

The veto session is underway

The Veto Session, which we are currently in, is scheduled to go until May 11. Veto Session is traditionally dedicated to addressing bills approved or vetoed by the Governor and to finish the state budget. The redistricting of the Senate map has caused the process to slow down. Tuesday, May 1, the Senate finally approved a map that I can't vote for. IF the Senate map would pass, we would lose another Senate seat from Western Kansas.

The same day we finished the Omnibus Bill in Appropriations. I cannot tell you how much I learned by being on this committee. It was exciting and frustrating to be on the committee that passes out a 14 billion dollar all fund budget. There were many items on this bill that I opposed, but the majority won out. There were several instances where my input helped Western Kansas. I do feel that we are in much better fiscal shape than we were just two years ago, and I appreciate having a statutory required ending balance.

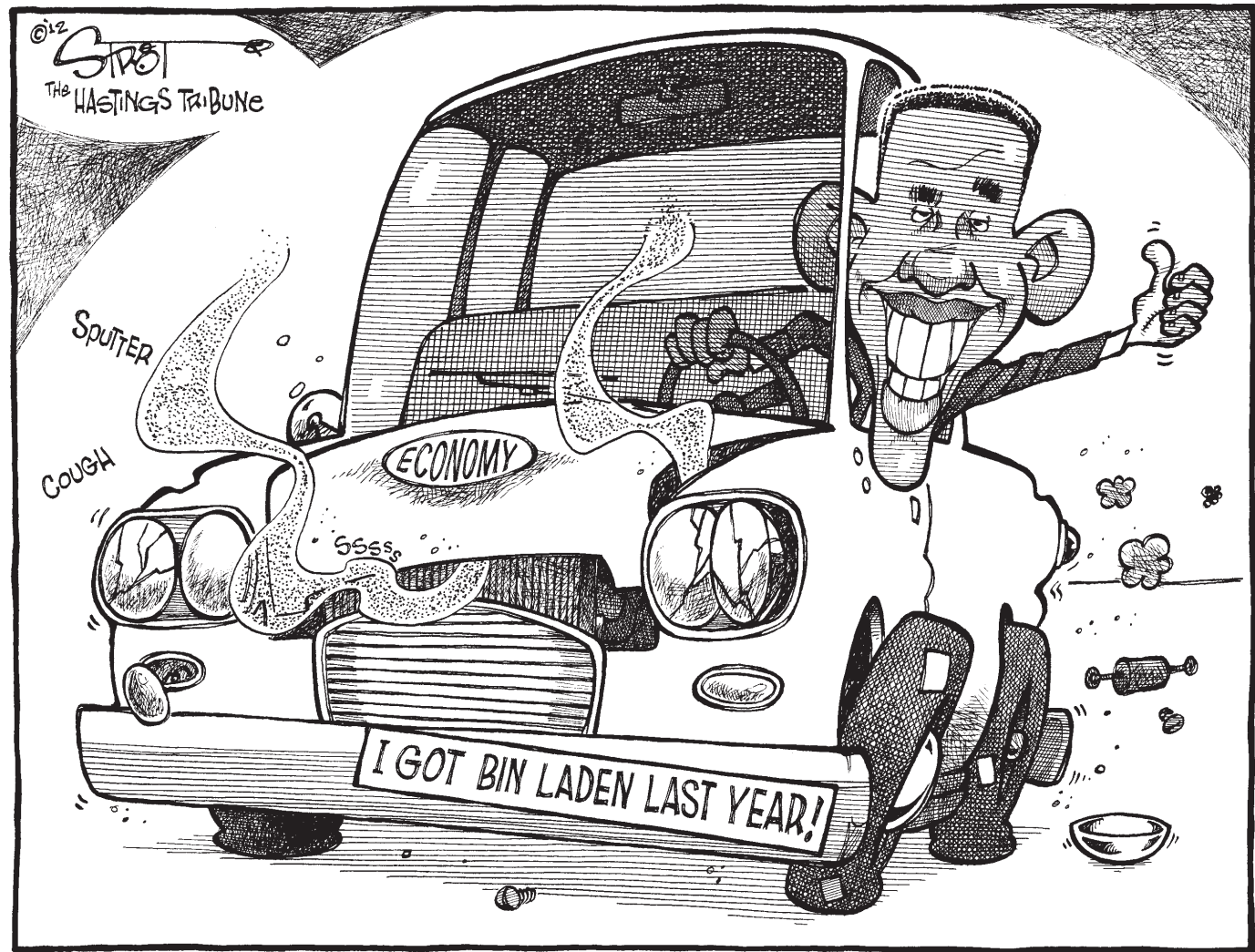
Most of my constituent contacts the past week have dealt with the Governor's tax proposals. I cannot support the current proposals because of the extreme gamble that we can grow the economy enough to make up for the income tax cut. We were shown projections that it would take thousands of new jobs to make up for the shortfall and that in 2014 we could have a \$14m deficit. Most of my letters want lower sales tax, less property tax, and a break for small business. Like many bill proposals that we see, you have to look at the whole picture and not just one piece that looks good.

