

from our viewpoint...

Governor was right not to sign papers

It was an unusual move. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius refused to sign appointment papers for a former Smith County sheriff, naming him to a job he had to leave more than a decade ago because he had broken the law.

Good for the governor. By now, Ellsworth Murphy probably is back in the saddle as Smith County sheriff.

It shouldn't be, but the governor has no real authority to block an appointment by a county party committee to fill a vacancy in local office. The law says either she signs the documents, or the appointment goes into effect without her signature.

It sort of makes you wonder why the governor is involved at all, but that's not the point.

The point is, the governor was right. There's no way Murphy should be a sheriff again.

He was removed from office for violating state law by putting an illegal bug in the police chief's house. Witnesses said at the time he claimed he was investigating her involvement in a supposed drug ring.

That never panned out, but even if it had been true, it's wrong for a law enforcement officer to break the law. Bugging a person's home without a warrant is a violation of their constitutional rights, and a serious offense in this county.

It's never justified to break the law to catch bad guys, assuming they are bad guys, especially for an officer sworn to uphold the law.

But the offense was just a misdemeanor, so technically, Murphy was not barred from reappointment. All he'll say is that it's in the past.

The county Republican committee showed poor judgment and poor taste in making the selection. There had to be someone more qualified for the top law enforcement job in the county, where the elected sheriff quit and left town.

To further establish his credentials as an all-around good guy, Mr. Murphy filed a lawsuit against one Smith County resident, charging slander because the man referred to him as a "convicted felon" after the party meeting.

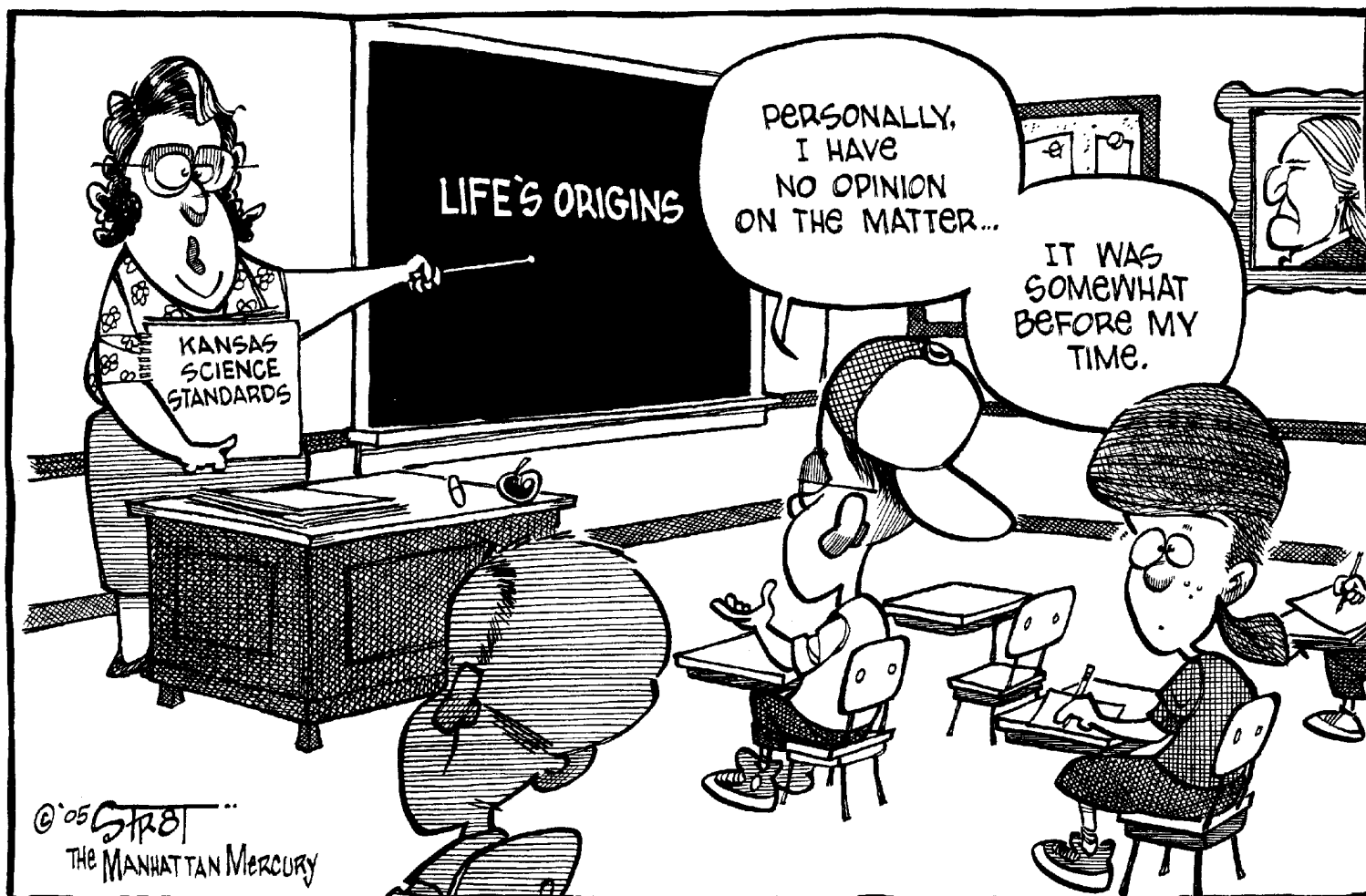
He claimed he was suffering "extreme emotional distress."

