

Governor's plans may lead to his demise

Gov. Sam Brownback seems to be under fire from every which direction.

His moves to slash the state's income tax – while extending a sales-tax increase passed by a Democratic governor – cut state spending, trim the fat out of state agencies and programs and generally make government work may or may not be popular with voters.

But one thing is sure: Mr. Brownback has drawn the enmity of nearly every pressure group representing those who spend state money or draw a state paycheck, and from many who just think more state spending is a good thing.

In his first two years in Topeka, the governor found many of his initiatives frustrated by holdover “moderate” Senate leadership that blocked his cuts and programs at seemingly every turn. The governor and his conservative backers turned to voters statewide, targeting this group. Nearly all of them were turned out of office in races that often involved established conservative members of the House with plenty of money from conservative groups.

Even so, the 2013 state budget, adopted last year, cut state spending by \$465 million, or about 3.2 percent, the first time the state spending hadn't gone up in decades. This year, with solid conservative majorities in both houses, the Legislature cut spending even beyond what the governor proposed. Colleges particularly felt the knife.

All that has left the governor with more critics than friends, or at least, it seems that way. He's drawn fire from statewide associations of teachers, school boards, families of the disabled, colleges, county officials, you name it. No group represents just ordinary voters statewide, however, and there's not much of a read on how they feel about his tax and spending cuts.

But organized groups of all sorts have been touched by the cuts, and many don't like them. Editorial writers for the state's major newspapers uniformly panned the Brownback agenda and both the tax and spending cuts. Many refer to claims that his income tax cuts favor the rich while programs for the poor have been cut.

The *Topeka Capital-Journal* did praise the governor for stemming the growth of state spending, but most of the major papers, from *The Kansas City Star* to the *Hutchinson News* and the *Garden City Telegram*, have had far more to say about the cuts. Even the *New York Times* chimed in, advising the state's high court on the school case.

