

# commentary

from other pens...

## Evolution debates didn't bother classes

**The Garden City Telegram on evolution:**  
Not that any local school districts pay much attention, but as expected, the Kansas Board of Education reversed itself...and restored evolution as a central theory in the state's science classes.

The action undoes the action by the same board two years ago to de-emphasize evolution...

A majority of board members who believed the theory conflicted with Biblical teachings exerted their religious conservatism on all Kansas school children. The action cast a pall of ridicule upon the state from scholars to comedians.

When voters change the philosophical tenor of the board in November, removing the conservative voices that spearheaded the removal of evolution, most everyone expected a reversal. The new board didn't disappoint.

But while the action drew nationwide attention to the state, classrooms in Kansas barely noticed the board's action in 1999. That's because schools aren't compelled to comply with state board mandates as they pertain to such curriculum matters.

What the action did — and all the action did — was remove evolution from the standards by which student achievement is measured...

There won't be wholesale changes in lesson plans...because there weren't wholesale changes two years ago.

That being the case, the political exercises embarrassed the state, and in part Wednesday's action that righted an obvious wrong gives rise to the debate over whether the independent state board should be abolished.

### The Iola Register on education:

"I need to step up my game about now. Something has to be done about public education. It's the last box on my things to do list that I want to check off before I take off from this job," Gov. Bill Graves told a room full of Kansas editors...

Gov. Graves spoke those encouraging words when reporters asked him about a Senate Education Committee proposal to increase the state sales tax .6 of a cent over three years to finance a \$75 million package of additional spending on top of the \$68 million in the governor's budget...

The Senate education proposal would increase the state base by \$90 for each student and would also increase funding for special education. A tax increase of some sort would be necessary to fund it.

Neither Senate President Dave Kerr of Hutchinson nor House Speaker Kent Glasscock of Manhattan...sounded supportive of a tax hike.

Sen. Kerr pointed out that state revenues in December and January came in below the estimates used to make the state budget...

Speaker Glasscock had a different reason to be negative.

Kansans, he said, want to know that they are getting their money's worth for the dollars they spend on their schools...

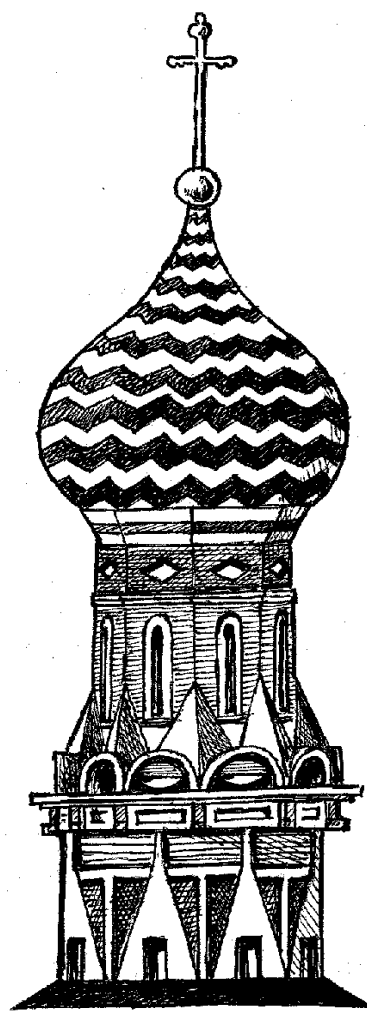
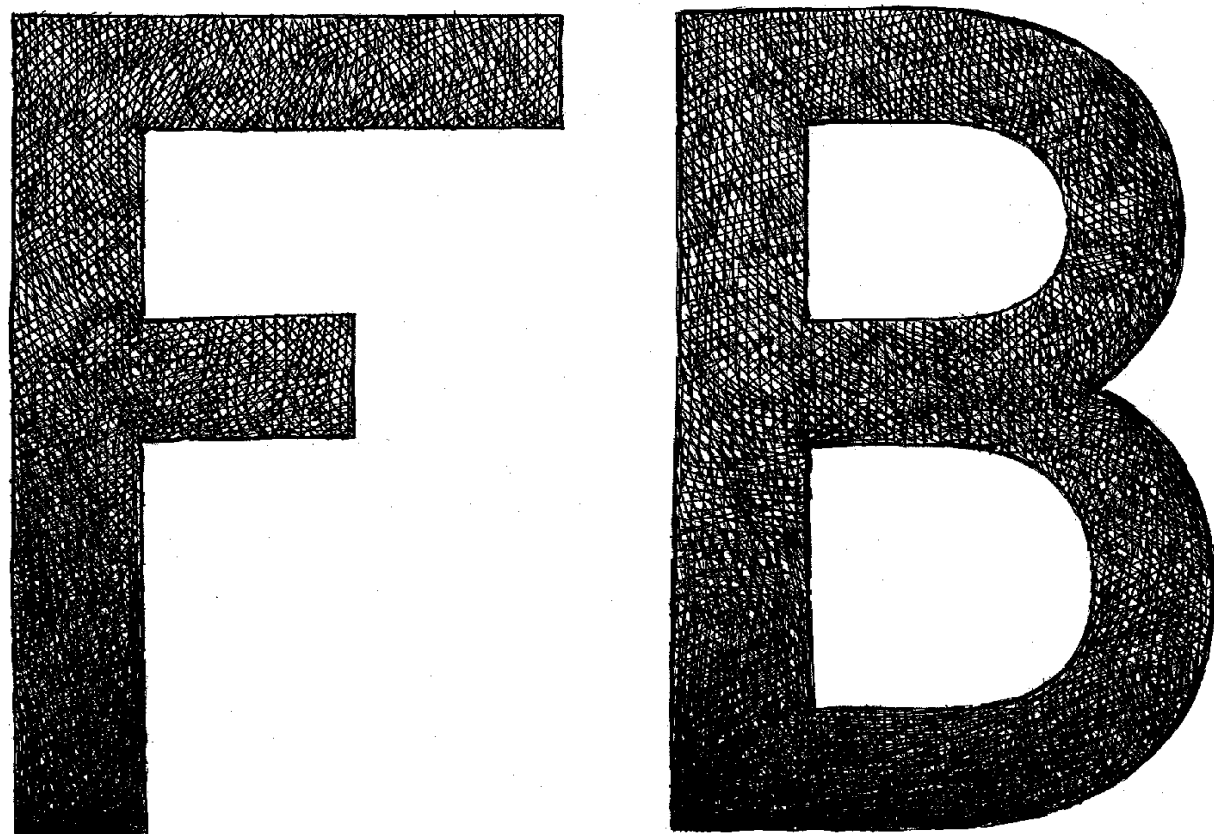
While it was made clear...that a tax increase large enough to catch the public schools up with the budget ground that they lost to inflation the past seven years was not in the cards, it is also apparent that the discussion on school finance moved off dead center this week and began to edge forward.

