

Governor submits school finance plan

The legislature finally received the Governor's school finance plan last week. It is a 147 page document that has many moving parts. The proposed teacher evaluation plan (all teacher evaluations would be posted on-line) has actually received more attention than the financial part of the plan. I am sure it will be debated and written about many times before it is resolved. Right now, I feel, there is very little legislative support for the new finance plan.

News from your legislator
Ward Cassidy



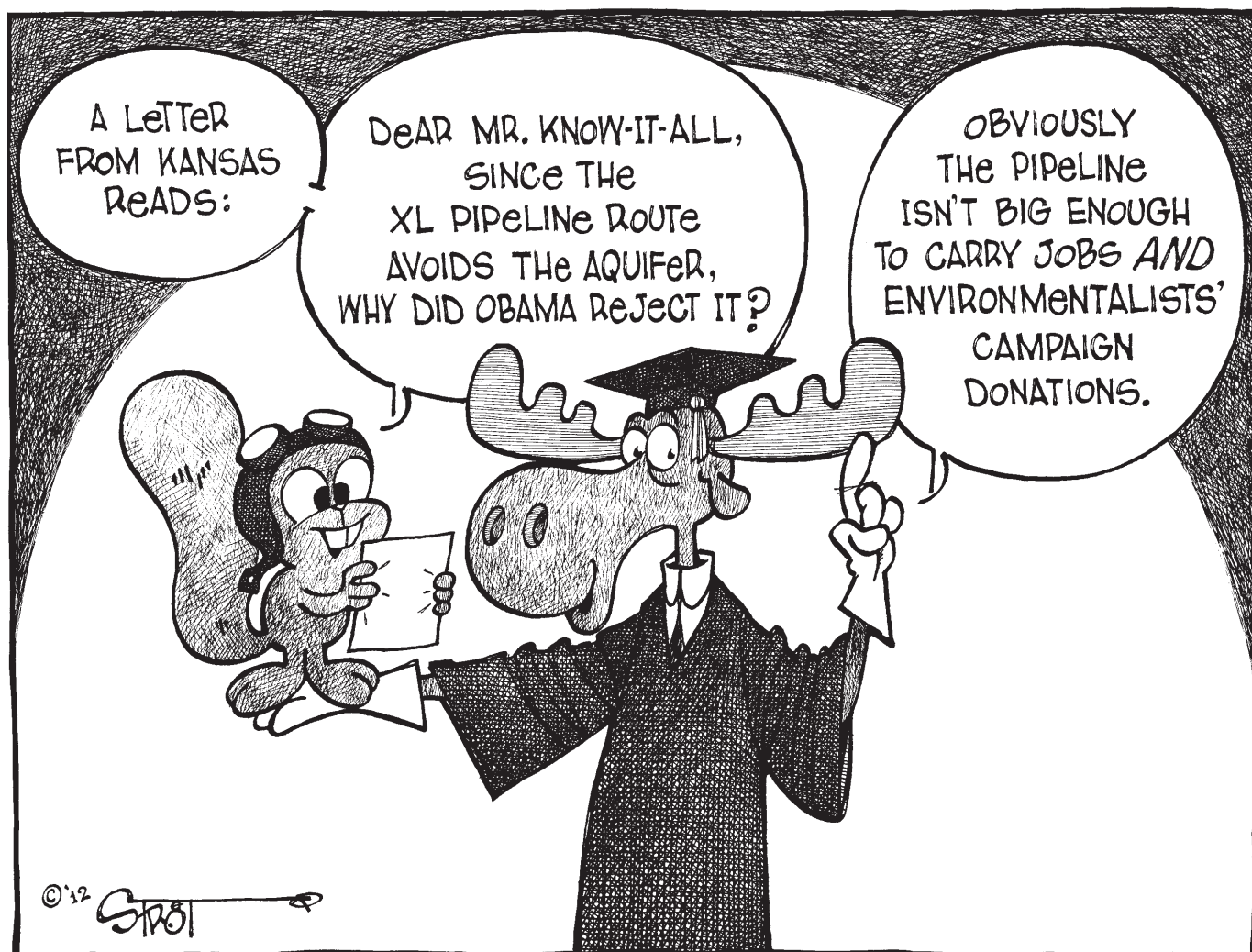
The Governor has proposed \$17 million in cuts to the Children's Initiative Fund. This program is funded by tobacco settlement money, and there will still be \$40m this year in receipts. It really doesn't make sense to cut such programs as Smart Start, Early Childhood Block Grant, and Parents as Teachers. A major goal of the Brownback Administration is to improve 4th grade reading readiness, and we cannot shortchange the programs that lay the groundwork to that goal. If we do, I feel strongly it will impact our reading scores. Research shows that for every dollar invested in quality childhood programming, the state would save at least \$7 down the road.

Kansas, like all of us, could use more money. I requested, in Appropriations, that the Department of Wildlife and Parks provide a list of all the state-owned land. I found out that some of the land was left to the state in estates that specifically stated that the land could not be sold. There are also other agreements that have been made that would make the selling impossible. There are, however, still thousands of acres that could be sold. I proposed an access agreement for the state-owned lands sold that would allow sportsmen access. Also, there would be a requirement that a percentage of acres and fence rows would continue to be farmed in order to help maintain the wildlife on those acres. I would think it would be easier for the Department to check on the property sold than to maintain it themselves. Hopefully, we can pursue this to acquire needed state funds.

I have signed on to three House Bills that are very easy for me to support. The first is Casey's law, which would require legal guardians and parents to notify law enforcement when their child is missing. The second is a review of mandatory reporting laws for sexual abuse, to make sure we are providing protection on college campuses in our state. Both of these were driven by the national news on these topics. Finally, an Arts Commission Check Off, on the state's income tax return form, would be included and would allow income taxpayers the opportunity to support the Arts.

