a total expenditure of over \$14 Billion dollars. The research and revisor staffs now have the daunting task of putting all the right words and descriptions together.

They will work day and night writing, rewriting and proof reading to make sure the final product accurately reflects the committee deliberations. As I stated before, many will be surprised at the reduction of services because we lack the funds to be all things to all people.

The K-12 schools will certainly take hits because the Base State Aid per Pupil is reduced. The legislature tried to mitigate that by loosening up restrictions on other fund sources. This action like many others in this session will have supporters as well as detractors. Life would be easier if we had all the money we wanted and could spend it on anything we felt was needed.

As we increase our use of electronic communication devices, the opportunity to commit crimes increases. House Substitute for Senate Bill 55 would create or amend law relating to search warrants and interception orders for electronic communication information, search incident to arrest, the crimes of harassment by telecommunications device and sexual exploitation of a child.

The bill additionally addresses required factors in determining conditions of release, employment of city and county prisoners, relief from firearm prohibitions for a person adjudicated mentally ill, expunged records, grand juries, direct appeals to the Supreme Court, community corrections, house arrest, arrest expungement fees, DUI offender house arrest and work release, and the forfeiture of appearance bonds.

This is an example of bundling numerous bills together. Just remember all these issues were brought forward based on a suggestion from our law enforcement community, judges, corrections officials, KBI, County and District Attorneys, individual legislators and citizens.

Senate Substitute for HB 2194 would modify the KPERS retirement plan for public employees who are current KPERS members and for future public employees of the state, school and local groups. The bill would make a number of changes, most contingent upon specific triggers, including certain actions that would have to be taken by the 2012 Legislature.

Additionally we have to have a positive or favorable decision by the IRS regarding elections by KPERS Tier 1 and Tier 2 members to choose alternative options for their individual retirement contributions and benefits.

Hopefully these changes would bring the state, school, and local groups into actuarial balance no later than FY 2019. The sources of funds are personal contributions from salary, employer contributions (taxes), and market performance (stock investments).

Included in the bill is the requirement of adding yet another "study commission". This 13-member commission is to consider alternative retirement plans, including defined contribution plans, hybrid plans that could include a defined contribution component and any other possible plans.

The commission is required to report no later than January 6th, 2012 on its recommendations which then would be introduced as two identical bills in each chamber, require committee debate and at least one chamber taking floor action.

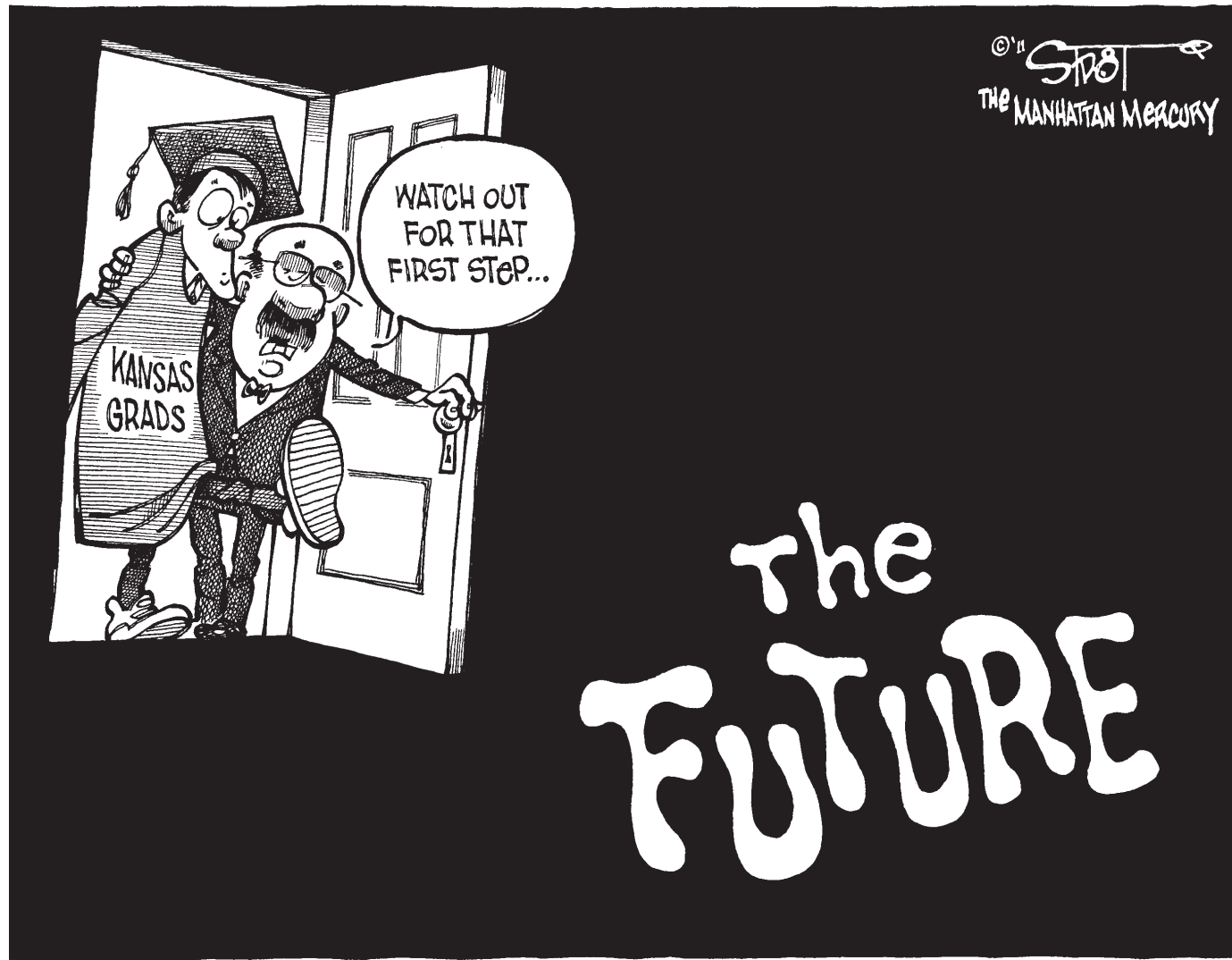
The commission will consist of legislators selected by chamber leadership and 5 members selected by the governor; ex-officio members will include legislative staff and the KPERS executive director.

