

## Governor's olive branch best art folks can expect

Gov. Sam Brownback has backed down — a little — on his plan to do away with the Kansas Arts Commission, proposing that it be merged with the state Film Commission and placed in the Department of Commerce.

Last year, the governor vetoed the arts commission's entire budget, nearly \$700,000, a move which supposedly cost the state \$1.3 million on federal and regional grants. Arts advocates were outraged, from Topeka to the local arts commissions which received a lot of the grant money.

Now the governor is proposing a \$200,000 budget for the merged commission and a plan for an income-tax checkoff to support the new Creative Industries Coalition.

Predictably, Henry Schwaller IV, the former chair of the arts commission who has tried to be a thorn in the governor's side ever since the veto, pooh-poohed the plan. The checkoff couldn't possibly raise enough money to bring any federal funds, he sniffed.

Mr. Schwaller's name ought to indicate which side of the tracks he comes from, and there is the problem with spending taxpayers' money on the arts.

Most of us have no say in how it's spent, and the programs produced often lack mass appeal. It winds up with a few people who could afford to see plays and concerts on their own spending tax money to put on programs that don't serve most voters.

The logic and the ethics are suspect. In a

time when schools and universities are short of state money, why put dollars into programs with so little support?

Well, everyone agrees the arts are "good." And good for us, like broccoli. And a few dogged supporters won't give up on reaching for that \$2 million, especially the paid staff of arts commissions in larger cities. Their jobs are on the line, after all.

Mr. Schwaller has been a leader in this movement. He's a busy guy, according to his official biography, a real estate investor in Hays, where he also serves on the city council, and is a teacher in the business school at Fort Hays State University.

We don't doubt his sincerity, or that of anyone who wants to spend public money on what should be a private pursuit. We simply think it's wrong headed.

If all the arts-commission supporters got out and raised money for the arts, instead of just complaining about the end of state support, arts programs in Kansas could be flush with donations.

Maybe it's either more fun to complain, or some of these people just can't get the idea that the idea of an elite few deciding how tax money will be spent on the arts isn't so appealing to many people. Or that the state and federal governments don't have any money "left over" anyhow.

Maybe they will learn with time.

— Steve Haynes

## Here's a primer on the budget

Informative reports from the Legislature, reports that include up-to-date information and also inform about the overall process, seem to be the columns most enjoyed by readers.

This first report of the year could be called State Budget 101. The state, in effect, has two budgets. The All Funds Budget, controlled by the Governor and his staff, is twice the size of the General Fund Budget.

Last year, the All Funds Budget was just shy of \$14 billion while the General Fund was a little over \$6.1 billion.

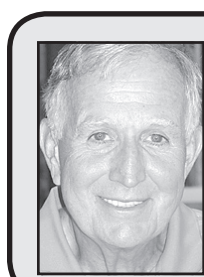
The All Funds budget includes the General Fund plus many dedicated funds, which must be spent on specified activities.

All federal grants to the state (representing about 17 percent of the All Funds budget) flow into dedicated funds.

The Legislature has no control over how federal grants must be used, but it can change the laws governing state revenues used to pay for some activities (unless a federal grant stipulates state matching funds).

For example, the State Highway Fund, the largest dedicated revenue fund at roughly \$1.4 billion, must be used to construct and maintain roadways. The highway fund receives its money from motor fuel taxes, motor vehicle registration fees, a dedicated portion of the state sales tax and the federal government.

However, the Legislature (and governor's staff) often sees fit to re-direct sales tax money from the State Highway Fund to the General Fund to pay for what a majority perceive as more urgent priorities.



### Letter from Topeka

By State Rep. Ward Cassidy  
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The same thing could happen with the motor fuel tax.

The state General Fund generates the budget debates you read about in the news.

As stated in the governor's Budget Report: "The state General Fund receives the most attention in the budget because it is the largest source of the uncommitted revenue available to the state. It is also the fund to which most general tax receipts are credited."

The Legislature may spend State General Fund dollars for any government purpose."

That being said, I read in the *Topeka Capital* that this year's session will likely be historical.

As I have said all along, shoring up the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, reforming Medicaid and school finance will dominate the session.

Wednesday night, the governor gave his "State of the State" address.

The pomp and circumstance associated with the evening was rather impressive. The governor's new tax plan adds one more giant item to consider in this session.

It is still too early to give you my opinion of how it will affect us.

Last Tuesday, I was invited to the governor's home with several other

legislators to discuss his school finance plan.

I would have to say, at this point, there would need to be a lot of changes before western Kansas could support it.

Being put on a power committee (Appropriations) has added a lot more work to my daily schedule and a lot more people wanting to know my thoughts.

