

## Gov. Parkinson showed courage in budget cuts

Hooray for Gov. Mark Parkinson, for having the courage to slash the state budget not once, but twice, since the Legislature went out of session last spring.

Not only that, but the governor took time, in an aside, to lecture greedy school superintendents and teachers who want to sue the state for money it doesn't have, and taxpayers can't afford, so they can avoid taking their share of the budget cuts.

The time to worry about that, the governor said, will be after the state's economy recovers, the recession has passed, unemployment shrinks and Kansans' incomes start to grow again.

Let's hope the lawyer-driven group known as "Schools for Fair Funding" listens to his advice. The governor, in his message announcing the cuts, pointedly said there was no point in spending taxpayers' cash on a lawsuit over money the state simply doesn't have.

The governor also said that, this time around, the cuts are going to hurt. Cuts include \$50 million from the Kansas Department of Transportation, meaning projects will be dropped, roads won't be resurfaced and other critical maintenance will be put on hold. With \$36 million more cut from public schools, teachers may lose jobs and classrooms surely will get more crowded.

The Department of Corrections, which already has closed some programs, will cut back on parole supervision. Waiting lists will grow for programs for the disabled. Colleges and universities will have to put off already-delayed maintenance.

None of this is good. As the governor said, "We have cut every ounce of waste, streamlined every program and squeezed every last saving we could find. We are now cutting basic services."

And the recession is not over yet. State revenues continue to run under official estimates, which in turn, have been cut again and again. There is no sign of a turnaround in state income. Why?

Because Kansas businesses are not making much, and therefore are not paying income taxes at the expected rate. (And the projected rate is far below tax collections a couple of years ago, when businesses were flush.)

Kansans are not doing so well, either. Thousands are out of work; thousands more have lost overtime, seen hours cut, even been forced to take unpaid leave. People are not paying income taxes as they did in good times, because they don't have the income. They are not spending, so sales tax collections are down.

When will it end? No one knows, but the state has to dig in for at least another year of cuts and bare-bones spending. There won't be much waste left to trim by the time it's over.

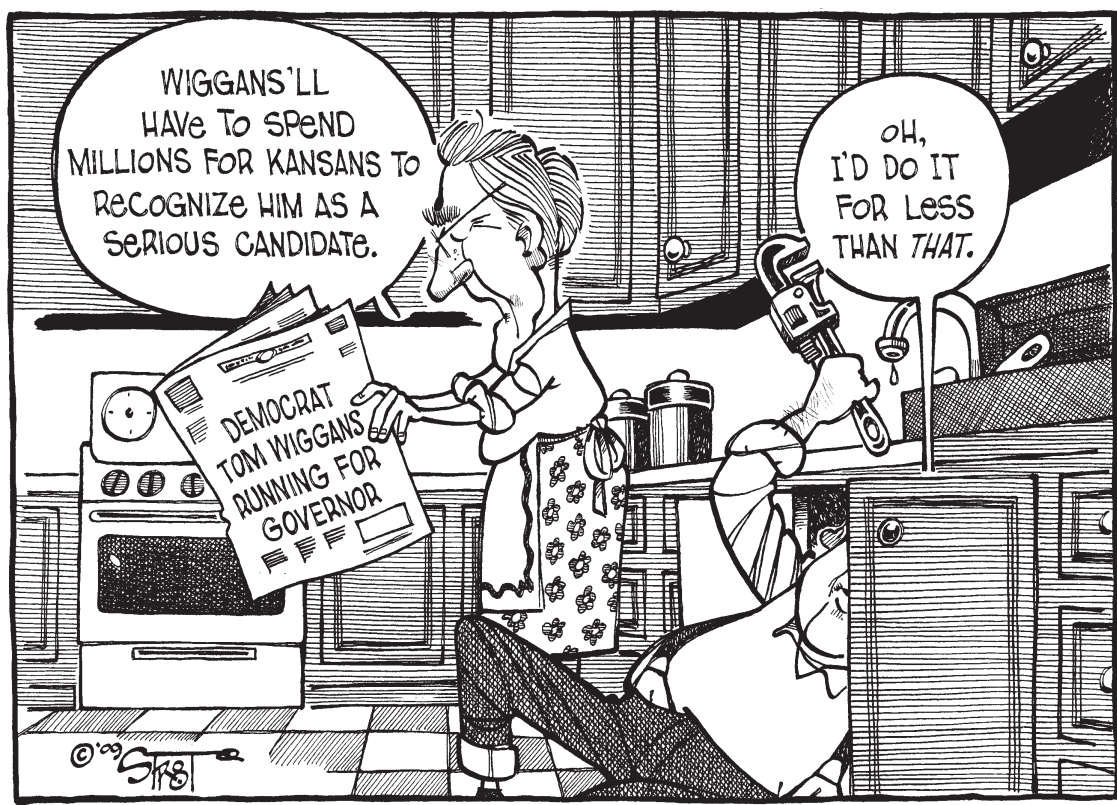
The governor called for a review of state spending and priorities when the Legislature convenes, aimed at getting the state through the crisis. Yet it's clear that taxpayers and businesses don't have a lot to give right now. They are, if anything, hurting worse than the state.

