

Cuts are needed to balance the budget

With the Legislature deadlocked and the state desperate to pay for increased caseloads in human and health services, what we used to call welfare, Gov. Sam Brownback has ordered cuts to balance the current budget.

That's not an option. It's required by Kansas law, which prohibits the state from running a deficit.

In making \$56.5 million in cuts, the governor had to take \$50 million from schools to keep the social welfare operation going. That's not going to be popular, and it leaves a lot of budget problems hanging.

The Legislature could have solved this problem, and should have, but the still-liberal Senate refused to compromise in a battle over money for special-education programs. As with other decisions, the state would have been better off if the Legislature had done its job.

We suffered when the Legislature abdicated authority over the school budget several years ago, cramming an additional \$1 billion a year in to satisfy the state Supreme Court. Then over the last few years, everyone from schools to taxpayers had to pay for that decision as ever-declining state revenues required the state to take all of it back — and more.

Gov. Brownback has found, as did Gov. Mark Parkinson before him, that expecting the Legislature to make tough decisions is a waste of time. Gov. Parkinson was forced to make dozens of painful cuts last year, despite a 1-cent increase in the state sales taxes he pushed through, when the Legislature refused to act on the deficit.

Now Gov. Brownback, who rode a large majority into office on the promise of building the state's economy by growing private business and jobs, finds that he, too, must be the adult.

Many senators apparently do not realize that the new era requires some sacrifice. They are fighting to save school budgets from the axe and even want to save the state Arts Commission from a well-deserved fate. They seem oblivious to the fact that the state is flat broke, that we've had to cut schools back to 1992 levels and still may not be able to balance the budget.

(And right here, let's just say that our Sen. Ralph Ostmeier is not part of the problem in the Senate. He's pushed for fiscal integrity when the liberal block back east has not.)

There's not much left to cut but the sacred cows, so we might as well get to it. And every program is someone's sacred cow, believe us.

The governor points out that the rescission bill he proposed at the start of this year's session would have solved the state's current budget crisis and left the state with a few million to play with as next year's budget goes into effect July 1.

Our own Rep. Ward Cassidy points out that had the rescission bill passed, the state would have \$37 million in its ending balance June 30, rather than nothing under the current plan. That is the price of delay, and it is more than enough money to solve the special education problem.

It won't happen, though, thanks to a stubborn and intransigent few.

The Senate needs to stop defending the tax-and-spend policies of yore and get with today's program, which requires responsible spending, living within the state's income.

That's what Kansas taxpayers voted for last fall, and that's what they expect now.

— Steve Haynes

Spring reunions scheduled

SPRING will soon be here and that is time for REUNIONS. One important reunion being planned is the Norton All School Reunion. This includes graduates of NCHS as well as anyone who ever attended the Norton schools to meet with classmates and friends.

As people begin to arrive in Norton on Friday, May 27, they may enjoy the many places to see in Norton including the Also Ran Gallery at the First State Bank, open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. You may view the youth center in the Browne building from 2 to 4 p.m., the Museum and the Library, the Courthouse with photos at the first stair landing and other places of interest to visit. We are reminding people of the many places Norton has for eating and shopping and visiting with friends on the streets of Norton as they did when attending Norton schools, and see a movie at

Memories Sonya Montgomery



the Norton Theatre Friday evening. Local alumni are encouraged to attend to welcome the out of town classmates.

On Saturday, May 28 from 9 a.m. to noon there

will be a public open house to be held in the Junior High School Cafeteria.

The evening meal will be served at the Junior High Gymnasium; those wishing to attend should make a reservation prior to May 10 by mailing \$20 per person to Sonya Montgomery 713 Van Horn, Almena, Ks 67622. For more information, you may call 785 871 2020.

We encourage people to attend the church of your choice on Sunday and attend the Memorial Day services on Monday.



