

## Leave things well enough alone may be the only answer

A proposal that gained little traction in the Kansas Legislature last year, but could resurface in the current session, was a cockeyed plan to change the date of municipal elections from spring in odd-numbered years to fall in even years.

The effect would be to merge city and school elections with those for county, state and national office, and that would be a bad idea.

It's one of those things that may sound OK at first, but the more you think about what would happen, the worse it looks.

The idea is to get more people involved in local elections, but it wouldn't work. Instead, local elections – covering cities, schools and other districts – would be lost in a sea of state and national issues.

It's true that city and school elections seldom attract the number of voters that turn out in presidential years, or even to vote in the "off" years for governor. But just because city elections might run at the same time as presidential races doesn't mean voters would know who is running for mayor.

There's no way to say the result would improve city government or local schools. The reverse might be true.

City and school elections were carefully separated from partisan voting for state and county office by an earlier generation of reformers. We say they should stay where they are, in the spring in years when no one else is running for much of anything.

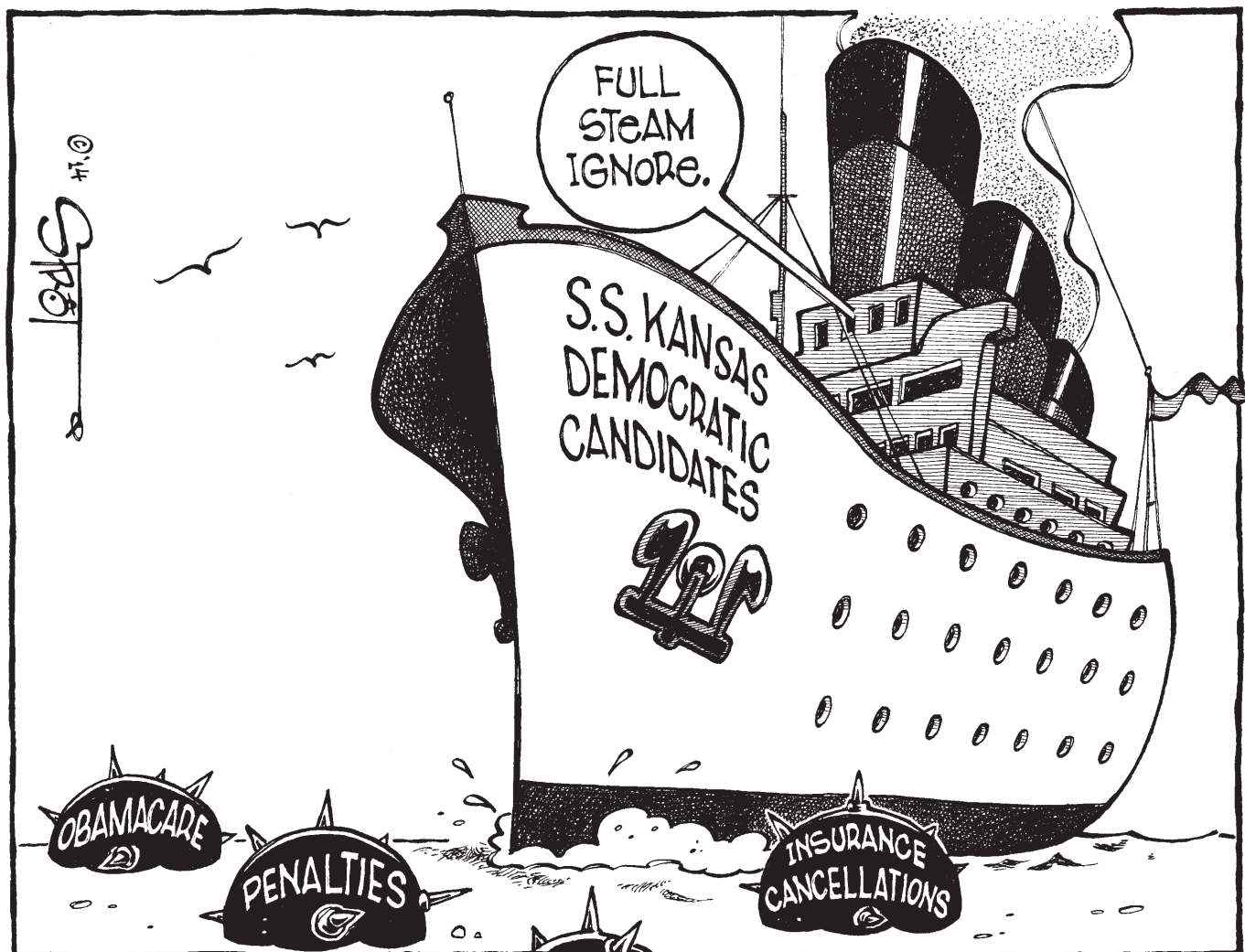
It's fashionable to decry a perceived lack of interest in local government, city, county and school, whether talking about low voter turnout in elections or a lack of citizens at public meetings.

