

# commentary

from our viewpoint...

## New plan is good, but takes too long

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has put forth one good idea for improving the state's revenue and boosting business in Main Street Kansas. The only problem is, it'll take four to five years to see any money.

The new governor has asked the Legislature to change the state's sales tax law to make it match other states in definitions of what's taxable and other details. That's a necessity if states are going to help each other collect sales tax on Internet and catalog sales.

It's about time Internet sales were taxed. As it stands today, Amazon.com and the hundreds of other Internet dealers, large and small, are protected by federal law from state and local sales taxes.

President Bush has argued against taxing such sales, arguing that it would curb the growth of the Internet and the spread of Internet access. Bull.

But if growth of the Internet comes at the price of the health of our existing retailers, what is the benefit?

It's hard enough already to make a living on Main Street or out in the strip mall. Now they want to give another advantage to big-money Internet firms?

Think of what that can do, in a few years, to the local economy, the local job market and the local tax base.

Is it fair that when you go across the street to the hardware store, you pay 5-7 percent sales tax (more in some states), but when you go to your computer and order the same merchandise, you don't?

Ask the owner of your hardware store what he thinks. He's using the same Internet to order the same stuff, plus he has all the expense of maintaining his store, stock and employees so it'll be on hand when you need it.

Kansas actually has a law requiring people to pay "compensating use tax" on anything bought out of state where no tax is paid. Unless it's something big enough to hit the state's radar, like a car, though, it's almost impossible to collect. When was the last time you ordered merchandise and then filed a use tax return with Kansas?

What the governor is asking here is not for any unfair advantage for "bricks-and-mortar" merchants. She wants a level playing field. She wants to plug a big hole in the state's tax collections.

Republican leaders are sympathetic, but as House Speaker Doug Mays points out, they can't do much for Ms. Sebelius this year. It'll take an act of Congress, as they say, to solve the problem, and there is much opposition to that. It's fueled, as usual, by special interests who are raking in big, tax-free bucks off the Internet.

Good luck, governor. In the meantime, we'd better find some other way to make money for the state. — *Steve Haynes*

### where to write

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**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715

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## The cats are now in control!

**cynthia haynes**

- open season

Cats to the right of me, cats to the left of me. I can't get up.

The cats have taken over my bed, the couch and any other place I might want to lie, sit or stand.

According to the book my children gave me for Christmas, "The Complete Cat Book," cats like to sleep in the warmest spot in the house, and they like company.

That would explain why there is always one sleeping on top of the heating vent in the dining room and one in the kitchen, and why there are always two or three in my bed every night.

The book warns that if you don't want your cat to sleep with you, you'd better close the door and not let it in even once.

I haven't figured out why anyone would not want their cat to sleep with them.

Cats are warm, furry and friendly — well mostly friendly.

I love having the cats sleeping with us, even if it means I can't move.

Most nights, I find one under the covers be-

with the intention of remaking the bed. I didn't get any farther than the living room couch.

The blanket was warm, I was sleepy, the couch was there. And so was I for the next half hour.

I felt a slight disturbance in the force, but was too far gone to notice.

When I awoke, I had Miss Molly sitting next to my head; April Alice, her sworn enemy, on my stomach; and Kubla Khan, the only guy of the bunch, near my feet. I was surrounded.

The disturbance was when the two females got on the blanket at once. They hate each other, but must have called a truce so they could both take a nap.

I love naps and so do my furry friends. I saw a cartoon the other day that featured a cat that claimed that wakefulness was that annoying time between naps.

So true.

Sometimes I wish I could sleep on top of the covers and help bracket a pair of humans. Wakefulness is so annoying.

## First day of session a little bumpy

Monday morning, Jan. 13, started a little bumpy for the first day of the Kansas legislative session.

My secretary called in with the flu and I was juggling reception duties, phone duties as well as putting the finishing touches on several projects when the phone rang a little before 9 a.m. A pleasant voice on the other end said: "This is Joyce Allegrucci; did Governor-elect Sebelius and you have an opportunity to visit over the weekend?"

Well, I was kind of taken back and impressed at the same time. I acknowledged that the governor-elect and I had exchanged smiles when I attended the Family Fun Festival on Sunday afternoon with my family. I was listening with my son as the governor-elect read a book to a roomful of children and their parents. I thought she had bigger fish to see than me with all of the inaugural festivities around the state.

Joyce explained that governor-elect really wanted to visit with me about some issues that would be coming before the Legislature over the weekend. She surmised that a "real conversation" hadn't taken place but promised that they would make it a priority once the inaugural festivities were completed.

Here I was on the phone with the person who ran Kathleen Sebelius' successful gubernatorial campaign and in less than three hours would move into the position of being her appointment secretary. The appointment secre-

**stan clark**

- newsletter

tary is responsible for all the appointments to all the boards and commissions in Kansas government. She asked if I would give her my thoughts on some of the applicants?

I told her that in the eight years I have been in the Senate, I had never been asked for an opinion on any people that were under consideration for an appointment, but that I would be glad to assist.

She paused, rather taken back, and surprised by my statement. She went through some names of people that live within my district and some that live at the other end of the state. The appointments that she was working to fill were for committees that were unrelated to any that I serve on. I gave her my honest evaluation on the people that I knew, we exchanged a few pleasantries, she emphasized that the doors to all of the new administration's offices were open and that they wanted my thoughts and ideas on solving issues facing Kansans.

Many years ago I listened to a sermon where the idea being presented was that "peace" was not the absence of conflict or a ceasing of hostilities, but that "true peace" was "quiet good-

ness," a time when two people or groups of people come together spiritually and a bond of trust is built that leads to productive, positive acts.

Joyce's phone call serves as a wonderful example of a small thing that establishes the groundwork for productive, positive acts. I don't know if my comments on the applicants for appointments to these committees helped her in making recommendations, but really that is secondary to the doors that were opened and the "quiet goodness" that was shared during and following our conversation.

I am looking forward to this session. The dynamics within the government are changing. Small, primarily imperceptible changes in the structure of government cannot continue to be held together with duct tape. A discontinuous change in the way government services are delivered is coming. The time hasn't arrived yet, but it is getting closer.

This "Tim Shallenburger for Governor" supporter intends to work with the new governor in finding long-term solutions without compromising my compassionate conservative social and economic principles.

Please feel free to contact me on any issue. I can be reached by writing to Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol-Room 449-N, Topeka, KS 66612; by calling 1-800-432-3924 or 785-296-7399; by FAX at 801-457-9064; or by e-mail at [sclark@ink.org](mailto:sclark@ink.org).



### berry's world

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jim Berry is on vacation. Please use this classic cartoon, which was originally printed in 1995.

**Jim Berry**  
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