I received many e-mails about the Obama Administration and their proposal regarding family farm child labor laws. Specifically, the rule would have changed the extent to which children could work on farms owned by family members – including driving most power driven equipment. Although this was a federal issue, I forwarded these e-mails to Senator Moran. Last week, the Obama administration withdrew the attempt. The ability for Kansas families to continue passing down long-standing traditions from generation to generation is part of our state's culture and I am glad that our children will still have the opportunity to help on the farm.

A major issue this year is KanCare. The Governor's office has been afraid of how the Federal cuts to Medicaid would affect our state's budget and has attempted to set up a program that would provide services more effectively. I feel that we moved too quickly and that there are problems with the entire KanCare package. I voted in Appropriations to carve out the Developmentally Disabled section and postpone implementation until January 1, 2014.

There are many important issues still to be decided. I will do my best to represent the interests of our district.

News from
your
legislator
Ward Cassidy



A bit of rest after a long stressful day

If you sleep from 4 to 8 p.m. can it still be considered a nap?

Whatever you want to call it: a nap, sawing logs, catching a few ZZZZZs, resting my eyelids or a little snooze, I did it Sunday afternoon. I know you can never make up lost sleep, but I sure gave it a try.

This was my weekend on the radio and it was going to be a new experience: I was working alone. Usually, I have a partner, Tim. He pushes all the buttons and turns all the knobs. I just answer the phone and select the music. I tell Tim what song I need and he finds it on the computer or I give him the CD I want played. It's a smooth operation. When you're flying solo, though, it gets a little more complicated. Phones are ringing, songs are ending, commercials need playing. It can be a real juggling act.

Back in the day, when I first started in radio we were still playing vinyl records. We progressed to cassette tapes and then to CDs. Now, the music is stored in a computer and you have to know how to retrieve it.

This weekend Tim could not work with me, but he assured me I would

Out Back
Carolyn Plotts



Next thing I knew I opened my eyes and it was almost dark outside. Four hours gone- just like that.

-ob-

They're coming! They're coming! The bulbs I planted are coming up! Sunday was so full, I didn't even take a single look at my flower beds. Early Monday morning I went out, in my bare feet, to check the beds. That's when I saw them. Tender little shoots peeking through the ground. Eight of them, so far. I can hardly wait. But just like having a baby, at least in my day, I'll have to wait to see what I get.

-ob-

Jim thinks I am addicted to Sudoku. You know the numbers game where you have to arrange numbers in a grid so you have 1 through 9 in every row, up and down and across.

Now, I'm not going to admit there may be some merit to his accusation. I do like to play the game. It's on our Kindle. If I choose the easy version, I can whip out a game in five to six minutes. It's not an addiction; let's just call it a distraction. And I get "distracted" a lot.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- ★ **Governor Sam Brownback**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-3232
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. roberts.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-4774
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, Russell Senate Office Building Room C-4, Washington, D.C. 20002. moran.senate.gov/public/ (202) 224-6521
- ★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 300 SW 10th St., Room 262-EA, Topeka, Kan. 66612. ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us (785) 296-7399
- ★ **Congressman Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. huelskamp.house.gov (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124
- ★ **State Rep. Rick Billinger**, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka, Kan. 66612 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov (785) 296-7659
- ★ **State Rep. Ward Cassidy**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Topeka, Kan. 66612 ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov (785) 296-7696

Grassroots journalism is vital to small towns

People in Kansas, and across this country, depend on strong community journalism to keep them informed and connected to one another. In spite of all the inroads with social media, many of the folks who live in rural communities across Kansas still rely on home-town newspapers like the Hoxie Sentinel where I grew up.

Just like the local grocery, school or courthouse, inhabitants of rural Kansas consider their community newspaper vital. Some even believe if they lose their paper, they could lose their entire town.

While in southwestern Kansas a couple weeks ago a long-time cattleman friend told me he'd be lost without his weekly paper. He told me, "Just like my livestock, we need to nurture this process. Folks gotta support their local paper (advertising and subscriptions) just like they have to support other businesses up and down Main Street."

Community newspapers report the "real news." What's really happening in a small town or village. You remember, the local news – the births, deaths, weddings, city council meetings, high school events, sporting events – they cover it all.

As a youngster growing up in Sheridan County I could catch up on all the events going on in all of the small villages in my county including Seguin,

Insight
John Schlageck



editors and publishers is vital to getting the word out on what your organization is doing. It's all part of the process of community. Letting people know what you're all about.

While much of today's big city and national media have a less than stellar reputation, it's different in small towns. In small towns people know their reporters and editors. One of the best ways for anyone in public life to connect with constituents is through community newspapers.

Coverage is different too. Community papers report the facts. Sometimes the large metropolitan papers miss the point and end up talking about themselves. They make the news – they become the news.

Today, avenues for delivering news continue to expand. Social media continues to explode, especially among the younger crowd. Still, 171 million people in the United States read a newspaper – in print or on line – on a weekly basis. More than 48 million read a paper daily.

Although there is no doubt print newspaper readership is slowly declining, reports about the pending death of the newspaper industry are exaggerated. Given the fragmentation of media choices, printed newspapers are holding onto their audiences relatively well. And nowhere is this more true than in rural states like Kansas.

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