

from our viewpoint...

People gather forces to battle for money

The forces of public spending are gathering whatever strength they have left, hoping to get a grip once again on the state budget – and just maybe grab Gov. Sam Brownback by the throat while they're at it.

The people who like to spend other people's money – your money, in other words – are pretty sure Kansas is not spending enough, especially on their pay. A broad coalition is emerging dedicated to battling the conservative governor and returning the state budget to the days of constant growth.

One group, calling itself the "Big Tent Coalition," joined with a group called Kansans for Quality Communities in staging a "state-wide" tour to promote public spending. Statewide, to this group, means Salina, Lawrence, Pittsburg and Wichita, by the way, a pretty comprehensive effort for the eastern third of the state.

"Big Tent" appears mostly to represent advocates for families of the disabled, home care and community mental health centers, groups which always want and need more state money.

The "Quality Communities" group, which has been around for a couple of years, lobbying for more state spending, represents both major teachers' unions, the state Association of School Boards, state employee groups and others who depend on state taxes for their paychecks. Members include the state-financed Area Agencies on Aging and Kansas Citizens for the Arts, which has fought the governor over his veto of money for the state Arts Commission.

In short, these groups represent a huge chunk of those who depend on the state budget for their livelihood. There is no reason why they can't or shouldn't work together or that they shouldn't want to lobby the state to give them more money. It's their right. Both groups maintain websites explaining who's behind them, so there are no secrets.

Nor is there anything wrong with the state's labor unions, as reported by the Associated Press, "trying to unite" against the governor and for more state spending. They have a right to their position, too.

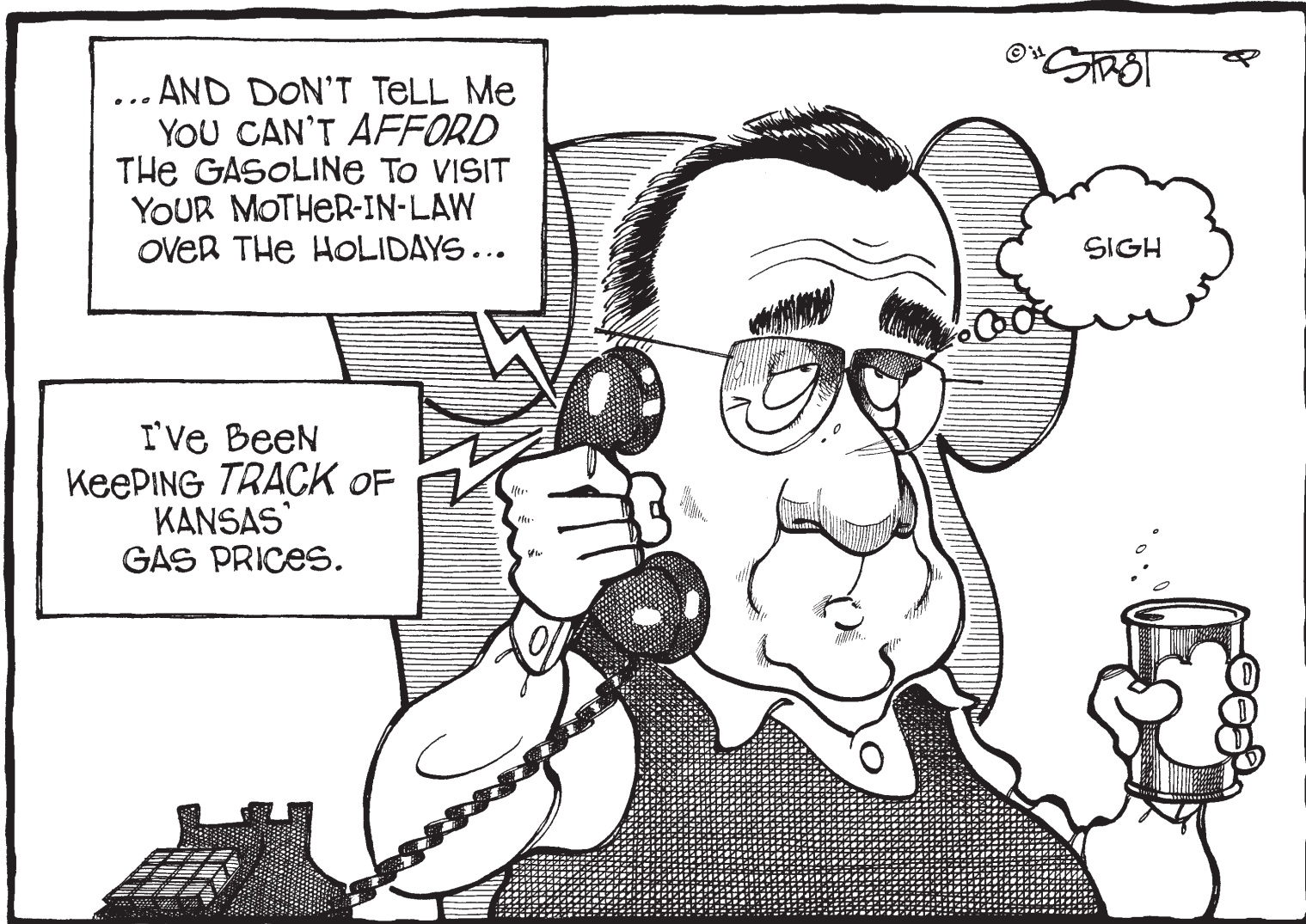
The thing is, even with a small surplus of around \$200 million this year, after all the cuts made by the last two governors during the recession, Kansas still doesn't have much money to throw around. The state is more or less broke.