Things could be worse. Some states already are cutting payroll and forcing employees to take unpaid time off. But Kansas has it bad enough. Everyone, schools, colleges, state agencies, will have to tighten their belts and do the best they can.

Good times will return, and when they do, there will be more money, though never probably enough to satisfy all the state's need.

In all this, Gov. Parkinson, as a short-term governor thrown in a tough situation, has performed admirably. Our hat's off to him.

— Steve Haynes



## Gravel not the tastiest snack

It was a beautiful fall — right on my face.

We were out walking in Sappa Park on Saturday.

The park has picnic areas, camping areas and trails, lots and lots of trails. Some of the trails go up and around the dry lake bed. Some go around the inside and a couple cut right across, running through weeds, grass and stands of trees that grew up during the dry years.

One trail goes away from the lake and heads more or less toward town through the trees. You could almost believe you are back east while winding your way around through trees and brush along the creek. In one spot, a fallen tree has bowed itself right over the trail. The only way through is under the arching trunk.

Volunteers run mowers down the trails several times a year to keep them clear and usable. Since nothing is growing right now, it's been awhile since this trail has seen much maintenance, but it's in excellent shape.

We had just gotten to the cattle guard that marks the end of one section of the trail. At this point, we usually turn back. The walk from where we park to that spot is about 30 minutes, so to the cattle guard and back is an hour of exercise for



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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us and the dog.

Steve turned around. The dog headed back up the trail. I turned around and stuck my foot under a fallen branch laying mostly off the trail. I tried to recover and almost made it — but not quite.

Crash!  
Steve turned around and hurried back to make sure I wasn't broken. Nothing injured but my dignity, which was severely dented. I had landed on my front-side with my hands out in front of me shielding my face, so I was shaken but not hurt.

The last time I took a header like that, I landed face-first on a gravel road and I wasn't nearly so sure I wasn't hurt.

It turned out I was fine. I just had a few bruises and a mouthful of gravel.

That time, Steve had told the dog to heel and she had amazingly obeyed. Right in front of where I

was walking.

I jumped, and sort of tripped over her in midair.

I've since learned that the dog will always go to Steve's left side when called to heel and I try to stay on the right. This doesn't always work, but I haven't had any gravel for lunch in quite a while.

Now if I can just figure out which side the fallen branches are taking, I'll have it made.

### From the Bible

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense; I shall not be moved.

*Psalms, 62:5-6*

## Here's recipe for a good time

If you had as nice a Thanksgiving as I did, you had a wonderful time. Family, friends and food were the main ingredients. Add a sprinkle of shopping, a dash of perfect weather and a "smidgeon" of board games for the master recipe of a good time.

My oldest daughter, Halley, and I did something we had not done in years. We had a night for just the two of us.

I left Jim at Adam and Kara's while Halley and I went out to dinner, a movie and a sleepover at her apartment. We went to dinner at Carabba's, the restaurant where Halley used to work. We were immediately swarmed by her old friends who still work there. The manager even came to tell her "Hi."

It was quite a reunion, and I promised a "shout out" to Becca and David who waited on our table that night. The food was wonderful, surpassed only by the great service we received.

