

commentary

from our viewpoint...

Shortfall gap puts state into budget cut frenzy

News that the state's income will be \$206 million short of projected spending next year has everyone at the Statehouse in a tither.

Legislators are trying to figure out how to raise taxes without actually raising taxes, and the education lobby continues to demand more, not less, state money. A conference committee, at last report, had thrown out everything done all year and was ready to start over, trying to find an agreeable way to close the gap.

At first, thoughts turned to smoke and mirrors. The governor thinks the state can raise another \$40 million by spending \$3 million on extra revenue agents. But you can only squeeze the turnip so much.

The slot machine lobby saw one last hope for its dead horse. Slots might bring the state \$45 million, supporters said.

Democrats immediately called for a tax increase, which they've been certain is needed all along. One proposal is to hike the state inheritance tax just as the federal government is about to do away with the national tax it is based on. That makes sense.

Education plans put forth by the governor and the Senate leadership both proposed tax increase, sales, income, sin and other, depending on who you were talking to. The Senate even proposed an innovative tax on soda pop, though it was never clear why. Maybe soda pop is a sin now.

In the meantime, the House passed a tax cut plan, trimming the rate for the statewide property tax levy used to help pay for schools. That apparently was meant as a message to the tax-loving Senate, not a serious tax cut.

In a state where the Legislature cut taxes four years in a row and skated the fifth, the "I" word has received more work than it has in a decade. State finances are in a bind, the Cassandras cry. A crisis looms. Cuts must be made.

The truth is a little different. Even with the "shortfall" at \$206 million, as they call it, state spending is liable to rise about 1 percent, with total spending a record nearly \$4.7 billion in the general fund. That's nearly double the budget of just 10 years ago.

Does the state have to spend that much?

Most of it goes for schools, highways, higher education and social services. Highways operate under a transportation plan approved last year, though collections for the plan are now projected to run short over its 10-year life. Schools are clamoring for more, and receiving a great deal of attention. Higher education has been told to tighten its belt. Even promised raises for professors may be canceled.

Faced with the shortfall, liberal commentators, Senate leaders, Democrats and even the governor are screaming for a tax increase so the Legislature can boost spending. Almost no one is calling for the state to do what any family or business would do, facing similar circumstances:

Tighten the ol' pursestrings, reduce spending and weather the storm. If the average family could raise taxes on someone else and keep on living high, we might try it. The state is tempted to raise taxes now because it can.

But the history of Kansas politics is littered with the bodies of tax-raisers. Better, we think, to hold the line.

