

commentary

from other pens...

Children shouldn't be casualties of budget

The Manhattan Mercury on state budget:

A couple of developments last week are cause for encouragement that public school students in Kansas won't be casualties of the state's budget crisis and that common sense hasn't been abandoned.

First came House Speaker Kent Glasscock's stated intent to hold Kansas school children harmless in budget deliberations. ...

... No less important was a proposal Friday from Gov. Bill Graves to address the shortfall. As he had indicated he would, the governor proposed both major tax increases and significant spending cuts, a combination that, unfortunately, is necessary.

The \$364 million in proposed tax increases includes raising the state sales tax from 4.9 percent to 5.2 percent and increasing income taxes by 5 percent. ... Cognizant of the burden higher taxes would present to Kansans, the governor wisely is proposing that they expire after three years.

The \$366 million in proposed spending cuts would, among other reductions, scale back social services, close five minimum security prisons and shorten the duration of the Legislature by 10 days.

The governor's outline is, of course, not the final word. Nor, given the reductions it would mean for higher education and many other areas, is it ideal.

But it does provide a new framework for a Legislature still coming to grips with the scope of the shortfall and with the once-unthinkable tax increases and spending cuts that will be necessary to ensure a stable future for Kansas.

The Garden City Telegram on Sunday sales:

Kansas lawmakers should take their head out of the sand. The world is progressing, apparently much to their dismay.

Once again the Kansas House has defeated an effort to allow retail sales of beer, wine and liquor on Sundays...

Kansas continues to be one of the few holdouts to old-time thinking on the issue, to the detriment of the citizens of the state and their ability to manage their own lives.

One lawmaker offered the absurd notion that Sunday sales would lead to more drunken driving deaths and alcoholism...

There are religious underpinnings to the law preventing Sunday sales and civil libertarians could make a case that it violates the separation of church and state.

Kansas has always had fairly arcane liquor laws, a product of the puritan past and ultraconservative present ...

Nothing prevents someone of legal age from patronizing any of the local restaurants that serve alcohol on Sunday, imbibe beyond reason and attempt to drive home. ...

Sunday sales won't cause any fewer people to attend church and doesn't mean those who want to buy a six-pack on a Sunday are deviants or decadent or any such nonsense.

There really is no logical justification for Kansas lawmakers to prohibit Sunday sales of beer, wine and liquor, so you've got to wonder why they cling to unnecessary legislation.

where to write

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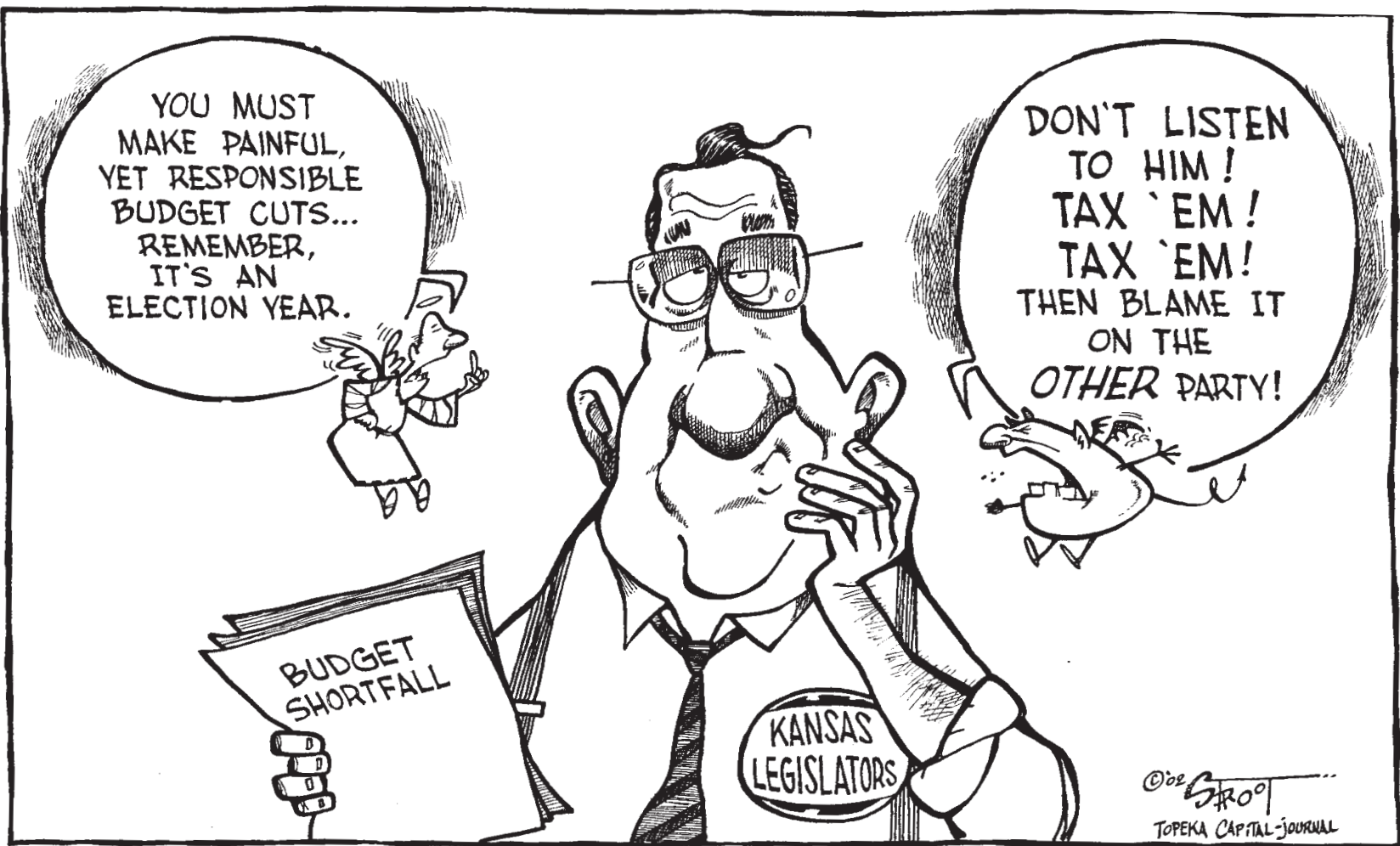
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I have decided I would like to visit Chile

I want to go to Chile.

My husband merely raises his eyebrows and gives me a condescending smile.

I know I've been brainwashed, but so what?

This fixation with Chile — the country, not the food — started on Friday when I got the chance to visit the Chilean embassy in Washington.

Steve and I were in town for a National Newspaper meeting, and as part of the sessions we were offered a chance to visit an embassy, either Chile, Norway or Austria. Steve chose none of the above. He wanted to try a new train, Amtrak's high-speed Acela, which goes up to 150 mph.

I said, since I'd never been to an embassy before, I didn't care. My lottery number came up Chile.

I thought about Chile and realized that it is one of three countries I can recognize on an outline map of South America. I can point out Brazil, Argentina and Chile. Brazil because it's sooooo big. Argentina because we had an Argentinean foreign-exchange student for a semester and Chile because I remembered it was long and on the Pacific coast. Chile is *long*. The ambassador told us that it had



cynthia haynes

• open season

3,000 miles of coastline but is only 100 miles wide. It is like a ribbon along the side of the continent.

The country stretches from the Atacama Desert in the north to Terra del Fuego in the south.

The desert is so dry it has almost no plant life, but there are huge deposits of copper, Chile's No. 1 export. The desert gives way to the central valley, where four-fifths of the population lives.

The valley contains most of the country's agriculture, including a lot of fruit and vegetable farming.

To the south, the land is again almost uninhabited but contains lots of inlets and bays where salmon fishing and salmon raising have become a major industry.

To the far south, Chile owns about half of Terra

del Fuego, the desolate island between the Cape Horn and the Straits of Magellan, the only path between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans until the opening of the Panama Canal.

Surprisingly, Chile owns Easter Island, the home of those enormous stone heads, in Polynesia.

How long is Chile? If the country were turned upside down and laid along the western coast of North America it would extend from the middle of Alaska to the northern part of Mexico. The south of Chile has an Alaskan climate and the north a Mexican climate.

Of course, the ambassador made the place sound like paradise, but I was impressed that they have fly fishing, rafting, surfing, beaches, geysers, volcanoes and ice fields. Trapped between the Andes mountains and the ocean, the country has a little of everything.

I was impressed.

Of course, the ambassador glossed over the poverty, political problems and earthquakes, but hey, no place is perfect.

When's the next jet to the Pacific side of South America?

True sentence for the crime



joan ryan

• commentary

He steels himself for the next surgery and the next and the next, as doctors try to reconstruct some semblance of who he was.

"I can tell by his voice when he wakes up if it's going to be a rough morning," Arnett said over breakfast at the Buttercup in Oakland. On rough days, Shawn refuses to go to therapy or see another doctor. Sometimes, he shuts himself in the bathroom and howls.

"His personality is like a roller-coaster," Arnett said. She took over as Shawn's legal guardian soon after the attack when her sister became overwhelmed with the medical decisions. She was caring for an 8-year-old, mentally handicapped nephew when she took Shawn in last September, after his three months at Children's Hospital.

Her living room now houses a huge filing cabinet to keep track of Shawn's doctors (20 so far), education, prescriptions, medical supplies, trust fund, social-services personnel, Social Security, Medi-Cal, Catholic Charities and lawyers. People look at Arnett's Day Runner date book covered with appointments for Shawn, and they marvel at her devotion. But she says most of the time she feels inadequate, lost and exhausted.

"If I had to do it again, I wouldn't be available," she admitted. "I'm tired. Just tired. I do a lot of cry-

ing and a lot of praying. The crying relieves the pressure, so when I walk out of the house it's (with) a smile and my head up."

Shawn's mother helps out, staying with Shawn when Arnett has to be out and taking Shawn on Saturdays so he can play with his brothers and sisters. "I never would have thought this would have affected the family in the way it has. We don't know what to expect from day to day," said Arnett.

Sometimes Shawn's stepfather or a neighbor takes him fishing, though lately Shawn has declined the invitations. "The doctor says we need to get out for more activities, but Shawn never wants to leave the car," said Arnett.

I called Arnett the morning after our breakfast. She sounded more drained than the day before. "I have four appointments today," she said. "If it were up to me, sweetheart, I'd stay in my pajamas. People want to tell me I'm a hero. I'm no hero. Shawn's the hero."

As Diane Whipple's family and friends await a verdict this week in the sensational dog-mauling trial in Los Angeles, Shawn's family and friends wait for neither resolution nor justice. No one will serve time for the grisly attack on an 11-year-old boy trying out his new bike. Punishment for the crime falls only on Shawn and his family, and, as they now have come to understand, it's a life sentence.

Joan Ryan is a columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Send comments to her e-mail at joanryan@sfgate.com.

berry's world



Storm spotter training next week

Dear Editor,

The Storm season is headed our way, hard to believe that when they are predicting snow for us this weekend, but the calendar tells us it is time to prepare. The Sherman County Communications and Emergency Management department is hosting the annual Storm Spotters training on Thursday, April 4, 2002.

The National Weather Service of Goodland, will be presenting this training and it is free to all who wish to participate. We will hold the training at the Kansas National Guard Armory, starting at 7 p.m. It is imperative to have well trained eyes watching the skies especially for the City of Goodland, as the radar can not do everything to protect us.

If you have not had the training in the last 3 years, you must attend to have your certification with the weather service updated. We need spotters in the South Western and South Eastern sections of Sherman County. If you know someone who lives in these areas, pick up the phone and invite them to attend the training with you.

As always, it is important to remind all of the citizens of this county, your personal protection is



from our readers

• to the editor

your responsibility. Take the time to help protect yourself, your family and friends. Attend this free weather spotters training, 7 p.m., Thursday, April 4, at the Kansas National Guard Armory.

Mary Messamore
Sherman County Communications and Emergency Management

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and 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.