

Courts should quietly slip out the door

It's time for the Kansas courts to step out of the school finance controversy and let things settle down.

The Kansas Supreme Court has scheduled arguments later this month on the latest round in the school-money fiasco. No decision is likely until July, leaving school districts unable to draw up their budgets.

This just can't go on every year.

The Legislature has thrown pretty much every dollar it has at the school finance "crisis." There isn't any more to give, not without robbing other state programs or the taxpayers.

It's not possible to draw up a school finance plan that will please every parent, every district and every administrator. Someone will be unhappy, whatever the Legislature does.

And someone will sue, even after the current lawsuit is settled. They always do, because in recent years, the courts have encouraged them.

It gives the judges more power and increases their influence when they take on cases like this. It's not what courts were intended for, though.

Under the state Constitution, the Legislature is supposed to set taxes and raise money. The Legislature is supposed to decide how that money is spent.

That's because we elect the Legislature, and its members are responsible to us, the voters. Judges are not. They are in office under what amounts to life appointments.

There's a reason the framers wanted those with the power to tax and spend under the people's thumb: When you split that power from the vote, it quickly becomes abusive.

Kansans have shown again and again that they do not want higher taxes, yet state spending has more than quadrupled (in real dollars, adjusted for inflation) in 40 years.

Without a tax increase, there is only so much money. Every surplus penny in recent years has gone to schools, leaving colleges, roads and other programs to starve. Parents are forced to pay the price in higher tuition, while drivers find more bumps and fewer new roads.

The courts need to remember their place. Even though some groups may not be happy with the way the state's pie is divided, the Legislature has the power to tax, and the right and the responsibility to divide the income.

If some groups — a few school districts, or a few parents — don't like the result, they can go to the Legislature and push for more. They can campaign for candidates who promise more. That's our system.

Even if you believe schools deserve more, though, it's wrong for the unelected courts to take power and make that decision.

It's time to put our system back in order. If the courts won't let that happen, then we need to change the way judges are chosen and retained.

The taxpayers can't raise more money just because an elite few, even an elite few judges, want it done. We have to go out and earn it.

— Steve Haynes

Thumbs Up to . . .

√ **George Rossi** and **Lucas Melvin** for going above and beyond the call of duty by sponsoring the 8th grade class trip to Washington, D.C., each year. As parents we appreciate your efforts. (called in)

√ **Jessica Reeves**, on your first-place finish in the Junior Dragster Class in Kearney on June 4. (email)

√ **The organizers** of the 26th annual *Antique Machinery, Threshing and Power Show* at Almena Saturday and Sunday.

√ **Dwight Vallin**, on your 29 years in the principal's chair. Good luck in retirement.

√ **Lyle Archer**, on your 40 years of exceptional service with the Kansas Department of Transportation.

√ **Clay Madden** and **Lance Roe**, on the high honor accorded by *Wrestling USA Magazine*. (email)

√ **Joey Copper** and **Clarke Nelson**, good luck in the All-Star football game Saturday. (email)

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Council's good sense could save some cents

I, for one, thought the Norton City Council's decision regarding the sewer plant project was about as good as it gets. Instead of jumping into a multi-million dollar undertaking, the men and women who make up the council passed a motion effectively rejecting the original \$5.46 million bid for a new plant. Instead, they passed a motion to call in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to take a close look at the existing facility and then tell them what needs to be done to fix it.

This was a demonstration of the city council having the community's best interests in mind. It also gave the council some breathing room, something they needed at this point in time. Too, it allows for the public to tell the governing board how they feel.

You know we sometimes elect people to public office to do our business and in the process beat 'em up if they don't think like we do. It's OK to tell them they are doing a good job when it's warranted. Positive approaches carry a benefit.

Never undersell any aspect of this town, this county. As you approach Norton from any direction, it looks healthy, progressive, like a place that's got its act together. It took a lot of people a lot of years to put us in that category.

I especially like that sign east of town that simply says, "Where the Best Begins."

-td-

Attitude is everything, so they say. And it was said best in a recent issue of *Prairie Dog Press*.

There once was a woman who woke up one morning, looked in the mirror, and

Good Evening Norton Tom Dreiling



noticed she had only three hairs on her head. "Well," she said, "I think I'll braid my hair today." So she did and had a wonderful day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and saw that she had only two hairs on her head. "H-m-m," she said, "I think I'll part my hair down the middle today." So she did and she had a grand day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and noticed that she had only one hair on her head. "Well," she said, "today I'm going to wear my hair in a pony tail." So she did and she had a fun, fun day.

