

# commentary

from our viewpoint...

## State budget answer has no spare money

The Legislature and Gov. Kathleen Sebelius have, apparently, closed the state's budget gap one more time by cutting state agencies again, by zeroing revenue sharing for cities and counties and by borrowing from the road fund.

When the fiscal year ends in June, they expect the state to have not a dime left, which is all the law really requires. Gone will be state's 7 percent reserve account, the "rainy day" money that we're supposed to set aside in case things go wrong.

Many will argue that's all right; things have gone wrong, and we need the money. Trouble is, we really don't know how the state's fortunes will turn as the year progresses.

Things are supposed to get better. But the government economists have been saying that for nearly three years now. The recession that George Bush inherited from Bill Clinton has deepened and widened. Soon, it will be Mr. Bush's recession, too.

And there's no real sign that it's over yet.

And while Kansas will skate through another year without major cuts to school programs, the rest of state government will suffer. We'll have to ask ourselves how much we want to see it cut, and at what point are we willing to raise taxes to save state services.

School boards have given up hoping for an increase in the budget and are happy to hear promises of no cuts, but they have to be nervous.

Colleges and universities have already felt the knife. Last year they were complaining about the danger of losing quality in their programs, but this year, they're just scrambling to make sense of the new reality.

At the University of Kansas, Chancellor Robert Hemenway has given up hope of any new money from state funds. He says he'd like to be let out from under the state purchasing, surplus property and personnel systems so he can spend what he has better. More power to him.

Dr. Hemenway also wants to get to keep the interest on student fees and tuition that now goes into the state general fund, but that's not likely to happen. The money's already been spent.

For rural Kansas, one of the most critical decisions will be what happens to the state's transportation plan. The word is that the new secretary of transportation, Deb Miller, hopes to keep all current projects, stretching out the 10-year highway plan by a couple of years to get them done.

As long as maintenance is kept up on existing roads, that's no problem. The state can't afford to let maintenance slide or we'll wind up like Missouri, having to dump new construction just to catch up with overlays.

And nothing is more important to our rural economy than transportation — except maybe rain and the price of wheat.

We think the state will survive the test, and the cuts and economies forced by the fiscal crisis will make it stronger. Tight times will pinch, it'll hurt, but we'll make it. — *Steve Haynes*

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## Touching the Face of God

Following the Columbia disaster, some people are saying humans should not be in space, that either the money would be better spent elsewhere, or the risk would be better born by unmanned, robot flights.

They are wrong on both counts.

First, the benefits from medical, environmental, electronic and engineering advances far outweigh the budget that NASA has spent in the last 40 years. Without NASA as a catalyst, we would be missing may of the advances in computers, EKGs, remote medical telemetry, batteries, weather forecasting, metallurgy, calculators, oil and gas exploration, structural engineering, voting machines, cable television, cellular phones, electric cars, the Internet; all things that make our lives what they are today.

More important, to pull human beings from space, leaving it the province of unmanned exploration, is to deny, to change, what we are. Imaginative. Curious. Pioneers.

Christopher Columbus was not a robot. Lewis and Clark were not robots. The Wright brothers were not robots. But they all had to struggle against the part of society that said it couldn't, or shouldn't, be done.

**evan barnum**

- on the other hand

There is built into us a need to explore. Within ourselves, within our world, within our universe.

To reach out and "touch the face of God." Not by robots, but in person.

Ships sailed for the New World and were never heard from again. More ships sailed.

The pioneers who settled this country died by the hundreds, the thousands. But they came anyway. Looking to the future, not to their present comfort.

Sacrificing — for us.

That is our legacy.

Each one of us is here because someone took a risk, putting their lives on the line to make things better for their descendants. Not living just for themselves, but for the advancement of humanity.

To say that we should not be in space is to say we should have stayed in the trees and never dared to stand on two feet.

To say that we should not be in space because "it is too dangerous" is to say that the Wright Brothers were wrong to try to fly. Lewis and Clark were wrong to explore.