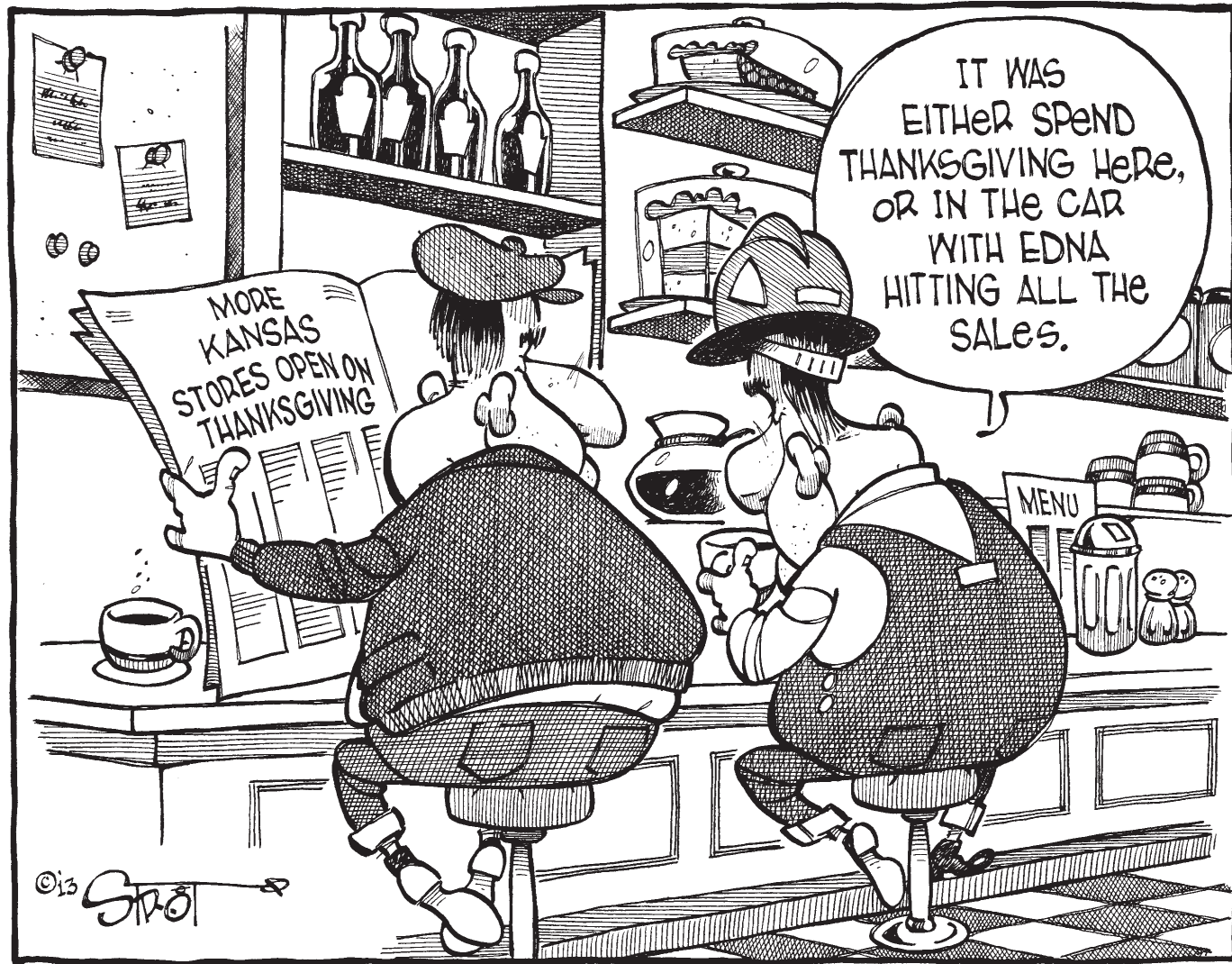
Much of what's been written has been speculation that the tax cuts are unfair, that the income-tax cuts in particular will fail to stimulate the state's economy and that there will be no money if the state Supreme Court orders the state to spend millions more on schools, restoring cuts made under former Gov. Mark Parkinson.

All the criticism may be taking its toll. An early poll by a Wichita television station showed the governor trailing would-be Democratic challenger Paul Davis, the House minority leader, 43 percent to 39 percent. However, political experts interviewed by *The Star* suggest that the governor will run a better race next fall.

A real unknown is what will happen in House races. The entire House has to run for re-election every two years, unlike the Senate, which has four-year terms. If the anti-Brownback crowds get behind candidates in House races, it might be able to cut into the conservative majority there, if not prompt a takeover by more-liberal leaders.

But it's way too early to predict any of that. Or to forecast the governor's demise. We'll just say it could be a far more interesting fall than most in 2014.

Steve Haynes



But for the grace of God, go I

English preacher, John Bradford, watched the prisoners being led to their execution and remarked, “There but for the grace of God go I.” Perhaps he experienced a premonition, as later he was burned at the stake. His crime? Preaching the Gospel of Christ, but all of us can relate to the sentiment he expressed. Only by God's grace...

As I paused this week to give thanks, I, too, could examine the world situations and put myself in many different shoes. I have been spared much sorrow, not by my own actions or inactions, as the case might be, but once again, by that Grace. I did not choose to be born in 1946; I did not choose my parents; I did not point my finger at the Norton Hospital and ask the stork to drop me there. I am white, female and American all because of where I was born. I came with all these things. I have had a charmed life, but for the

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



most part there is very little of my life that I can take credit for, instead I give thanks.

I have a friend whose brother says they are members of the “lucky sperm” club. They realize it was through no choice of their own that they have landed in their particular situation, but they are thankful.

