

commentary

from other pens...

Budget debate belies fact spending growing

The Topeka Capital-Journal on substance abuse funding: If Kansas lawmakers are afraid to raise taxes to even maintain current funding of programs that help at-risk youth, then they are selling voters tragically short — and Kansans, especially those in need, are being poorly served indeed.

Legislators are scrambling to find a way to patch a \$206 million hole in the budget when they return for their wrap-up session...

Apparently, one of the options being looked at is not patching the entire hole: On the chopping block is about \$16 million the state sends to local units of government to spend on substance abuse prevention programs and the like.

Talk about shortsighted! Are lawmakers more concerned about risking their political hides, or with saving at-risk youth?...

It's not as if the state is going to lose money next year. Even with the \$185 million shortfall in expected revenues, the state will receive and spend more...next year than this year.

Lawmakers have a number of options to get to that point...

One thing that cannot be an option is to cut prevention programs that work. They save the state money in the long run. They elevate the quality of life in Kansas communities. And they no doubt are saving lives.

So the ship of state is taking on a little more water than expected. So what? We'll stay afloat. Surely it's not time to pull in the life preservers and ask our at-risk youth to sink or swim on their own.

The (Junction City) Daily Union on raising taxes:

Sometimes politicians need to be brave and risk making constituents unhappy. Now is one of those times.

For the past few years, Kansas legislators have been placating constituents by cutting taxes. Now the state finds itself short of funds to finish out this current fiscal year and expecting even more shortfall to cover the next fiscal year's proposed budget.

Speaker of the House Kent Glasscock, R-Manhattan, told us...the prevailing feeling in the House is to make cuts in programs rather than raise taxes. The Senate, too, he said, is unlikely to support any tax hikes.

Why is that, we ask.

The state is facing an estimated \$206 million shortfall in revenue projections for fiscal year 2002...

It seems legislators ought to get the message Kansas needs more money to operate programs and to meet past and promised commitments we all thought were worth funding.

But, it appears members of both houses have spent this week trying to move dollars from one place to another so they don't have to admit it's time to increase taxes...

Sometimes, shuffling money from one program to another isn't enough, and Governor Graves' insistence the best way to solve the state's current and projected financial problems is to raise taxes — not just property taxes — is right on target.

Now, if our legislators would bite the bullet, they could be make a hit for good state governance instead of striking out in favor of good feelings back home.

