

Now is the best time to cut our state budget

A tussle between the conservative Kansas House and the more moderate (but hardly liberal this year) Kansas Senate over how to handle a bill making cuts to the current state budget is deadlocked, putting off an agreement on savings.

That is not good. The bill needs to pass this week, because every day counts. A month's delay, threatened by the dispute between houses, will cost the state a month's savings. That could amount to millions.

House members want to cut right way. Some claim the total should be closer to \$50 million or \$55 million rather than the \$35 million sought by Gov. Sam Brownback.

Senate members are worried about losing federal money for special education. They want to lock in an extra \$25 million to guarantee that the federal government won't punish the state for not providing enough.

The governor has suggested passing the \$35 million in cuts now and dealing with special education later, when the budget situation is more clear and the state knows how much is needed. Some suspect it could be a bit more than the \$25 million.

We say cut now while the budget stroke can be as broad and deep as possible. A month or two months from now, any given level of cuts will produce fewer savings. And everyone knows the state faces a shortfall in this year's budget.

Any deficit left undealt with will just come out of the ending balance the state has to begin next year's budget July 1, meaning even deeper cuts next year. It will hurt less to cut a little more a little sooner.

And as the governor suggests, the time to deal with special education will be when the figures needed to make an intelligent decision are in. Not while holding up the entire show in Topeka.

It's an issue that needs to be dealt with, but as part of the bigger puzzle of how much the state can afford to spend on schools.

Public education, kindergarten through high school, already gets more than half the budget. Teachers and administrators want more, of course. Some have suggested raising the sales tax yet again to raise money, but voters have spoken on that subject: they said, "no," electing more conservatives to the House and to state office.

Despite the cries of teachers and others, the state will spend more on education next year than last. The problem is, the increase is going to teacher pensions and other programs, not to classrooms. That's too bad, but teachers are not offering to take pension cuts, either.

Gov. Brownback lamented that situation, which forced him to cut the budget for teaching kids once again, even after a tax increase last year.

But people have said the state must start living within its means. In this case, a "suitable" budget for education will be one the state can pay for, and in the end, that should be something we all can live with.

With another tax increase out of the question, this issue needs to be settled quickly so the state can start saving, and the Legislature can move on to figuring out next year's budget.

— Steve Haynes

Girls plan road trip for sink

Roadtrip!

The kitchen remodel at the home of my brother Dick and his wife Donna is progressing, but it's time to install the kitchen sink, and the kind she wants is not to be found around here.

That means one thing: Donna and I get to go shopping. And—wouldn't you know it—the men want to go along. The forecast is for more wind and cold, so neither one of them wanted anything to do with the outside. Can't say as I blame them.

Besides, if there is anyone I would even consider being cooped up in a car with for more than two hours, it would be Dick and Donna. You know how good conversation makes time pass quickly? When you're with them, time flies and you're almost sad when the trip is over.

-ob-

Kids now-a-days think they invented texting shorthand. You know of bff's (best friends forever) and c u (see you).

We were using this kind of abbreviated messaging 50 years ago. Granted, it was hand-written, but it was like a secret language our parents didn't understand. Which, of course, was the point.

Back in "the day," we actually wrote letters (with stationery, a stamp and everything) to each other. You wouldn't think of mailing it without emblazoning S.W.A.K. on the outside of the envelope. Everybody knew that meant "Sealed With A Kiss".

This shorthand even infiltrated



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
quality-pro@webtv.net

the spoken word. Pajamas became Pjs, a parent would tell a child to "straighten up PDQ" — that meant Pretty Darned Quick in polite society — and if something was a rush job, you would say, "I need this ASAP."

The military should probably be credited with inventing the acronym. Everyone knew what their MOS (Military Occupational Speciality) was. A power unit was a P/U. Perhaps you had to know the context before you knew the meaning of PA. It could have meant "pad abort," "pending availability,"

"pilotless aircraft," "point of aim," "power amplifier," "protected area," "precision attack," "per annum" or "performance analysis."

If someone yelled, "Take cover! There's a PA coming in for a landing!" You knew they weren't warning you of "pending availability."

-ob-

I had several comments on my Facebook entry about Jim and my giant Valentine on the side of our barn. All were positive, but one friend said if her husband ever did something like that, she'd think he was having an affair.