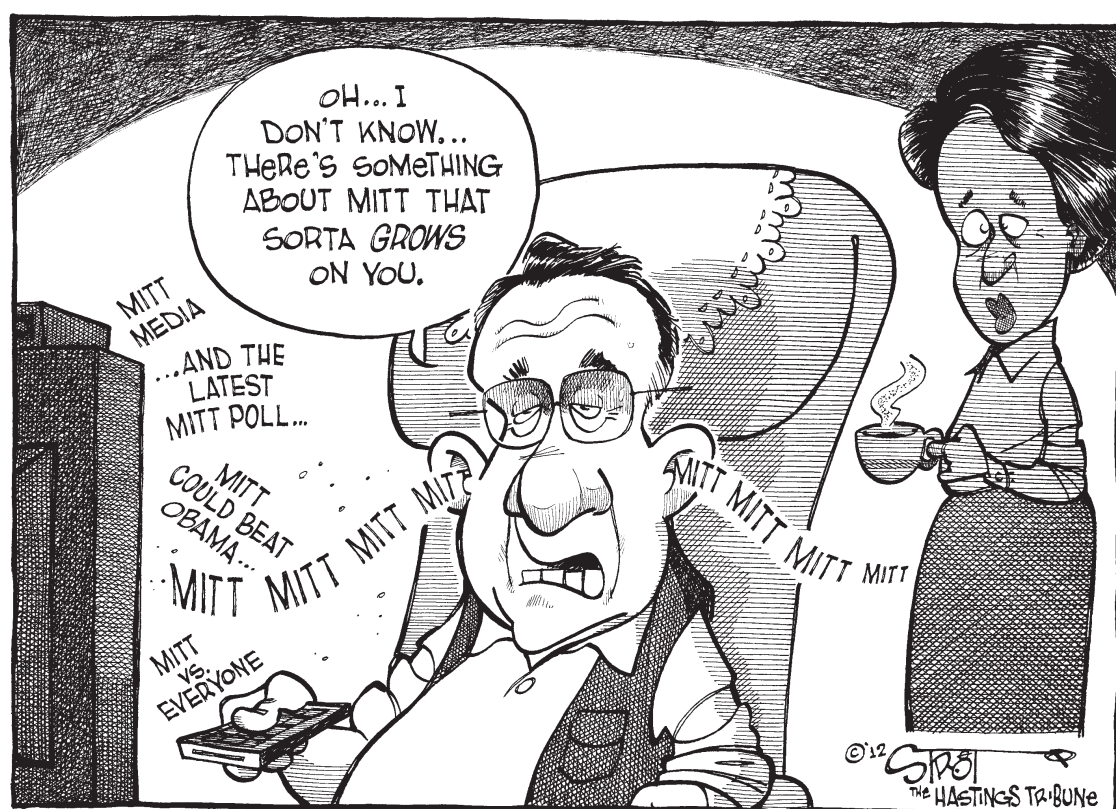
My thoughts are always — "What is best for northwest Kansas and the state of Kansas?"

I appreciate input from my district and will respond to the best of my ability. You may reach me at ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov.

### From the Bible

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: and there came a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

— Mark 1:9-11



## Truck gets the jump on 'em

Cynthia and I have been getting pretty good at jump-starting my truck, which seems to have some mysterious electrical fault.

In three years, we've put two new batteries into this beast, and it's still running them down. There's never any sign of what caused the battery to ebb, just a slow — or no — crank in the morning.

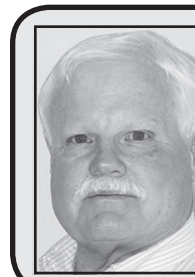
And cold as it's been, failures have become more frequent.

I've learned to quickly unzip the bag where I keep the tow rope, battery cables, flashlight and other emergency gear in the back of the truck. I can pop the hood and hook up the cables in nothing flat.

Cynthia has learned just how to back her car out of the garage — we normally park both at an angle out from the center to leave more space — and how to avoid some of the stuff normally stored between the vehicles.

The other day I even figured out how to clip the live ends of the cables to a wooden cabinet between the cars to keep them clear until she gets her hood open.

We can get that truck going in under three minutes — if it'll crank — and under 10 if it needs time to charge. The latest wrinkle is a battery charger we found amongst all the junk in the garage. That's the last resort, but it works.



### Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes  
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Some days, when the truck has been on the highway, I've no trouble starting it in the morning. Others, when it's been sitting more, or just when it feels like it, it's no go.

The only clue — if it is a clue — is that the air-bag light seems to come on when the electrical problem has been expressing itself.

Cynthia says it reminds her of the summer we travelled around Colorado in my car, a two-door Chevrolet Nova, that had a problem on warm days in high altitude with vapor lock.

I haven't even heard of vapor lock in years, but in those days, it was a problem in the summer sometimes. Gasoline in the fuel line would vaporize and you couldn't pump fuel.