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Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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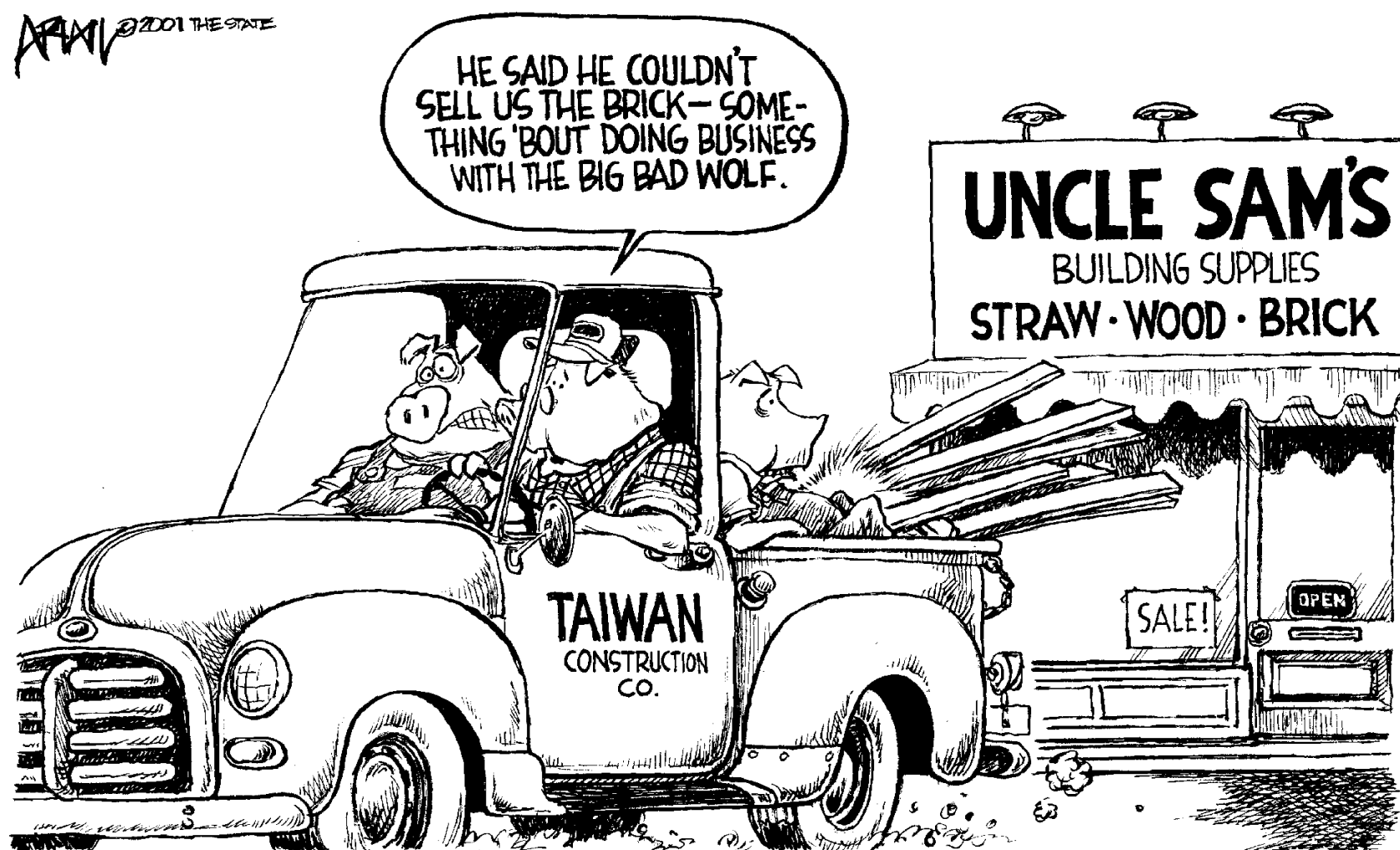
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Indian rocks for a satellite

Puff! There goes the farm markets to China since the People's Liberation Army of China grabbed the American EP-3E crew.

It's really hard to do business with someone who sues you, and it's harder yet to trade with someone who holds American fliers hostage. The passing of Permanent Normal Trading Relations was supposed bring a new day in Sino-American relations. Wonder what they will say now. Well, only a Chinese contortionist ever believed the free food pentagon (five biggest food processors) would let our grain surpluses go to China or anywhere else.

It easier for Westinghouse Electric, Loral and Hughes, to export satellites from our military surpluses (arsenal) than it is to get a license to export our farm surpluses.

Here in the good ol' U.S. of A, we pay a processor subsidy that they call farm subsidies. We would rather give food away than sell it. Then pay the maritime service \$1.14 a bushel to ship it.

You would think the Department of Agriculture-food-processor-complex was more powerful than the military-industrial-complex. However, even the village Idiot knows the United States has been snake bitten by this kiss-them-to-death foreign policy with China.

How did this happen? It happened a little bit at a time. Some might even say Richard Nixon did



wayne gattshall

• wayne's world

it when he went to China. Since then, every American president has placed a high priority on trade with China. The problem is this Chinese dog is using the United States for its tree. Just last year, shiploads of Chinese military, including senior Chinese military officials, were shown sensitive data on how the U.S. military trains its forces.

There is a certain historical déjà vu (we have seen it all before). This U.S. policy has had more twists and turns than a deposed Russian Duke.

Remember how the war paint came out when Yah Lin (Charlie Trie) moved from a coffee shop to the Commerce Department? You know the Commerce Department issues export licenses. So America has its oriental mind, too. It is not who you are but who you know, that counts.

Well, it was the white flag. China is not a third-world nation, and they have delusions of grandeur as a world power. If you think this is about making the Taiwan Straits a private lake, think again. There are sensitive CIA reports that show the Peoples Lib-

eration Army of China is in Mexico. It already controls both ends of the Panama Canal, you know.

Furthermore, they have more money than a drunken sailor when it comes to buying new generation aircraft from Russia. Even more so, Chinese agents do less time in the slammer than cop killers. So who cares if we want our plane back! Remember North and South Korea are talking. They don't think like Americans. We like to cut our deals quick, take our losses and try again. But the inscrutable Orientals break out in a toothy smile and say, are you in a hurry?