Write

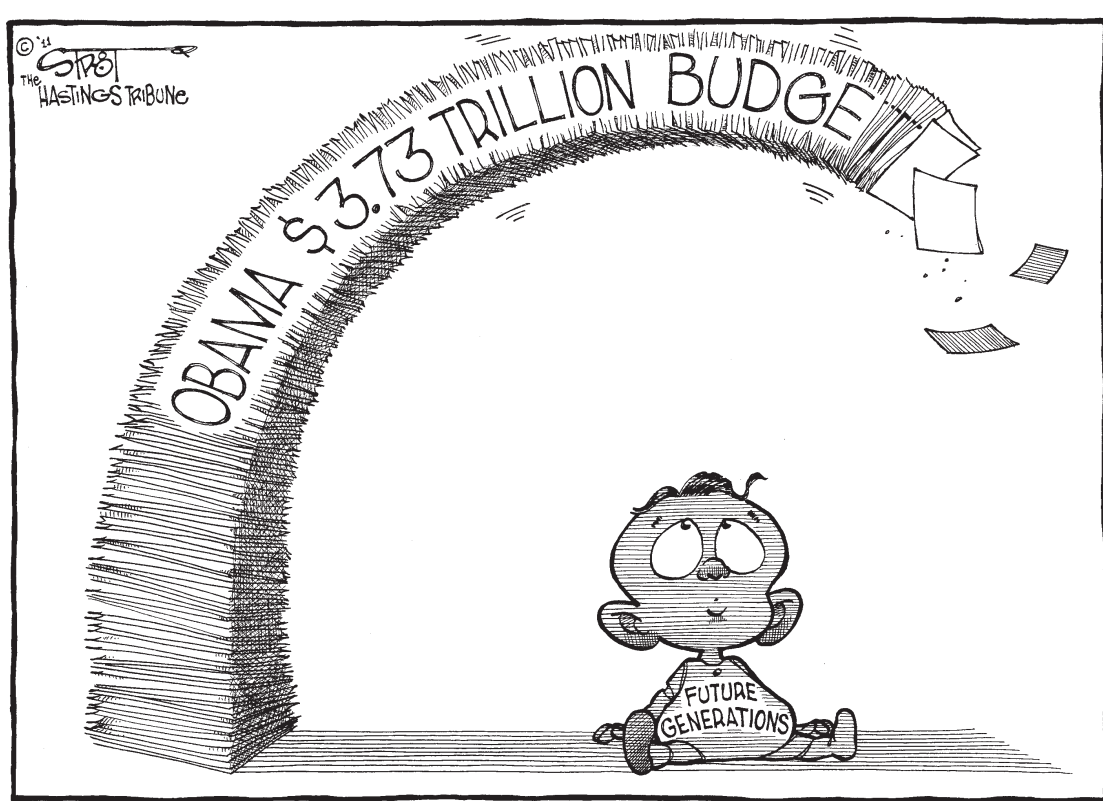
The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

Mail letters to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749, or by e-mail to oberlinherald@nwkansan.com.

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

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

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.



Old car gets a few more miles

She shakes. She rattles. She rolls.

She's a candy-apple-red sports car that's seen a lot of highway and loves to run. She also goes through snow like a four-wheel-drive truck.

So that's why I was driving my 1990 Probe a couple of weeks ago. The old gal sits out in the weather winter and summer and only gets out on the road now and then these days. But when I need her, she's always there.

The snow wasn't that deep, but my Toyota took one look at the slight incline on the alley leading to our garage and said, "No thank you; I don't think so."

So I traded in my almost new car with heated seats, power everything and antilock brakes for the Probe, a five-speed, manual transmission bucket of bolts that I dearly love but don't drive very much anymore.

As I drove from Oberlin to Colby with the temperatures somewhere below zero, I remembered why I don't drive this beloved hunk of metal much now.

The Probe doesn't have a compact disc player. It doesn't have a tape player. It doesn't even have a working radio or clock. I can't tell the temperature, and while the heater works just fine, the air



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
c.haynes@nwkansan.com

conditioning is out and there are no seat heaters. Hadn't been invented yet, I guess.

It was built before fancy antilock brakes were even an option, so you gotta be careful at stop signs. Sometimes you stop, and sometimes you press the brakes and just keep going through the intersection.

But it had one bit advantage over my Solara. I doesn't mind snow. In fact, it was bought in the Colorado mountains. It knows how to go around hairpin curves and over mountain passes. It doesn't mind snow and ice and freezing temperatures.

But it finally stopped last week after I drove it to Norton.

When I was ready to go, it wouldn't start. A friend got a battery charger for me and we tried again. Still nothing.

Had my old friend finally died? Had it frozen to death out in the snow on Main Street?

Well, we hope not. While it's still in the auto hospital, we think it just needs a new battery cable, a new battery and some new fuses.

Before long, We'll be back in business, the Probe and I.

So, if you see me drive by in a red sports car with slightly peeling candy-apple-red paint within the next few weeks, get out your snow shovel.

From the Bible

For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God?

God is my strength and power; and he maketh my way perfect.

2 Samuel 32 -33

February shows spring ahead

Nature can be so cruel, teasing us like she did last week.

Still, when the end of February rolls around, spring can't be far away.

You had to know that she was kidding when she sent us 70-degree weather at the middle of the month. My guess is even the wheat plants knew it was a trick, and wheat plants are notoriously short on intellect.