The next day she woke up, looked in the mirror and noticed that there wasn't a single hair on her head. "Yeah!" she exclaimed, "I don't have to fix my hair today."

It's all about attitude.

-td-

Ever get the feeling that some days you're the bug; some days you're the windshield?

Good advice: Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.

-td-

I was reading with interest the other day where Nex-Tech Directory's *Art From the Heart* program included winners from our area, and one specifically has ties to

Norton. This is the sixth year Nex-Tech has commissioned third-grade children in the region to submit colored drawings to be used in the yellow pages section of their directory. Many of the brightly colored entries are selected at random and displayed interspersed among the yellow page advertising. Additionally, Nex-Tech Directory Services holds a random drawing among the entries submitted to determine cash prize winners. This year Kyle Pfeifer of Hill City and Marlee Rath of Oakley submitted the lucky pictures. Anita Kerbaugh is Kyle's teacher at Hill City Elementary and Carla Pilkington is Marlee's teacher at Oakley Elementary. All four received \$50 cash. Mrs. Pilkington is originally from Norton and is a graduate of Norton Community High School.

Congratulations to all four!

-td-

The church in question reads the Bible all the way through each year. Near the end of the final Bible reading and discussion, the pastor talked about some of the attributes and contents of first, second, and third John. He then made this statement, which has haunted him ever since, "I have never been so blessed since we started reading in the Johns."

-td-

Two guys were chatting in a bar one evening when one said, "I was reading where lions are considered to be the most sexual of all creatures."

"Darn the luck," said his friend, "I just joined Kiwanis."

-td-

Have a good weekend, and join your friends at the church of your choice.

That's just the way it is out on the farm

Sunday, June 4, on the way to church, we had a little discussion about how soon the wheat would be ready to cut. I said it won't be ready to cut until after the 25th, (which is the hubby's birthday). The thing is we always TRY to cut wheat earlier but it rarely works.

Except for last year, as daughter Patricia reminded me, we did cut on his birthday! Today as I drove to town I decided we may very well be cutting wheat before his birthday. A couple of days of hot weather does wonders.

It's easy to love farming on pretty June days like we have had as of late. It is cool at night. Not too windy or hot during the day and in our little part of the world we have been blessed with timely rains.

I drive by a hay field we have on my way to town. Farmers get to live a life that allows them to witness miracles every day. We cut the alfalfa off every four weeks. It looks like there is nothing there at all for a few days after we do, but by the second week, here it comes.

How wonderful it would be if we humans could live our lives like that. No matter how low we were laid, in a while we would come back, better than ever. We would never be discouraged or give up. We wouldn't even remember the set-

Back Home Nancy Hagman



backs.

The hubby was in the house when I returned from town. I could hear KRVN from the garage. (Gotta catch the markets, you know.) He was fixing a snack. "Having breakfast?" I joked. It was about 9:30, an odd time for him to be in the house. He grunted and then asked me to come help him. "I hit my head and jammed my back."

This has to be the most accident prone man in the world. The details are something like this: He left the house without eating breakfast because he wanted to get the rest of his feed planted before it got hot. He drove through a grassy ditch and there was a big rut he did not see until it was to late. The tractor seat bounced so hard he hit his head.

I rubbed the kink out of his back. He then took his cap off and suggested I look

at the top of his head. You know what they say about head wounds: they bleed a lot! I think we should have gone to the doctor, but of course we didn't. We washed his head and put on some antibiotic ointment. He finished his "brunch" (RC cola and a peanut butter sandwich) and decided to go off and see what other damage he could do.

I made him take the cell phone, in case he passed out or something, he could call. WAIT — that won't work, will it!

Anyway he retrieved the phone carrier that fits on his belt from a table drawer; forgetting about the light fixture above it. When he stood up he hit his head. Lord forgive me, I laughed. What else can you do!

I guess we are like alfalfa (or maybe noxious weeds). We keep going no matter what. We even laugh at adversity!

It's almost noon, he hasn't called yet to report any further catastrophes. And the last I heard July Kansas City wheat was up three quarters of a cent.

Harvest will be here sooner than we think. We expect fair yields but know that many will not be so fortunate.

Farming is not only a wonderful way of life, it is also a very dangerous one. No matter what your harvest prospects may be, BE CAREFUL OUT THERE!