Hope remains alive.

### Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten if possible, and should include a telephone number and, most importantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: <daily@nwkansas.com>.

APRIL 2001 THE STATE



## Room furnishings may not fit personality

Nationalgeographic.com is running a feature that allows you to choose Oval Office furnishings as if you were president. The menu is limited. You choose a book and a knick-knack for your desk, a former President's portrait for your wall, a pet and a menu item. The choices under each menu item are also very limited and most wouldn't be my first choices.

After you make your choices, the site generates a "column" from a fictitious Washington newspaper. The furnishings you chose supposedly indicate what kind of President you would be.

Since most of the choices, except the pet — a cat, of course — weren't mine, the "column" doesn't have much relevance to what kind of President I'd be, if I ever were foolish enough to have such desires.

Out of my limited choices for presidential portraits, I chose James Knox Polk, considered to be the greatest of all America's one-term presidents. He served between Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln, the only standout in a line of mediocre — or worse — Presidents.

While Polk wouldn't be my first choice, he is a good choice because he kept all his campaign promises, including limiting himself to one term. In that term, he annexed Texas, settled the Oregon controversy and gained the American Southwest, including Southwest Kansas, in the Mexican War. An ardent believer in Manifest Destiny, he was the first President to govern a country that stretched "from sea to shining sea."

My first choice for a presidential portrait in my office would be our first President, George Washington. He's my great-uncle, however many times back, so that has something to do with it. But the main reason is his sterling character and incredible devotion to republican principles. Washington would not have used the word "democracy." To people of his time and station, "democracy"



roxie  
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• star tracks

meant "mob rule." Washington abhorred mob rule, but he also abhorred monarchy and dictatorship. If he had not, the United States would be a completely different country than the one we now enjoy.

When Washington stepped down at the end of his second term, Britain's King George III was shocked. The king could not believe that someone could voluntarily give up power.

The king hadn't been paying attention to Washington's previous career. At the end of the Revolutionary War, Washington could easily have become a military dictator. Instead, he went home to Mount Vernon. If he had not, our executive branch would likely have been a led by a committee of at least three. Because the Framers of the Constitution knew Washington's, character and they knew he would be our first President, they let us have just one President. They knew that whatever precedents that Washington set would be good ones.

Second choice is much closer to us in time, too close to know for certain all of his historical impact — Ronald Reagan. After living through Watergate and Jimmy Carter, we needed someone like Reagan. My earliest memories of the news are all of national humiliations — race riots, riots against the Vietnam War, the carnage of that war, Watergate, then President Jimmy Carter's utter lack of leadership. It was almost embarrassing to be an American in those years, first watching our country being torn apart, then that we had passed our

peak as a country and there was no hope to get better.

Then Reagan came. No matter what you may think of his policies, and I liked them, he was a leader. He believed in America's promise and its future. He made us feel good about our country. We heard no more about this "national malaise" in which Carter believed. Reagan loosed the economy's chains, starting a major economic expansion. And we stood up to the Soviets and eventually won the Cold War. He said "America is back" and we were back, standing tall in the saddle instead of crouching down, ashamed of ourselves.

