

Author, reporters chide Kansas for its principles

We've seen a wave of articles chastising Kansans for taking federal money while voting for politicians, like our Rep. Tim Huelskamp, who rail against federal spending.

This goes back to the book "What's the Matter With Kansas," by Thomas Frank, who argued that Kansans hew to the conservative social outlook of the Republican party while they benefit from the liberal-left spending of the Democrats.

In effect, he says, we vote against our own economic interests. We've abandoned the populist notions of a century ago—regulation of robber barons, bans on corporate farming, strict limits on banking—for social issues such as abortion and, yes, big government.

"Not long ago," Mr. Frank writes, "Kansas would have responded to the current situation by making the bastards pay..."

"Not these days. Out here, the gravity of discontent pulls in only one direction: to the right, to the right, further to the right. Strip today's Kansans of their job security, and they head out to become registered Republicans. Push them off their land, and next thing you know they're protesting in front of abortion clinics."

He's right, of course. An article in The Kansas City Star last week shows that in one rural Kansas county, at least, federal spending exceeds the federal taxes people pay by at least 2 to 1, yet that county and dozens of others continue to vote for Mr. Huelskamp and his like.

Liberal editorial writers at Kansas newspa-

pers expound on the fact that we are all "takers" even as we opposed federal spending in principle. The hypocrisy of it!

Guilty as charged, I suppose.

It's true, rural people, and not just in Kansas, tend to vote their conscience rather than their pocketbook. People who don't believe in abortion vote for candidates who don't believe in abortion. Those who think big government dangerous and expensive tend to vote for candidates who push for smaller government.

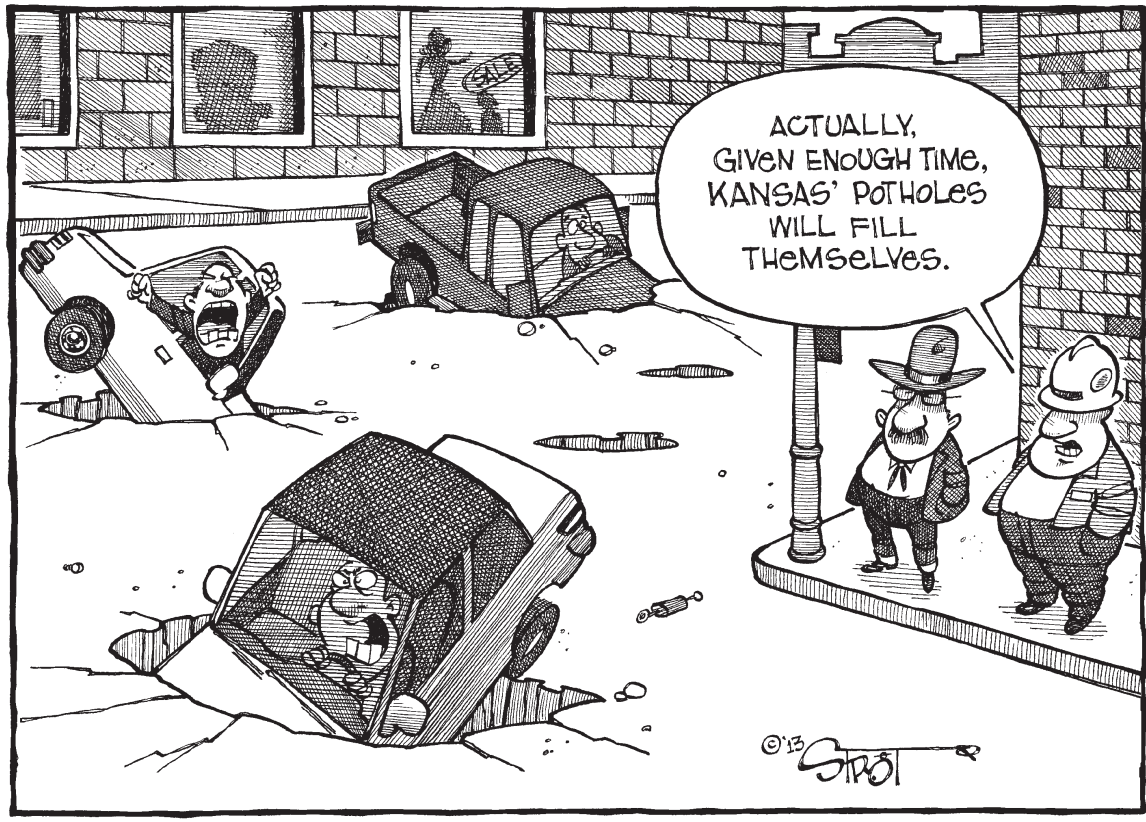
And if their hometown or county takes in more than it sends out to the federal government, well, they probably haven't ever added it up, but they'd probably vote for the same guy for Congress as they did last year. The principle would still be more important.