But what do they do? They issue bellicose anti-American rhetoric to impress their Asian neighbors. They just talk, talk, talk. But why not?

Who is afraid of a paper tiger? Just shoot down another American plane like the Peruvian military did.

Every great nation falls from within. These nuclear corporations say money is money, and we would not want to lose our markets. So it is true the people pay all the taxes while U.S. consortiums make all the money.

Does it make sense for the military to buy black berets made in China? What is next nuclear submarines? Wonder what would happen if they had to pay a value added tax on their \$1 coffee mugs?

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Bush spends first 100 days redefining his party

WASHINGTON — Christine Todd Whitman faces a brutal challenge heading George W. Bush's Environmental Protection Agency.

It's bigger than arsenic or Kyoto or even the environmental issue.

The two-term New Jersey governor's problem is that she comes from a brand of Republicanism this president wants to disown.

I'm talking about that enduring GOP moderate seen most often in the Northeast, Northern California and the better-off suburbs coast-to-coast. I'm talking about the Republican party of George W. Bush's father.

For 100 days, this 43rd president has done everything he can to disassociate himself from the 41st.

He began by embracing a Bible Belt hero, John Ashcroft, to run his Justice Department. He then played to ardent right-to-lifers with an inaugural ban on U.S. dollars to aid groups that provide abortion counseling. Since then he has crusaded for a \$1.6 trillion tax cut with near-religious zeal and presented himself as something far short of Rachel Carson on environmental issues.

In each instance, George W. Bush has distanced his young presidency from that of his father's. Senior Bush pegged himself as "kinder, gentler" than the Reaganism he replaced. No nasty budget cuts, no red-meat ideology.

George W. made it clear from the get-go that he's an unafraid conservative. He knew before naming Ashcroft that making him A.G. would trigger an all-out fight with the liberal opposition. The People for the American Way, Hollywood, the Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP would all be up in arms.

Young Bush did it anyway because he knew



chris matthews

• commentary

naming a hero of the Christian right to the Attorney General's office was precisely what his father would never have done.

This father-son seesaw can be seen on other playing fields:

Dad broke a promise with a painful tax hike. Son has bet the ranch on a big tax cut.

Dad trumpeted "a New World Order" after forging a global alliance against Iraq. Son is the most stay-at-home president in history.

The son has dumped his father's four-year game plan, not out of some Oedipal rage, but for the practical reason that it didn't work. Having won 54 percent of the popular vote in 1988, the father won just 38 percent in 1992. That kind of lesson is hard to forget.

The Bushes, both father and son, saw Dad's dazzling 91-percent approval rating from the Persian Gulf war evaporate two Novembers later. They learned that even an impressive military triumph abroad does not guard a commander-in-chief against an electoral trashing at home.

Consider how the old man would have handled the standoff over the American plane on Hainan Island. He would have conferred with fellow world leaders in London, Paris, Moscow and Tokyo. We'd have gotten leaked accounts of late-night meetings, of the ongoing vigil in the White House situation room. It would have been the stuff of

grand diplomacy, with the president as the nation's Chief Diplomat.

Of course, George W. played it just the opposite. He let others — Colin Powell, Condi Rice, Don Rumsfeld — share the spotlight. Foreign policy is, after all, the reason they're in office. He knows, because he learned from his father, that political bread is buttered on the other side. It's far better, he calculates, to save his face for that big tax-cut signing ceremony this August in the Rose Garden.

The two men also gleaned a cultural message from the wreckage of 1992: Don't forget the Republican base, especially in the conservative South. George W. never takes his eyes off it. Count the number of days he spends on his Texas ranch compared to the days he spends visiting New York or San Francisco between now and 2004.

This Bush knows that to win re-election he first and foremost needs to win the states he won last November. He needs to dance with the one that bring him, and that's not the Christine Todd Whitmans of this world. It's the guy from the Bible Belt who wants his tank full, his taxes low and his president down on the ranch.

Chris Matthews, chief of the San Francisco Examiner's Washington Bureau, is host of "Hardball" on CNBC and MSNBC cable channels. The 1999 edition of "Hardball" was published by Touchstone Books.

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