

commentary

from other pens...

Sinking feeling comes from budget disaster

The Topeka Capital Journal on the Legislature:
What if the captain of the Titanic had been able to just graze the iceberg and keep the ship afloat? He would have saved a lot of lives. But would he have been hailed as a hero? No, you can bet he would have been in trouble for damaging the ship...

That's the kind of sinking feeling one has in the wake of the 2002 Legislature: the relief that it didn't end in a disaster, but a lingering ire over how close it came and the damage that was caused.

Something after 3 a.m. Friday...lawmakers finally passed a bill that keeps the state afloat. But lawmakers, especially in the House, won't be treated as conquering heroes...

For months, House members ignored or flat-out denied the inevitable: that some modest tax increases would have to be forthcoming...

It was odd, and more than a little hypocritical, for House members to approve a \$4.4 billion budget, then turn around and repeatedly vote against the resources necessary to fund it...

The democratic process is messy and inefficient at its best. But this was pathetic.

There is plenty of blame to go around. Republicans hold clear majorities in each chamber, yet divisions between moderate and conservative Republicans couldn't be bridged...

Still, House Democrats might just as well have been a no-show this year...

So, yes, with the night-crawler passage of a \$255.7 million tax bill, lawmakers averted the disastrous consequences...

But somehow it doesn't feel like something to celebrate.

The Garden City Telegram on college tuition:

College-bound graduates toasting each other this weekend probably aren't paying too much attention to activity in Topeka, but they'll find out the painful truth soon enough.

Officials at the state's six universities outlined proposals last week that would increase tuition by as much as 25.2 percent beginning this fall.

The proposals illuminate the bleak reality of funding higher education...

Public policy of this and every other state should embrace crafting a higher-education plan that's affordable to the masses. Making post-secondary education affordable is the public's obligation.

The paradox facing the universities is figuring out a way to limit spikes in tuition while continuing to advance curriculums and attract first-rate professors to campus in a highly-competitive market.

Pricing education out of market for the masses would have a detrimental effect on a school's ability to achieve the latter. Schools are seeking solutions. At KU, for example, the school will set aside \$2.2 million in tuition grants for eligible students next fall, offsetting for some the 25 percent increase in tuition...

Similar programs should be created at the other public institutions because the public has a significant stake in assuring vitality in our universities.

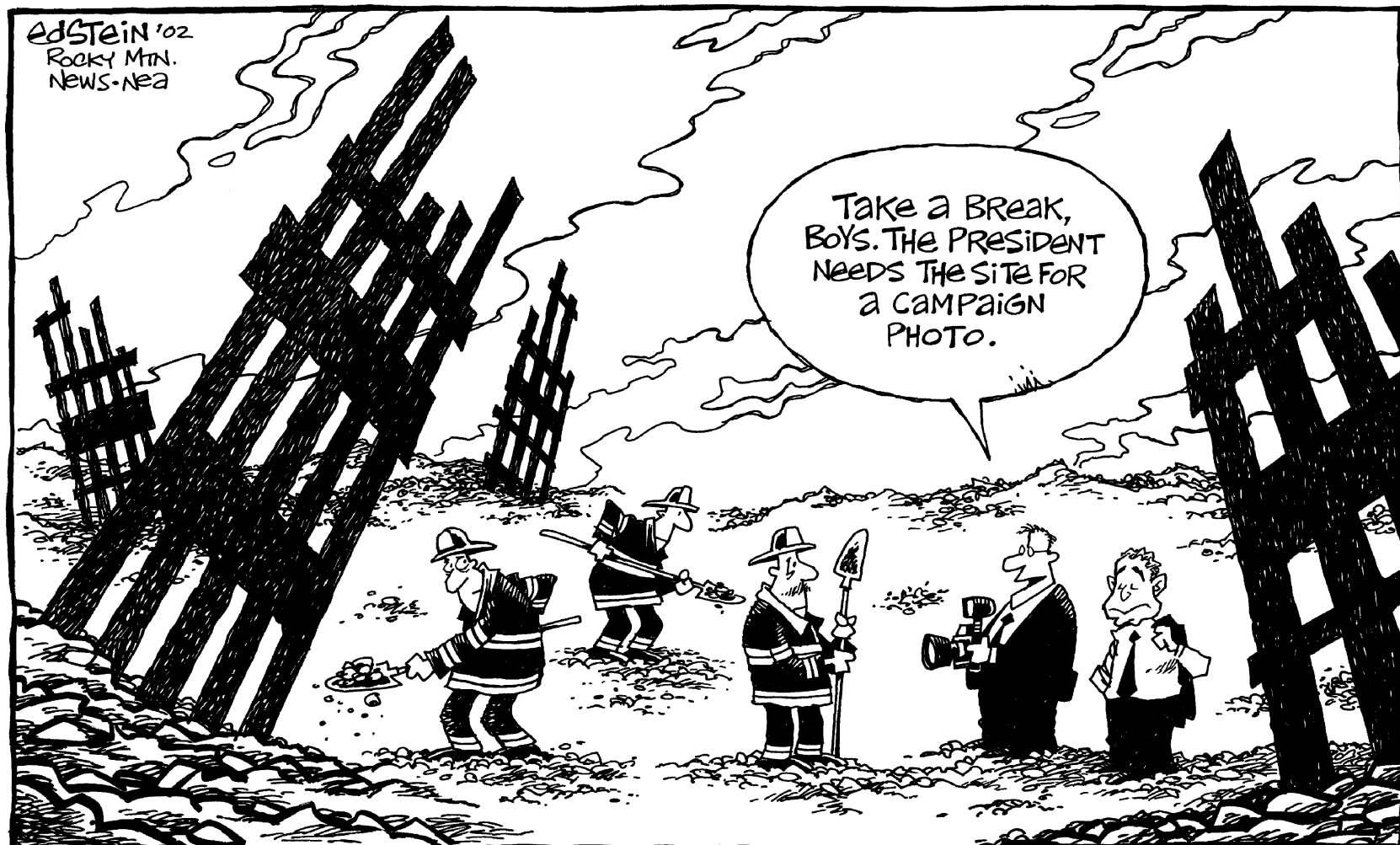
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School being out doesn't change routine much

