

School money plan could break the bank

It looks like there will be a lot more money for Kansas schools next year, though not as much as some people wanted. It also looks like the state will be pretty much broke by the time \$466 million-a-year increase phases in three years from now — assuming the Legislature keeps its promises and sticks to the schedule. That's not something the Kansas Legislature is known for in these things, sometimes with good reason. No one has a crystal ball good enough to see what the state's income will be three years from now. The country could be in the midst of a wild boom inspired by Bush tax cuts — or another recession inspired by his wild spending — by that time. It's really anyone's guess. What will be no surprise is that many state programs shoved aside in the hysteria over the school finance "crisis" will be starving for cash. That includes highway, higher education and general services of all kinds. In a state where spending in real dollars has more than quadrupled in 40 years, that may not be all bad, but there should be some balance.

Maybe the constitutional process will kick back in and the Legislature will have to do its job of allocating the resources as it believes voters want. That has not happened the last couple of years. Under the gun of a Supreme Court order, the legislators have been trying to hit an artificial target for school spending while robbing every other fund. If you do not believe this, send a child to college or drive some of our increasingly bumpy roads. The facts are these: Schools in this state do an admirable job with the money they have. There is no crisis in school funding, except the one created by a lawsuit filed by certain schools which felt they lost out in the legislative process. Other programs are important to the people of this state, especially roads and universities. The Legislature is supposed to decide how much we are taxed and where the money goes. The courts are not. Yet increasingly in the last decade, across the country, aggrieved school districts have turned to the courts to get more money. And, as in Kansas, courts have been only too happy to seize power and move the money around. Fifty years ago, it would not have happened. Lack of backbone in our legislatures may be one reason our taxes are so high today. It certainly is one reason tuition is so high. No one wants our schools to suffer, but they are not the only state program. It's time to get back to reality. Sadly, that's not likely to happen. Some school districts will be unhappy with the results of this year's battle, and guess what? They'll sue.

— Steve Haynes

Thumbs Up to . . .

- √ **Dick and Ila DeWitt**, on your 60 years of marriage.
- √ **Danielle Cliff**, on your super showing at the State FFA Horse Judging Contest. (via email)
- √ **Norton Flower Committee**, on your ongoing efforts to beautify downtown Norton.
- √ **Cody Lowry, Amanda Wahlmeier, Alyssa Kaus, Carissa Lacy, Rachael Lentz, Melissa Hillebrand, Kayla Juenemann, Paul Gosselin, Sarah McDiffett, Ryan Maddy, Derek Volgamore**, on the scholarships awarded by St. Francis of Assisi Parish of Norton.
- √ **Norton County Emergency Medical Service**, on your special and busy *national week* observance.
- √ All the **Butter Braid Bread buyers**, sellers, distributors. Your generosity is a *big bounce* to your AYSO youth soccer program. (email)
- √ **The Norton School District** for giving Kenny Leiker an honorary diploma. (walk-in)

