

from our viewpoint...

State tax decisions cast as good vs. evil

Bleeding-heart writers in Topeka like to cast it as a good-versus-evil sort of thing.

You might, too. The miserly Legislature has refused to raise taxes, they say, and state services will suffer.

As far as it goes, that's true.

The Legislature, controlled by conservatives appalled by the growth of state government, has said "enough."

It's refused to raise taxes, forcing us to take stock and decide what's important.

The facts are appalling.

In the last 40 years, the state budget has grown from \$527,000 million to \$11.8 billion. Even when you take inflation into account, the growth is more than quadruple.

That's a lot of government, a lot more than many Kansans want or need.

And by forcing us to evaluate state spending and set some priorities, the Legislature is doing us a real favor.

Taxes are high enough. Some would say they're still too high, despite cuts in the Bill Graves era. But they are unlikely to go up, not in this Legislature.

And that is not a bad thing.

Taxes are little more than a legalized way of stealing. They're not charity and they're not voluntary. It's important that they be spent only for vital public causes.

When a state's spending quadruples in four decades, someone should be asking where the money went. State programs have multiplied. They live forever, feeding on the built-in lobby created by those who benefit from the program,: the employees and the clients.

The only way to stop this is to limit tax growth, and the Legislature sees that.

At this point, no one is talking about cutting state spending, mind you. Just limiting growth. That alone is difficult as heck.

But in electing this Legislature, that's clearly what the people of Kansas asked for. Priorities.

Schools remain No. 1.

Roads and colleges are close behind.

Welfare has ever-increasing demands, but must be limited.

Cities and counties won't get any more "revenue sharing" from the state.

And the rest of the government will have to settle for the crumbs.

And none of that is all bad, at least not if you're a taxpayer. — *Steve Haynes*

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A few things from the 'funny' folder

I don't know about you, but I am constantly writing down things that I read — especially things I think are funny or interesting.

I have quite a folder of them; the folder needs to be cleaned out. So I thought I'd just share some of the items with you:

"When I was young, we used to go 'skinny dipping.' Now I just 'chunky dunk.'" From an e-mail.

"Wouldn't it be nice if whenever we messed up our life we could simply press 'CtrlAlt Delete' and start all over?" from e-mail.

"I see your IQ test results were negative." Unknown.

"Snowmen fall from heaven unassembled." Unknown.

"Dad didn't ask a lot of questions or offer up what my grandmother called 'bubbles of hope,' a statement that is as solid as a bubble." We heard lots of them when my mother was sick: She's going to lick this, or everything's going to be all right."

"I know that although we may never understand it, there is a plan, and though it may be traced in pain, in the end there will be joy, and it will be beautiful." Donna VanLiere, The Christmas Blessing.

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'" Erma Bombeck.

"Confidence is a powerful magic." Morgan Llywelyn, Druids.

"Rocks thrown at the dead have a way of bouncing back." Morgan Llywelyn, Druids.

A guy gets splattered by a passing bird, looks up and says, "For the rich you sing." Lawrence Sanders in McNally's Secret.

"Heroin-chic" — description of fashion models By English author, M.C. Beaton in



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• commentary

Agatha Raisin and the Haunted House.

"With (his) imagination, he ought to be writing historical bodice rippers." By English author, M.C. Beaton in Agatha Raisin and the Haunted House.

In a TV interview, Disney executive Isner said of recently fired Ovitz — "He did something that was simply, somewhat despicable."

"A sow's ear. Ain't you ever noticed? I know you read your Bible. Seems like every time God needs somebody for something, He picks the last man anybody'd expect. If He wants to make a silk purse, He'll start with a sow's ear every time. Like when He needed somebody to kill a warrior giant, He went and got a skinny young'un with a rock. When He got in a fire-building contest, he first wet the world. When He needed somebody to write a bunch of chapters for His Book, He picked one of His worst enemies." W. Dale Cramer in Sutter's Cross.

