

Hurrahs and boos for state legislation

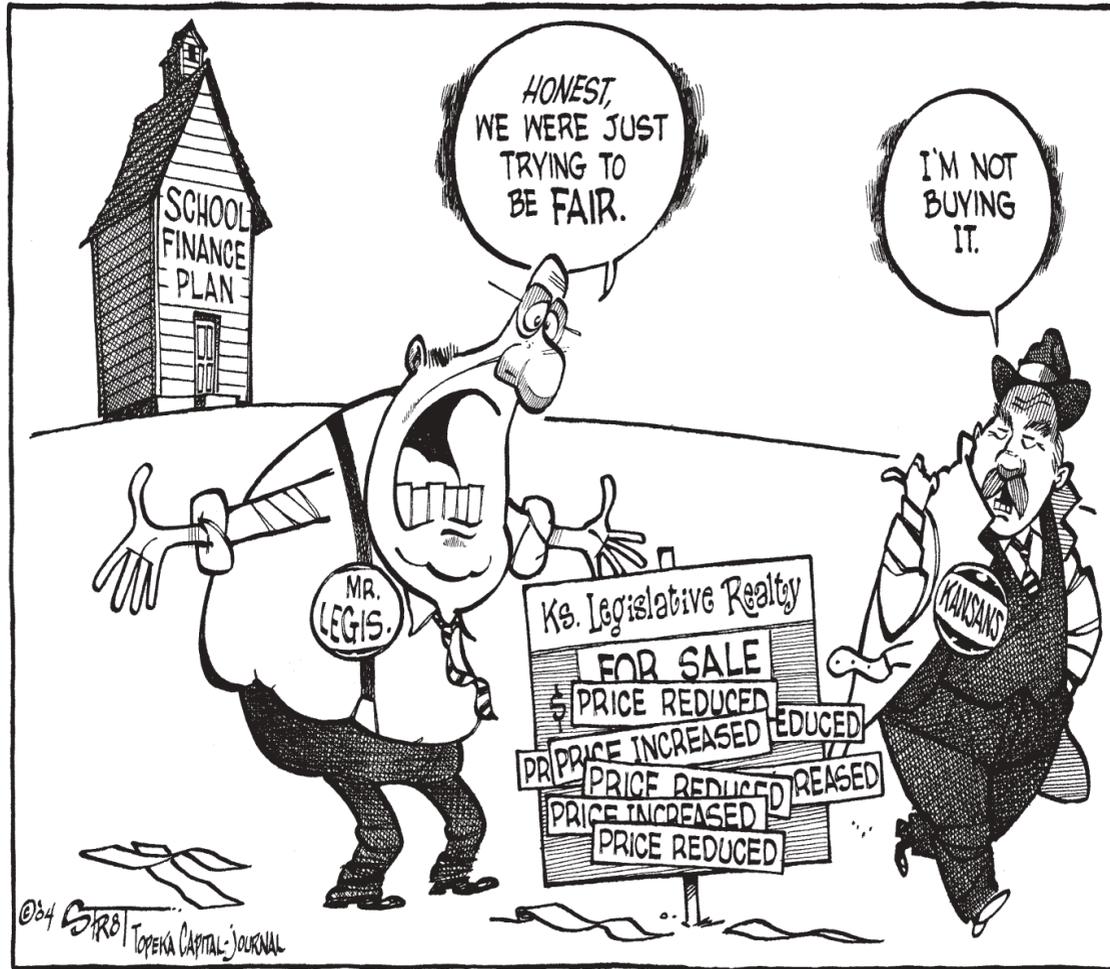
Cheers and jeers. First, thanks to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius for signing a bill to restore in-state tuition rights to children of immigrants who graduate from Kansas high schools. It's important that we educate and advance the best and brightest students from our schools, whether they were born in this country or not. While anti-immigration fanatics have railed against the bill, the last thing we need in this country is a class of under-employed, under-educated, under-skilled poor, people with no place to go and no expectation of a better life. Immigrants come to this country because they want to work. Our system for handling and integrating them into American life is hopeless. But the fact is, they are here. It's unlikely that we will ever succeed in keeping them out. Particularly, top high school graduates who want to go to Kansas colleges deserve some consideration because they represent the best and the brightest, people who will make fine Americans. To get in-state tuition, students will have to promise to become citizens as soon as they can. They will have to pay their own way. They won't displace any Kansas citizens.

It was wrong for the Legislature to change the law and keep them out of our universities. The governor, by her support, has helped right this wrong. With her general progressive attitude, it's hard to see why Ms. Sebelius stepped up to keep citizens of two Kansas counties from voting on consolidated law enforcement. The bill would have allowed a vote on consolidation, under an elected sheriff or an appointed director in Cloud and Lincoln counties. The governor cited opposition from statewide law enforcement groups in her veto message. Officers feared loss of jobs, she said, and possibly their pensions. Heck, that was probably what backers wanted, lower costs. One source noted that in Cloud County, law enforcement had opposed the change while county commissioners pushed for it. Why, we ask, is the governor stepping in to help a special interest group here? Why not let people have a chance to vote on consolidation? Most Kansas counties continue with the centuries-old system of a county sheriff and city police, even when there are only four or five officers in the county. It's an outmoded and inefficient system, but only two counties have overcome the inertia and ingrained special interests to try consolidation. With two more, we might have gotten a chance to see how well the idea works — or doesn't. The governor robbed voters of a chance to decide, and that decision seems both shortsighted and narrow-minded. We expect better.

