

## Governor's work gets some yeas and a few nays

Cheers and jeers. First, thanks to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius for signing a bill to restore in-state tuition rights to children of immigrants who graduate from Kansas high schools.

It's important that we educate and advance the best and brightest students from our schools, whether they were born in this country or not.

While anti-immigration fanatics have railed against the bill, the last thing we need in this country is a class of underemployed, under-educated, under-skilled poor, people with no place to go and no expectation of a better life.

Immigrants come to this country because they want to work. Our system for handling and integrating them into American life is hopeless. But the fact is, they are here. It's unlikely that we will ever succeed in keeping them out.

Particularly, top high school graduates who want to go to Kansas colleges deserve some consideration because they represent the best and the brightest, people who will make fine Americans.

To get in-state tuition, students will have to promise to become citizens as soon as they can. They will have to pay their own way. They won't displace any Kansas citizens.

It was wrong for the Legislature to change the law and keep them out of our universities. The governor, by her support, has helped right this wrong.

With her general progressive attitude, it's

hard to see why Ms. Sebelius stepped up to keep citizens of two Kansas counties from voting on consolidated law enforcement.

The bill would have allowed a vote on consolidation, under an elected sheriff or an appointed director in Cloud and Lincoln counties.

The governor cited opposition from statewide law enforcement groups in her veto message. Officers feared loss of jobs, she said, and possibly their pensions.

Heck, that was probably what backers wanted, lower costs. One source noted that in Cloud County, law enforcement had opposed the change while county commissioners pushed for it.

Why, we ask, is the governor stepping in to help a special interest group here? Why not let people have a chance to vote on consolidation?

Most Kansas counties continue with the centuries-old system of a county sheriff and city police, even when there are only four or five officers in the county. It's an outmoded and inefficient system, but only two counties have overcome the inertia and ingrained special interests to try consolidation.

With two more, we might have gotten a chance to see how well the idea works — or doesn't.

The governor robbed voters of a chance to decide, and that decision seems both shortsighted and narrow-minded.

We expect better.

— Steve Haynes



## Proud to be part of tradition

We were an unlikely band of brothers.

Bob Neal, reporter, editor, journalism teacher. Today, a turkey farmer in Maine.

Jim Steele, who hit his stride as perhaps the best investigative reporter in the country, and collected a pair of Pulitzer medallions at the Philadelphia Inquirer

Tom Stites, former deputy national editor at *The New York Times*, former managing editor of *The Kansas City Times*. Now the top editor for the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Rick Serrano, a Kansas City native, published author, currently at the Washington bureau of the *Los Angeles Times*.

Me, a country editor from the far edge of Kansas. I felt humble, but I think I had the prize for traveling the farthest.

The thing we had in common was that we all started our careers, or at least stopped over, at *The Kansas City Times*, the late, lamented morning edition of *The Kansas City Star*.

We had gathered in Central Park West, in midtown Manhattan, in the apartment where Paul Haskins had spent his last years.

There, surrounded by people from the great, gray lady of our industry, we talked about Paul, who died at his place in Cancun. He was only 62, but his lungs were shot.

Paul was the finest editor I've ever known. I shake my head when I think of his career. He was the only editor who came to work at *The Times* in cowboy boots, a lifelong trademark. He split his career, nearly 20 years in Kansas City and 20 in New York. The fascinating thing is how he got there.

A high-school dropout from California, part Native American, he



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes

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stumbled into a job at *The Kansas City Times* as a copy boy. In those days, it was the custom to hire young men to answer phones and run errands, and give them a chance to learn the trade. Many drifted away, more went on to college or other jobs. One I knew just retired as president of one of Kansas City's largest banks.

But a lucky and talented few took root and blossomed there in the newsroom. Paul had been one of those. Stites, I think, was there when he started. Steele came after him. I was just a college boy, starting as a reporter. Serrano may have been the last one to start out as a copy boy.

We all stood in awe of Paul's skill, his insight, his passion for the news. So, apparently, did his colleagues in New York. It's unheard-of for anyone without a college degree to be hired at *The New York Times*. Paul never did graduate from high school, let alone college, though he taught editing one year at the University of Kansas.

He rose from copy boy to city editor in Kansas City, leading *The Times* to a Pulitzer for its coverage of the Hyatt Hotel balcony collapse in 1981. In New York, he rose to chief deputy national editor, responsible for assignments across the country. One former boss called him "the heart of the national desk."

It would be easy to call Paul a piece of work. He was tall, gruff,

imposing. He was a demanding boss, but you knew he cared more than anyone. He was the first one to the bar after work, he smoked two to three packs of Pall Malls a day, and he lived the news.

He was one of a diverse and talented crew that worked the night shift in Kansas City in those days. None of us would ever say that we had worked at *The Star*. We might have shared the newsroom with the day crew, and our paychecks bore the company name, but we were never of them.