However, voters have shown time and again that if they want change, they'll demand it. City and school officials have no trouble discerning what people want when voters decide things are not going the right way. Citizens show up for meetings, make themselves known, even run for office.

Most of the time, we think, taxpayers are pretty happy with what they get from their elected local officials, and they are content to let them do their jobs. It's the same with local elections. Shifting them to the fall, when partisan politics dominates, won't change things.

In fact, it might result in less interest and understanding of local issues as voters focus on the big races. Leave things well enough alone, we say. Spring elections have served Kansas cities and schools well; there is no need to change.

— Steve Haynes



## Immigration is a sincere form of flattery

Californians, much to the dismay of Oregonians, were moving to the Pacific Northwest at an accelerating rate in the late 1980s and 90s. The people of Oregon resented the intruders for various reasons.

An Oregon newspaper cartoon featured two Oregonians sitting at a bar. One said to the other, "I hate having all these Californians taking over our state."

In a corner, sitting quietly, the Native American softly says, "Tell me about it, Kemosabe."

I have currently been reading a book set in New York City during the early part of the 20th century. The challenges the immigrants faced and their determination to make a better life for their families is admirable and yet the so called "native citizens" resented the immigrants' presence. Rather than feeling proud to have a country seen as providing opportunity, a better life for their families and a hopeful future, they saw the immigrants as inferior. What

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



a tragedy.

Now we fear immigrants might take advantage of our government or take jobs from "true Americans". Jobs, I might add, that some Americans find demeaning. Perhaps more of those are taking advantage of us, than those crossing the border. Immigration is a highly charged issue, with often little thought going into individual situations or the needs in our country.

Two women have worked for several years to try to bring immigration reform to fruition. Esther Olavarria, a Democrat, now serving in the White House, worked as Senator Ted Ken-

edy's immigration lawyer. Rebecca Tallent, a Republican, has served with John McCain, Sarah Palin and now is a policy aide to Speaker John Boehner. Since 2003 the two have worked to seek agreeable legislation and in 2006 and again in 2007 nearly achieved it. It had the backing of Senators Kennedy and McCain and others. The crux of the legislation read, "would grant legal status to millions of immigrants, secure the border and increase the flow of legal workers." Unfortunately, it died before it became law.

Several years ago I wrote an article on immigration. A young Hispanic woman challenged me on my views. The most thought provoking question was why we needed borders. That notion's time has not come and maybe never will, but hopefully immigration reform's time has come.

Jack Paar once said, "Immigration is the sincerest form of flattery." And we should respond likewise. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

## Continued saga of the elusive Jack-in-the-Box

So where were we?

Oh, yes. Wichita. Toys 'R Us: Rejecting a pink Jack-in-the-Box because the intended recipient was a BOY!

There is a Babies 'R Us (the stores are linked) on the other side of town but we were uncertain how extensive their toy selection was. We decided to see if someone could check for us before driving over there.

We made our way to the front service desk. Two ladies: engrossed in conversation.

One caught my eye and told us to wait. She started to resume her conversation; then stepped forward.

"We were wondering if you could check inventory in the west store or at least give us a phone number so we can do it?"

She dismissed us with a wave of the hand—Go back to the gift registry!

At least that area of the store was somewhat quiet.

We explained that we were looking for a Jack-in-the-Box.

