

Where will legislators get money for school budget?

It seems certain the Kansas Legislature is going to put another \$400 million to half a billion a year into public schools over the next few years.

No one seems to know how the state will pay for this, beyond the first year. Revenue projections don't show the state bringing in enough to make ends meet, but then a few years ago, the projections showed the state having a lot more money than it actually got. A rising tide makes all the difference.

And while there may be a lot of support for increasing the school budget, it's the Legislature — not the courts — that needs to decide how much and where it comes from.

There is no ground swell among voters or business people for a tax increase, no matter the reason. The results of the last election ought to convince people of that.

Relying on gambling expansion to finance schools is a bad idea, bad because gambling is destructive, and bad because it's not a reliable source of money.

There's just something repulsive about paying for kids' education with sin taxes, any way you slice it.

So the Legislature, faced with a Supreme Court order to come up with more money before it goes home, needs to shift around existing dollars and new income from a growing economy to find the money for schools. It's not going to be easy.

The members will have to keep in mind, as Chancellor Robert Hemmenway at the Uni-

versity of Kansas says, that it makes little sense to educate kids through high school and not provide a decent higher education.

Kansas colleges have been starving the last few years as public schools and welfare soaks up every available dollar from the state budget.

Nor can the Legislature expect to take much out of the highway fund, lest the state default on its promises under the 10-year transportation plan.

The devils in the works, it seems, include social programs, from public assistance to help for the disabled, Medicaid and welfare. These programs have grown uncontrollably during the recession. Even today, they show little sign of slacking off, and many are considered "entitlements," which the state has to pay for whether it has the money or not.

Special-interest groups keep pushing for more money for these programs, and at even a hint of cuts, they organize demonstrations in front of the State house. It's hard to be firm with people in wheelchairs. It looks mean.

The Legislators will have to balance all that out and do the best they can. That may not be good enough for the courts, but then, the courts have no power to raise taxes. At least, we hope they don't.

The best we can hope for is that the economy will keep improving and there'll be money to cover all the bases. If not, there is nothing writ in stone that says the state government has to grow every year. — *Steve Haynes*



Moms the glue that bind society

After much thought and soul searching, I've decided that stay-at-home moms are the glue that holds this country together.

I've always been a working woman. I quit my job just before my first child was born, but by the time she was 2 weeks old, I was on the phone to my old boss, begging to be taken back.

I hate housework, I'm no expert on child rearing and I'm no good at clubs and groups.

But looking around, I see dozens of mothers taking care of their young children and volunteering their time to help the Little League, PTA, Cub Scouts and other groups.

I'm not saying that there aren't lots of working moms doing the same things. But, let's face it, by the time you get the husband and kids ready for the day, put in 8 hours at a job and get home to fix supper, help with homework, throw in a load of laundry and do the dishes, you don't have much time or energy for other projects.

We visited Steve's sister and brother-in-law last week, and I started to realize how much she does.

Barb is Steve's much younger sister. She lived with us for several years and she seems more like my sister or one of my older children



Open Season

By *Cynthia Haynes*
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than an in-law.

A smart, good looking woman, she has a master's degree in city planning and had worked for several towns in the Kansas City area. Then her husband got a job in their old home town.

Instead of getting another job, she turned her time and energies into raising her son and doing volunteer work.

She's the secretary of a dog rescue group and drives hundreds of miles every month or so to pick up or deliver Hungarian vizsla, a breed about the size of a pointer, but with the lean looks of a greyhound and the dark red of an Irish setter. Besides finding new homes for displaced dogs, she keeps them for up to three or four months adding them to her menagerie of three indoor and countless outdoor cats, two vizslas of her own and five to eight horses.

She's the president of the Lake

Kahola Homeowners Association, having inherited half of her parents' cabin at the lake. With her knowledge of planning and development, she keeps folks from building garages on the public right-of-way or somebody else's land and other such nonsense. It doesn't make her too popular sometimes, but she just keeps working to make things right.

She's a member of the parent-teacher group, and when we were visiting, she had designed, copied and was mailing 1,800 flyers for the school carnival.

I realized that she and hundreds of others like her are keeping things going across the country, volunteering their time to guide children, protect animals, enforce the rules and bake the cookies.

Thanks, Barb, and all you stay-at-home moms, who just never seem to spend that much time at home. You all keep us glued together.

Wet weather greens things up

I know, I know. It's still February. Even so, the wet weather last week left the grass with just the tiniest tinge of green.

In the front yard, jonquil leaves are pushing up where the sun shines most.

Iris plants that looked brown and desolate last week are peaked and perking up.

Out in the country, the wheat isn't exactly growing, but it's not exactly asleep, either. It's greener and cleaner than just a few days ago.