Can't the state tighten its belt the way the rest of us have to? — Steve Haynes

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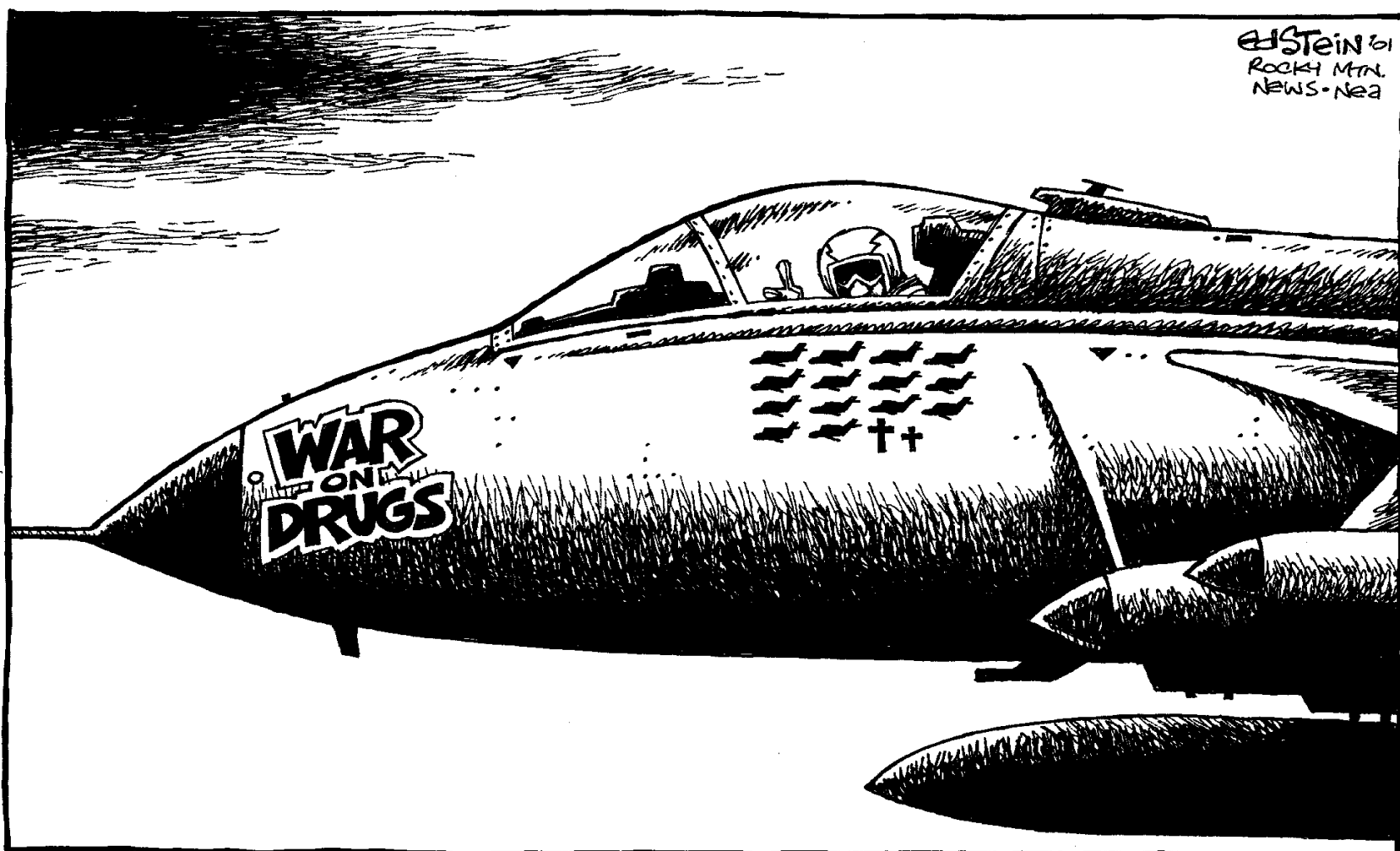
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'Fat-free' is good, but in moderation

I was reminded, this last week, of a young man that used to come into one of my clinics with his mom. He immediately became one of my most unforgettable characters.

This little guy, was just chucked full of spice and vinegar. He was about five years old and brought joy and laughter into my life each week.

One day he came bouncing in with a bag of candy. He, unselfishly, began to go through it to share with me. As he was sorting through his bag of delights, he took out several pieces in his hand. Looking them over, he began handing various pieces to me. Remarking, with each piece, "this one is fat-free." He did this with 3 or 4 pieces, then popped one in his mouth, saying, "this one is fat-possessed."

This phrase became very popular among the members of Expectations. We definitely wanted to stay away from the "fat-possessed" foods. However, we have very little problem finding products that say "fat-free." This is great! The only aspect of this that concerns me is the amount we will eat.

In my experience, working with people, so many will take the "fat-free" on the label, as a license to eat the whole thing. This is the very reason we came up with our motto, "if two will do, don't eat four."

We must continually, keep in mind we have to use moderation. It doesn't matter whether we are eating "fat-free" or "fat-possessed." The ONLY foods I don't use my motto on, are fruits and vegetables. I do not limit the quantity of those at all.



sally mosier

• freedom in eating

Miss Piggy says, "I never eat more than I can lift." That is why Miss Piggy is Miss Piggy. She has never determined to adopt the attitude of freedom concerning the quantity of food she ate. She has never determined that "if two will do don't eat four."

We are so fortunate to have the variety of foods that are available to us. There are very few things they haven't come up with a fat-free version of. However, the most crucial aspect of watching the size of portions, has been neglected.

I have adopted a new facet to my personal freedom. I have determined to find a blessing in every situation. I am overjoyed to tell you it has been a very gratifying task to find many blessings in this way of eating. I feel so very blessed to be eating A FEW good tasting potato chips with my sandwich. I feel so blessed to be able to have A SMALL piece of low-fat cheesecake. I feel so blessed to go into my favorite ice-cream place and have a low-fat yogurt shake or cone.

