

Governor was right to veto bill on raffles

While we're sympathetic with the goal of a bill that attempted to legalize charity raffles in Kansas, we agree with Gov. Sam Brownback, who vetoed the bill as unconstitutional.

The Kansas Constitution is quite specific on this issue, at Article 15, Section 3, which says:

"Lotteries and the sale of lottery tickets are forever prohibited."

A lottery is defined in law as any game or scheme which includes three elements: chance, a reward and a consideration, or price. That certainly includes selling tickets at \$1 each or six for \$5 to raise money for a little girl with cancer or a church that needs money for a new air conditioner.

Section 3 does include three exceptions approved by voters in recent decades, for licensed horse and dog tracks, and now casinos; for charitable Bingo games as regulated by law; and for the state lottery, a big-time money maker for the state.

We all know that churches, civic and fraternal groups, lodges and clubs, and just plain people, have been holding drawings and other lotteries for years to raise money for good causes. It's been going on a long time, probably longer than it's been prohibited by the Kansas Constitution.

At the newspaper, we know this, because we have to turn down dozens of ads each year from well-meaning charitable organizations

trying to raise money for — you guessed it — a good cause.

However, it's against the law to promote an illegal lottery. It's also against federal postal regulations. We just can't take those ads, though we maintain under the First Amendment we can and do write news stories about these drawings. (Our one rule is that in return, we required the group holding the drawing to report its income from an event.)

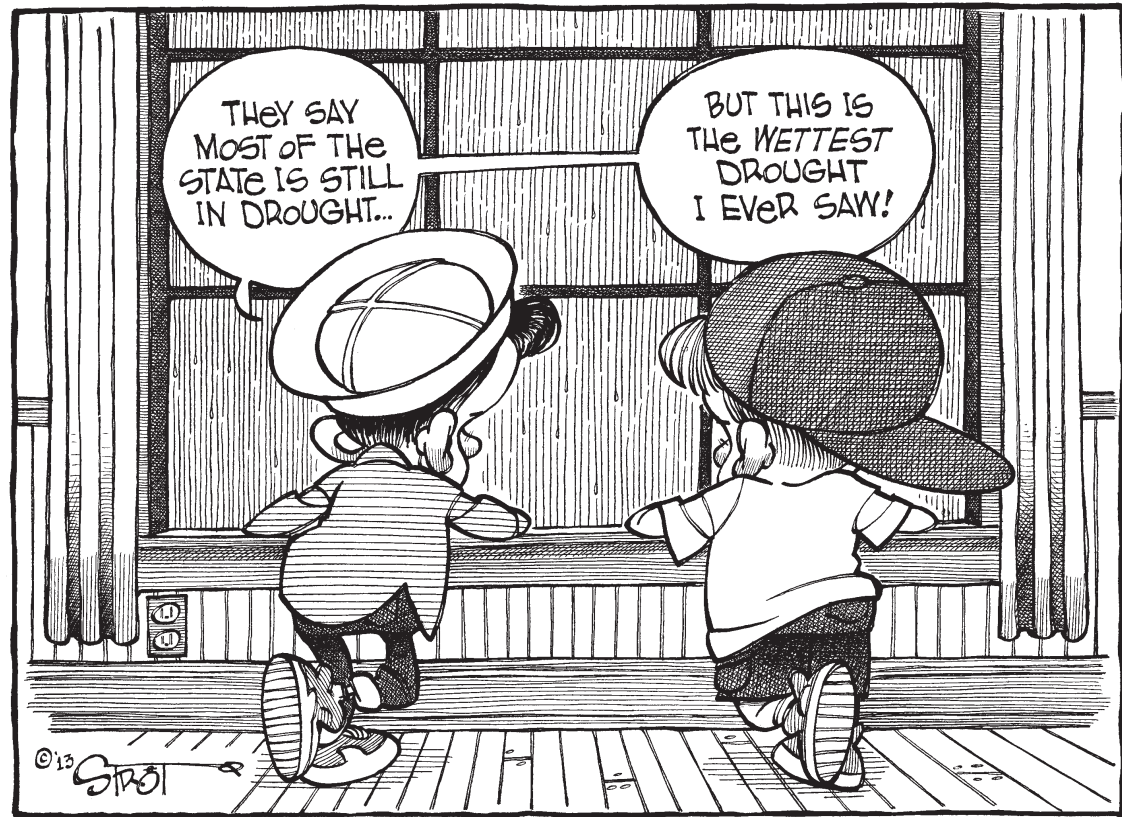
We see no harm in making charitable lotteries legal in Kansas, but agree that the Legislature needs to do this right by passing a constitutional amendment for voters to decide. We think they'd go along.

While we know of no Kansas county where authorities have prosecuted a church or veterans' post for holding an illegal lottery, we question the wisdom of having a law that makes criminals out of well-intentioned people.

