

Legislature, not courts should control state taxes

Maybe we'll get one thing settled in Kansas this year.

And that's whose running this state.

In civics class, we all learned how a state is supposed to work.

The governor proposes a budget and leads the bureaucracy.

The Legislature makes laws, adjusts and approves the budget.

And most of all, the Legislature raises taxes.

The courts referee everything. They interpret the laws and, when asked, decide whether they fit in the state's constitutional structure.

Courts have no power to draw up a budget or increase taxes.

Or so we thought.

In Kansas today, the state Supreme Court has ruled that the Legislature isn't putting enough money into schools. The court based its decision on one sentence in the Constitution. It says the state shall make "suitable" provisions for educating all students.

What happens if the Legislature doesn't move fast enough? The court set an April 12 deadline for making things suitable, whatever that means.

The judges aren't saying.

Presumably, the court can't just order the Legislature to raise taxes. We all learned that in civics class, or thought we had.

If the court finds schools not suitable, per-

haps the judges will shut them down. Right. That would be good for our kids.

At best, the court should be able to rule on dividing up the money the state has, not on a tax increase.

The whole legal process was begun by a group of medium-sized school districts that felt they lost out in the legislative process.

This brazen attempt to circumvent the process and get more money ought to be stopped. Someone needs to stand up to legal blackmail, and to activist, liberal judges who would back such a suit.

Many in the Legislature are mad.

One bill would require judges to be confirmed by the state Senate before taking office, as federal judges must be. Another would return the high court to the election process, giving voters more say.

Both ideas have merit.

There's no evidence Kansans want to pay more taxes, even for schools. It'd be interesting to see, at the polls, what they think of our high judges and their self-imposed role as spending advocates.

Whatever happens, we'd suggest that any judge who thinks we need more taxes should step down from the bench and run for the Legislature. That'd give a better picture of what people want.

— Steve Haynes

4-H best at leadership skills

Mention kids and 4-H to me in the same sentence and, if possible, I'm there. I think 4-H is the best organization for developing leadership skills and youngsters' self-confidence.

A few weeks ago, a 4-H leader called to see if I would help teach their club a dance for 4-H Day competition.

"Sure," I said. "Is it a square dance? Maybe the Cotton-eyed Joe? How about the Schotische?"

Visions of my own days as a 4-H dancer popped into my head. We wore cute three-tiered checked skirts in a rainbow of colors. Mine was green. Of course, our partners wore a string bow-tie to match our skirts.

"No," the leader said. "Will you teach the kids how to do the 'Hand-Jive'?"

Anyone who went to high school in the 1960s knows the Hand-Jive. It was not so much a dance as something you did sitting down. The movie "Grease" introduced it to kids in the '80s, and now their kids think of it as a golden oldie.

Last week was our first practice and, typically, the girls were all excited while the boys hung back. Way back. If they could have, I think they would have "hung" right out the back door. But, their mothers told them, they had to do it, so for the most part they did it in good spirits. That is, right up until the time we told them they had to hold a girl's hand during a couple of maneuvers we choreographed into the routine.

After much cajoling, and maybe a little bribery, we got three boys to actually touch a girl while they did twist-overs, pull-throughs and the stroll. You have to remember these boys are, I'm guessing, from 6 to 12 years old. They haven't learned yet,



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts

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nor do they want to, that it's the guy who dances that gets the girl.

This week's practice went smoothly, with everyone remembering their places and the steps. Costumes are coming together, with mothers of girls busily making poodle skirts and mothers of boys looking for plain white T-shirts and butch wax.

I won't be there for the next two practices, but I've served my purpose. The moms just needed an "out-of-town expert" who wasn't related to anyone to come in and get things going. Kids always listen to someone else better than they listen to their own mom.

I will try my best to get back in time for their performance. If they do as well there as they did in practice, it's a purple ribbon winner for sure.

—ob—

Grandma used to put her pies on the windowsill to cool. Her granddaughters put their pies on the windowsill to thaw.

From the Bible

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:1, 2

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

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Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.



Weight loss right on schedule

My diet is half over, and amazingly, I've lost half the 52 pounds I want to lose.

I started this *&*&#&\$@ diet in mid August at 172 pounds. I thought I'd get down to 150, but then decided that if I lost just one pound a week for a year I could be 120 — what I weighed when I was married in 1971.

The first 10 pounds came off in about six weeks, and I was elated. I knew I could get the poundage off in less than a year. But as time went on, it seemed harder and harder. Between the first of December and the last of January, I only lost about four pounds.

I was worried. I wanted to be on goal at the halfway point.

I started weighing myself twice a day and wished desperately that petting the cats helped lower your weight instead your blood pressure.

On Feb. 15, though, I stepped on the scale and the magic number appeared — 146 pounds.