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

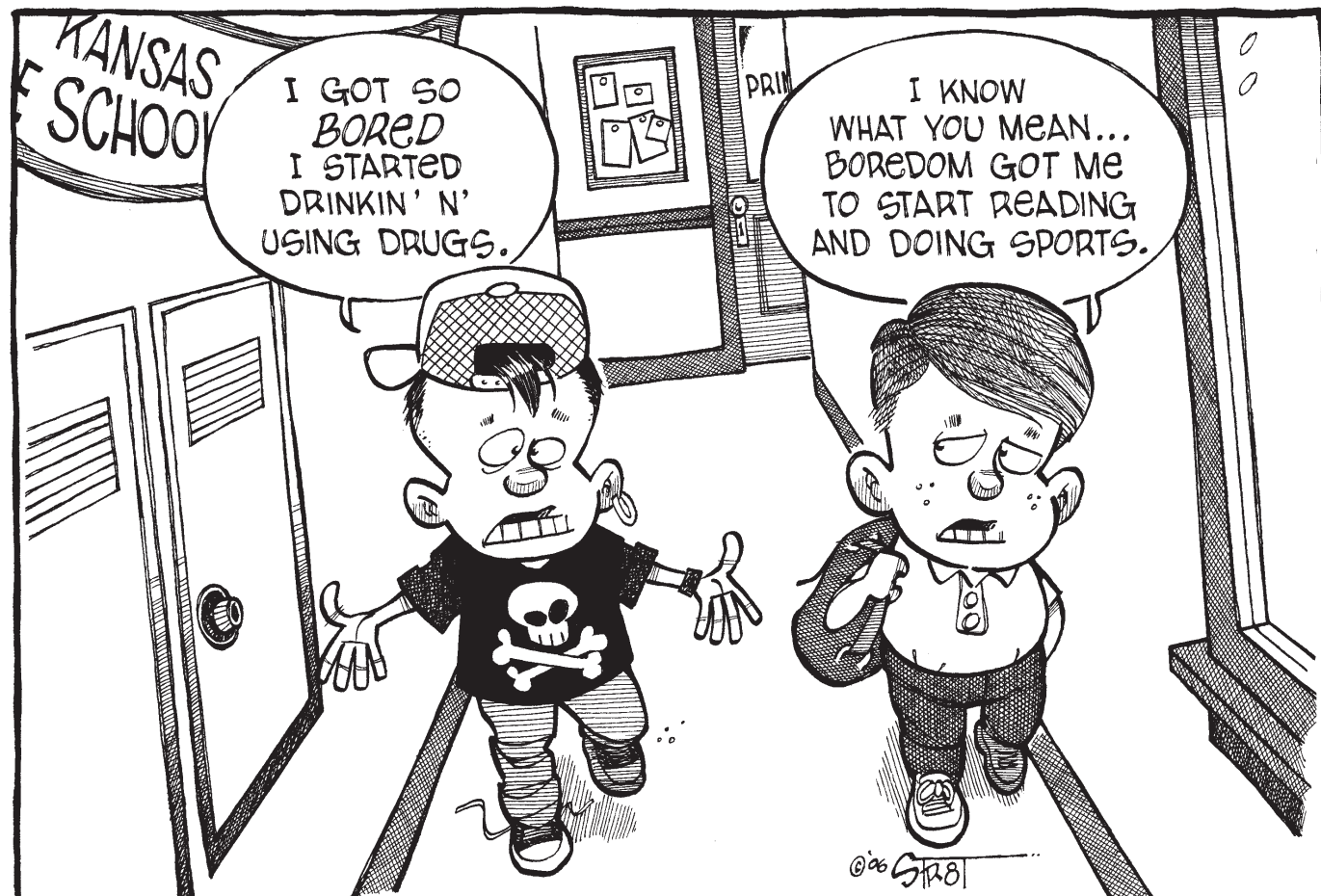
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Gathering was a colorful sight to see

One of the more impressive sights around town last week was the Mid-Continent League track/field championships at Travis Field. The large crowd filling the stadium and all other available areas was decked out in all colors of the rainbow. Indeed a sight to see.

Getting a chance to mingle with those in attendance was a bonus for me. "What do you think of this?" was a frequently asked question by those who recognized me from the photo accompanying this column. I think I caught some people off guard, attired in jeans, T-shirt and Nikes. You see, I generally dress for the occasion.

I like track, always have. As you age you envy the youngsters out there and what they can do and the intensity they employ. League is always a big thing, ending in bragging rights, individually or as a group.

Additionally, it allows visitors an opportunity to take a close look at the host city. I think we passed the test. And the weatherman cooperated.

They tell me this is a true story. It's about two Norton guys visiting one evening over a couple of beers. The one guy said to the other:

When our lawn mower broke and wouldn't run, my wife kept hinting to me that I should get it fixed. But, somehow I always had something else to take care of: the truck, the car, fishing, golfing, always something more important to me. Finally she thought of a clever way to make her point. When I arrived home one day, I found her seated in the tall grass, busily snipping away with a tiny pair of sewing scissors. I watched silently for a short time and then went into the house. I was gone only a few minutes. When I came out again I handed her a toothbrush. "When you finish cutting the grass," I said, "you might as well sweep the sidewalk."

The doctor says I will walk

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



again...someday.

-td-

There once was a time when the mere mention of the name Barry Bonds brought people to their feet. Now, sadly, the home run slugger is greeted with a mixed reaction — cheers and jeers, as a steroid cloud hovers above his head.

