

We don't need the cash bad enough to push slots

A coalition of gambling interests and spenders is, once again, pushing a slot machine bill in the Kansas Legislature.

The bill, which has come up every year in recent memory, supposedly is necessary to save the race track industry in Kansas. Why the track owners think they will make a mint on slots when their tracks are in trouble is beyond us, but they want slots bad.

The once profitable tracks have been in trouble ever since the so-called "riverboat" casinos opened across the state line in Missouri. While the boats seldom, if ever, venture out into the river, the casinos have become big business in Kansas City.

And the dog and horse tracks in Kansas have been complaining ever since.

Opponents — include us in that crowd — don't think the state needs more gambling. We already have the tracks and Indian casinos, plus the state-run numbers racket.

The pro-slot faction is an odd bunch, led by legislators from counties with tracks, of course, but backed by assorted Democrats and Gov. Bill Graves, who sees the potential \$50 million rakeoff for the state as a bonus in tight budget times.

When the tracks came in, they promoted the sport aspect of racing. The fact that casinos are killing them gives the lie to that argument. They are gambling establishments, pure and simple.

Hardly anyone talks about the social damage done by gambling when they are promoting economic development or income for a cash-starved state, but it's a real problem, growing worse with the proliferation of gambling.

There is no talk of any part of the state's "winnings" going to gambling-abuse programs, though you'd think that would be the least the state could do.

Better yet, just say no. Kansas already depends enough on sin — whether it's tobacco and alcohol taxes, gambling or its numbers game — that we don't really need any more of that kind of money.

Gambling may be OK for those who can afford expensive recreation, but it's tough on addicts. State-sanctioned gambling like the Lottery or slots is little more than a tax on those who can least afford it.

It's not the way we should set our priorities, even if the state does need the money. And we're not too sure about that, either. — Steve Haynes

Late-night viewing gets boring

You know it's a slow night when you find yourself watching infomercials and are actually considering ordering something.

Late Sunday afternoon, I had made a big pot of beef stew to tide Jim and Brian over for lunches while they work out at the farm. Suddenly I got the urge to make an apple pie, too. Soon the oven was heating. I had apples peeled, sliced and standing by in a mixture of sugar, cinnamon, cornstarch, lemon juice and a dash of salt. The crust was "in the works" when Jim poked his head into the kitchen and inquired, "Whatchadoin'?"

"How does an apple pie sound?" I asked, knowing that the man only likes two kinds of pie. Hot or cold.

"Sounds great!" Jim responded, "but, we need to leave for that Bible character show in 15 minutes."

"Oops! Guess I'll have to bake this when we get home, won't I?" Zip, snap, cover and seal. Everything is quickly stored away in the fridge for later.

Off we go to enjoy an amazing portrayal of several Biblical characters by actor/singer Ken Lee, who literally brings them back to life. Afterwards



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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Mary Jo and Gale invite us over. A pot of coffee and a loaf of zucchini bread later we head for home. On the way I'm considering how hectic our Monday mornings are and reiterate, "I still want to bake that pie when we get home, OK?"

"You bet," Jim agrees a little too eagerly. "I could go for a piece of hot apple pie."

The pie didn't take long to put together, but the old oven takes quite awhile to warm up, and then, no matter what, it takes an hour for a fruit pie to bake.

Which, is a really long way around, just to explain why we were watching infomercials after midnight Sunday night. There was absolutely nothing

else on. I was afraid to settle back in the recliner and nap for fear I wouldn't hear the timer and burn the pie. So we watched one hyper salesperson after another push their product. There was the Ab-Blaster, the super-duper vacuum sealer, the Classic Collection of 200 of your favorite country songs and the hand-dandy, three-tools-in-one food dicer, slicer, masher and mixer. All, of course, guaranteed to make your life easier, healthier, tastier, groovier and less cluttered.

The pie turned out great. A scoop of vanilla ice cream on a piece of hot apple pie is one of life's simple rewards. But I learned one thing. If I plan to do much more late-night baking, we'll have to re-install cable.