Third is Theodore Roosevelt. He, too, believed in America. But he also believed in the little guy. He broke up trusts that strangled the economy in favor of rich folks, letting smaller businesses get ahead. He believed in conservation, but he wasn't an environmentalist. Roosevelt believed in cutting waste and using natural resources for the benefit of humanity. He believed in preserving natural beauty, but he didn't believe in locking it away so no one could see and enjoy it. Roosevelt's administration built big dams in the West for irrigation, making settlement possible, but he also set aside the first national monument, Devil's Tower in Wyoming, and the first national wildlife refuge, Pelican Island, Fla.

Fourth is Harry S. Truman. I disagree with many of his domestic policies, but he had character. He was honest. He was gutsy enough to make some very tough decisions. He had enough imagination to approve the Marshall Plan to rescue Europe after World War II and enough modesty to let Gen. George Marshall, his Secretary of State, get all the credit.

Washington's and Truman's portraits actually are in my office, but I don't own the rest of them. Maybe someday I will. I just don't think I'll be displaying them in the Oval Office any time soon.

## Great times never last, but great companies do!

Business will be better or worse. — Calvin Coolidge

Robert Schuller wrote a great book titled, Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do! I'd recommend the book to any of you who are struggling with your life or business.

Schuller's main premise in this book is that bad things happen to good people and you should expect some tough times. More importantly you should know how to deal with tough times so that you get through your trials and difficulties with minimum damage.

I re-read portions of the book from time-to-time when I need a little mental toughening up. I was considering the title recently when it occurred to me that the opposite is also true in business. Great times never last, but great companies do. There is probably a good business book in that title, but for now I'll just use it for a column.

Before any of you accuse me of being a prophet or a pessimist, let me say that I'm not predicting a recession or even an economic slowdown. However, we've always had periods of decline alternating with growth. It's the nature of the business cycle to be up and down.

### Be prepared

One of the best ways to weather the storms of life is to be prepared for them. I don't expect my house to burn down, but I carry insurance. I don't expect to lose my job this week, but I have a back-up plan to go to if that happened. I don't plan to die soon, but I do own a burial plot.



don  
taylor

• minding your own  
business

One of the best ways to survive in business is to be prepared for difficult times. We cannot anticipate all of the bad things that can happen to us, but we can anticipate the most common problems.

Here are some tips for surviving a slow time. I hope you'll give some thought to incorporating them into your business plan.

### Surviving a slow down

Have a back up plan. Every business needs a plan "B." If what you're doing suddenly doesn't work anymore, what will you do? When I was young and immature I had no plan. I didn't even have a clue. My thoughts for success were focused on today.

Now I have contingency plans. I call them my "what if" plans. What if I lose my day job? What if my work slows down? What if my health fails? I ask tough questions and I look for feasible answers.

Think carefully. Think ahead. Then you'll be ready to act quickly when a crisis comes.

Have a cash reserve. Someone once said money is a good servant but a bad master. When tough times come, having cash will serve you well. However, if you're caught short life gets hard very

quickly.

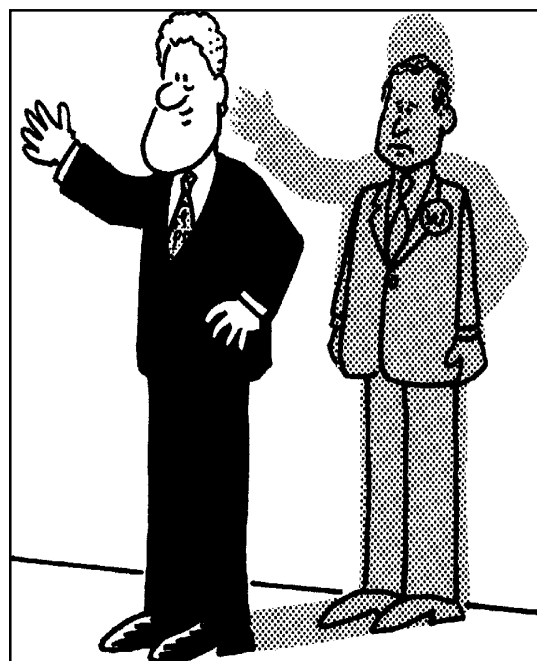
Personally, I like to have at least six months cash reserve. I want it working — earning interest — but available. For businesses, I'd recommend being able to cover at least three months of your operating expenses.

Tighten your belt before you're hungry. It is hard to convince most business owners that they should work hard to eliminate waste when sales and profits are good. But, it's the perfect time to do it.

I've seen at least a hundred folks spend themselves poor in good times only to regret it when a slowdown came. The late Sam Walton became the richest man in America in 1985. He built his empire by keeping his belt tight. Wal-Mart operated on only half the expenses consumed by other retail giants at the time.

Keep your belt tight in good times. Frugality is a great source of income.

### berry's world



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