"FAO Toys," the clever clerk exclaimed.

"Yes, we've been there but you only have one and it is pink." (I'll say this about today's youth, they are color blind. Both she and the original person who helped us find the pink toy did not see a problem with giving it to Mo.)

She humored us and got on her computer.

She was amazed, "We have lots of styles! Which one do you want?"

Me: "Anything, as long as it isn't pink!"

So she clicks on a picture. "Oh, that isn't in stock. Which other one do you want me to try?"

### This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



Me: "Anything (except pink)."

"Okay, how about this one?"

Me: "Do you have those?"

"No, which other ones do you want me to try?"

Me: "How about something that isn't pink?"

Halleluiah! She finally found one that was in stock, or at least the computer said it was. There were, in fact, three.

I was very excited because if we could find even one of any style; maybe there would be more in other styles. Plus we could do a quality check to be sure the thing popped at the right time!

Me: "Where would those be?"

The clerk looked mystified, "I think they are with the 'boy toys'."

Give me a break! You don't number your aisles? Your inventory list does not tell you where inventory might be?

If Jacks are "boy toys" why is the only one we can find pink????

She pointed us in the direction of "boy toys".

The aisles are narrow. They are full of people. To get to the "boy toys" we passed baby toys. I attempted to do some reconnaissance as we passed.

I did find some dinosaur stuff in the "boy toys" and I think she said one of the Jacks had dinosaurs but I could not

find a Jack-in-the-Box.

In a few minutes the clerk joined us. She looked also. Then we checked baby toys as well. Those aisles were like a zoo!

"Can you check the inventory at the other store?" I asked.

She thought she could, back to the registry desk.

Finally some good news! Eleven, yes, eleven, very hungry caterpillar Jack-in-the-Boxes in the west store!

Into the car, back onto Kellogg! It's easy----once you get onto Kellogg!

By this time it's almost dark. The west store seemed rather isolated. The lights were not on in the parking lot. The signage was not on. Was the store even open?

We gathered up our purses surveying the parking lot. Well, there wasn't really any place for a mugger to hide. We looked at the door again. The sign lit up "Babies 'R Us'".

There were two clerks in the store and zero shoppers! "Where are the Jack-in-the-Boxes?" we asked.

The gals told us, then one said, "Yeah we have a lot of them!"

"Eleven!" I said!

And there they were, so cute! A caterpillar pops out. The art is exactly like Eric Carle's classic book "The Very Hungry Caterpillar!"

Victorious, I treated my sister to supper at Red Lobster!

Remember the credit card commercials:

Gas to get across town: \$5  
Jack-in-the-Box: \$17  
Supper at Red Lobster: \$30  
Look on Grandson's face: Priceless  
And so it was----next week!



Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:  
e-mail [dpaxton@nwks.com](mailto:dpaxton@nwks.com)  
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave.

Greetings!

As you have no doubt heard, there will be a bond election in Norton USD 211 on April 1. The election is to determine whether or not to finance improvements to the Norton Schools. There has not been a bond election in USD 211 since the early 1970's; literally, this happens once in a lifetime in Norton.

The Board of Education has not entered into this project lightly; it has come to this point as the result of considerable study and consideration over the past five years. We know this issue will cause concern and question in our community and we want to get the facts of this issue to our community. It is our desire that the details of the proposal be as transparent as possible.

Beginning in February presenters will be available to speak to civic groups and community organizations about the bond issues. To schedule a presentation please contact Greg Mann at 877-3386 or at <mailto:supt@usd211.org> or [dpaxton@usd211.org](mailto:dpaxton@usd211.org). Also, ALL of the bond issue information is available at the USD 211 website. Go to <http://www.usd211.org> and on the right hand side, select Building Project.

On Sunday, February 23 at 4:00 p.m. there will be a community meeting in the East Campus Auditorium to discuss the bond issue and answer questions. The architect hired by the District will be present to discuss the facility needs and the proposed improvements. The District's bondsman will also be present to discuss the financing of the bond issue.

Sincerely,  
Greg Mann, Supt.  
USD 211

## THE NORTON TELEGRAM

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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

Kansas Press  
Association



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