So it'll be up to the 2014 Legislature to do this over, do it well and get the issue on the ballot for the next election. Clubs and fraternal groups that have been breaking the law for decades can wait another year or two to come out into the sunshine.

With all the legal gambling going on in this state, in fact, it's a wonder that no one ever thought of covering this gap before now.

— Steve Haynes



Grandchildren are the best

Maybe it's possible to get tired of playing with your grandchildren. I haven't reached that point yet.

But then I'm still new to this whole thing. My grandkids are 1,300 miles too far away, and I don't get to see them nearly enough.

But I'm willing to try to spoil them more. I really am.

After our eldest moved to Georgia, we'd go see her once or twice a year, usually on her birthday in May. After her sister moved there, too, we ramped up to twice a year. It was efficient that way, since they lived in the same place halfway across the country.

Then when the baby came, well we had to go three times that year. And with two grandchildren, we might soon be looking at four.

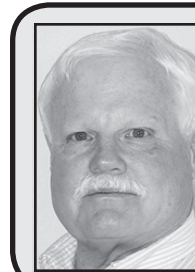
And I doubt it would be enough. I think we're lucky to have grandchildren at all. Some people don't. To me, that would be sad.

And there's only the two. Some people have them by the dozen.

I could deal with a dozen, but not all at once. There'd be way too much confusion and noise.

But, come to think of it, if they offered, I might try.

My mom had 10 grandchildren, and I don't know that they were ever all in one place at one time, but the times we had a bunch of them together were pretty special. She thought so, anyway. The walls of her home were covered with grandkid pictures.



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes

steve.haynes@nwkansas.com

I doubt I'll ever have 10 anyway. I'll just have to focus on spoiling the ones we do have. They're so cute, and so different from each other, that you could spend hours with either one and never get bored.

Taylor is 3 now, and quite precocious. Her vocabulary is exploding, along with her awareness of the world around her. She's wild and full of energy and it's a lot of fun to take her places, to talk with her and just to watch her play.

She likes to have books read to her and loves even more to "read" them to herself after she's been put to bed. Which her parents countenance as long as she keeps quiet and stays in your room. (Like her mother never did that.)

She wants Grandpa to take her to see choo-choo trains, which is fine with him, but they are rare where she lives. Just going on the hunt is a big deal to her, though.

Little Grayson, born in May, is another story, a novel unread and largely unwritten. He's already proved he's a big eater compared to

his picky sister. He eats all the time, left, right, supplement, whatever he can get.

He likes to be held if you walk around, but his mother says she thinks he wants to be able to move. I think her life is about to get a LOT more interesting. So is Taylor's, come to think of it.

But it's taken us three years to get to know Taylor, and now it seems like we're starting all over. Parents don't have the luxury of thinking of it that way, I know. When you have kids, you just deal with them. The more you have, the more you deal.

Grandparents have time to spoil 'em one at a time. With Grayson, at this stage, it's hard to tell what he wants and what it will take to spoil him, but we've got time to find out.

I personally am willing to do whatever it takes to get him going, but his sister will demand some time, too. I feel that fourth trip coming on.

You might get what you ask

You've heard the expression, "Be careful what you pray for," right? From now on Jim might be a little more careful who he asks to pray.

Friday evenings find us at the state prison leading a Bible study class for about 50 inmates. Jim usually sings a country song to get things started and talks a little while until everyone is settled. Last week, he told the guys that he would not be at Sunday Chapel services because he would be attending the antique tractor show in Selden he goes to every year. He explained that he and his son carry on the tradition of demonstrating how the stationary baler works, just like he and his father used to do.

It was time to start, so Jim asked if anyone would like to give the opening prayer.

A young man volunteered and began, "Lord, thank You for waking us up today. Thank you for the food we eat and for the roof over our heads. Lord, keep us safe and protect us. Lord, I ask you to bless Jim. Even though he's going to the antique show Sunday and won't be in Chapel where he should be. We still ask you to bless him. Amen."

I know you're not supposed to laugh during a prayer, but I couldn't



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
cplots65@gmail.com

help it.

A young mother I know posted on Facebook after hearing her little girl sing, "You bet watch out, you better not tell, you better be nice to cows, Santa Claus is coming to toooooown."

That's right: Be nice to cows. I couldn't have said it better.

Speaking of cows, the babies are growing up and off the bottle. All it took was one lesson, and all three calves are drinking out of a bucket.

They didn't like it much, but while letting them suck on my hand, I would put their mouth into a bucket of milk. I would pull out my hand and without knowing it, they would be drinking. Once they realized it, they would stop and try to find my hand again. They really wanted that bottle. Hunger won out, however, and with just a little effort, they were swilling down the formula.

