

Opinion

**Oberlin Herald
Viewpoint**

Where will legislators get money for schools?

It seems certain the Kansas Legislature is going to put another \$400 million to half a billion a year into public schools over the next few years.

No one seems to know how the state will pay for this, beyond the first year. Revenue projections don't show the state bringing in enough to make ends meet, but then a few years ago, the projections showed the state having a lot more money than it actually got. A rising tide makes all the difference.

And while there may be a lot of support for increasing the school budget, it's the Legislature — not the courts — that needs to decide how much and where it comes from.

There is no ground swell among voters or business people for a tax increase, no matter the reason. The results of the last election ought to convince people of that.

Relying on gambling expansion to finance schools is a bad idea, bad because gambling is destructive, and bad because it's not a reliable source of money.

There's just something repulsive about paying for kids' education with sin taxes, any way you slice it.

So the Legislature, faced with a Supreme Court order to come up with more money before it goes home, needs to shift around existing dollars and new income from a growing economy to find the money for schools. It's not going to be easy.

The members will have to keep in mind, as Chancellor Robert Hemmenway at the University of Kansas says, that it makes little sense to educate kids through high school and not provide a decent higher education.

Kansas colleges have been starving the last few years as public schools and welfare soaks up every available dollar from the state budget.

Nor can the Legislature expect to take much out of the highway fund, lest the state default on its promises under the 10-year transportation plan.

The devils in the works, it seems, include social programs, from public assistance to help for the disabled, Medicaid and welfare. These programs have grown uncontrollably during the recession. Even today, they show little sign of slacking off, and many are considered "entitlements," which the state has to pay for whether it has the money or not.

Special-interest groups keep pushing for more money for these programs, and at even a hint of cuts, they organize demonstrations in front of the State house. It's hard to be firm with people in wheelchairs. It looks mean.

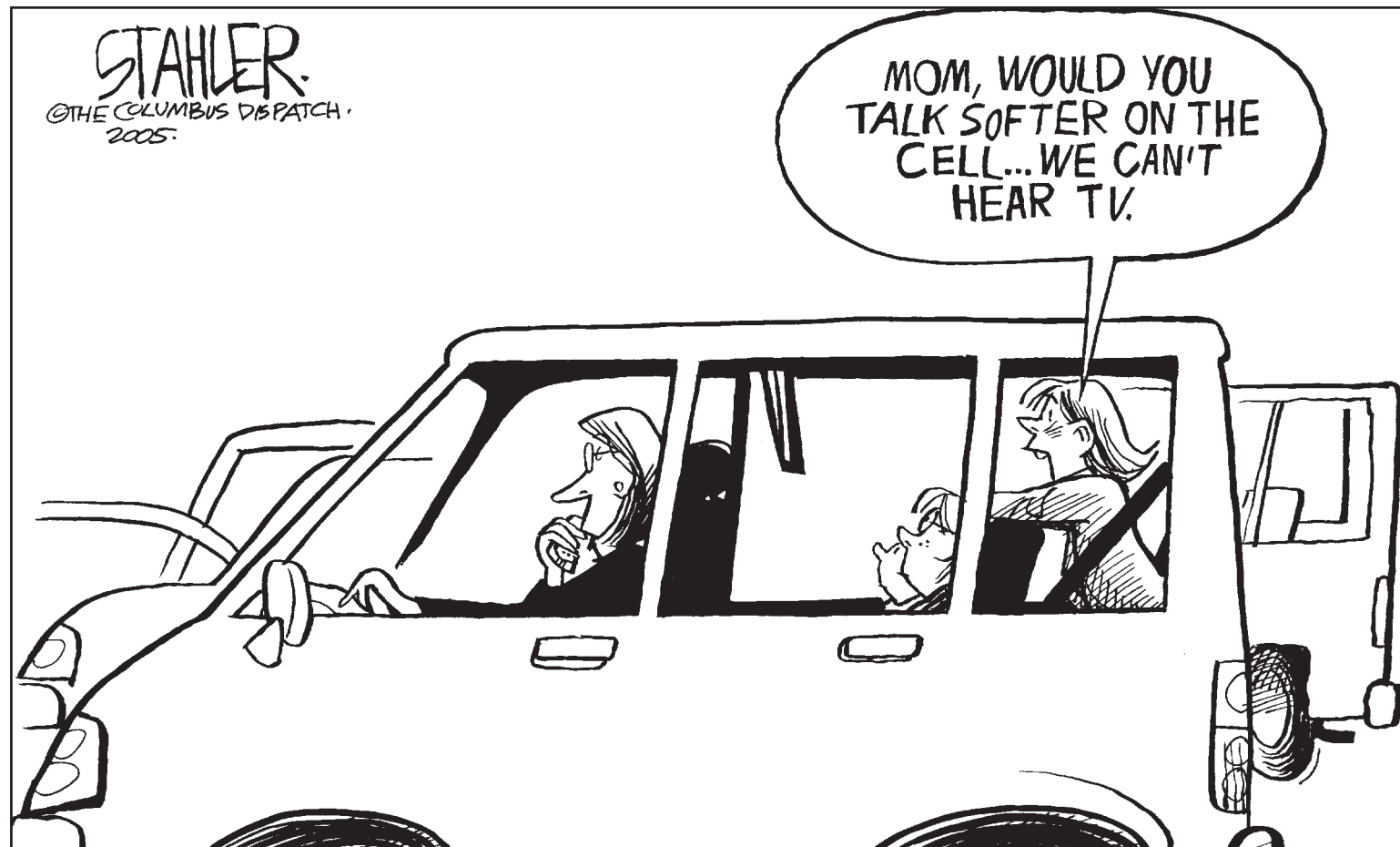
The Legislators will have to balance all that out and do the best they can. That may not be good enough for the courts, but then, the courts have no power to raise taxes. At least, we hope they don't.