This is a serious issue that could potentially affect all 244,000 KPERS eligible members. We will see where this goes and I will keep you posted. Thanks to all of you that contacted me with comments on our proposed actions as the process unfolded.

My Topeka office is closed; please contact me through email: ward.cassidy@ks.house.gov, my website: www.wardcassidy.net

My home address is Box 303 St. Francis, Ks. 67756  
I consider it a high honor to be your Representative in Topeka and have appreciated your e-mails, comments, and support.

News from  
your  
legislator  
Ward Cassidy



### Issues we face in taking care of ourselves

Can you spell triglycerides, boys and girls? I've not only learned how to spell it, I've taken a crash course in what they are. According to material I found on the internet, triglycerides are, plain and simple, fat in the blood.

Throughout this whole ordeal with Jim's injury and recovery, another health issue has cropped up. It was recommended he have a heart catheterization and during the testing, it was discovered his sugar levels were okay, he had no blockages, and no cholesterol problems but, his triglycerides were almost "off the chart". A very strict diet was prescribed and in the blink of an eye, our routine was turned upside down.

I give my husband a lot of credit. Some men would say, "No! I'm not gonna do it." But, from the very beginning, Jim said, "I will do whatever it takes to fix this." He has no idea how much easier that makes all of this.

Jim has always been one to eat what was set before him so, I'm the one who has to make the adjustments. Trying to come up with a palatable meal without using, butter, salt, sugar or white flour is a challenge. I am keeping in mind the words of a woman I love like my mother. "Aunt Toots" says, "Don't worry about the foods you can't eat. Just be thankful

Out Back  
Carolyn Plotts



for the ones you can." So that's what we're doing. He loves all fruits, vegetables, fish and chicken and who could complain about that?

Jim's hand is healing nicely and we expect the pin to come out of his thumb this week. He never, really, stopped working. He just can't do the heavy work like he wants to or the fine, finishing work.

This weekend is Jim's 50th high school reunion and we are scheduled to sing a song for his class's program. He keeps testing his guitar playing abilities but, at this point, we will be singing acappella.

In the midst of all the hub-bub of Jim's injury, doctor's visits and everyday life, we have added two new residents to the Plotts menagerie. They are "Billy" (the Kid) and "Nanny". Yes. We are in the goat business. And, if the man who sold us the goats is correct, we could be doubling our goat herd in a few days. Nanny is expect-

ing and goats often have twins.