There is a certain amount of hypocrisy involved here, yes. People tend to see the federal benefits they get as "earned" or "deserved," while those going to others seem like "waste."

Federal farm payments may be wasteful, for instance, and they may not work too well in preserving the "family farm"—just look at our plunging population curve in spite of all those billions spent—but the entire economy out here is built on them. And Social Security? We all paid into that.

We suppose it's old-fashioned for people to vote their principles rather than their pocketbooks, but that's what we are: old-fashioned.

Some would say that's not such a bad thing. — Steve Haynes



Her batting average is low

A swing and a miss. That's the way it was with another new recipe. This time it was a scrambled-egg-biscuits-and-gravy breakfast casserole.

All Jim would say was, "I'd just as soon have my eggs separate from my biscuits and gravy." I have to admit, it wasn't one of my favorites, either. Oh well, to File 13 it goes.

There are some really interesting recipes on Facebook, and I've copied the ones that sound good. But at the rate I'm going, I won't live long enough to try them all.

And what about my poor cookbooks? You might say I have a collection, judging by the boxes of them in the basement. I feel like I've been cheating on them, the way I've ignored them.

My motto regarding recipes is, "Try 'em all. You might miss a good one." So—much to Jim's dismay—I'll probably keep on testing new dishes. When he laments, "I don't know why you have to keep trying this new stuff. Your plain old meat and potatoes are so good. I wish you would just stick to that."

To which I reply, "You said it, 'Plain old meat and potatoes.' I want to try something new. Besides, if I hadn't tried 'something new,' you would never have known bacon-wrapped jalapenos stuffed with cream cheese, or pecan-pie bar cookies, or Texas Trash, or crème brûlée, or stir fry, or, or, or."

I think he got my point. Cooks get bored making the same old thing day after day, year after year. It's why women move furniture, dye



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts cplotts65@gmail.com

their hair and buy faddish clothes. They like change. Men don't. It's that simple.

—ob—

I am writing a story about my alma mater's 50th alumni anniversary class, the class that graduated two years ahead of me. One of the girls in that class sent me some of her memories, and it's funny because her perspective of herself and mine of her were totally opposite.

She considered herself a complete "nerd" while I remember her as one of the prettiest girls in her class with beautiful brown eyes. I envied anyone with brown eyes. She also had a creamy olive complexion, a million-dollar smile and nice, even teeth. She was one of the smartest people in her class, but that didn't make her a nerd. I know I wished I could have been so smart.

She didn't think she had any fashion sense, but then again, none of us did. Back "in the day," a gathered-waist skirt, white blouse, penny loafers and bobby socks were pretty much the norm for school attire.

Kids nowadays would be appalled to know we actually had a dress code. Girls had to wear skirts

or dresses; boys had to wear a belt with their shirt tucked in. What would Mr. Raburn have done with the low-riding baggy pants and all that underwear showing?

Our behavior was closely monitored, too. No roughhousing, no cursing, no disrespect to the teachers, no gum chewing, no holding hands in the hallways. I remember one boy in my class was sent to the principal's office for having a toothpick in his mouth. His defense was, "Hey, it's not gum."

Oh, I know ... times change. But people don't. Sure, kids want to express themselves. But at what expense? Modesty? Common decency? I have spent quite a bit of time taking pictures at high schools, and when I see some of the girls walking down the halls, I ask myself, "Where was their father when they walked out the door that morning?"

All this to say, there are rules in life. Rules that govern our driving, what we can print, and govern our behavior. Rules are not a bad thing. They merely establish the limits, limits that some feel the need to push to the extreme.

Son's new cat a real handful

Having Tommy in the house is like bringing home a 3-year old—fun and exhausting.

But he's just visiting, and soon will go to his new home in Lawrence.

A couple of weeks ago, a man came into the paper to place a want ad: Free to good home, young male cat, neutered, declawed, has shots.

So, I asked, why are you getting rid of him since you've obviously spent time and money on this pet.

It seems the man and his wife had gotten a new cat, a young female, and Tommy was trying a little too hard to play with her. He was basically beating her up and causing continuous strife in the house. Someone had to go, and Tommy was elected.

Don't put the classified in yet, I said. Let me check with my husband and son. This cat sounds perfect for our 30-something bachelor son.

Steve and I visited the couple and met Tommy. He's a sweet cat, friendly and curious. And playful. Real playful. We took his pictures. We described him to our son.

"Let's do this," was the return text, so Tommy came home with us.

Now, it's been a few years since we've had a kitten (or in Tommy's case, a teen cat) around the house. Our old ladies Molly Monster and Jezebel, mostly sleep and eat and hiss at each other.

Tommy is a whole different story. He's a busy cat.