"A few big drops of rain splatted little mud crowns in the dust of the yard." W. Dale Cramer in Sutter's Cross.

"He was a close one in every way. Close with a nickel, close with a smile, close with his words. If the good Lord gives each of us a fortune of words to spend from the day we get born, Talbot Lucas died a dictionary millionaire." Fred Chappell in Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You.

"Talbot and Little Mary were fated to stand on the unsilvered side of the mirror, so to speak. In the waning moon. They had to be some com-

fort to each other, but that part of their life didn't show. They were devoted to each other pretty much as a matter of duty." Fred Chappell in Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You.

"They chatted on a while there in the corner and Aunt Delia gathered as much personal information about the Lucases as you can carry breeze in a soup spoon." Fred Chappell in Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You.

"Gossip is a curse on the community. But it's such refreshment to the spirit, nobody can resist. Well, actually some can. And what happens to them? Why, other people talk them down so low, the moles can't sniff them." Fred Chappell in Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You.

"She's the feisty kind of woman a marriage name won't stick to any better than a crow feather will attach to a turtle shell." Fred Chappell in Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You.

"White noise = noise of the television." Francine Rivers, And the Shofar Blew.

"Enter. Here we all live in a state of ambitious poverty." Luce St.Clair Robson, Walk in My Soul.

"Just wait, Billy; always hasten slowly." Day of Reckoning by Jack Higgins

I think this is a contradiction in terms — "Greatest Artists of Hard Rock" (TV show). And I guess I should end with something upbeat. This is an e-mail that came to me a long time ago:

"A POSITIVE THOUGHT — If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring, and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He could live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart. What about the Christmas gift He sent you in Bethlehem; not to mention that Friday at Calvary. Face it, God's crazy about you" (Unknown).

Short sleeves seem to be missing this year

Where have all the short sleeves gone?

I spent the weekend shopping in Denver, and within the confines of every store were tops of all colors, shapes and sizes.

Materials varied from soft silk blouses to everyday cotton T-shirts trimmed with lace.

Each blouse beckoned to me from the racks, but on inspection, they didn't meet my summer wardrobe need.

I was on a quest for short sleeves.

Now, I've got no problem with other types of sleeves. I'm an equal opportunity shopper.

The three-quarter-length sleeve is actually quite nice on a breezy spring day, and long sleeves keep me warm in the winter.

But I'm thinking about those hot summer days where the Kansas sun steams the earth to levels in excess of 90 degrees.

Short sleeves were on my mind.

Sure, tank tops lined tables and dangled on hangers from spaghetti straps. They came in every color, shape and size, too. These ranged from cute halters with knots tied around the neck to stiff starched button-ups.

But have you ever seen me in no sleeves? Not only is my skin the whitest of white, but do people really need to see that much skin?

Those cute tank tops were made for a tropi-



**kathryn
burke**

• commentary

cal vacation or a day in the garden.

Of course, if I was blessed with Madonna's arms, I'd show them off. But I'm not, and I'd like to keep my limbs to myself, thank you.

I see these pieces as layering items to wear under my (clearly non-existent) short-sleeved shirt or jacket.

On my quest, I noticed the stores not crammed with tanks were filled with racks and racks of three-quarter-length sleeved shirts. The various styles stared up at me from brightly lighted displays. The mannequin, wearing a summer skirt, completed her outfit with a cute three-quarter-sleeve sweater set. The lady on the bright poster was donning a fancy mid-length sleeved top.

In my two days of non-stop shopping, I came across three or four short-sleeved options and I immediately snatched them up. I looked in every corner of every store and came close to giving up.

At the final store of my shopping extravaganza, I asked the lady behind the counter:

"Where have all the sleeves gone?"

"Are tiny tailors going through every shipment of new clothes and lopping the extra material out of shirts?"

"Am I going crazy or is the end of sleeves upon us?"

The lady calmly took my money and told me that these were just blouses, and next week they'll get a fresh shipment of new styles.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: <star-news@nw-kansas.com>.

garfield