I admit, one batch of jonquils out back did start to poke their heads up above the ground. So far, they haven't been nipped even though it got down to 10 degrees by Monday morning.

Other flowers, including the crocuses, wisely stayed hidden. And I don't blame them.

We stayed inside, too, with a north wind blowing. Looking at the forecast, I'm thinking we will be woefully short of our goal of walking 25 miles this week.

Cynthia says her ears are sensitive, and she can't be out in the cold wind. Sounds like an excuse to me, but when it gets below 20 and there's a wind, I don't argue.

The dog is always willing to go for a walk, no matter how cold it is, rain or shine. Only heat would keep her in the house. But then, she's a dog. Wheat plants are smarter.

Cats are a different story. They hate cold. You'd think a creature wearing a fur coat would take to cold, but cats are most happy beside a warm stove — or on the porch on a 90-degree day. On a cold night, they set foot outside, then turn around and go back in. No wonder people



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
s.haynes@nwkansan.com

say they're so smart.

Still, winter is about over. According to the climate people, spring weather here starts about March 1, and that usually is the case. Sure, there'll be snow and cold days. But the temperatures start to creep up and snow stays around only a day or two.

You only have to remember that March is to spring as November is to fall. April and October are mates. It won't be really nice until May, and all too soon, it'll be summer.

But spring training is in full swing, and Saturday the first games in the Cactus League begin the season. Barely a month later, it'll be opening day.

Soon enough, we'll be raking, trimming, cleaning, watering and mowing, getting flower beds, gardens and lawns ready to grow. We'll have to clean and tune the mower, find someone to till the garden and fertilize the lawn.

I don't know about you, but right now the idea of yard work sounds pretty good. I know by August, it'll be drudgery, but compared to shoveling snow, I'll take it.

Snow. In March and April, you hardly have to shovel the stuff.

You just clear doors, maybe a path to the car, and let it melt. Because warmer days are the one thing that's certain.

Daylight Saving Time starts March 13 this year, the second Sunday of the month. By March 20, when the spring equinox rolls around, and some people say it's the "official" start of spring, it'll already be time to mow the lawn. Days will start to be longer than night, especially noticable with the earlier start to summer time.

In March, you may begin the month worried about blizzards, but you're sure to end it worried about tornadoes. April and May are prime time for "summer" storms, and the nasty stuff usually trails off after June.

By April, bushes will sprout leaves, the lawn will be in flower and grass will need to be cut. By April, we'll be waiting for the trees to leaf out and the irises to bloom. Won't happen 'til May, but that won't keep us from wanting.

Soon enough, it'll be summer. But let's not rush things. Just enjoy spring. After this week, we'll deserve it.

Cut the budgets by cutting salaries

To the Editor:

To our Congress: I think that all of you are overpaid by at least 50 to 70 percent, and I think this would be a good place to cut to ease budget concerns.

I think that all politicians should have term limits. If I recall correctly, we the people voted for this.

I don't think any of you except the president and vice president are entitled to any retirement benefits.

It sets me off to hear the term "Going Back to Work." I don't think any of you has ever done an honest day's work.

It would seem as though when you blow hot air, that you are representing us. You should be represent-

Letter to the Editor

ing "We the People," not a political party or lobbyists.

To cut more spending, let's get out of Iraq and Afghanistan as soon as possible. These wars are not only costing us lots of dollars, but also military lives and crippling injuries.

If you people had not robbed Social Security and Medicare, they would not be in the shape they are. Pet projects do not represent us.

I also believe that we need to move more of our manufacturing, which would bring jobs, money and taxes to the economy.

If you think that you need to raise taxes, why don't you tax Internet sales? This would bring money back into our communities and state. All Internet sales places would collect this tax of 8 percent, plus 2 percent for distribution to all the cities according to population.

The price of gasoline should not be raised, as we are just starting to come out of the recession. Big Oil, I think you are a greedy, selfish bunch!

J.D. Roberts
Longmont, Colo.

THE OBERLIN HERALD

Serving Oberlin and Decatur County since 1879

USPS 401-600

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.

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

Phone: (785) 475-2206 Fax (785) 475-2800
E-mail: oberlin.herald@nwkansan.com

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

Nor'West Newspapers STAFF

Steve Haynes editor
Kimberly Davis managing editor
Mary Lou Olson society editor
Nancy Robinson proofreader
Carolyn Kelley-Plotts columnist
Joan Betts historian
Cynthia Haynes business manager
Pat Cozad want ads/circulation
Tim Davis advertising representative
Anita Ketterl advertising makeup

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers
Kimberly Davis, assistant publisher

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcatur, 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, \$38 (tax included) in Decatur, Norton, Rawlins, Sheridan, Thomas and Red Willow counties; \$42 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$48 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$50-\$250 (in U.S. dollars only) extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to 170 S. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan. 67749-2243.

