

Opinion



A Kansas Viewpoint

Kansas must avoid a special session

From The Wichita Eagle

For weeks after the Legislature took delivery of its auditors' cost study on K-12 funding in January, lawmakers seemed to focus on everything but school finance.

Then after the House had passed a solid three-year, \$633 million plan and resolution seemed within reach, the Senate spent one day voting on three education bills before giving up. Even the smallest plan couldn't do better than a 20-20 tie. So now, this urgent issue must wait until the wrap-up session April 26.

Kansans deserve a better ordering of priorities from their Legislature.

There's nothing easy about getting lawmakers from across the state to agree on the right way to answer the Kansas Supreme Court's order and auditors' concerns.

Instead, the Legislature has made time for a curious array of business this year, including a workers' compensation reform that was out of touch with Kansas' pro-business status quo and deservedly earned the governor's veto, and a concealed-carry handgun law that, if other states' experience is any guide, likely won't affect public safety much either way.

The Legislature also seems bent on inviting litigation in trying to limit the repulsive military funeral protests by Topeka's Westboro Baptist Church. Its zeal to react to the U.S. Supreme Court's eminent domain decision risks unreasonably limiting governments' ability to manage land use. And work on such issues as gambling, tax cuts, cloning and human-animal hybrids, abortion clinic regulation, high school abortion education, sexually oriented businesses and sex offender penalties has been more frustrating than productive.

Legislative leaders sounded optimistic about their ability to find a schools solution after the break. Until then, Kansans should press their lawmakers to avoid a special session at all costs. They can also remind legislators that last summer's 12-day special session cost taxpayers \$574,000 — an infuriating sum, in part because so much time was wasted plotting how to pay back the Supreme Court. If lawmakers require another such session this summer, they will be the ones who deserve payback.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkansan.com or pdecker@nwkansan.com.

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BRACKIN'S RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH 4/06

So much can happen on one day

A lot of good reading material crosses my desk during the week, but there's just not enough room to get all of it in the newspaper.

Still, every now and then it's fun to pull out items that we typically don't publish. In this particular instance, the "Today In History" columns compiled by the Associated Press offer interesting reading about events that happened 10, 50 and even 100 years ago.

Just for fun, maybe you might enjoy glancing over some of the information too and see how many highlights in history you can remember. Obviously, I had a few problems with remembering events dating back to the turn of the century. Anyway, here are some of the breaking news stories for today.

- On April 7, 1862, Union forces led by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant defeated the Confederates at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee.
- On this date:
 - In 1927, an audience in New York saw an image of Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover in the first successful long-distance demonstration of television.
 - In 1939, Italy invaded Albania. (Less than a week later, Italy annexed Albania.)
 - In 1945, during World War II, American planes intercepted a Japanese fleet that was headed for Okinawa on a suicide mission.
 - In 1947, auto pioneer Henry Ford died in Dearborn, Mich., at age 83.
 - In 1948, the World Health Organization was founded.
 - In 1949, the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "South Pacific" opened on Broadway.
 - In 1953, the U.N. General Assembly elected Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden to be secretary-general.
- In 1966, the United States recovered a hydrogen bomb it had lost off the coast of Spain.
- In 1969, the Supreme Court unanimously struck down laws prohibiting private possession of obscene material.
- In 1994, civil war erupted in Rwanda, a day after a mysterious plane crash claimed the lives of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi. In the months that followed, hundreds of thousands of minority Tutsi and Hutu intellectuals were slaughtered.

Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

Ten years ago

- Celebrating Easter Mass under a glorious spring sky, Pope John Paul II appealed for support for the "artisans" of peace in Bosnia, Northern Ireland and the Holy Land.
- Five years ago: NASA's Mars Odyssey spacecraft took off on a six-month, 286 million-mile journey to the Red Planet. In Cincinnati, Timothy Thomas, an unarmed black man wanted on 14 misdemeanor warrants, was fatally shot by a white police officer, sparking three days of riots. Actress Beatrice Straight died in Los Angeles at age 86.
- One year ago: The blockbuster painkiller Bextra was taken off the market, and the FDA said all similar prescription drugs should

strongly warn about possible risk of heart attacks and strokes. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, a Shiite, was named Iraq's interim prime minister; Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani was sworn in as interim president. Historic bus service began between the two parts of Kashmir, one controlled by India, the other by Pakistan.

Birthdays

Actor R.G. Armstrong is 89. Sitar player Ravi Shankar is 86. Actor James Garner is 78. Country singer Cal Smith is 74. Actor Wayne Rogers is 73. Actor Ian Richardson is 72.

Media commentator Hodding Carter III is 71. Country singer Bobby Bare is 71. Rhythm-and-blues singer Charlie Thomas (The Drifters) is 69. Jazz musician Freddie Hubbard is 68. The mayor of Oakland, Calif., Jerry Brown, is 68. Movie director Francis Ford Coppola is 67.

Television personality David Frost is 67. Singer Patricia Bennett (The Chiffons) is 59. Singer John Oates is 57.

Singer Janis Ian is 55. Country musician John Dittrich is 55. Rock musician Bruce Gary is 54. Actor Jackie Chan is 52. Football Hall-of-Famer Tony Dorsett is 52. Actor Russell Crowe is 42.

Rhythm-and-blues singer Mark Kibble (Take 6) is 42. Actor Bill Bellamy is 41. Rock musician Dave "Yorkie" Palmer (Space) is 41. Actress Heather Burns is 31.

Thought for today

At the end of each column, the Associated Press offers one thought-provoking quote. Today's thought is: "Only where there is language is there world."

— Adrienne Rich, American poet.

Decker is editor of the Free Press.

Your turn

April is Kansas Archaeology Month

Nancy Arendt, President High Plains Chapter of Kansas Anthropological Association Colby

The professional archaeologists of Kansas have designated April as Kansas Archaeology Month. It celebrates the role of archaeology in studying and understanding the state's historic and prehistoric past. Through archaeology we begin to understand who was here, when and why.

The purpose of Kansas Archaeology Month is to increase public knowledge about the past, the science of archaeology, and to involve the public in protecting our cultural heritage. Much is yet to be learned about the past, especially here in the high plains, where less research has been done.

The Kansas Anthropological Association

(KAA) is a state organization of avocational archaeologists with several chapter groups scattered throughout the state.

The High Plains Chapter of KAA is our local group. Our purpose is to learn together and work with other interested individuals to locate, verify, document and preserve regional prehistoric and historic sites.

Our goal is to educate the public in not only the importance of documenting these sites but also to include them as we explore what Northwest Kansas has to offer as it tells its own history.

Dr. Donna Roper, an archaeologist, is coming to Colby April 23-26 to investigate possible sites, and look at collections the public has. &W will have an open house April 21st for area people to visit with Dr. Roper.

She will give a presentation at the Prairie Museum April 23 at 2:30 p.m. entitled "Recent Explorations of an Early Wichita Indian Village in Central Kansas."

Brad Geist, a Goodland high school student, will give a DVD presentation on his participation last year at the Kansas Anthropological Training Program near Kanorado, at the Prairie Museum on April 23 at 1:45 p.m.. E-mail highplainschapter@yahoo.com or contact me at 785-460-6653 for more information on the High Plains Chapter of KAA, up coming events, or information you would like to share.

Please join us in celebrating the history of our land and its people. So much is yet to be learned, it takes everyone sharing their knowledge, collections and questions to put the pieces of the history puzzle together

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. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. 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 considered offensive or libelous. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley