

commentary

from other pens...

State budget problem makes Dems angry

The Salina Journal on the current legislative session:
 Democrats in the Kansas Legislature don't like the way this year's game is going, so they are threatening to take their ball and go home. That is the essence of their threat to end the Legislative session early and force Gov. Bill Graves to call lawmakers in for a special session. ... But in this case Democrats are right to be miffed, even if their tactics leave something to be desired.

... Consider the matter of redistricting, where Democrats were cut out in the beginning and had to force their way into the process.

Of greater import is the lack of movement on budget matters, where the state is facing the greatest financial crisis in memory. There is a \$700 million gap between expected revenue and expenses, yet Republicans ... keep delaying the inevitable decision to raise taxes. Instead they float preposterous plans to slash state spending, lower the state's reserve funds and add in federal dollars that are not guaranteed.

That approach shows abominable shortsightedness. Gov. Graves has stepped forward with a budget plan that covers half the financial shortfall with spending cuts and the other half with tax increases. It is the bravest and most reasonable proposition yet offered in this Legislature, yet it is getting scant attention from Republicans.

Instead they keep tinkering with impractical tax cuts and make-believe federal funds.

It's no wonder Democrats want to attract attention to the foot dragging.

We doubt the Democrats will get much traction with the threat. But we applaud their effort.

The Parsons Sun on an imminent nursing shortage in Kansas:
 There are hundreds of absolutely rock-solid reasons state legislators must raise taxes to get through the current budget crisis. In spite of that, many continue to adamantly drag their heels in refusal.

Another excellent example of a catastrophe waiting to happen was illuminated this week: Higher education funding will further reduce the number of nurses in Kansas as classes are shrunk and financial assistance dwindles.

Who cares? It had better be every Kansan in the state.

There is already a 12 percent vacancy in nursing jobs, and even at current funding levels, the schools can't turn out enough nurses to fill that need. Further cuts in education will result in an even bigger gap between what is needed and what is available.

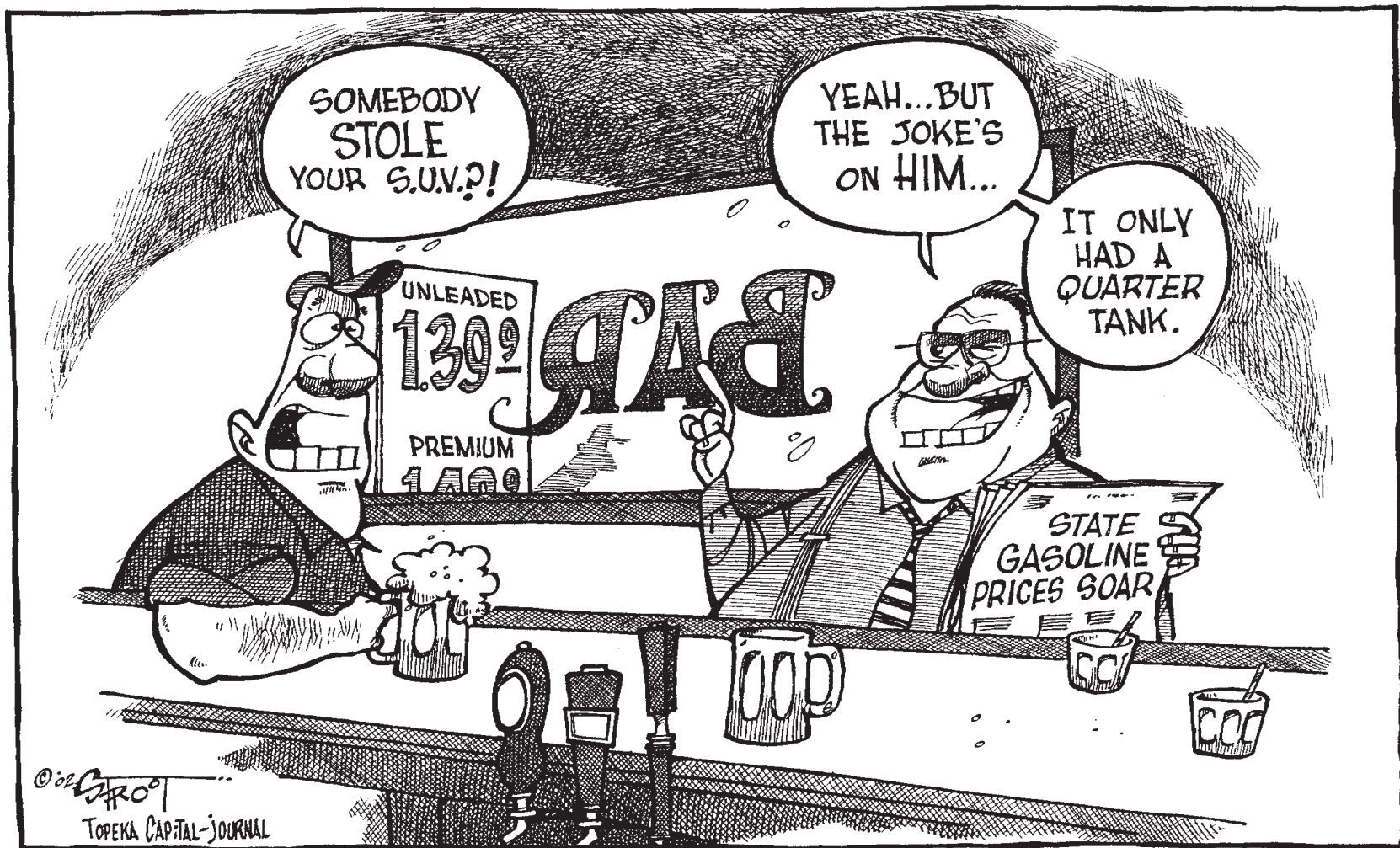
For those who think that's not a problem, take a moment to think of the consequences. Today's population of nearly 400,000 people age 65 and over is expected to grow to more than 600,000 in the next 20 years, which will proportionately drive up the current number of roughly 170,000 people age 72 and older.