Every open door is an invitation for him. He's spent almost as much



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes c.haynes@nwkansan.com

time inside my cupboards as my pots and pans. Yesterday he got into the compartment behind the trash and recycling bins. It's hard to push them back in with a cat back there.

With the spring air, he thinks he should be outside, but without claws and not knowing where he's at, we won't allow that. Or at least, we try not to allow it.

One day last week, he escaped four times. We caught him in the garden twice. Once I got him just after he slipped out the back door and once I got a frantic call from Steve.

"Help me, come home quick." I didn't even ask what he wanted. I knew. He had to leave for Colby and Tommy had gotten out and was hiding under the back porch. I lured him out with a cat toy.

His former mistress called to see how he was getting along with our other cats.

Not too well, I had to admit. Like I said, they're old ladies. They don't appreciate a young whippersnapper in the house. There's a lot of growling going on. But, like I said, it's just temporary.

Today, Tommy is stealing rocks

from one of our potted plants and chasing them around the room. Soon he will be under my feet as I try to fix supper.

I'll be really sorry and really relieved to see him go to Lawrence. He and son will get along famously.

I'll miss him when he's gone. But, for now:

"Tommy get off that counter. Stop that. That's hot. No, you can't go outside. Don't bat her tail. Give me back that rock."

Just like having a 3-year old in the house—wonderful and exhausting.

From the Bible

"I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned."

— John 15: 5-6

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Writer wants indoor pool

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter to whoever has concerns about the existing swimming pool.

How many of you realize The Gateway was voted on by the people in the very beginning? There was a lot of pro and con.

I was one of the three who carried petitions so we could vote. The outcome was the civic center lost out by seven votes, as I recall.

The next thing I knew, someone was getting a grant. That was not right, as even though the vote was close, the rights of the people were

denied!

The swimming pool is another issue. If they want a swimming pool, I would wonder why they don't add on to the high school and have an indoor swimming pool? That way it could be used all year—not just three months out of the year like the old one.

I realize it would cost more, but the city could be charging for its use all year long. I am sure there

are swimmers who wouldn't mind driving some distance just to be able to go swimming in the winter. This could be used for the health of the older people, as well.

Individuals with certain health conditions are encouraged to get more exercise. This would be great exercise for all.

Elsie Wolters Oberlin

KanCare no good for the disabled

To the Editor:

On April 11, the Hays Daily News printed an editorial on KanCare (the overhaul of Kansas' Medicaid system, affecting 380,000 people). The author understood the gravity and complexity of the issue and gave insight about the stories of those who have rubbed shoulders directly with KanCare, providing a common-sense call to action for community services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their long-term services and support, which include residential, day and other services provided by Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas Inc. in this area.

While we are grateful for the Brownback administration for delaying inclusion of these services into KanCare, our plea for a permanent "carve-out" from KanCare has not lessened. Most people may not realize that intermediate care facilities and Working Healthy programs were already covered under KanCare.

Since the late 1980s, partnering with the state in the closure of the Norton State Hospital, our agency has been providing these services. In anticipation of the shift to KanCare, providers met in December to talk about the details.

Under KanCare, we went from straightforward to complex and confusing and from a billing process that took mere minutes a week

to a continuous process requiring hours each day. Delayed payments surpassed \$130,000 for us in early March. Some providers have had to borrow money to cover payroll.

Here are some additional pieces of the KanCare puzzle:

• A perplexing price tag or "Fiscal Note" of nearly \$100 million to "carve out" our services.

• Savings touted to be the result of "better care and outcomes." This is difficult to understand when the cost of providing community services has been held nearly flat for almost two decades

• A consultant with NewPoint, a pro-managed care advisor, revealed troubling insights regarding inclusion of our services into KanCare. The report identified that savings for services under managed care come by way of "de-institutionalization." Kansas has already done that.

• Finally, if you were not aware, there has been an effort from within the Legislature this session to make radical changes to the Developmental Disability Reform Act.

Many advocates have expressed a desire to work with the administration on the implementation of KanCare for medical and behavioral health services for our clients. We have repeatedly expressed deep concerns with other services being included into KanCare, overseen by for-profit insurance companies, an idea with a mismatch of expectations, experience and philosophy.

I believe there are sensible thinkers in Topeka who see the clear warning signs. The majority view of the community service system has untiringly advocated that the state not gamble by force-fitting these services into KanCare.

Decades ago, parents, families and community advocates wanted better outcomes for their children. From this, the community service system was born. Now, the next generation of parents, families and advocates are joining these pioneers in crying out again to our legislators and the administration to protect this system. This piece does not belong in the KanCare puzzle.

Jerry Michaud, Hays president, Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas

In the U.S.A.

"My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am, I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual and physical education I received from her."

—George Washington First President of the United States 1789 - 1797