Out in the country, springs are flowing and creeks that have been dry for a year fill with water.

The crack of the bat is in the air, in Arizona and Florida if not on the street. Not yet.

Pitchers and catchers spent the weekend working out. Position players should be due in camp by today.

Spring training is in the air, and we've survived another winter.

I know, I know.

It ain't over yet.

Depending on how you reckon it, winter has another week to go. Or four. The forecast is nasty.

It's common to hear people say that spring begins "officially" on March 20, the spring equinox. (I've never figured out who made it "official," but that's the term people use.)

That's when day and night are equal, as the earth makes its way once more around the sun. But the equinox has little to do with weather, not directly at least. Meteorologist will tell you that the weather at this



Along the Sappa

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latitude usually starts to change about March 1, so the beginning of the month really marks the start of spring weather.

That's next week.

Fact is, March days should average about 5 to 10 degrees warmer than February, and it just gets better from there.

After the equinox, nights will be shorter than days. The advent of Daylight Saving Time will be just right around the corner in April. Along with the start of baseball season.

And by the end of March, we'll all be mowing the lawn.

I can't wait. Really.

I miss yard work. I miss mowing, which provides a certain satisfaction as well as a measure of needed ex-

ercise. Shoveling snow is just a poor substitute, and besides, we don't get all that much snow.

Oh, there will be more cold weather. We often get more snow in the spring than in all our winter.

And March is to spring as November is to fall, which is to say more like winter than summer.

But longer days and growing flowers bring hope, hope for green lawns and sunny days and golden wheat.

We need that hope. I think most of us, farmers and city folk alike, just survive winter. It's a time for family and reflection, dreaming about sunny beaches and sparkling slopes, but not usually that much fun.

All that's about to change.

And not a moment too soon.

Honor Roll

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There is no place like home

We're home, we're home, we're home! Just like Herman Munster says, "We're home."

After kind of a rocky start getting on the road, what with forgetting our money, etc., the rest of the trip went quite well. In fact, we finished building our house in Mexico in almost record time and returned a day early.

We weren't trying to set any records; it's just that we had an exceptionally good work crew and were building a small house. It took about 14 hours to finish, complete with windows, wiring, insulation, roofing, stucco, a door, sheet rock, front step, taping and paint.

If any of you get to see pictures of our trip, I need to explain about the paint. It's what might be called "Barbie Doll Pink." But, it was free, so we're not complaining.

For the last two years, I have gone to our local home store and asked if they had any "oopsy" paint. You know, paint that has been mixed, then the buyer decided it was not the right color and rejected it. Luckily for us, they did have some and offered it to us with no strings attached.

Last year, I think the paint was blue. This year it was bright pink (which we lightened a little with some white).

Still, the two rooms of the new house we built for a lady named Sylvia and her husband (who we



Out Back

By *Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts*
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were told was away working), their two children, a son Luis, who was born with a disability and is unable to walk, and their daughter America, a precious little 2-year-old, are bright, cheery, safe and secure.

This was the 12th house we worked on, and I cried at this dedication just like I did at the first. Sylvia shed big tears of joy and gratitude and told us, through an interpreter, she would never forget us.

We won't forget her, nor will we forget the new friends we made from Lamar, Colo. Lee and Corina are a Hispanic couple who have built a successful construction business through sheer hard work and determination. Like a lot of us, they felt a need to "give back a portion of the abundance with which we have been blessed." Both bilingual, they were terrific translators as well as teammates.

As a special treat for one of our evening meals, Cori prepared "real" burritos with her special homemade

tortillas, filling and salsa. It was wonderful. Jim poured the salsa on thick. As he ate with delight, Lee said, "You're the first white man I've seen able to eat it like that."

—ob—

Did you hear what the little boy said when the power went out at his school and the cafeteria staff couldn't prepare a hot meal, so had to serve peanut butter and jelly sandwiches instead?

"Finally! A home-cooked meal."

From the Bible

For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Psalm 51: 16, 17

Reader wants more school news

To the Editor:

Amen to Mr. Nedland's letter in the paper this past week. We have always thought things that are going on in and around Oberlin should be first and foremost in your paper, such as all school activities, not just sports.

I do not have a problem with sports, but so many other good things happen in the schools such as Scholars Bowl and forensics, and many music activities never seem to get your attention. I, like Mr.

Letter to the Editor

Nedland, do not care if they are action shots, posed or grouped.

I also would read about everyone's kids with as much interest as I do when it's about one of my own. I also have not gotten completely over the personal attack on my granddaughter Allie, but this is not a letter because of it. I think

people that are natives of Oberlin that take your paper would also like to know what is going on, and viewing pictures of things they might remember, and memories of the good ol' Decatur Community High School days.

Judy Gold Hill City

Write

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