As the demands for health care increase, who will take care of them? ... A study by the Kansas Department of Human Resources found that by 2006 the state will need 35 percent more registered nurses and 29 percent more licensed practical nurses — this while enrollment is already dropping.

The current budget crisis isn't about just making ends meet today. ... The nursing shortage is very real. Withholding education dollars today will have the most dire consequences for decades to come.

where to write

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State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 128-S, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7399



Time for desserts

With the passing of Lent and the call to abstain, I thought recipes for desserts would be fun. The following dessert recipes are from the book Quick Desserts by Cyndi Duncan & Georgie Patrick.

Almond Cream

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 package unflavored gelatin
- 1/2 cup hot water
- 1 cup half and half, light cream or milk
- 1/2 cup light sour cream
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Sliced strawberries, apricots, bananas, oranges, kiwis, peaches, or nectarines
- Thin, crisp ginger, shortbread or butter cookies

Spray gelatin mold; wipe excess of with paper towel. In small pan, blend sugar and gelatin. Add water and mix well. Let stand five minutes. Bring to full rolling boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add half and half. In large bowl, mix sour cream with almond extract and lemon juice.

Gradually add sugar mixture beating until smooth. Pour into mold and chill until firm. To serve, dip mold in hot water briefly, until edges of cream begin to liquefy. Dry outside of mold. Invert onto serving dish. Surround with strawberries or other fruit. To eat, spoon cream onto cookie and top with slice of fruit. Serves 6-8.

Spread generously between two slices of pound cake, lady finger or banana bread. Place "sandwich" in bowl, and top with fruit (like strawberry shortcake with a twist).

Peach Custard Dessert

- 1 1/2 cups flour



pat schiefen

• postscript

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- 1 30-ounce can sliced peaches in light syrup, drained, reserving syrup
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup peach syrup
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 cup evaporated milk

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Spray 8 or 9-inch baking dish. In large bowl, combine flour, salt and butter. Mix with pastry blender or fork until mixture becomes coarse. Press firmly on bottom and halfway up sides of baking dish. Arrange peach slices on crust. Sprinkle sugar and cinnamon on top. Bake 20 minutes. In medium bowl, whisk together syrup, egg and milk. Pour over peaches. Bake 30 minutes. Center will become firm on standing. Serve hot or cold. Serves 9.

If using fresh peaches, increase sugar to 3/4 cup and substitute apple juice for peach syrup.

German Chocolate Pie

- 1/2 bar German sweet chocolate
- 1/2 cup margarine or butter
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar

- 2 heaping tablespoons flour
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup whipped cream or 2 cups frozen whipped topping, thawed

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 9-inch pie pan. In small bowl, microwave chocolate and margarine 15 seconds on high. Stir and repeat at 5 second intervals until mixture is smooth. In small bowl, combine eggs, sugar and flour. Beat at high speed 3 minutes. Add chocolate mixture and beat 1 minute. Stir in vanilla and nuts. Pour into pie plate. Bake 25-30 minutes. Cool and refrigerate. To serve, top with whipped cream and grated chocolate. Serves 8.