I am strongly supporting House Bill 2406, which would prohibit interference or harassment of any member of the military or immediate family at a funeral service. I am supportive of the 1st amendment and freedom of speech, but protesting military funerals crosses the line. The bill is still in committee, and we are strongly encouraging them to get the bill passed out.

The House of Representatives redistricting plan has been set out. If the plan stands the 120th district would add Graham County.



The proper use of the English language

"There and their, they're not the same thing!" I've seen it on a t-shirt and I love it!

My mother was first and foremost an English teacher. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

In the age of texting, e-mail and so forth, those of us who have a clue are going the way of the dinosaurs. As much as kids today love computers how can they not question why their word documents are full of words and phrases highlighted with red or green squiggles?

Yet, even with my understanding of the squiggles, mistakes appear in my column! Shocking, isn't it? Spell check doesn't always catch the nuances of there and their!

Whenever I see an error in my printed column I rush to the computer to see if I'm responsible. Usually I am!

This brings up a lot of big questions:

1. Why didn't I see it when I proof read?
2. Sorry to throw you under the bus Dana but: Why didn't the editor see it?
3. I have no idea how the mechanics of getting the paper to print work but does someone else enter this into a computer or proof read? If so why don't they correct the problem?
4. Is my high school English teacher reading it, red pencil in hand?
5. Do all the readers out there think I'm an idiot?
6. Does anyone else even notice?

There are always gray areas about language. I get the "fragment, consider revising" message a lot! Some days I have a very fragmented life!

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



Then there are new words, as illustrated today by "texting". My computer suggests testing, tenting, taxing, tasting, but it does not recognize "texting".

One thing I have a problem with is "your"! It often comes out "you". And spell check doesn't pick up on it. I think I put that "R" on there. My theory is the computer starts thinking for me and drops the "R". Or perhaps it is the one instance when my fingers are flying over the keys (I'm pretty slow at key-boarding) and I just don't get the "R" PUSHED DOWN HARD ENOUGH!

I had a friend proof reading something just recently and she pointed out a "you" when it should have been "your". I admitted my problem. (Isn't that the first step to recovery?) She said it also happens to her! Maybe we need a support group! At least I know better than to use "you're" when it should be "your"!

One English lesson I missed was on the usage of "its" and "it's". I'm just certain I was not taught that it was wrong to use an apostrophe when "it" is possessive. They changed this rule somewhere over the years; apparently between 1969, when I graduated from high school and 1971 when my sister did. Because she learned all about that

and I did not!

You have to be careful when you know the rules and others do not. My mother was mortified when Johanna Johnson and I sat on the front row across the gym from her at the High School Baccalaureate service one year and poked each other each time the minister (a good ole boy from the south) made an grammatical error! Sorry, Mom, but it was really your fault!

In today's world none of this matters. No one capitalizes, or worries if their particples are dangling! English, a difficult language to begin with, has become a quagmire of strange abbreviations with a complete absence of punctuation!

One of the daughters was shocked to learn that her high school students did not know how to address an envelope. I love mail but the post office is truly finished except for junk mail and packages!

Elizabeth reports the mail boxes at her apartment complex are never used by the traditional college students. They are stuffed full and overflowing. Yet the kids never check; they live full lives oblivious to traditional mail. Apparently mail is not necessary at all! I'm so sorry. I'm going to miss mail!

I'm not getting the "there, their, they're" t-shirt. In high school, I made fun. I've matured.

Some days----I question some things, especially after seeing the wrong "there" in a recent column and finding it was totally my fault!

Misspellings happen! I think I'll have that printed on a t-shirt!

A final farewell to a great father, husband, friend and mentor

There are people who come into our lives unexpectedly, impacting us in ways unimagined and enriching who we are and who we become. Such was Tom Dreiling in my life. As hard as it may be to believe, when one lives in a small community, I never met the man. We communicated solely through e-mail, sharing thoughts and laughs and childhood stories.

I first "met" Tom when he came to work at the Norton Telegram and essentially became my "boss". We shared a common history of growing up in western Kansas. I spent a couple of summers as a pre-teen in Hays where the Dreiling name was well known. I even worked with a distant cousin of his. Tom shared stories of the Kennedy overnight stay when Tom's brother was head of the Kansas Democratic Party; he heard about my dad attending JFK's speech in Hays. We shared stories of health and spouses, children and

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



grandchildren. Tom had experienced life with all the ups and downs; a single parent, widowed with young children, and his own health issues.

Tom became my writing mentor. When stuck with how to say something, he gave the encouragement needed, not answering my question but opening the door for me to find an answer. When I was frustrated by situations he found humor. I could count on receiving encouraging words following a column he particularly liked. Politics was one of our favorite subjects. Last week after the State of the Union we bantered

back and forth about the upcoming election...his prediction? Well, I will reveal that the night of November 6th.

But not only was he my writing mentor, perhaps more importantly he was a life mentor. I will miss his annual December tribute to his late wife and mother of his children. The years didn't lessen his love and devotion for her; an admirable trait in a throw-away society. He was extraordinarily proud of his family and so grateful for their attentiveness. He listened as I worried about Jack, our children and grandchildren and he offered his prayers for their well-being.

His family will feel the void he once filled and so will many of us. To his family I say, how truly sorry I am for your loss. To Tom, I think you heard the words, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." You will be missed, Tom, you will be missed. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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Congrats to Mr. Will and NCHS High School band. The numbers may be small, but the sound is mighty! The winter concert was wonderful and the pep band rocks the b2-asketball games! Emailed in.

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