

from our viewpoint...

State needs money, gambling bad idea

A bad idea is still a bad idea, even when the state needs the money.

Time was when society as a whole pretty much recognized that gambling was a bad idea. Basically, gambling was illegal in this country, except in Nevada.

But there is no way to rid a nation of gambling, any more than you can rid a nation of dangerous drugs like alcohol and meth. It's pretty hard to prevent something that can be done in a barn or a basement.

And because we are human, there'll always be demand for sin.

When gambling was illegal, the market (like that for liquor when it was illegal) was controlled by criminals. The mob ran horse books and numbers games in every city.

With the advent of Las Vegas, the mob saw its chance to go legit and make some real money. And, using the Teamsters Union pension funds for investment capital, that's just what they did.

Soon, everyone wanted a piece of the action, from Indian tribes to hard-pressed state governments, and in Nebraska, even small-town city councils. The state lottery, with profits earmarked for schools or prisons or parks, became ubiquitous.

Casinos sprung up everywhere from South Dakota to Gary, Ind., in the shadow of the steel mills. Bingo parlors and betting operations, riverboat gambling salons and race tracks multiplied.

So, of course, did gambling addiction and the loss of homes, cars, marriages and families.

But, when the state needs the money, who cares? Right?

And Kansas needs the money, so gambling is on the table as the governor and Legislature wrestle over the final details of another deficit budget.

Slot machines to save the state's race tracks, and boost a few needy counties, including Ford and Geary. Casinos to fuel economic development. Who knows what might come next. One bill provides county option for the entire state. Heck, we'll all have casinos soon. Slots at the corner c-store. Bingo at the bank.

The latest twist is having the state lottery run the new games. The take?

No one is saying for sure, but maybe only \$50 million or so. Not nearly enough to solve the state's budget problems. Only a good economy will do that.

Beware the state-run gambling enterprise, by the way. When the mob ran the numbers racket, it took just a few cents of every dollar. When the state runs the numbers racket, known now as a state lottery, it typically takes half.

The odds are better in Vegas than in most state-run joints, but the losers lose just the same.

The only winner is the state, which having failed to run the mob out of the gambling business, just takes over. And cuts the pay-out.

We don't need more gambling in Kansas. It can only hurt us while failing to do much for the state budget.

Like we said, a bad idea is a bad idea. — *Steve Haynes*

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e-mail: star-news@nwkanssas.com

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nwkansas.com

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services
(nbetz@nwkansas.com)

Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. (support@nwkansas.com)

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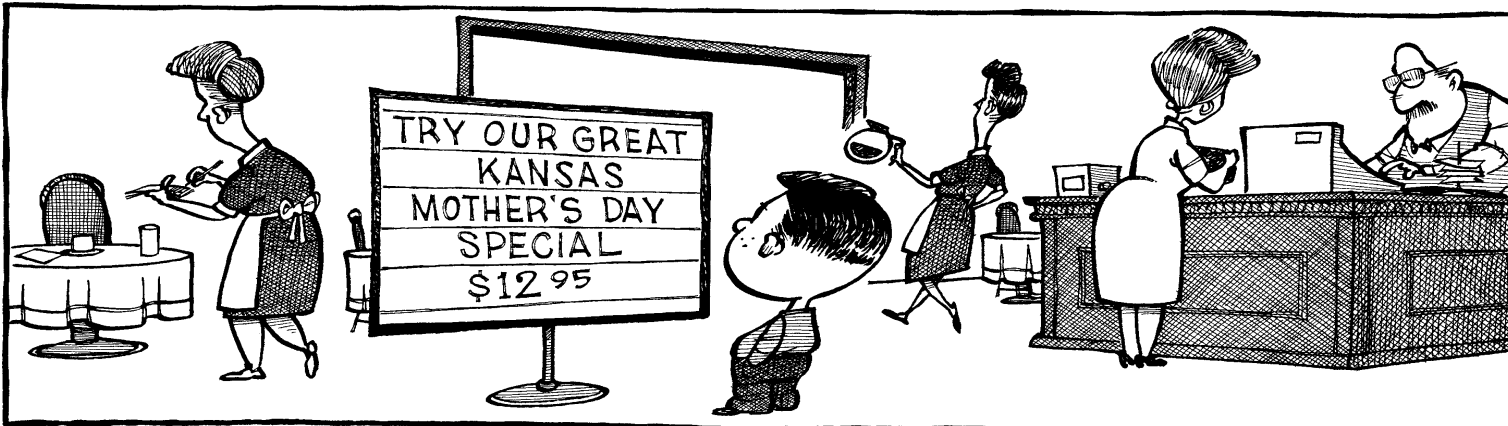
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Gossip hurts everyone

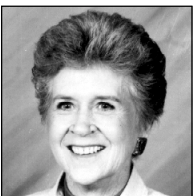
I don't know about you, but I like to read.

I am often struck by the wisdom some writers can put into their words, and I want to share that wisdom with others. Here's some quotes I've saved about gossip—the always-present, insidious ruination of lives and relationships.

This one is called “Gossip: Nobody's Friend.”

“My name is Gossip. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed. My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face. To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become. I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same. I topple governments and wreck marriages. I ruin careers and cause sleepless nights, heartaches, and indigestion. I make innocent people cry in their pillows. Even my name hisses. I am called Gossip. I make headlines and heartaches.” — Author Unknown

This is from an editorial by Lorrain Kee (St. Louis Post-Dispatch) in Wichita Eagle Jan. 3:



**lorna
gt**

• commentary

“Gossip. Not everyone does it, but almost everyone does. At least that's what we've heard....