We worked for *The Kansas City Times*.

Later, the company was sold, the afternoon paper was closed and a lot of those talented people drifted away. The business has become more corporate, less romantic.

After a decent amount of conversation and food, words were said. Paul's widow urged us to have another drink. When the party broke up, we went our ways. Stites and Bob were on the same train out of Penn Station, and we went downtown together. Tom swiped us through the subway turnstile with his farecard; they don't have tokens anymore.

It was a long weekend for me, but on the way back from the Denver airport, tired as I was, I had to smile.

Paul came from another era, a wonderful tradition. And I just felt so proud to have been a part of that.

## It is so great to be back home

I'm home! I'm home! I'm home! My plane touched down in Denver at 8 p.m. Sunday night. And there was my handsome husband waiting for me at the baggage claim.

Following the longest separation during our marriage, I don't know which one of us was smiling bigger at seeing the other again.

It was after 9 p.m. before we cleared the airport and looked for a place to eat. An hour and a half and a hamburger and French fries later, we headed the car east. We stopped once for coffee and once to switch drivers before arriving in our little town at 4 a.m. Jim woke at his usual time, but let me sleep until 7:30 a.m., when he was walking out the door to go to work.

I pretended to be alert because he had even fixed coffee, bacon and eggs for me. But I'm afraid as soon as he was gone, I sat down in my recliner and shut my eyes. You could have stuck a fork in me; I was done.

Three hours later, the jangling of the phone roused me. It was Jim wanting to know how the column was coming. Trying to sound bright and awake, I said, "Fine. Just fine. Coming right along on it."

"Read me what you have so far," he asked.

"Well, uh. Um-m-m, uh. Let's see, uh," I stammered, trying to buy some time.

"You haven't started it yet, have you?" he said in a slightly accusatory tone. "Woke you up, didn't I?" Busted. He knows me too well.

It's not like I don't have anything to write about. Ten action-packed days. Coast-to-coast travel. Zipping through time zones like a hot knife



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts

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through butter. It is just so hard to get focused.

After leaving my daughters in Washington, I boarded a nonstop flight for Seattle to the home of my sister's oldest daughter, Patty. Patty's sister, Delight, was already there and Kathryn was expected the day after my arrival.

Patricia made the mistake of saying she would like to change a few things at her house but didn't know quite where to start.

That was all Delight needed to hear. A born organizer/decorator/slave-driver, Delight whipped everyone into a "Clean Sweep/Trading Spaces" make-over frenzy.

I was the designated curtain maker. Patty is a saver, so fabric was no problem. She and Delight found paint on sale. So they assigned Kathryn a door and a brush. Meanwhile Patricia and Delight moved furniture, rearranged, sorted, eliminated. It was fun working together.

It wasn't all work, though. Patricia treated us to a lovely evening on board a train for a rolling, murder/mystery dinner party. The train rolled through beautiful countryside while the story unfolded. As the meal was served, more clues were revealed to the diners. In the end, it

made no difference what the clues were. The diners created their own conclusion to the case and the most imaginative won.

As for the spa experience, let's just say I opted out on that one. I was expecting something totally different than what it was. Call me a prude, but I don't do naked. I am not going to walk around naked and I don't want to see others naked. And there was no middle ground. There was no choice like: "Clothed women to this side; naked women this side".

Big, bold signs in the locker room said ALL clothing and jewelry MUST be removed. No exceptions. So I went for coffee and a newspaper while the others soaked, saunaed and spaed.

All in all, it was a great vacation. But now that I'm home, I'll have to go back to work to get some rest.

### From the Bible

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. II John:8

## Patrol focusing on drinking, safety

To the Editor:  
The weeks of May 24 to June 6, the Kansas Highway Patrol, Kansas Department of Transportation and local law enforcement agencies will be conducting special enforcement lanes focused on drinking drivers and those not using child restraints and seat belts.

In 2002, 58 Kansas teen-agers lost their lives in traffic crashes. Of these

### Letters to the Editor

58, 78 percent were not wearing safety belts. Vehicle crashes are the No. 1 cause of death for this age group.

Our goal is to reduce this number significantly.

Don't Drink and Drive. Always Buckle Up.

It's the law.

Douglas C. Griffiths, lieutenant  
Kansas Highway Patrol  
Troop D, Norton

## Emergency assistance appreciated

To the Editor:  
On behalf of Rawlins County Emergency Medical Services and Rawlins County Health Center, we would like to thank both the Decatur County emergency medical technicians and firefighters for their assistance in the tragedy that occurred

north of Herndon on Saturday, May 15. It was nice to have the extra hands, especially in this critical situation we were dealing with.

I would also especially like to thank Pat Pomeroy for his expertise both at the scene and at our facility.

This was a tremendous example

of teamwork in a bad situation, and I hope we can reciprocate some time if called on.

Jerome M. Molstad  
physician assistant-certified  
Atwood

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