A 2 Thumbs up to Rural Telephone Service Co., Inc. & Nex-Tech. Keep up the good work! Emailed in.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002

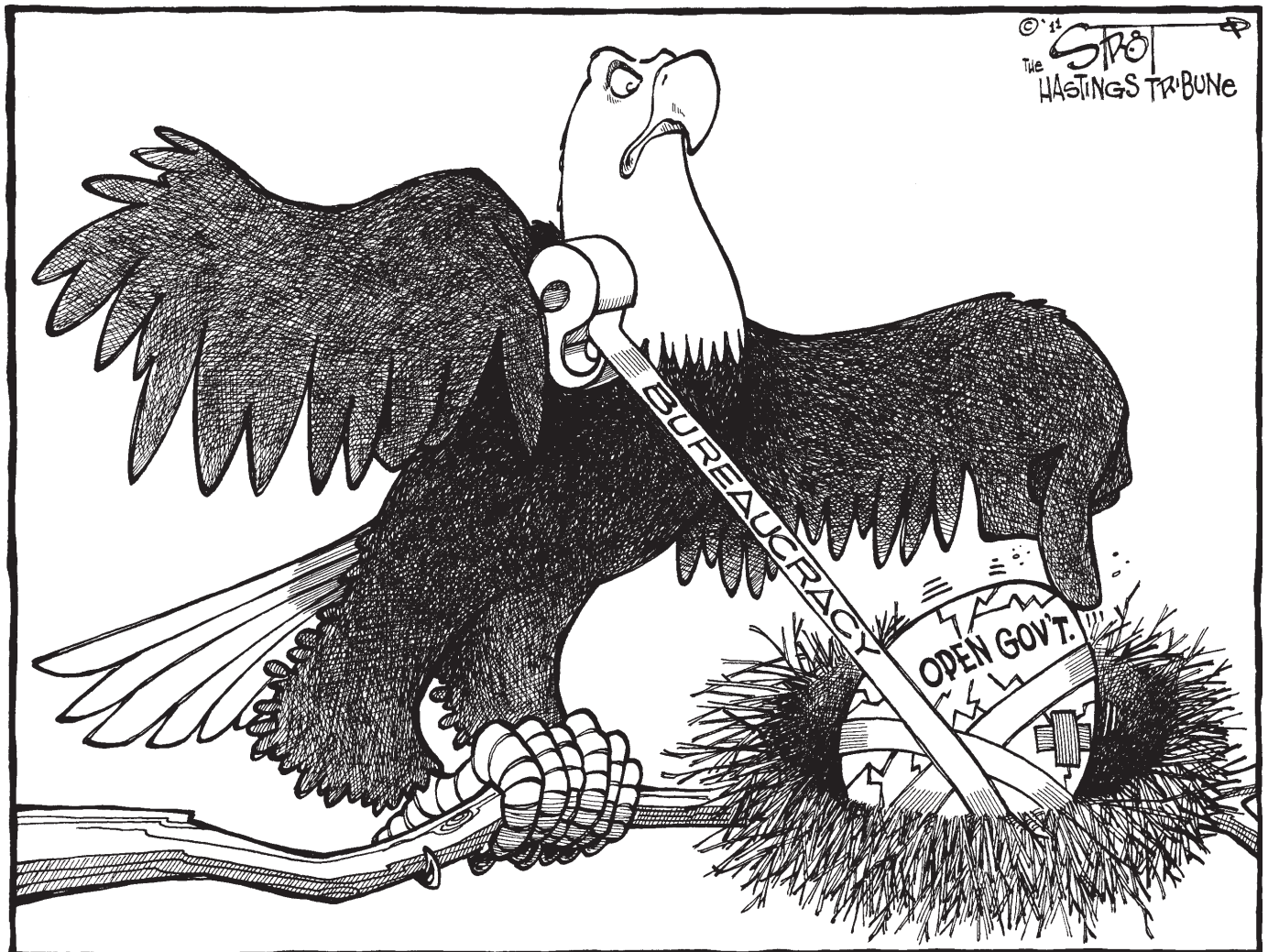
Kansas Press Association



OFFICE HOURS:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

STAFF

Dana Paxton.....general manager
advertising director/
email: dpaxton@nwkansas.com
Dick Boyd.....Blue Jay sports
Harriett Gill.....society editor
email: hgill@nwkansas.com
Vicki Henderson.....computer production



Appreciating the often forgotten cow

Insight

John Schlageck

Talk to farmers, stockmen and ranchers — most will tell you how much they love their cows. Problem is this humble and in most cases easy-going beast rarely receives the praise associated with the noble show horse or one of the so-called smartest creatures, the squealing pig.