My mother was nearly 42 when I was born and she used to tell me I was an afterthought or no thought at all. Prior to my parents' discovery of the

upcoming arrival, my father had made the decision to leave his government job as county agent, buy his parents' farm and return to Norton. My brother was 14, my sister nine and shortly after my birth in August they began the school year in yet another new town. I was unexpected, but always felt loved. I was blessed with a roof over my head, a loving family and access to life's necessities. One doesn't have to look far to realize not everyone has the same experiences. My life could have been very different, but it wasn't and I am thankful.

When I worked for Big Brothers Big Sisters I realized just how blessed I have been over my lifetime. Perhaps these are the reasons I feel as I do about providing health care, senior assistance and other aid, because, “There but for the grace of God go I.” mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Thankful that pests can be eradicated

Thanksgiving is a time of conflicting emotions! Before you can eat the dinner someone has to cook and before you cook someone has to shop and before you shop you have to make a list. I know I should be thankful for a mind to plan, money to shop with, and family and friends to feed but it's a lot of work!

Maxine says: How is my kitchen on Thanksgiving like my bedroom? There is zero chance you'll find a man in it!

The man in my bedroom helps when asked, just not in the kitchen. That is probably my fault. I'm an Alpha Cook. No one can help me!

I greatly appreciate that he changed the light bulbs in the pot lights in the dining room. We have had some dreary days. What is the point in dusting if no one can tell you did it?

With light assured on the inside the cleaning began! The hubby helped move the heavy sofa. I think the reason he likes that sofa is because it is so heavy. I can no longer rearrange the furniture. Some of us adjust to change better than others!

I decided I better wash windows in case it was sunny. That led to washing the swag curtains. And wiping down the walls; including taking the pictures off the walls to clean behind them.

It seemed every time I moved something I found a spider. The exterminator was supposed to come last week but the cold front came through. They called saying they had problems be-

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



cause of it and rescheduled.

I'd never had an exterminator until this past summer. But Kate helps with harvest and brings her cats. My kids are very squeamish about insects and spiders. And Kate is very particular about the cats!

I thank 4-H entomology and Arlene Best for giving me a different perspective. I'm fascinated by bugs. Whenever I find an unusual specimen I always think, “Is there a 4-Her somewhere that would like to have this for his collection?”

Anyway the exterminator came and left. It seemed he had done his job. Dozens of bugs came crawling out of the basement bedroom walls and died! I don't know why they could not die in the wall!

The day Kate was to arrive I headed to the basement to sweep the carcasses.

YIKES---there were little flea like bugs everywhere. They jumped! How could I have fleas? The exterminator was just here. We do not have pets in the house and we never had fleas before!

Not only were they all over the floor,

they were in the bedding. I had already washed the bedding but I did it again. And the rugs. I found some pet safe bug spray and sprayed like crazy. It killed the bugs. I swept them up and sprayed again. More crawled out and died. I swept them up. I had about 8 hours to get the situation under control.

It was a Sunday. I did not tell Kate about the problem. Monday, as soon as she vacated the basement, I locked the cats out of the bedroom, swept, sprayed and called the exterminator.

The receptionist laughed. I think she called them spring-hoppers. She said they hatch when the weather warms up (we did have a very cool spring and early summer) and seek a cool place (like a basement) and water (like a swimming pool)!

AH HA---that explains why they were in the dehumidifier!

Maybe that was all a story, but a desperate person will believe anything! I relaxed and told Kate since the exterminators a lot of bugs were crawling out and dying. If it “bugged” her she should sweep them up.

I never shared my worry that I thought they were fleas!

The spring-hoppers disappeared. Unfortunately the phenomenon of other bugs and spiders crawling out of the walls to die has not!

But there is that: Except for those I just found: They are dead!!!!

Something to be thankful for!

Hope you had a great Thanksgiving!

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Thumbs up to Jaida Wright, Mattison Rhea and Lexi Voss for making it to the team championship for punt pass and kick in Kansas City at Arrowhead! Good luck!!! Emailed in.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.