Nor do we expect them to do much damage to Sam Brownback, who remains a popular and well-liked governor. Remember, he won a landslide victory last year after scaring off nearly every candidate the Democrats could come up with. People seemed to like his message of fiscal responsibility; it fits with the times.

After two terms in the U.S. Senate, he's no political novice, either. The spenders do not like him, to be sure, but he's sitting in the governor's office and they aren't. Their efforts to boost spending and undermine the governor are not much of a threat.

But it would be interesting to know just how much tax money, yours and mine, has been committed to this effort by school boards and public employees. School districts and Area Agencies on Aging, for instance, seldom spend their own money.

Other than that, though, it's open season on loose money in Topeka. — Steve Haynes



I asked if they had room for one more

It was my hope they had room for one more!

Some years ago I rolled into a small community after sundown, looking for a motel room. I was in that town to begin work the following morning at the newspaper.

While I drove the streets of what was going to be my new home, I kept an eye out for a motel. I was not familiar with the town at all, so finding a motel was a bit more of a chore than I thought it would be.

Finally, after an hour's search, I spotted what looked like a pretty nice motel. Apparently it was a popular stop for travelers because there were quite a few cars parked near it along the street.

It was well lighted and had an attractive sign on the front that included a large clock. That was nice because tired travelers, like me, don't always keep track of the time.

I managed to find a parking spot about a half block away. With my fingers crossed, I walked up to the front door, opened it and just seconds later a man appeared. "Quick service," I thought to myself.

"Yes, sir, what can I do for you?" he asked. "Do you have room for one more?" I replied.

He looked me over and then said, "You're not the right kind."

That comment sort of blew me away. "Right kind?" I asked. "What do you mean 'right kind'?"

"Well, for starters," he said, "this is a mortuary." And he then began to laugh.

I was speechless. I told him no offense but it looked like a very modern, up-to-date motel. He thanked me for my kind words and directed



tom dreiling

• man of the plains

me to the area of town where I would find lodging, "for the right kind" He was right, there was a choice of motels in that area.

As I sat on the edge of the motel bed, giving thought to this experience, the voice in my head started talking. "Hey, stupid," the voice said, "did you not notice there was no parking lot at or near the place you thought was a motel?" The voice was right on both counts, 'stupid' being count one.

If someone tells you sometime that "you are not the right kind," don't feel offended, rather rejoice! you are still alive.

We are a year away from casting our ballots for president, so it's time for the Man of the Plains to make the following declaration: President Obama will be challenged by former Gov. Mitt Romney. The talking heads on radio and television – the bunch that claims they know everything – are struggling with this issue. They are the ones from those so-called exclusive schools of thought who are being paid big bucks to answer what this former student at Fort Hays State University just answered – and I did it for nothing!

Please allow me a few words about the passing of a truly great guy. Ken Haas had more friends than he could ever have imagined. The reason being, Ken Haas was a kind, gentle,

considerate soul who drew an incredible following through his years as a school counselor and educator at Kennedy Middle School and principal at TMP-Marian, as well as a sports enthusiast that took him onto many different venues.

And his smile would attract many more. He didn't have to say a word, just simply flash that smile and you felt a closeness to him that in its own way salted a friendship.

I know Hays is a better place because of Ken Haas. His goodness rubbed off on all who had the pleasure of knowing him, meeting him, greeting him. If there ever was a Mr. Positive, it was Ken Haas. He left us just a short time ago and from that moment on he was missed by wife Cheri, his three daughters, sons-in-law, grandkids, siblings, neighbors, friends, his dog and countless others who got wind of his death as word spread throughout his beloved community.