I ask skeptical people, all the time, "what is your favorite food?" Then, I take satisfaction in opening my recipe book and showing them a low-fat

version. This last week, I was completely stumped when the reply was, "fat." That was it...just, fat. I couldn't find an adequate recipe for "fat."

If you are on the lookout for a good recipe that isn't "fat-possessed," one of my readers sent me this cauliflower recipe. Mom fixed it for us last week and boy, was it good! I may not be a good judge, because, I have never found a recipe for cauliflower that I didn't like.

Completely Cauliflower

2 lbs. Cauliflower; 1/3 cup no-fat milk; 4 T no-fat oleo; 2 t mustard; Salt and pepper; 1/8 t nutmeg; and 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cut the cauliflower into florets and cook in boiling salted water for 10 to 12 min. until they are soft. Drain and puree with milk oleo and mustard. Season; place in baking dish and cover with cheese. Bake 30 min. in preheated 350-degree oven or until golden brown.

I want to say a special thanks to Mathew Cooper for adding to my life, to Expectations and to my column. I also want to say a special thanks for all the responses I am getting from the male readers of "Freedom in Eating". We can all be encouraged this way of eating is enjoyed by the men in our lives.

We are still getting many requests for our "Freedom Package" which consists of our recipe book and our complete weight loss plan for only \$20.00. Just send your check to 400 10th. St., Canyon, TX 79015. And yours will be on the way to you. E-mail me at gsally@netwest.com

Looking old can help you

I have a 17-year-old car. The paint has faded, and the chrome is flaking, and there's rust all over it. Some guys would get all the body work done and a fresh coat of paint. Maybe a ring and valve job. But that's not my way.

No matter how much you repair or replace, the sad truth is that all of the parts of that automobile are old and tired. And since nobody is crazy enough to replace all of the parts, more sooner than later, one of them is going to break down. To me, the only way to keep it on the road is to remember the car's failing health and treat it with tenderness and extreme respect.

If I get a new paint job, I'll forget it's an old car. Then, when it doesn't start or something doesn't work, I'll be disappointed. I like it better now. It looks like an old pile of junk, and when it gets me where I want to go, I consider it a miracle. It's called "contentment through lower expectation." It's also why I don't dye my hair.

THE CUT MAN

I hate to admit it, but I like watching boxing. Not in person, but on television. And not when it's anyone I know or ever dated. I think what appeals to me is the fundamental struggle against an obvious and worthy opponent and the ultimate personal discovery about a man and his own personal courage. For me it's a microcosm of life.

Now every boxer has three guys in his corner. And the most important of these is what they call a "cut man." He's the guy who patches you up between rounds so you can go back out and continue



red green

• north of forty

the fight. I think in life we all need a good cut man. Somebody who can make us smile or cheer us up or even just pay for the beer.

Some of us don't have a knockout punch or blinding speed and we'll never win any titles, but if we have a good cut man, we can at least make it to the last round, and that's all that really matters. You can't win at life anyway. The ending is fixed.

COMMUNICATION REQUIRES INTERPRETATION

Communication is a very important part of everyone's life. But to be able to understand people, you must realize that they often say the exact opposite of what they mean. For example:

- "It's not you, it's me."
- "Have you lost weight?"
- "If I had to lose to somebody, I'm glad it was you."
- "I can't eat all this."
- "Head office has ordered me to let you go."
- "You look younger every year."
- "As your former employer, I'm so pleased you've become so successful."
- "I'm from the tax department and I'm here to help you."

AGGRESSION DEPRESSION

For anybody who's played contact sports or sold timeshares, you've been told many times that aggression is a good thing. If you want something, you have to go after it. Nobody's going to hand you success; you've got to butt into line, reach out and grab it.

They call it the "killer instinct," and a lot of us encourage it in our kids and our athletes and each other. And then we hear on the news about fights in the stands and road rage and belligerent airline passengers.

Maybe we need to temper this whole aggression thing. We're ending up with a lot of really crabby people doing well. That's not a good trend. Society gets a little scary when every time people see a yellow light, they step on the gas instead of the brakes.

Quote of the Day: "Don't squat with your spurs on." — Red Green

Red Green is the star of "The Red Green Show," a television series seen in the U.S. on PBS and in Canada on the CBC Network, and the author of "The Red Green Book" and "Red Green Talks Cars: A Love Story."

berry's world