The best anyone can hope for is that the economy will keep improving and there'll be money to cover all the bases. If not, there is nothing writ in stone that says the state government has to grow every year.

*Steve Haynes
Nor'West Newspapers*

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or offensive.



And the winner is?...nobody

Nobody figured it out. Nobody. And I thought Question #11 in last Friday's column was the easiest of all the questions so far in my little trivia contest. If you remember it was: "In the area of music, what town in our area can lay claim to MSSR.?"

Ready for the answer?
Colby for Mark Schultz and Sam Ramey. Mark in the field of Christian music and is a nationally acclaimed artist, while Sam is in opera and considered one of the world's most gifted voices

Boy, I thought that was a snap.
No movie tickets coming from this column this week.

So we now move to Question #12 (of particular interest to Colby): "Everybody's got one somewhere and this one towers above them all."

Again, it's very, very simple. Answers to td@nwkans.com, fax 462-7749, or call 462-3963. Answers by Thursday afternoon next week.

Good luck to our Eagle wrestlers at state and the Trojan wrestlers at nationals. You do us proud!

The smaller schools are already into their basketball tournaments and the larger schools start this coming week. Wow! The winter sports season is just about to wrap up. Then it's spring and all its offers — not the least of which is the end of the school year by the time the outdoor sportskids call it quits.

I see the Michael Jackson jury has been seated, much quicker than the so called television babbling legal experts expected. The trial, if there is one, will probably move at a snail's pace. "IF there is one?" you ask. One attorney the other evening on the tube said he fully expects some



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

kind of out of court settlement to spare Jackson the ordeal of prison. He said something about Jackson being a frail, weak young man and prison wouldn't be in his best interest. What kind of bull is that?

Two doctors and an HMO manager died and lined up at the pearly gates for admission to heaven.

St. Peter asked them to identify themselves. One doctor stepped forward and said, "I was a pediatric spine surgeon and helped kids overcome their deformities."

St. Peter said, "You can enter."
The second doctor said, "I was a psychiatrist. I helped people rehabilitate themselves."

St. Peter also invited him in.
The third applicant stepped forward and said, "I was an HMO manager. I helped people get cost-effective health care."

St. Peter said, "You can come in, too."
But as the HMO manager walked by, St. Peter added, "You can stay three days. After that, you know where we are going to send you!"

Today's Highlights in History:
On Feb. 25, 1793, the department heads of the U.S. government met with President Washington at his home for the first Cabinet meeting on record.

In 1836, inventor Samuel Colt patented his

revolver.
In 1913, the 16th Amendment to the United States Constitution, giving Congress the power to levy and collect income taxes, was declared in effect.

In 1964, Cassius Clay (later Muhammad Ali) became world heavyweight boxing champion by defeating Sonny Liston in Miami Beach, Fla.

I thought the O'Reilly Factor was way off base Thursday night when host Bill and one of his guests were already talking about the process for picking a new pope. Lordy, Bill, Pope John Paul is still alive, although ill, still alive. O'Reilly and his guest have already buried the pope. But what else can you expect from the shallowness of the likes of Bill O'Reilly?