We grieve in silence, but we speak loudly and proudly of this man who fought so hard for so long before giving himself up to the very Creator who brought him into this world. He is now a member of "God's Club."

Thanks, Ken, your foot prints will be everlasting.

Snippets took a back seat today to allow me the tribute above to Mr. Haas.

Peace.
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Museum board supports curator

As members of the Museum Advisory Board we are responding to Glenda Park's letter to the editor published in *The Goodland Star-News* on Nov. 15.

There are two purposes for this letter. The first is to show our support for Karen Anderson, Curator of the Museum, and secondly to thank Glenda for expressing her concerns.

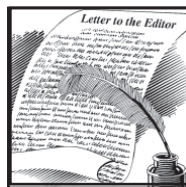
Our Board is exactly what its name implies; we are an appointed advisory board to give advice and ideas to the City of Goodland regarding the museum. We have no power to make decisions, but we consider ourselves a sounding board for the curator and the city administration on museum matters.

All of us serving on this board are volunteers and were appointed while Linda Holton served as curator of the museum. When Linda retired we were concerned about the future of the museum.

The city administration went through a process of requesting and accepting applications to replace Linda. The interview process was conducted by city administration, city employees, and volunteer city residents. There were many applications and very good candidates. The committee decided the best candidate was our current Curator, Karen Anderson.

Part of the discussion during the interviews was a vision of the new curator for our museum. Karen, prior to her interview, had taken the time to tour the museum and made specific recommendations to the committee on changes she thought needed to be made so the museum could become a more integral part of Sherman County.

Karen was hired because of her education, foresight and suggestions. Since taking the position Karen has started the process of implementing some of her ideas with respect to changes she believed needed to be made. Karen advised our board of the changes before they were implemented. Since we are an advisory committee Karen does not need our permission



from our readers

• to the editor

for the action she takes as curator, but we do discuss her vision for the museum and how to implement the same.

The Museum Advisory Board supports the job Karen is doing. We recognize change is not easy for most of us and some of the changes Karen has made, with our board's support, will not satisfy all residents. The goal is to make the museum a more integral part of the community and provide hands-on experience for Goodland and Sherman County residents, hopefully making our history more accessible and relevant to the community.

The artifacts currently on display at the museum represent only 10-15 percent of the total artifacts owned by the museum. One of the goals is to rotate artifacts in and out, as well as rotate exhibits. As artifacts are removed to make room for items in storage, the items removed are preserved and stored. That is the case with the sod house exhibit. The objective is to keep fresh artifacts and exhibits on display to tell the story of Sherman County.

We appreciate Glenda expressing her concerns. All of us who support the museum share a common goal of making it the best facility in Northwest Kansas. We are very proud of the museum and if you have not been there in the last six months, we invite you to visit and allow the staff to show you the changes that have been made and the vision for the future.

Members of the Museum Advisory Board: Judy Siruta, Dave Branda, Bill Wright, Greg Shores, Larry Keirns, Jerry Fairbanks and Cindy Bowman

To the Editor:

Are the ambulances in Goodland for everyone or just for certain people?

I was taken to Goodland Emergency Room on eve of Nov. 10, and was admitted to the hospital. The next day my Doctor here and my Doctor in Denver said I needed to be transported by ambulance for surgery.

My family got ready to go with me – we waited 1 – 2 – 2 1/2 hours for Goodland hospital to try to get their crew together, they finally said they couldn't get their crew together so maybe Denver would drive down with their ambulance crew and transport me.

Now think, 2 1/2 hours to get me, 2 1/2 hours back and I was due for surgery as soon as I got there.

I told the nurse guess the only way I will get to Denver is by my own car. She says, "Do you want to do that?"

I said looks like that's the only way I will get there.

She asked me would you be comfortable going in your car?

I said yes because I knew that's the only way I was going to get to Denver.

My family asked about Flight for Life but was told it's too expensive. My family drove me to Denver to Swedish Hospital. I stayed five days there and then to my sons house for six days. While at my son's I had a really good nurse there to help me.

So I have a question? How can there be an ambulance and crew at Goodland races but when I needed to be taken to Denver for surgery the hospital couldn't get a crew together to take me?

Makes you wonder what kind of ambulance service we have, don't it. I'm not sure why we have the ambulance here if not to take someone to another hospital when it is with doctor's Orders.

Margie Albers
Goodland