Ships are dangerous. But we still sailed after Titanic sank. Airplanes are dangerous. But we still fly, even after planes have gone down. Cars are dangerous. Tens of thousands die in them each year. But we drive every day. Shuttles are dangerous. But we still flew after Challenger. And we must fly after Columbia.

Just waking up in the morning is dangerous. We may not live to see the night. But we get up anyway, because that is what living is — something more than just existing.

To turn away from space is to start down the long descending road of the dull, the unimaginative, headed toward extinction. It would be a diminishment of ourselves.

We explore as safely as we can, but we do it. Knowing that there is risk. Knowing that we may not survive.

The manned space program must go on, with due diligence in safety, but also the awareness that all exploration involves risk.

To turn away from space is to turn away from who and what we are.

To become less than human.

And to tell our ancestors they were wrong.

## The cookbook with no meat, dairy, eggs

Robert Robertson's cookbook "Vegan Planet" is the most comprehensive cookbook on the market for vegetarians and vegans. Vegetarians eat no meat and vegans eat no meat, eggs or dairy products.

**Tomato Sauce in Winter**

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 small yellow onion, minced  
1 large garlic clove, minced  
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)  
2 tablespoons tomato paste  
1/4 cup dry red wine  
One 28 ounce can crushed tomatoes  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley leaves  
Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook. Stir until fragrant about 1 minute. Be careful not to burn the garlic. Stir in red pepper flakes (if using) and tomato paste and cook. Stir for 1 minute to heat through. Add the wine and blend until smooth. Stir in tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to low and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook for about 15 minutes to thicken. Stir occasionally.

Stir in parsley, taste and adjust the seasonings and serve hot. The sauce freezes well. Makes about 3 1/2 cups.

**Gloria's Glorious Garlic Sauce**

This versatile sauce can be used on steamed or grilled vegetables or to perk up sauces and stews. It can even be thinned a little and used as a salad dressing.

1 head garlic, broken into cloves  
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling  
2 tablespoons blanched almonds  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon water, more if needed

**pat schiefen**

- postscript

Preheat oven to 350. Place garlic cloves with the skins still on in a small baking dish. Drizzle with a little olive oil, cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake until soft, about 45 minutes.

Remove garlic from the skins and place in blender or food processor. Add the almonds and process until smooth. Add oil, vinegar, salt and water. Process until well blended. Add a little more water is a thinner consistency is desired.

Transfer to container with a tight fitting lid. Refrigerate until ready to use up to several days. Makes about 2/3 cup.

**Yellow Pepper Coulis**

This is especially good with grilled or steamed vegetables. It can also be used to add flavor and color to soups, salad dressings or other sauces.

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 small yellow onion, chopped  
3 medium sized yellow bell peppers, seeded and chopped  
1/4 cup water  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add onion and peppers. Cover and cook, Stir a few times until soft, about 5 minutes. Add water, season with salt and pepper to taste and cook until vegetables are very soft, about 15 minutes.

Transfer to food processor or blender and process until smooth. Push the mixture

through a fine mesh strainer into a small saucepan and heat over low heat. Use right away or allow to cool and store in tightly sealed container until ready to use. Reheat over low heat. Makes about 2 cups.

**Basil Pesto with Variations**

You can use pesto to flavor salad dressings, swirl into soups when serving, or serve with grilled vegetables or sliced ripe tomatoes. Use parsley and walnuts or mint and almonds instead of basil and pine nuts. Pesto will keep in the refrigerator for several weeks. The sauce will discolor from the air. If you don't want it to spread a thin layer of olive oil on the top.

2 garlic cloves, peeled  
1/3 cup pine nuts  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 cups loosely packed fresh basil  
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil  
Finely grind garlic, pine nuts and salt together in food processor or blender. Add basil and process until minced. Slowly add the oil in a steady stream until blended into a paste. Pour in a bowl, cover tightly and refrigerate until ready to use.

## Letter Policy

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### garfield