“Walter Winchell once said, ‘Gossip is the art of saying nothing in a way that leaves practically nothing unsaid.’ It is alternately called our ‘national pastime’ and our ‘communal voice.’

“Gossip isn't new. Yet, clearly the grapevine isn't what it used to be. In the old days, we passed notes in class about our loves and grudges. We whispered over fences in our yards or at the water cooler at work. We gossiped on the telephone. Nowadays, the vine is juiced. Gossip pops up in our instant messages. Carried on the World Wide Web, it ravel's farther, faster. And the relative anonymity of e-mail only makes it easier to pass along.” True, but sad!

“Participation in evil is usually easier than being in opposition to it. The fact that it can go

literally around the world in seconds is scary!

“Gossip comes from people who want to elevate their own standing, to be in ‘the know’ or verbally confirm the worst in others which was always suspected to be there.

“It is often passed along in casual conversation without any facts to prove it. Many don't even realize they're gossiping; they're just telling ‘the news.’ In reality, much of what seems to be true at the time doesn't need to be repeated; the truth might be different tomorrow.

“We need to guard our mouths. The Bible tells us that the tongue is sharper than ‘a two-edged sword.’ How true that is.

“Gossip cuts people up from all sides, and also injures the gossiper. A good test of our words is this: ‘What are we discussing as we journey along the way? Could Jesus join your conversation and feel at home in it?’ The Interpreter's Bible, Mark, p.786.

“We need to ask ourselves those questions habitually and often.

Instead of thinking of someone else who needs this information, just apply it to yourself. Too often we see others' flaws long before we see our own.

Blood drive needs donors on Tuesday

To the Editor

Every day thousands of people throughout the United States need blood. It is estimated that every two seconds someone in the United States receives a blood transfusion. Burn victims, surgical patents, and people undergoing chemotherapy treatments depend on the American Red Cross and its volunteer blood donors to maintain an adequate blood supply.

Please help the Red Cross meet the needs of hospital patients throughout our region. If you are in general good health, at least 17 years of age weigh 110 pounds or more, I hope you will consider taking time out of your busy sched-



**from our
readers**

• to the editor

ule to donate blood to help someone who needs blood.

From 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday Goodland is hosting an American Red Cross blood drive. The will be held at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, 307 W 13th. All Blood types are needed, especially Type O-

Those running the state can't face reality

It's amazing that those running the state of Kansas just can't seem to face reality.

The state is up to its eyeballs in financial problems, and it has been for two years.

Everywhere you turn, there's talk of state budget cuts.

Yet the fact is, the state budget has gone up each and every year.

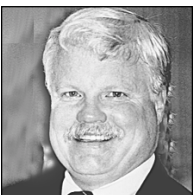
That's right, state spending keeps on going up. It was \$8.85 billion in 2001, \$9.5 billion in 2002, \$9.85 billion this year and the budget projection for next year tops \$10 billion for the first time.

The only things being cut are budget requests, pleas for more money when the state does not have any.

A family faced with the kind of budget problems the state has — stagnant revenue, pressure for increased spending, much wailing from the children as their allowance is cut — would either cut back or face bankruptcy.

A private business faced with this kind of pressure would do the same — stabilize employment, defer raises, maybe even have some layoffs. Or face bankruptcy.

We know. We've had to face that with our business, and it's been painful. Lots of Kansas businesses have faced tougher issues than ours.



**steve
haynes**

• along the sappa

But we don't have to answer to the teachers' union or the many organizations that represent people who benefit from — or work for — state programs.

The first rule of government is, those who get want more. Last year's new, innovative program is this year's entitlement.

And absolutely no one is prepared to see government programs cut.

The right answer to the state's budget problems is to cut back until the economy recovers and the state once again is flush with cash. What they are doing in Topeka, it seems to me, is trying to figure out some way to cook the books and avoid reality.

The governor wants to borrow against future tobacco settlement payments, make people pay their second-half property taxes earlier (so the payment is in the current fiscal year, not the new one), and authorize more gambling.

The Republican-dominated Legislature

positive and O-negative.

Most medication are not cause of deferral. Those with diabetics or high blood pressure may donate as long as their condition is controlled by medication and they are feeling well that day. Potential donors are reminded to drink plenty of fluids prior to their blood donation.

For more information on donating blood, how to volunteer or to schedule an appointment, please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543).

Luella Richardson
Kanorado
Red Cross Publicity Chairman

wants to delay the June payment to schools into July, and put off paying some tax refunds.

What both sides are advocating, really, is Enron accounting. By using up state reserves and shifting funds around, they hope to avoid a deficit, at least on paper, and skate through the year without either cutting services or increasing taxes.

No one wants to vote for increased taxes. That's the kiss of death.

Yet, no one wants to cut service. Every state program and service has someone who benefits from it. And those people — senior citizens, the handicapped in their wheelchairs, school teachers and students — are very effective when they parade outside the State house.

No one is saying their needs are not real. But the state doesn't have any more money for them. It's dipped into its savings account, shifted funds, done everything it can. And it still can't afford its ever-increasing budget, not like it could in the 1990s, when times were flush and the state cut taxes each year while increasing the budget.

Now times are not flush. Reality should be settling in. Not in Topeka. No, the Legislature and the governor can't even agree on which mirrors to put the smoke in front of.

garfield