I guess the Oscars will be handed out Sunday. That's nice.

When you mix water and flour together you get glue...and then when you add eggs and sugar you get cake.

Right?
Right.
Well then, where did the glue go?
Ponder that for a while.

I will be away from my desk until next Wednesday. Patty, the editor, will be handling some of the stuff I generally care for. So send it to her at pdecker@nwkans.com. Thanks.

Have a good evening and a good weekend. And don't forget the church of your choice will welcome you with open arms. Don't disappoint.

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkans.com.

Why some prayers are not answered

You will enjoy today's submissions. If you have something to share, send it to td@nwkans.com, fax 462-7749 or mail to the office at 155 W. 5th, Colby 67701. Thanks, in advance. - td

A poem about 'JAKE'

Jake, the rancher, went one day, to fix a distant fence.

The wind was cold and gusty ...the clouds rolled gray and dense.

As he pounded the last staples in and gathered tools to go,

The temperature had fallen ...the wind and snow began to blow.

When he finally reached his pickup, he felt a heavy heart,

'Cause when he tried the switch, that ol' truck just wouldn't start.

So Jake did what most of us would do had we been there,

He humbly bowed his head and sent aloft a prayer.

He then tried the key for one last time, and quietly cursed his luck.

They found him three days later, frozen stiff in that old truck.

Now, Jake had been around in life, and done his share of roamin'.

And when he got to Heaven, it looked like Kansas on a beautiful spring mornin'.

Of all the saints in Heaven, his favorite was old St. Pete.

He liked to sit around and visit with him; he thought it was really neat.

So one day they sat and talked an hour or two, or maybe it was three,

But it really didn't matter ...in Heaven time is free.

"I've always heard," Jake said to Pete, "that God will answer prayer."

But the one time I really needed help, He just plain wasn't there."

"Does God answer prayers of some, and ignore the prayers of others?"

That doesn't seem exactly square...I know that all men are brothers."

"Or does he randomly reply, without good rhyme or reason?"

Maybe it's the time of day, or the weather or the season."

TD

At Week's End

"Now, I ain't trying to act smart, It's just the way I feel.

So would you tell me ...what the heck's the deal?!"

Peter listened very patiently and when Jake was done,

He smiled in recognition, and said, "So, you're the one!"

That day your truck wouldn't start, and you sent your prayer a flying,

You gave us all a real bad time, with hundreds of us trying.

A thousand angels rushed to check the status of your file,

And you know, Jake, we hadn't heard from you in quite a while.

And though all prayers are answered, You see, God doesn't have a quota;

He didn't recognize your voice, and started a truck in North Dakota!

Question: What do you get if you cross a four-leaf clover with poison oak?

Answer: A rash of good luck.

Just minutes before the church services started the townspeople were sitting in their pews and talking. Suddenly, Satan appeared at the front of the church. Everyone started screaming and running for the front entrance, trampling each other in a frantic effort to get away from evil incarnate.

Soon everyone had exited the church except for one elderly gentleman who sat calmly in his pew without moving, seemingly oblivious to the fact that God's ultimate enemy was in his presence. So Satan walked up to the old man and said, "Don't you know who I am?"

The man replied, "Yep, sure do."

"Aren't you afraid of me?" Satan asked

"Nope, sure ain't" said the man.

"Don't you realize I can kill you with a word?" asked Satan.

"Don't doubt it for a minute," returned the old man, in an even tone.

"Did you know that I could cause you profound, horrifying, physical agony forever?"

"Yep," was the calm reply.

"And you're still not afraid?" asked Satan.

"Nope."

More than a little perturbed, Satan asked, "Well, why aren't you afraid of me?"

The man calmly replied, "Been married to your sister for 48 years."

Didja Ever Wonder?

√Can you cry under water?

√If money doesn't grow on trees then why do banks have branches?

√Since bread is square, then why is sandwich meat round?

√Why do you have to "put your two cents in" .. but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"?

Where's that extra penny going to?

√Once you're in heaven, do you get stuck wearing the clothes you were buried in for eternity?

√Why does a round pizza come in a square box?

√What disease did cured ham actually have?

√How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

√Why is it that people say they "slept like a baby" when babies wake up like every two hours?

√Why are you IN a movie, but you're ON TV?

√Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

√Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?

√If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a stupid song about him?

√Is Disney World the only people trap operated by a mouse?

√Why does the "Alphabet" song and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" have the same tune?

Til net week...stay well. - td

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