Honor Roll

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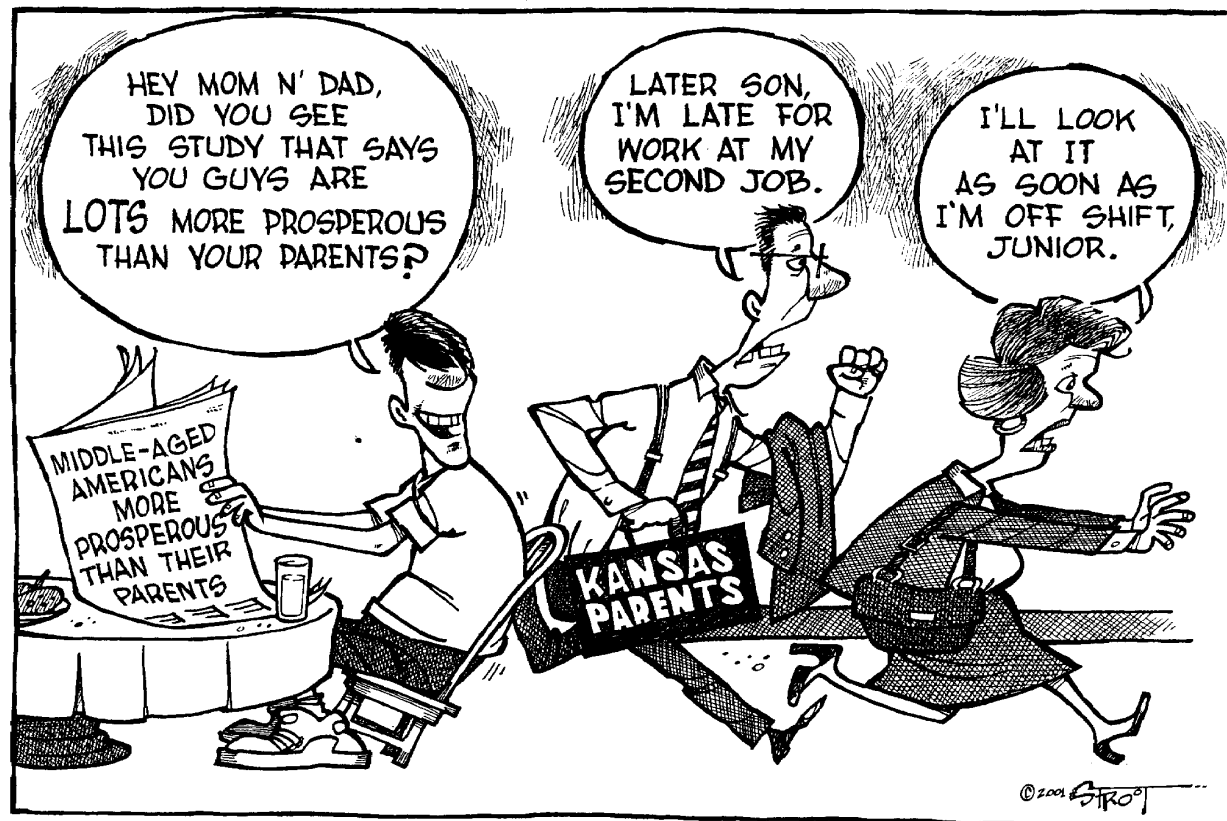
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From the Bible

Then spake Jesus again unto them saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8:12



Writer gets a little repair work done

I saw you looking at me, wondering what happened, too embarrassed to ask but curious nevertheless.

No, I wasn't in an accident. I didn't wreck the car, fall down the stairs or run into a door. I did not run into any part of my husband.

I may look like a battered wife, but nope again. I had to pay to look like this. I've been remodeled, had plastic surgery, got a face lift.

A doctor spent several hours remodeling my eyes, chin and neck while I was under general anesthetic.

All my life, I've said that I wasn't planning on going gracefully into wrinkles and sags. I always said I would do something about it.

So I started saving my money, and the day after my 53rd birthday, I went to Denver and told the doctor to take a few years off my face.

The immediate result was two black eyes and two swollen cheeks. I had stitches in my chin, eyelids, hairline and behind my ears. After a couple of days, the swelling spread to my neck, with the bruising forming a lovely V from my neck to my cleavage.

It's been two weeks now and both the swelling and bruising are fading, although it will take a couple of months for everything to go away. In the meanwhile, I'm wearing dark glasses and diceys to cover up the bulk of the mess.



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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Nothing short of a paper bag over my head will hide everything.

So as people see me, they wonder, and a few friends asked what happened. Several women of my age have already been checking out the results, which even with bruises and swelling are quite dramatic.

To answer the questions:

- No, it wasn't terribly painful. There is discomfort. It isn't a pain-free process but it is more like having your ears pierced than childbirth.

- It is supposed to last from 10 to 15 years. After that, you need to go again. I don't know if I will or not. By then I will be 63 to 70. I may decide not to bother.

- Yes, I'm very happy with the results. I now have just one chin, and when the swelling goes down, my eyes will look great.

- The consultation is free but the surgery has to be paid for in advance. Also,

you have to pay for the hospital and anesthesiologist in advance.

- Several trips to Denver are required for the consultation, surgery, stitch removal and follow-up.

- Steve is ecstatic with the results. He says he's old enough for a trophy wife but couldn't afford one, so he just had the old one remodeled.