No one extols the virtues of this contented creature that spends her days quietly grazing and eating grass. We've all watched movies about horses My Friend Flicka and pigs Babe, but for most of the time, cows are considered boring and ignored by Hollywood, the media and the general public.

Still, cows are not whiners and they take their obscurity in stride and rarely complain about their circumstances. They spend days and nights under the stars without a tent or blanket and only their coat to keep them warm. They have to hoof it across the pasture just to get a drink of cold water.

But hey, I'm not here to say I feel sorry for the cow community. Confident and quiet, it is not their way to ask for preferential treatment.

Spend time with a herd of cows and you'll soon discover they are indeed spiritual beings. They live their entire lives in service to mankind.

Behind that seemingly blank stare rests a knowing glint that suggests, "Go ahead.

Make fun. I spend all day eating and sleeping. You're the one with high blood pressure and cash-flow problems."

Cattle occupy a unique role in human history, domesticated beginning with the Stone Age. Some are raised for meat (beef cattle), dairy products (cows) and hides (both).

They are also used as draft animals and in certain sports. Some consider cattle the oldest form of wealth, and cattle rustling, consequently one of the earliest forms of theft.

Dairy cows are referred to as the foster mothers of the human race because they produce most of the milk that people drink. They provide 90-percent of the world's milk supply.

The best cows may give approximately 25 gallons of milk each day. That's 400 glasses of milk. Cows in this country give an average of 2,000 gallons of milk per year. That's more than 30,000 glasses of milk.

Beef cattle supply more than 30 different cuts of meat including the heart, tongue and what we grew up calling mountain oysters — a male private part.

You gotta' admit, that's meaningful giving.

Another gift from the bovine community is leather that comes from their hides. We use it for boots, belts, baseballs, suitcases, purses, wallets, easy chairs and jackets.

Cows also shine in the rodeo arena or as spokesmammals in advertising. Borden's Elsie the Cow has graced this company's dairy products for eons. And who hasn't seen the skydiving cows on their television screen?

Snorting bulls symbolize a healthy stock market and a Hereford cow pioneered space travel. Every kid knows about the cow who jumped over the moon.

Milk, ice cream, cheeseburgers or that fine leather purse — think about it. Where would we be without our cows?

On any given day a cow often does more for us than our friends, neighbors, in-laws or even our elected officials. Cows deserve a roaring round of applause and recognition for a job well done.

Anyway, I'd much rather thank a cow and wear a pair of leather boots than sport a mink coat and thank a varmint. I know I'd rather drink milk from a cow than milk from a mink. Enough said.

A birthday surprise for a loved one

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



turn around and he will be in school. Time flies.

-ob-

My friend, Babe, took care of our chickens while we were gone. By her own admission, Babe is a city girl but, she thought it would be fun to feed the hens and gather eggs for a couple of weeks. Her pay, of course, was the eggs the "old girls" produced.

While in Mexico Jim, said, "I just got a voice mail from Babe. You better call her, she said there is an "issue" with the chickens."

"An issue", I thought. Did a dog get in the pen and kill them all: did they escape and scatter all over town? I wondered what I might hear but, called her anyway.

Not to worry, Babe's concern centered around a hen that refused to get off the nest. I assured her that all was well. The old "biddy" was merely in a setting mood. She wanted to hatch some chicks. I told my friend to wear a long-sleeved shirt and maybe put on some gloves then, gently lift the hen from her nest and put her on the ground. I cautioned that she may have to do this several days because the urge to "set" is strong but, the hen will get over it.

Tragedy averted and we won't have to worry about any little chicks.

ent was at home and he would just have to wait. The night we arrived back into our little home town, it was about midnight. As we approached our house, Jim saw the garbage cans, sitting streetside, filled to overflowing with the lath James had pulled out of the room. At first Jim thought James had cut down the pampas grass but, on closer inspection, recognized it for what it was. Then he knew.

"James cleaned out the office, didn't he?" said Jim.

I admitted, "Yes, he did. Happy Birthday. I hope you like it."

"I love it," he said. "That gutting part was what I dreaded. Now, it's done and, I can get busy."

-ob-

All our kids and grandkids were well and doing fine. Out little great-grandson, Kayden, has already cut two teeth; is working on more; and is pulling himself up to anything he can grab hold of. He will be walking and talking soon. We'll

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up: e-mail
dpaxton@nwkansas.com,
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654