They seem to be content with their new home, although, it was not so at first. The night the goats were turned loose inside our fenced compound, and before the gate was closed, they had climbed onto a stack of shingles, bounded over the fence and were headed home. We let them stay a few days while we "goat proofed" the compound. Now, with no avenue of escape, they seem content to eat weeds and goat granules. Little Billy will come eat out of my hand but, Nanny is still standoff-ish. She stomps her foot and won't even come to the feed pan if I'm in the pen.

I hope to tame her baby(ies) when it (they) come. That is if she will let me get close.

-ob-

Memorial weekend is coming up and I don't know if we're going to have any flowers to decorate graves with or not. Some of my iris is blooming but not a single rose bud is visible and the peonies aren't blooming yet, either. I hate the thought of buying flowers but, it may come to that.

My mother always said, "The way we care for the dead is a sign of how we care for the living." A lot of truth in that.

### The life experiences of being a "Baby Boomer"

Insight

John Schlageck

Being a Baby Boomer, there's plenty to talk about during my early lifetime. My generation has been praised and pummeled throughout this 60-year period.

Regardless of the circumstances and events, many of us took an active role in what was "going down." We were young and wanted to make a difference. We believed we could change the world.

During the '60s, we were some of the first Americans to publicly call for banning the bomb and stopping the war in Vietnam. Some of us served in the armed forces and were proud of it.

We watched in horror at the assassination of our president, John F. Kennedy. We also witnessed the beginning of integration and watched the first man walk on the moon.

In grade school, we volunteered to be the first recipients in the fight against polio. We stood in long lines and accepted sugar cubes that contained the first polio serum.

My generation were some of the first to eat frozen food and TV dinners. I never liked either, but preferred Mom's home-cooked meals made from scratch.

Copying machines from Xerox showed up for the first time in office buildings. We drank our sodas out of 12-ounce glass bottles. Plastic containers had yet to hit the market. And if you were smart, you were investing in plastic.

During my sophomore year at Sheridan Community High School, "Tab," the one-calorie diet soda made its debut. It was banned a couple years later because the saccharine that made it sweet, without the calories, killed lab rats.

Five and dime stores still flourished - there were no convenience stores. We could buy a candy bar for a nickel and a

soda for a dime. Daily newspapers sold for a nickel and you could mail a letter for four cents.

My older cousin, Freddie, bought a Mercury two-door coupe for less than two grand when he returned from the Navy.

Cool? You better believe it.

People were also buying homes for less than \$10,000 and moving to a new place called the suburbs. Horned rim glasses were all the rage and contact lenses a novelty. Teens tossed Frisbees and popped the pill for the first time.

The '60s - war, civil unrest, revolution, integration, college, freedom and making our own way - far from home and the oversight of family, neighbors and the small rural communities where we grew up.

And the music. Every year musicians like the Animals, Beatles, Stones, Dylan, Airplane, Doors, Hendrix, Orbison, Janis and Elvis released new albums. Talk about classic rock. There's not a thing like it today. And we listened to this music on AM radio, FM was still in its infancy.

Yes, the times they were a changin'. Still, most of my contemporaries married first and then lived together. Manners still meant something and every contemporary of mine used the words, "Yes ma'am" and "Thank you." They also took their hats or caps off when they entered a home or building.

Designer jeans were still scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne. We thought

fast food was what we ate during Lent, not something we ate every day. House-husbands, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages were still a decade into the future.

As Boomers, we arrived on the scene long before day-care centers, group therapy and nursing homes.

For us, time-sharing meant togetherness - not condominiums. Software wasn't even a word. When we were kids, "made in Japan," meant junk and the term, "making out" referred to how you did on your exam.

In our day, cigarette smoking was still fashionable. Grass was mowed, Coke was a cold drink and pot was something you cooked in.

Today, the golden age of boomers has become a distant memory. Instead of country clubs and Club Meds, many of us are looking at the prospect of hearing aids, lens transplants and assisted living.

But hey, we once had the world by the tail. We kicked up our heels and lived like there was no tomorrow. Now that tomorrow is here, many of us are still living large.

We continue to work, play, dream and experience each and every day with the same zest and exuberance for life that we once enjoyed in our youth. And if you think about all of the events going on in 2011, it's really not that much different than the '60s.

Peace, brother.  
John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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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

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