I don't know about you, but school being out doesn't change my routine very much.

There are many people of course who are now faced with new challenges: what to do with their children, how to keep them busy and happy for the long summer months, who's going to transport them to the swimming pool or ballgame while I'm at work, etc.

Just a quick word of advice: Don't labor over such decisions. Spend as much time with them as you can, and enjoy the extra time with your kids. They will be grown and gone before you know it. One day, you'll wish you have these current things with which to deal.

In thinking about kids, I ran onto this article I had saved. It is a police department circular as quoted in "When All Else Fails, Read the Instructions" by James W. Moore:

For Parents: 12 Easy Ways to Turn Your Children into Delinquents.

1. Begin at infancy to give your children everything they want. In this way, they will grow up to believe the world owes them a living.

2. When they pick up bad language, laugh at



lorna g. t.

• commentary

them. This will make them think they are cute.

3. Never give them any spiritual training. Wait until they are 21 and then let them decide for themselves.

4. Avoid the use of the word wrong. It may develop a guilt complex. This will condition them to believe later, when they are arrested for stealing a car, that society is against them and they are being persecuted.

5. Pick up everything they leave lying around—books, shoes, clothes. Do everything for them so they will be experienced in throwing all responsibilities onto others.

6. Let them read any printed matter they can get their hands on. Be careful that the silverware and drinking glasses are sterilized, but let their minds feast on garbage.

7. Quarrel frequently in the presence of your children. In this way they will not be too shocked when the home is broken up later.

8. Give children all the spending money they want. Never let them earn their own way. Why should they have things as tough as you had them?

9. Satisfy their every craving for food, drink, and comfort. See that every sensual desire is gratified. Denial may lead to harmful frustration.

10. Always take their side against neighbors, teachers, police officers. They are prejudiced against your children.

11. When they get into trouble, apologize for yourself by saying, 'I never could do anything with them.'

12. Prepare for a life of grief. You will be likely to have it."

Just think about it as you're trying to 'entertain' your children instead of guiding them in how to take responsibility.

Start some project you can do together; it could be to cut the neighbor's lawn or paint a shut-in's house. Working together can be just as much fun as playtime that costs money. And it's good training

Doing the right thing in the wrong way

The greatest crime/the highest treason/to do the right thing/for the wrong reason.



steve haynes

• along the sappa

Or in the case of Rep. Peggy Long of Hamilton, to do the right thing in absolutely the wrong way.

One thing an editor hates to do is chastise a friend. Most of us don't have enough of them. But here we go, off the deep end.

Rep. Long, who is from Oberlin, succeeded in the waning days of the marathon legislative session in getting a bill through both the House and Senate to outlaw cockfighting or raising gamecocks in Kansas.

It was the right thing to do. Kansas reportedly was one of only six states that had not outlawed this senseless and barbaric practice.

But, oh, the way she got it done. It smacked of brilliance in legislative tactics, but was wholly lacking in democratic ethics.

Ms. Long, I'm sure, convinced herself that the ends in fact justified the means.

Maybe if I were in her shoes, I'd agree. But I don't think so.

Democracy requires openness, not back-room, back-door politics.

Rep. Long said she had tried for several years to

get her bill onto the House floor. Committee chairmen pretty much control what gets out for debate, though, and she says no committee chair would give her bill a hearing.

It's hard to imagine that cockfighting, a sport conducted on a more or less underground basis, even where legal, is that popular. Or that cockfighters are that powerful in Topeka. But it could be so.