Decorated Grape Clusters

- 2 pounds red and green grapes
- 1 pound white chocolate, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups honey-roasted cashews, finely chopped
- Grape leaves for garnish

Rinse grapes under cold water and drain well. Cut grapes into clusters of 3 with kitchen shears. Place on paper towels in single layer. Allow to dry completely. Microwave chocolate 10 seconds. Stir and repeat at 10 second intervals until chocolate is melted. Put cashews in shallow pie pan. Dip grape clusters, one at a time, into melted chocolate and let excess drain back into pan. Gently roll grapes in cashews allowing some of the chocolate to show. Place grapes, stem side up, on waxed paper. Refrigerate no more than 4 hours. Makes 36.

You also can use strawberries. It's a change from the traditional dark chocolate dip.

Check out those scholarship services carefully

Dear Attorney General Stovall:

I recently received a postcard in the mail from a scholarship-finding service saying my daughter could be eligible for thousands of dollars of scholarship money. The postcard said that tens of thousands of scholarship dollars go unclaimed each year simply because students do not know where and how to apply. Although my daughter is ineligible to receive scholarship funds based upon financial need, the high cost of education led me to consider this scholarship-finding service.

I called the service, and the woman I spoke to said that for only \$179 she would guarantee my daughter a large list of available scholarships, tailored to her needs, for which my daughter would only need to write letters of application. I was a little leery at first, but then the representative told me that my daughter would receive at least \$1,000 in scholarship funds — or I could get my \$179 back.

After a little hesitation, I decided I couldn't really lose as long as the company was offering a money-back guarantee, so I agreed to purchase the service. I gave the salesperson my credit card number and was told that I'd receive my packet within a few weeks. The packet I received, though, was nothing like what was promised. The majority of scholarships listed did not apply to my daughter — they were either based upon financial need, race, military experience, or were for first-year students (my daughter is a sophomore). I contacted the company and asked for my money back, but I was told my daughter needed to apply to and be denied by each and every source on the voluminous list before I could get a refund. Attorney General Stov-



carla j. stovall

• consumer corner

all, is there anything I can do to get my money back from this foolish "investment" that I made?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

My Consumer Protection division looked into your complaint and found that the actions of this scholarship service were in violation of several sections of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act (KCPA) in its transactions with you and other Kansas consumers. First, the company's solicitation implied that consumers would receive college scholarships, grants, and/or loans; however, it did not disclose that consumers would receive only a list of possible sources of scholarships — some with conditions consumers did not meet.

Additionally, this scholarship service supplier is considered a telemarketer because it sent written materials about its service to you in the mail without discussing all material terms of the offer and requested that you contact the company to initiate the transaction. Under the KCPA telemarketing laws, such a supplier is required to obtain a signed confirmation from consumers before receiving payment for any goods or services purchased over the telephone. This scholarship company did not obtain this signed confirmation before receiving payment.

Finally, the KCPA requires Credit Service Organizations to register with the Kansas Consumer Credit Commissioner. A Credit Service Organization is any person or business that represents that it will assist a consumer in, among other things, obtaining an extension of credit for them. The scholarships and educational funding this scholarship service advertised constituted an extension of credit; however, this company did not register or provide file proof of a surety bond or account with the Kansas Consumer Credit Commissioner.

My office was able to obtain a refund of your \$179 after contacting the company. It is important to remember that no one can truly guarantee scholarships other than the entity which is actually furnishing the scholarship. Many companies which promise scholarship money deliver only lists of sources with this same "application-and-denial" requirement for refunds, or provide only sources of other financial assistance, such as student loans, which must be repaid. Usually, the same information is available at no charge from your student's financial aid or counseling office.

Attorney General Carla J. Stovall offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints. For information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310. Leave your name, number and subject and your call will be returned promptly.

Alco employees cared; tried to keep store open

To The Editor:

I would like to clarify two statements from the ALCO article in Tuesday's (April 2nd) *Goodland Daily News*, that seem to be taken out of context by some people in Goodland.

First, the Alco #21 store's closing was not a "nice shock." It was a devastating shock to all of the current employees. After working at Alco's Goodland store for nearly 25 years, I was really upset at the news I received Thursday evening (March 28th). (I was in Denver and returned to read of the store closing in the *Goodland Daily News*.)

Second, Alco's Goodland store has had a store shrinkage problem for a couple years. Store shrinkage occurs when a store inventory is taken and



from our readers

• to the editor

there is merchandise missing from the store that was not sold through the store's cash register. This shrinkage can happen from shoplifting, employee theft, or paperwork problems. I did not intend to imply the current Alco employees are thieves. In reality the Goodland Alco employees are some of the best people I have ever worked with. We, as employees, cared about our store and did everything

in our power to keep the store open.

Richard Schwasinger
 Goodland

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