A mechanic explained the problem to us and showed us where in the line it likely occurred, at the top of a bend just under the carburetor. He said you might be able to cure

the lock by cooling that line off with a wet rag.

Cars today don't even have carburetors, and maybe that's a good thing, but in the '70s, that's all we had.

Anyway, we learned to work as a team when the Nova vapor locked. I'd pop the hood, she's go to the cooler for an icy rag and we'd have that puppy started in a couple of minutes. We toured our way through Alamosa, Dolores, Mesa Verde and Telluride with that cold rag and never got stuck.

It just goes to show the value of training and teamwork — especially when you're motivated by being 30 miles from town on a 90-degree day.

Anyway, I'm taking my truck to the shop this week, and I hope they can figure out what the problem is. Teamwork or no, I'm tired of jump-starting it. Real tired.

## If only she'd put them away



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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The lost is found. I should have remembered my mother's advice: "Carolyn, if you would just put everything away, you'd find it."

Well, who knew my old pair of glasses were hiding in the pocket of an apron I hadn't worn for several months. That admission alone — that I hadn't worn an apron — would have gotten me in trouble with Mom.

One day late last summer, I could not find my glasses. Usually I hung them around my neck on a chain, even though all my girls think that is kind of "old-ladyish." My daughter Jennifer had given me a stylish neck chain with cute little silver hearts that dangle at the temples. She probably figured if I was going to wear one of the things, she could at least guarantee it would be a nice one.

Anyway, the summer heat and chaffing had caused me to remove the chain. Every day after that, it was not a matter of "if" I would misplace my glasses, but "when." Jim will tell you that I spent more time looking for my glasses than I did wearing them.

I don't need them to read or work on the computer, but I do need them to see across the room, drive or watch television. Consequently, I was constantly taking them off.

I turned the house upside down looking for them. I tried retracing my steps and backtracking my day to no avail. Finally, I resigned myself to the fact they were gone. Nothing to do but order new glasses.

I hate to admit this, but I get my glasses through a major discount store where the frames cost \$9. Since my prescription is very common, I called to order a new pair. The assistant was reluctant to order new frames for me sight unseen.

I assured her that as long as they were black, they would be fine. A few days later, they were ready to be picked up, and I could see again.

Fast-forward to this weekend. Jim and I were putting on an appreciation supper for our church family to say "Thank You" for helping pay for our most recent Mexico mission trip. I was preparing to assemble about 120 burritos and donned my favorite apron. I felt something in the pocket, reached in, and there were my old glasses.

Yeah! Now, I have two pairs. Let's hope I can always find one.

## Song reminds her of past

We sang Happy Birthday to a young lady at Rotary the other day. There were a couple dozen of us, and we were off key and out of synch. Really off key and out of synch.

She put her hand over her eyes and her head on the table.

I'm not sure if she was critiquing our singing or just totally embarrassed. She was to turn 18 the next day. Singing that song badly, really badly, is a club tradition.

I got to thinking about her world and mine, the day when I turned 18.

Back in 1966, the biggest event of our lifetime had been the death of John F. Kennedy. Everyone could tell you where they were when JFK was killed in Dallas.

I suppose for my mother and father, it was Pearl Harbor.

And for my young friend, it's probably 9-11 and the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

When I turned 18, it was legal for me to drink a beer, but not liquor. However, I couldn't vote.

I remember being really annoyed that my sister, who is six years younger than I am, got to vote for president the same year I did. They changed the law from 21 to 18, and



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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I was born 1948, a presidential year. So at 20, I was too young in 1968, and by 1972, the voting age was 18. I was 24 and my little sister was 18.

I never smoked, but I could have started buying cigarettes just about any time I wanted. I remember my parents, who did smoke, giving me a quarter to buy a pack of Pall Malls out of a vending machine.

It wasn't legal for minors to buy out of the machine then, but who was going to stop me?

Yes, I remember buying alcohol before I was 21. I never did like beer. We would put the bottle on the window ledge outside our dorm room so that it wouldn't be found by the residence hall director. But, then, I never remember anyone ever checking for alcohol in our rooms, either.

Today, my young friend could go

to jail for many of the silly stunts I pulled back then.

Times have changed, and whether it's for better or worse, I can't say.

That dorm room didn't have a telephone or a television. My only plug-in devices were a clock radio and a hair dryer. I wore a dress to class every day and was addressed as Miss Desilet. No one had yet heard of women's liberation, and as a pharmacy student, I was one of just six women in a class of 60. Today, more than half the classes are women.

I didn't own a car or ride in an airplane until after I was married.

Sometimes, I miss those days when we had less but were somewhat freer. Then my cell phone rings, and that's the end of my philosophizing for awhile.

"Happy Birthday," Serena.

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