After seeing all the ads for weight loss gimmicks — "Lose two dress sizes in eight weeks" and all that — I started thinking about what has changed over the last six months.

The biggest thing I noticed is that my watch no longer fits. My Twist-o-Flex band needs a link or two taken out. About half the time, the



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes

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face is on the underside of my wrist or the whole watch is pushed up my arm a couple of inches.

Great, that was what I was aiming for — skinny wrists.

I did notice a couple of other things.

The reason I went on a diet is that I couldn't fit into my jeans. The zippers wouldn't zip and I couldn't button the top two buttons on the ones with buttons. They were getting tucked under my sweatshirt.

Yesterday, I put on a pair of my old jeans, leaned down to tie my shoes and kept on talking to Steve. It hit me. I had not only zipped the zipper and buttoned the button, but I could breathe and tie my shoes at the same time.

So, I've lost some in my stomach and thighs.

The last piece of evidence came from a pair of corduroy pants and a leather skirt.

When my luggage went on vacation without me in January, I went out and bought a pair of corduroy pants, size 12. I haven't been able to wear anything under a 16 for years. Since the pants were on the sale rack, they may have been a little big for a 12, but at this point I'll take any size changes I can get.

With that said, I've lost a favorite leather skirt.

I have a long, brown leather skirt I just love and wear a lot in the spring and fall. I tried to put it on the other day. It's become a modern hippie-hugger. Instead of being classically stylish, at the waist, it's sort of a low rider now. The only way I could wear it is by using suspenders.

Since it's leather I don't figure I can afford to have it remodeled.

Well, I told myself that I was planning to lose plenty on this diet — I just wasn't planning on it being a favorite skirt.

Immigrants want better life

I've been trying to get a handle on why people get so worked up over the current wave of immigration.

It's just people coming here to work, and to build a better life, like we always have.

No one moves here to go on welfare or subvert the American way of life.

Immigrants want to work. They want to make money. Most want to be Americans, and history shows, in a generation or two, they will be.

Sure, most of them speak another language, Spanish or Vietnamese or Thai. So did every immigrant group after the first.

But the children of all those Poles and Swedes and Bohemians and Germans learned to speak English. So will the children of today's immigrants.

And despite what is says on the base of the Statue of Liberty, today is no different than a century ago.

There've always been those who abused and maligned the latest immigrants, whether they were Italian or Irish or Greek or Mexican. While we say we welcome the tired, the poor and the hungry, just as often, we've called them names and told them to stay away.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes

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By the middle of the last century, we'd put quotas on immigration and tried to limit the number who came here.

But our economy is so good, we can't find workers at home. Haven't been able to in years. And quotas or not, they come.

Across the border, through the fence, following trails through the desert or hiding in trucks and railroad cars: Many risk their lives. Some pay the final price.

They must think it's worth it to be here.

We must, too, because we hire them.

Without immigrants, few roads would get built in this country. Construction would stop. Packing plants would close. Fast food would be slow. The list is endless.

Americans don't want these jobs.

We think they're beneath us.

Maybe they are.

Immigrants will take them. They want to work.

But it's natural for humans to look askance at someone from another tribe. We fear that we don't know or understand. We dislike anyone who is different.

There is hope.

The longer an immigrant group is here, the more it assimilates. Children lose their accents and the grandchildren are as American as the next guy.

It'll happen.

Meantime, we need to just stop worrying and get on with life. Immigrants aren't the threat. Prejudice and ignorance are.

Common sense will prevail.

I think.

Service looking for foster parents

To the Editor:

Since 2000, St. Francis Academy has contracted with Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services to provide foster care reintegration services throughout Region IV, roughly the western half of Kansas.

I'm excited the state has shown its confidence in us by renewing that contract. St. Francis is the only agency to provide these services in the Oberlin area. But what does that mean?

It means we help children who need temporary care outside of their home. It means we work to keep children in their home towns, in their own schools, near their families and friends.

It means we strive for family reunification, and we support foster and adoptive parents in Oberlin and throughout western Kansas. When we come together to keep children and teens close to home, everyone wins.

As a part of the St. Francis team, I'm proud to work closely with families that provide kids with safety, love and guidance in a family setting. They're outstanding

people, opening their hearts and homes to children and teens who need temporary foster care or a permanent home.

They took a risk and got involved and made a difference.

I believe there are more caring, concerned adults in Oberlin who want to make a difference. I'm hoping they do so soon.

Sharon Ringler, vice president
Children and family services
St. Francis Academy, Salina

Letter to the Editor

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243

Published each Wednesday by Haynes Publishing Co., 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749. Periodicals mail postage paid at Oberlin, Kan. 67749.

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Decatur, Dresden and Decatur County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association, Nebraska Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year, \$30 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$34 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$37 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$20 extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

Office hours: 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
(Also open most Saturdays when someone is in.)

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