— Steve Haynes

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- ★ **Governor Kathleen Sebelius**, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-2332
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514
- ★ **U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521
- ★ **U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715
- ★ **State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building, Room 449-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399
- ★ **State Rep. John Faber**, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500



Vacation is great, but oh so tiring

I'm home! I'm home! I'm home! My plane touched down in Denver at 8 p.m. Sunday night. And there was my handsome husband waiting for me at the baggage claim.

Following the longest separation during our marriage, I don't know which one of us was smiling bigger at seeing the other again.

It was after 9 p.m. before we cleared the airport and looked for a place to eat. An hour and a half and a hamburger and French fries later, we headed the car east. We stopped once for coffee and once to switch drivers before arriving in our little town at 4 a.m. Jim woke at his usual time, but let me sleep until 7:30 a.m., when he was walking out the door to go to work.

I pretended to be alert because he had even fixed coffee, bacon and eggs for me. But I'm afraid as soon as he was gone, I sat down in my recliner and shut my eyes. You could have stuck a fork in me; I was done.

Three hours later, the jangling of the phone roused me. It was Jim wanting to know how the column was coming. Trying to sound bright and awake, I said, "Fine. Just fine. Coming right along on it." "Read me what you have so far," he asked.

"Well, uh. Um-m-m, uh. Let's see, uh," I stammered, trying to buy some time.

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



"You haven't started it yet, have you?" he said in a slightly accusatory tone. "Woke you up, didn't I?"

Busted. He knows me too well. It's not like I don't have anything to write about. Ten action-packed days. Coast-to-coast travel. Zipping through time zones like a hot knife through butter. It is just so hard to get focused.

After leaving my daughters in Washington, I boarded a nonstop flight for Seattle to the home of my sister's oldest daughter, Patty. Patty's sister, Delight, was already there and Kathryn was expected the day after my arrival.

Patricia made the mistake of saying she would like to change a few things at her house but didn't know quite where to start.

That was all Delight needed to hear. A born organizer/decorator/slave-driver, Delight whipped everyone into a "Clean Sweep/Trading Spaces" make-over frenzy.

I was the designated curtain maker.

Patty is a saver, so fabric was no problem. She and Delight found paint on sale. So they assigned Kathryn a door and a brush. Meanwhile Patricia and Delight moved furniture, rearranged, sorted, eliminated. It was fun working together.

It wasn't all work, though. Patricia treated us to a lovely evening on board a train for a rolling, murder/mystery dinner party. The train rolled through beautiful countryside while the story unfolded. As the meal was served, more clues were revealed to the diners. In the end, it made no difference what the clues were. The diners created their own conclusion to the case and the most imaginative won.

As for the spa experience, let's just say I opted out on that one. I was expecting something totally different than what it was. Call me a prude, but I don't do naked. I am not going to walk around naked and I don't want to see others naked. And there was no middle ground. There was no choice like: "Clothed women to this side; naked women this side".

Big, bold signs in the locker room said ALL clothing and jewelry MUST be removed. No exceptions. So I went for coffee and a newspaper while the others soaked, saunaed and spaed.

All in all, it was a great vacation. But now that I'm home, I'll have to go back to work to get some rest.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Speaker apologizes for any misunderstandings

To the Community of Norton
It has come to my attention that the address I delivered at the commencement ceremonies for the Norton Community High School graduating class has been upsetting to some.

I am very sorry about this as this was certainly not my intention. My intent was to deliver a message that was a positive encouragement to the graduates, a positive experience for the audience and a positive reflection for our fine school district.

In the address I asked people to, "consider the kinds of things that happen by and to people 20 and under."

In doing so I was trying to establish two things.

1. That this graduating class was, by comparison, far above the norm of our society, and
2. That in spite of the problems within our country I saw great promise in these graduates and their generation to bring

about positive change.

The title of the message was, "Time Bombs." I made reference to other (US News and World Report, Time Magazine and Schoolsafety.org) negative uses of this term concerning young people, but when I referred to our graduates I attempted to turn this phrase saying, "Talk about a time bomb that could explode and bring about one of the best explosions you and I ever saw."

I said that God loved every one of them and that we should too. In the speech I praised God for people like these graduates and said that I thought, "God wanted to do something great with this generation."

No one associated with the school asked me to speak for or against God and or religion in my address.

I am a religious person. My choice to speak about them and to read from the Bible in the address was solely mine. My address was a private speech delivered in

a public forum. Freedom of private speech and religious expression are afforded me by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

A copy of the manuscript I used in the address is available for your examination upon request if you will email me at fyvetimer@juno.com.

I have communicated long enough to realize that a message intended, even said, is not always the message received. I apologize to the Class of 2004 if my remarks were hurtful. You are an exceptional group of young people who have accomplished much and will accomplish more. I am proud of you. I apologize to the parents of the senior class if my address was hurtful to you.

This class is exceptional in large part because you have been exceptional in your parenting. Please accept my apology.

Jeff Nielsen, minister
Norton Christian Church

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram 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.

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

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to

the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.