Next step will be the pasture. They are eating alfalfa hay and grass we pull for them, so I know they're ready. We will have to fence off their escape route before the move; otherwise, this would end with one of our famous rodeo scenes.

They won't know what to do with all that space after being in their small pen. What they better

do is eat the weeds. That's what we hired them for. To be self-propelled, automatic, lawn mowing-lawn fertilizing machines.

A far cry from what my Saturday nights used to be, last Saturday night found me doing the laundry and shredding paper.

We get an amazing amount of "junk" mail. I usually rip off the name label and place the mailer in the recycle bin.

The "to shred" box was full and then-some. I vowed to stay with it until every last item with our name on it was in little, itty, bitty pieces. There was so much, I think the shredder overheated a few times, but it's done.

Yup. Some exciting life we lead.

In the U.S.A.

"When the people fear the government, there is tyranny. When the government fears the people, there is liberty."

Thomas Jefferson
U.S. president (1801-1809)
Draftsman of Declaration of Independence

Long session is frustrating

Those who are following this legislative session are aware that we should have been done three weeks ago. There have been no General Orders or bills "above the line" since we returned for veto session on May 8.

I have driven my 380 miles back and forth three times, and each time, I hoped it would be the last trip for some time.

The tax plan and budget are tied together, and the House and Senate cannot find common ground. The House is split dramatically on the sales tax expiring July 1. We have representatives who will only vote for a plan that takes the sales tax from 6.3 to 5.7 percent, and others who will only vote for a plan that retains the 6.3 percent.

I personally feel that with the tax plan that was passed last year (which I did not vote for), we should split the difference and see if we have the growth necessary to take it all the way back the following year.

Farmer's figures outline drought

To the Editor:

Your drought article was excellent. Here is some information to substantiate the lack of precipitation in northwest Kansas.

Some isolated areas have received an extra shower or two that have really helped the wheat, but those of us in northwest Decatur County always seem to get the "hole" when a storm comes through. The following data is from our CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network) observation records as recorded by the Davis automated weather system at our farm two miles north of Traer.

Everyone tends to talk about rainfall amounts for the calendar year, but to see what is occurring, it's more accurate to look at the previous 12 months as a rolling measure of precipitation.

In January, precipitation for the previous 12 months was 9.98 inches, while normal is about 22. The figure for February was 10.29 inches, March 10.20, April 8.63 and May 9.37 inches. Those numbers indicate we are in a cycle that brings less than half our normal precipitation. In fact, precipitation from May 2012 to May 2013 is only 42 percent



Letter from Topeka

By State Rep. Ward Cassidy
ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov

The budget is a different matter. We have to have the revenue to run the state, and the only way we can make things work is with more cuts. This is an example of how difficult this process is: in my district, we have a tech college and a community college. They are important to the economy of northwest Kansas.

I have been fighting to keep their funding. In a neighboring district, there are cuts being made to Kansas prisons. Of course, their representative is fighting for his district. There are 125 representatives and 40 senators all doing the same thing. How

do we maintain fiscal responsibility and still provide services?

Another example: I have had many calls about the Department of Revenue and the way they are handling this year's tax returns. Their staff has been reduced and their workload increased. Less government — less service.

We have been here too long — and hopefully compromise is near. With the grace of God, my next article will be about how this all turns out.

(The session actually wrapped up over the weekend.)

Letter to the Editor

of normal. These numbers include all melted snow, and the last 12 months, the melted snow accounted for nearly 3 inches, or a third of the total precipitation.

Another interesting statistic is the amount of daily precipitation that falls in increments of less than .2 of an inch. The past 12 months, only 11 precipitation days had precipitation over .2 of an inch. Much of the precipitation was in increments of less than .1 of an inch and half of the total precipitation the past 17 months was in amounts of less than .2.

The highest precipitation on any one day or storm was from a snowfall that measured .71 of an inch precipitation. We have to go all the way back to Aug. 15, 2011, to find a day that we recorded over an inch of precipitation, and it was 1.25 inches on that day.

Calendar year annual precipitation in recent years has been:

2011 27.74 inches

2012 9.44 inches

I believe the above numbers to be accurate with an error of less than 1 percent. So far in 2013, the record and the automated system agree within .03 of an inch.

No wonder the wheat looks so pathetic and we have problems with dirt blowing on the fire-ravaged areas.

Jim Wesch, Traer

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@nwkansas.com.

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

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@nwkansas.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
Ramell Taylor reporter
Mary Lou Olson society editor
Carolyn Kelley-Plotts proofreader, columnist
Joan Betts historian
Cynthia Haynes business manager
Kimberly Davis advertising manager
Pat Cozad want ads/circulation
Crista Sauvage advertising makeup

Steve and Cynthia Haynes, publishers
Kimberly Davis, assistant publisher

Official newspaper of Oberlin, Jennings, Norcat, 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.