- Almost all the nurses at the surgery center had had some plastic surgery. They said most people are so happy with the results they come back for more. One even asked if the doctor had a menu.

Well I'm happy with the results. My friends say they are proud of me for doing it and my children just want pictures. Maybe in 10 to 15 years, I'll want to do it again.

But for now I think the kitchen is the next thing that needs remodeling around here.

Council needs to look at priorities

The Oberlin City Council continues to meet twice a month, though it seldom has much for the second meeting.

The council started the twice-monthly meetings after several new members pushed the idea. Basically, they wanted to become "hands-on" managers, meddling in the day-to-day affairs of city government rather than setting policy, and that's hard to do when you only meet once a month.

It hasn't worked out quite like they had planned. For one thing, the micro-managing group has been unable to meet and agree on its agenda because of the state Open Meetings Law. Its members have seldom voted as a bloc, though some people envisioned that they would.

For another, the city has a good administrator, a good police chief and a good foreman now. With the last administrator and her controversial style out of the way, there hasn't been much need to micromanage. The city is running pretty well, thank you.

In previous terms, the council met once a month, but scheduled special sessions or work sessions as needed, usually before budget time and when there was a big project to plan.

The second monthly meeting has taken the place of most work sessions, but there still are weeks when the council is only meeting because it said it would.

That's kind of wasteful, isn't it?
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Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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At least seven candidates now are in the race for City Council, with a couple more rumored to be considering write-in campaigns. Time is short for write-ins, though. It will be hard to sell their worth in just a couple of weeks, and if someone is interested, they had better get going.

Still, events last fall around northwest Kansas proved that a write-in candidate can win, if his cause is popular or the candidate on the ballot is unpopular enough. Sherman County voters, for instance, turned out a veteran commissioner who had backed high-handed attempts to tear out a paved county road.

In Oberlin, a successful write-in candidate is going to have to portray him or her self as something special. Given the situation, that would mean coming out strongly for progressive government instead of penny-pinching attempts to cut the city down to next to nothing.

We think people are tired of attacks on the police department, which is doing a good job. We doubt that they want

to undo all the changes and decisions made over the last couple of years. And we think they want necessary public projects, like fixing the streets, finding adequate water or buying a new police car now and then to proceed.

Though the odds are always against write-ins, it'll be interesting to see how this race comes out.

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Speaking of police cars, we understand the emotional charge that goes into that issue. A lot of people see the cops driving brand new cars, then look at their 10-year-old clunkers, and wonder why they are paying for that.

The fact that new cars save the city money just doesn't appeal to them. It's an emotional thing, which several council candidates played on quite successfully.

But how does a council that won't buy a new police car justify spending \$84,000 on a street sweeper with almost no discussion? You could buy three or four police cars for that kind of money.

That's not to say that the streets don't need sweeping, but wow.

Writer unhappy with Extension agent

Editor's Note: The following letter was addressed to members of the Decatur County Extension Council, Randy Leska, Pam Wilson, Torrey Morford, Kelly Shields, Roma Grafel, Sid Metcalf, Patti Uehlin, Mike McKenna and Montine Alstrom. As with all letters, it represents the opinions of the writer. It is being run here because it is comments on a public agency and public officials.

— Steve Haynes

I am writing this after finding that Peggy Roe has left her position in the Extension Office. I am concerned that a person of her capabilities would find the working conditions in that office to be such that she would not want to continue under those conditions. I am not sure what her written reason was for leaving, but I know and I think that most of you individually know that the reason was Byron Hale. It is time for the board to come together — as a board — and do something!

Letter to the Editor

As far as many in Decatur County are concerned, his position has become a standing joke. It is no longer funny. When someone as dedicated and concerned as Peggy Roe is lost, it ought to be a signal that a larger problem exists. She was just beginning to make that office a useful and visible part of Decatur County. I am sure that her efforts will go quietly away unless something is done.

In a small sense, you can look to the County Fair and 4-H, which is my ax. I have watched a continual deterioration of both of those pillars for our youth. Since Peggy came on board, that was much improved. While there is still a long way to go, I could at least see some effort being put out from that office.

The larger sense, however, is the main pillar of Decatur County — yes-

terday, today and tomorrow. That pillar is agriculture and all that goes with it. What effort has Byron made in that, the most crucial part of both that office and this county?

I will ask you to ponder the answer to one question. Put yourself in the position of making a change in your agricultural efforts or let's say that you have an ag-related problem that you can't solve. You want to make the right decision. Would you or anyone else in Decatur County go to our current extension agent for advice?

Once you have individually answered that question, it is time for you to come together as a board and restore some credibility to that office.

Michael D. Helm
Norcat

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