

## Judges should decide disputes, not expenses

The Kansas Legislature will have to decide next year what, if anything, to do about the state Supreme Court.

The court way overreached its powers when it ordered the Legislature to spend specific amounts on schools.

The issue is not how much money schools need, but who decides how much is enough.

The court says it will decide, but that's bad for democracy. Unelected judges are supposed to decide our disputes and interpret the laws, not spend money.

The court based its decision on a phrase in the state Constitution which says the Legislature shall make "suitable" provision for schools. The court defined suitable as it was outlined in a consultants' report the Legislature itself had ordered.

The Legislature later decided that the consultants' figures were a little more than suitable.

"Never mind," the court said. "Get more money."

On the death penalty, too, the court has been out of step with Kansans. The court went out of its way to make certain that a troop of murderers escaped lethal injection.

If the Legislature decided that the death penalty was proper, and several juries agreed to apply it, what place has the court to make its

own rules here?

Good question.

In the old days, we used to elect Supreme Court judges in this state. The good government movement saw that as a political nightmare, dragging the courts into places they ought not to go.

Maybe the do-gooders were right, but the present system, where the governor picks judges from a list provided by a nominating panel, has let the court get way out of tune with the people.

What to do?

Well, electing district judges, as most Kansas counties still do, seems to work pretty well. It's rare for a judge to lose his job, but it can happen if one becomes out of touch.

We'd go for that.

A plan to have the state Senate pass on judicial appointments, much as the U.S. Senate does, seems a half measure, but it would be better than no action.

Whatever it decides on the court, though, the Legislature needs to take back control of the school budget and start making decisions about how to spend state money.

That's the Legislature's job, after all. The members cannot afford to default on it again.

—Steve Haynes

## Love being treated as royalty

Jim and I are having a totally new experience. Until this weekend, I never knew what it felt like to be royalty. Now, I do.

Good minister friends of ours invited Jim to come to Syracuse to present a discussion of the Restoration movement in this country. He spoke Sunday morning, Sunday night, and will speak again Monday and Tuesday nights. I'm along as his support team.

If ever a congregation filled the description of hospitable, it is the First Christian Church of Syracuse.

From the moment we arrived in town, we were made to feel welcome. The couple hosting us in their home have given attention to every detail to make us comfortable. We have complete privacy in their upstairs, with our own bath and a beautifully appointed room.

Arlene is a quilter and her home reflects her warm heart as well as her handiwork. Her husband, Bob, is a self-described "gearhead." They work together in his auto repair business. Jim drooled as he toured Bob's state-of-the-art garage.

Our every need has been anticipated and families have signed up to have us for lunch and dinner every day of our stay. Some are meeting us for lunch at the church, others are



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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taking us out to eat. There are some great Mexican restaurants and I understand we will be sampling a couple.

It is very humbling for us. We know we're just common, everyday folk. But, for right now, in this place, Jim is the out-of-town expert.

—ob—

Our 6-year-old granddaughter, Taylor, called the other morning. She sounded so grown up, I didn't recognize her voice.

"Grandma, guess what? I scored two goals this morning."

Taylor plays in a soccer league but doesn't let the fact that she is the shortest on the team slow her down.

"Yeah," she said, "scored half the points on our team, and we won."

—ob—

It's hard to believe Taylor will soon be 7. All our grandkids are get-

ting older. Alexandria is almost 11, Chantelle is 12 and Angelia is 15.

Where is the time going? We used to look way ahead to the day Jim would "retire." That day is coming in March and now it doesn't seem so far away. We know he will never entirely quit working, but maybe he can slow down and do some of the things he's been putting off.

Our problem is, we'll never live long enough to get them all done.

### From the Bible

My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.  
Proverbs 7: 1, 2

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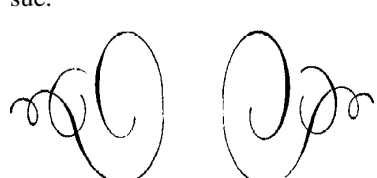
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## Home sweet home soon—I hope

I realized that I haven't been home for six Fridays in a row.

I like to travel, but this is getting ridiculous.

I'm blaming the whole thing on Steve's National Newspaper Association job. That's probably not true but, hey, it's good enough for me.

We started out at the Lake of the Ozarks for the Missouri Press Convention. The next week it was the National Newspaper Convention in Milwaukee. Then we were in Lincoln, Neb., to honor a couple of friends being inducted into the Nebraska Newspaper Hall of Fame. From there, we went to Emporia for the reopening of William Allen White's home as a museum and then we go to Washington for a National Newspaper Association board meeting.