Kansans may have something close to that, getting a guy like this as a county sheriff.

The only hope is that the state Law Enforcement Training Commission will deny him a certificate, which would bar him from staying in office.

Whatever, we applaud the governor's good sense in refusing to sign the appointment.

It was the right thing to do. — Steve Haynes



Shopping at home ought to be top priority

Someone at a county meeting made the suggestion that if one of the commissioners was going to Salina, maybe he could pick up some tables for the ambulance department at an unnamed membership store.

The commissioner never made the trip, the tables weren't bought and the county attorney pointed out that stores right here in Oberlin sell that sort of thing.

Good for him. Buying tables at Sam's Club seemed like a sort of unusual slip for the county commissioners, who buy most of what they can here. A lot of people probably don't realize, though, that say, Stanley Hardware, has access to just about anything you might want in a lot of lines.

Other Oberlin businesses either carry goods we don't think of or can get what you need. Most of us could do a better job of shopping at home. And sometimes, it's the merchant who is to blame: Many never advertise their entire lines, and



steve haynes

• along the sappa

people just don't know what they have. No one can buy everything they need here. There's no new-car dealership any more, for instance, and only one used-car lot. The city has made every effort to work with the dealer here, though, and that's a good thing.

All of us should make an effort to shop at home. We need to support the businesses here for two reasons:

They provide jobs and income in our hometown, and that's important.

And if we don't support them, they'll disappear and we'll wonder why we have to drive to Colby or McCook to buy thread.

That said, we know it does no good to preach to people used to driving 100 miles to buy a car. People shop where they will shop, and it's the merchants' job to get them through the door.

Some work harder at that than others. But when it's tax money being spent, for food, equipment, supplies, whatever, then the city or county board really needs to make a commitment to shop at home.

For the most part, our schools, our city and our county have done that. There's the occasional lapse, but nobody's perfect. And there really are things you can't buy here.

Oberlin has a pretty nice way of life. One thing we all can do to preserve that is spend our dollars at home, where they help people in our town.

Think about that the next time you're tempted to run to Wal-Mart for groceries — or Sam's Club for tables.

Where do you want your dollars to go — Oberlin or Arkansas?

'Yuan' higher commodity prices?

By John Schlageck,

Kansas Farm Bureau

No question about it, in today's global economy, trade remains the heartbeat of U.S. agriculture. World trade is key to this country's economic future.

During the last decade, nearly half of the U.S. wheat crop was exported. Each year, more than 30 percent of U.S. soybeans and more than 15 percent of our corn crop are shipped overseas. More than half of the grain and livestock produced on Kansas farms wind up in the mouths of hungry people around the world.

U.S. farm exports account for more billions of dollars each year and employ more than 750,000 Americans, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It's estimated the value of U.S. exports is nearly 25 percent of a farmer's gross cash income.

That's why the recent passage of the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement was such good news for U.S. and Kansas agriculture. So was the recent decision by China to revalue its currency. China is an integral part of this country's worldwide trade.

On July 21, the central bank of China announced the elimination of the Chinese currency's peg to the U.S. dollar. Going forward, the value of the yuan will be based on a group of international currencies, including the dollar.

The process of reevaluating Chinese currency will have positive impacts on U.S. agriculture. As the value of the yuan increases, U.S. agricultural exports will become relatively less expensive and more competitive in China. However, the currency change also will tend to increase the cost of Chinese goods entering the United States.

The initial revaluation of the currency resulted in 8.28 yuan to the dollar changing to 8.11 yuan to the dollar, an increase in value of 2 percent. China has restricted any currency value change to 0.3 percent per day as part of what is described as a "managed floating exchange rate."

Economists estimate the Chinese currency is 20 percent to 40 percent undervalued, which



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provides room for movement in relation to the dollar. China has tied the value of its currency to the U.S. dollar since 1997, a practice that has been blamed for making Chinese goods artificially cheap on world markets and hurting American exports.

What will be the impact of these currency changes by China on U.S. agriculture? China is the fifth-largest export market for a variety of U.S. agricultural products, with soybeans and cotton at the top of the list. The U.S. currently exports more than \$5.3 billion worth of agricultural products annually to China and imports \$1.6 billion worth of Chinese agricultural goods.

Economists estimate that a rise of 20 percent in the value of the yuan is necessary for an appreciable impact on the volume of U.S. exports. A more widespread effect could be the

impact on other Asian nations that have followed China's lead in the past and kept currencies artificially low in relation to the dollar. A widespread move by Asian nations to modernize currencies would result in more bulk and processed U.S. agricultural exports to those regions.

The decision by the Chinese government to begin the process of revaluation indicates a desire to integrate the Chinese economy more closely into global markets. Of even greater importance for those involved in China's market is the current 9 percent annual growth rate for the economy and increased demand by Chinese consumers for other nations' goods and services.

Revaluating the yuan is a win for U.S. exporters, U.S. and Kansas farmers and ranchers, Chinese consumers and China's overall economy.

John Schlageck of Kansas Farm Bureau has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for 25 years. He is the managing editor of Kansas Living, a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.



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