In any event, Rep. Long grew tired of fighting to get the bill out and seized a chance when, late in the session, she spotted a bill that, while all but dead, had been passed out by a committee and was still alive enough to be amended.

She and supporters contrived to have the bill revived enough for an amendment replacing the original contents with her cockfighting ban. It passed the House and Senate and is on its way to Gov. Bill Graves.

Well and good. Kansas has no need for a "sport"

which consists of grown men who should know better watching a couple of chickens try to kill each other with steel knives.

But how can we hold ourselves out as a democracy when our Legislature still allows this kind of procedure?

The bill had no hearing. Opponents, cock breeders and presumably fight promoters, had no chance to give their side of the story. Whatever that might be.

I'm not sticking up for these people, though. Just their right to be heard before we outlaw their despicable little game.

This is not the first time someone has pulled a late-session end run around the process in Topeka. Last year it was a parking garage for the Capitol. And regrettably, it won't be the last.

The fact that Rep. Long had to resort to such shenanigans is in itself a problem. Committee chairmen shouldn't be able to bottle up whatever bills they like.

There should be some process where every bill introduced somehow gets it 15 minutes on the floor, if it has any support at all.

But democracy requires decisions made out in the open, not government by secrecy or surprise.

Sorry, Peggy.

Thanks for help with graduation

To the Editor:
Project Graduation 2002 is now complete and the Seniors and Planning Committee owe a big thank you to several businesses.

To the Goodland Elks Lodge and Safari Steakhouse: We know the hardship this imposes upon your business to close part of the building for use during Prom and Project Graduation. We appreciate the use of your fine facility. Your support of our youth is truly appreciated.

To Coca-Cola: Thank you for your donation during our Project Graduation evening.

To The Goodland Daily News for allowing us to publicize the upcoming meetings at no cost. Your upcoming events column is a very valuable asset of the newspaper. The insert with the students plans is a keepsake.

To Eagle Cable Television: We want to thank you for publicizing the upcoming meetings, your generous donation to our party and for running the Senior pictures during the weekend of graduation at no cost to the parents.

To all of the parents who helped in any manner: There were hours spent in planning the party, personal money spent in executing the party, but most importantly, years spent guiding the seniors to this point.

The opportunity to have one final evening with as many students and their parents as possible is an experience that will not soon be forgotten. The dedication from the people of the City of Goodland to support our youth in all of the ways they



from our readers

• to the editor

do is truly appreciated by the students and their parents. We are thankful for all you have done.

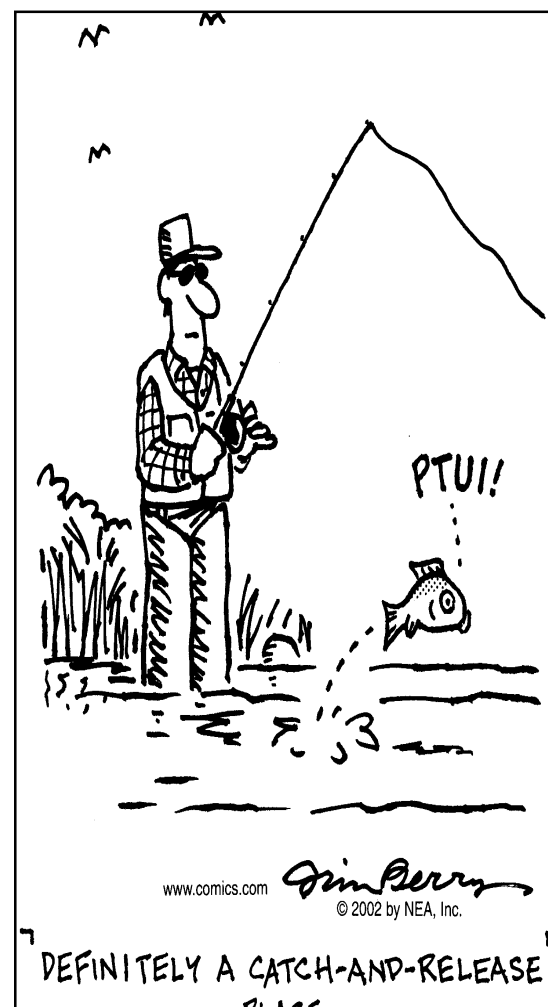
Now is the time the kite string breaks and off they will sail. To the students: Always remember where your kite lifted off, and that no matter how much money you make or titles you receive, there is no better sense of gratification than to give back to people what they have given to you. The community welcomes you back to support the next generations.

Debbie Martin
Project Graduation Committee 2002

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The Goodland Daily News
(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)
Member: Kansas Press Association
The Associated Press
Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association
National Newspaper Association
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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.
Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.
TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkans.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkans.com
The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.
SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

Incorporating:
The Sherman County Herald
Founded by Thomas McCants
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY STAR
Founded by Eric and Roxie Yonkey
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company