Right now, I'm in Creede, Colo. This one I can't blame on any newspaper, friend, association or even my husband. We are here to enjoy the mountains for a few days and close up our house.

As winter approaches, we have to remove every bit of liquid, drain the pipes and have someone put antifreeze in the toilets.

We also need to clean the place, shut off the electricity and take home all food in the refrigerator and anything in the cupboard that might attract mice or insects.

The shutdown takes us most of a day, but don't tell my staff that. I've been telling them it takes most of a



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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week for 10 years now and they're still falling for it.

The trees have mostly shed their leaves here in Creede, so we took off for a day in Taos, N.M., and for a ride on the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad on Sunday. It was the last trip of the year and we were hoping to see some leaves.

The mountains were spectacular on the train trip, even though the cottonwoods close to Taos have still not turned to the golden yellow that is so pretty. Maybe next week, but we'll be in Washington.

Taos is a funny old town. The pueblo has been there for centuries. You can go and visit it, but they charge you \$10 to get in. It's the only town I know of that charges admission.

The town of Taos itself grew up near the pueblo as a Spanish settlement, an outpost of the frontier and later as an art colony where you can find everything from the worst paintings in the world to classic Santa Clara pottery and Georgia O'Keefe prints.

We were meeting a friend, Guy Wood, for dinner. Guy and his wife Marcia owned a newspaper in Colorado back when we lived here. They left, buying the paper in Angel Fire, N.M., more than 20 years ago. We see them occasionally at press meetings over the years and our friendship has remained.

Marcia was in Santa Fe at a sorority reunion, but Guy drove over the mountain to have dinner with us. It was a mellow evening as a rare rain-storm gently showered the town and ruined my hairdo.

I didn't care. Taos, like most of New Mexico, is in the desert. All rain is welcome here.

Before long, we'll be heading back home for our first weekend there in weeks and weeks. It will be a long time before I see Creede, Taos or the Woods again, but I'm anxious to work in my yard and deal with the piles of junk collecting in the corners of my house.

Maybe if I click my heels together three times....

## San Luis walk awe inspiring

Walking in His shoes is a moving experience.

That's an understatement, but how can you explain the feeling?

We stopped Saturday in tiny San Luis, Colo., county seat of one of the poorest counties in the U.S., at least in terms of family income.

San Luis, nestled in a corner of the giant San Luis Valley in southern Colorado, home to 3,700 souls, is rich in heritage, tradition, faith, beauty and people. On the edge of one of the giant Spanish land grants that dot the western landscape, it has never been a wealthy place, but it is not a bad place to live.

Settlers first came this way from Mexico nearly 400 years ago, and San Luis claims to be the oldest town in Colorado. Descendants of the early settlers make up most of the population today. Some of the state's leading families have come from this area, including that of Colorado's new senator and U.S. representative, Ken and John Salazar.

From the center of town, across from the 125-year-old courthouse, are the steps leading up to the Stations of the Cross. It's a rocky path, much like Christ must have walked to Golgotha.

At nearly 7,500 feet elevation, the



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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way up the mountain is steep. At the top sits a church, a Catholic chapel. Along the way, San Luis sculptor Hubert Maestas has created striking brass interpretations of the traditional Stations of the Cross.

Churches, starting with the local parish, but spreading all across Colorado, raised money to build the shrine. It has become an international attraction. Mr. Maestas sells copies of the brass sculptures from his studio; the Episcopal church in McCook has a replica of his final piece, the Resurrection.

But the main attraction is walking the Via Dolorosa, the Way of the Cross.

There are people here most days, at any time of day. Tourists stop. Many have come this way just to see the shrine, to walk as He walked.

At Easter, it's just plain busy.

How to describe the feeling? Emotion welling up. Great sadness.

The thought of unspeakable cruelty, and Maestas does not spare the viewer the detail, the spikes through bone and flesh.

His statues lead walkers through the traditional 14 stations of the cross, from Pilate condemning Him to die, to the cross itself at the top, and to the tomb. We stop at each one and read the scripture aloud.

From the top, the view is across the verdant valley to the Sangre de Cristo mountain range, named "Blood of Christ" by Spanish explorers for the color the west-facing peaks take on just at sunset.

Then, the final piece, a soaring depiction of the resurrection, which breaks the gloom and brings the visitor back to hope.

It's a striking experience, humbling, depressing and exalting all at once.

I recommend it.

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