-td-

I think the television network news directors are getting things mixed up. Single pregnant celebrities are not news and making them news sends mixed signals to the most vulnerable in our society — our youngsters. Tom Cruise is a matter of scraping the bottom of the barrel in search of news. I couldn't care less whether Beep and Bop bundled up in a bar booth. The paparazzi as news fodder is foolish. Sometimes these examples take equal billing with legitimate news. I understand the networks are playing to the young crowd. But they must also remember it's the old crowd that got them to where they are.

-td-

A day in the life of a teacher:

TEACHER: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

MARIA: Here it is.

TEACHER: Correct. Now class, who discovered America?

CLASS: Maria.

TEACHER: Why are you late, Kevin?

KEVIN: Because of the sign..

TEACHER: What sign?

KEVIN: The one that says, "School Ahead, Go Slow."

TEACHER: John, why are you doing

your math multiplication on the floor?
JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables.

TEACHER: Glenn, how do you spell "crocodile?"

GLENN: K-R-O-K-O-D-I-A-L

TEACHER: No, that's wrong

GLENN: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

TEACHER: Donald, what is the chemical formula for water?

DONALD: H I J K L M N O.

TEACHER: What are you talking about?

DONALD: Well, yesterday you said it's H to O.

TEACHER: George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Layne, do you know why his father didn't punish him?

LAYNE: Because he still had the ax in his hand.

TEACHER: Aaron, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

AARON: A teacher.

-td-

I don't think a trial in the alleged Duke rape case is necessary. "Judge" Sean Hannity has been trying the case nightly and has "ruled" there is not sufficient evidence to proceed with a trial. I think he should just let the situation proceed along the legal path without armchair lawyering.

-td-

Remember, you still have time to say something positive about your community today.

-td-

If the answer is "church," what is the question? Come on....you know...

-td-

Have a good evening and a good weekend!

She's a grand, gracious old lady

"Cities are like people. Some are brash young fellows, lusty and loud, with rawbones jutting and sleeves too short.

Some are callow, shallow hussies, all giggles and flirts and furbelows. Savannah is a Lady."

Introductory sentences to *Sojourn in Savannah* by Anita Raskin

We found these words to be true last week as we enjoyed this jewel of southern hospitality. Savannah is gracious and beautiful without being snooty. She's a lovely lady who has endured and flourished through good times and bad.

In 1733, James Oglethorpe and 114 colonists sailed up the Savannah River and settled on some bluffs. The English settlers were met by friendly Yamacraw Indians, led by Chief Tomochichi.

Oglethorpe had a plan for a city that would be built around squares of public land. Each square would be surrounded on two sides (north and south) by private dwellings and on two sides (east and west) by public buildings and churches.

This made Savannah one of the first planned cities in the U.S.

Open Season Cynthia Haynes



Today, there are 24 squares in a grid stretching from the river up the gentle Georgia bluffs to Forsyth Park, about 1 1/2 to two miles south. Today, the squares are shaded by ancient live oaks that spread their branches over the park and streets, flowers, grass and benches.

Many also contain statues or memorials to such notables as John Wesley, founder of Methodism, whose teachings grew in Georgia, but who left for England after clashing with officials; railroad magnate William Washington Gordon, the father of Juliette Gordon Lowe, who started the Girl Scouts in America; and, of course, Oglethorpe himself.

The squares are still bounded by churches and public buildings on two sides and homes — both fancy and simple — in various states of restoration, on the other two.

While Savannah suffered from devas-

tating fires in 1796 and 1820, yellow fever epidemics and numerous hurricanes, it escaped the fate of Atlanta and many other cities in the path of Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman and the Union Army.

Sherman was said to have been so taken by the beauty of Savannah that he spared the city and sent this telegram:

Savannah, Ga. Dec. 22, 1864

To His Excellency, President Lincoln: Dear Sir:

I beg to present you as a Christmas Gift, the city of Savannah with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition and also about 25,000 bales of cotton.

W.T. Sherman Maj. Genl.

While cotton and slaves made Savannah rich before the Civil War, the city was founded on the precepts of freedom. While Jews were welcome in those early years, several types of undesirables were not — slaves (until 1750), rum (until 1742), lawyers (until 1755) and Papists.

My guidebook didn't say when they let the Catholics in, but the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, organized in 1799, was one of the few historic churches open for tourists and visitors while we were there.