Halley has a one-bedroom apartment, so we shared her bed that night. In the early morning hours, I felt a "not-so-gentle" nudge. It seems I had been snoring and she was trying to get me to roll over.

She apologized later but, I completely understand. If you're not used to sleeping with a snorer, it's



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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awful.

— ob —

We played a lot of games during the week - and laughed a lot. But, for the life of me, I can only pinpoint one stand-out moment.

My almost-15-year-old granddaughter, Alexandria, is on the pep squad at Reagan High School in San Antonio. They wear modest, but cute, uniforms and perform during half-time. Her aunts and I pressured her into modeling her uniform for us. Then, of course, we wanted to see a cheer. Her school's mascot is the Reagan Rattler and part of the pep squad pose is to curl the pointer and middle finger on one hand like a rattler's fangs.

Alex is a little shy, and we really put her on the spot. So, her Aunt Halley said, "Come on. I'll do it with you." Halley proceeded to put her hands together over her head like a belly dancer and to make up a cheer as she went. "We are the rattlers. We

slither and you can't catch us. Oh, yeah! We're the rattlers." And, then with both hands she gave us all the rattler sign with an added, "S-s-s-s, S-s-s-s" for good measure.

Maybe you had to be there to appreciate it, but we all, including Alex, laughed until we cried. And, of course, for the rest of the week, everyone gave the rattler sign with their own, "S-s-s-s, S-s-s-s."

— ob —

Since our return home, we've really jumped into getting Christmas lights up. If the weather holds, we'll have it done in a couple more days.

Although I can't say Jim is ever really done. You know his policy: "I will put up lights until I run out or Christmas is here."

We'll never run out of lights, so I'm prepared to see him still putting up lights Dec. 24.

## Cider passion can be hot

Fall is in the air, which means it's about time for Cynthia to blow up the refrigerator.

Every year, as the leaves fall and autumn slides into winter, she gets the hankering for hot spiced apple cider. She then runs out and buys the biggest jug of the stuff she can.

She likes the unpasteurized, unfiltered, "natural" kind best, the kind with lots of sediment and gunk in the bottom of the jar.

She'll go for a big jug, a gallon maybe, in glass or plastic, but preferably old-fashioned glass.

And she'll commence to drinking hot cider, one cup at a time. She buys special spice mixes and stuff to put in the cider and perk it up. She loves this stuff. I even think it's pretty good, but I have my limits. And I prefer the clear, clean taste of filtered cider with a little tartness, thank you very much.

She'll heat two or three cups of the first week and a couple the next. By Christmas, though, she'll have tired of the novelty. She finds that even she has her limits when it comes to hot cider. In short, she loses interest.

Someone has to watch this stuff in the refrigerator, and that someone tends to be me. I have learned this the hard way.

What we think of as cider today is really just apple juice.

Cider, in the old-fashioned sense,



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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is fermented apple juice. That means yeast gets into it and makes alcohol, or ethanol, the same stuff as in beer, wine, whiskey and gasoline.

And if you ever took chemistry, you know that fermentation creates an excess of one other product: carbon dioxide gas.

So as the juice ferments, it gives off gas, creating pressure in the container unless it's been vented.

This is not as much a problem as it once was, since we no longer have children at home. They live elsewhere and are of legal age anyway.

But I can remember more than once the kids complaining about a "funny" taste, but only after downing a glass or two of the cider. In most states, that's against the law.

Then there was the winter she blew up the refrigerator.

We were in the living room, reading when it happened. We hear a small explosion in the back of the house, nothing real unusual when you have three kids. I was detailed

to investigate.

After checking the toilet, the stove and the hot water heater, I opened the back 'fridge, where we kept stuff like milk, pop and beer. And apple cider.

It must have built up some pressure, because it had pretty much blown its top. And its middle, too. There was sticky, alcoholic cider all over everything.

I did make her come help clean it up, and that took some time, wiping unfiltered juice, gunk and all, and glass shards out of the refrigerator, and wiping down all the pop and beer, too.

I have to admit, she's never blown up the 'fridge since. Maybe that's because I tend to check the cider and throw it out when it starts to pressurize.

But it was one of the more notable nights of our marriage. The kids were a little disappointed, because they didn't get any of the forbidden fruit juice. But hey, there's always next year, right?

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