

If the country has extra, we should get money back

The tax-and-spend debate, in Washington and in Topeka, has an element of the unreal about it.

In Congress, they are talking seriously about a trillion-dollar tax cut, less than what the president wants, but a lot more than seemed possible just a few months ago. That sounds pretty good until you realize that the nation expects to have a \$3 trillion surplus.

Democrats want to spend a whole bunch of that money, as much \$2 trillion, for new programs and paying down the national debt. Realistically, it looks like they might get to spend \$1 trillion, with another trillion going to pay off the debt. Congress will fight all year over how to carve the "new money" up, but everyone wants to leave Social Security untouched.

President Bush wants to give at least \$1.6 trillion back to taxpayers who earned it. He wants an across-the-board cut aimed at promoting economic growth by getting big taxpayers to invest in the economy instead of paying taxes. Democrats, as usual, want to sock it to the rich.

And as usual, the great middle class won't see much difference in their paychecks, an estimated \$1,600 a year. That is only about \$30 a week, but any cut would be better than an increase.

Which is what Kansas taxpayers can expect if the teachers' union and school lobbyists get their way. A group of big-spending legislators want to raise the sales tax .6 of 1 percent over the next three years, earmarking the money for schools. They would raise the per-pupil base the state allows school districts to spend by \$90 this year, rather

than the \$50 the governor has proposed.

The tax increase is greatly unpopular, despite the teachers' lobbying power, and is unlikely to pass. Without an increase, people at the Statehouse are talking about another "tight" budget year, with little new money to be spent. Nonetheless, state spending probably will top \$9 billion for the first time this year, according to a thoughtful piece by John Hanna of the Associated Press.

That points out the reality of government, state and national, and that is growth. Government grows year in and year out. It grows not like the rest of the economy, according to what it produces, but just according to how much pressure there is to spend.

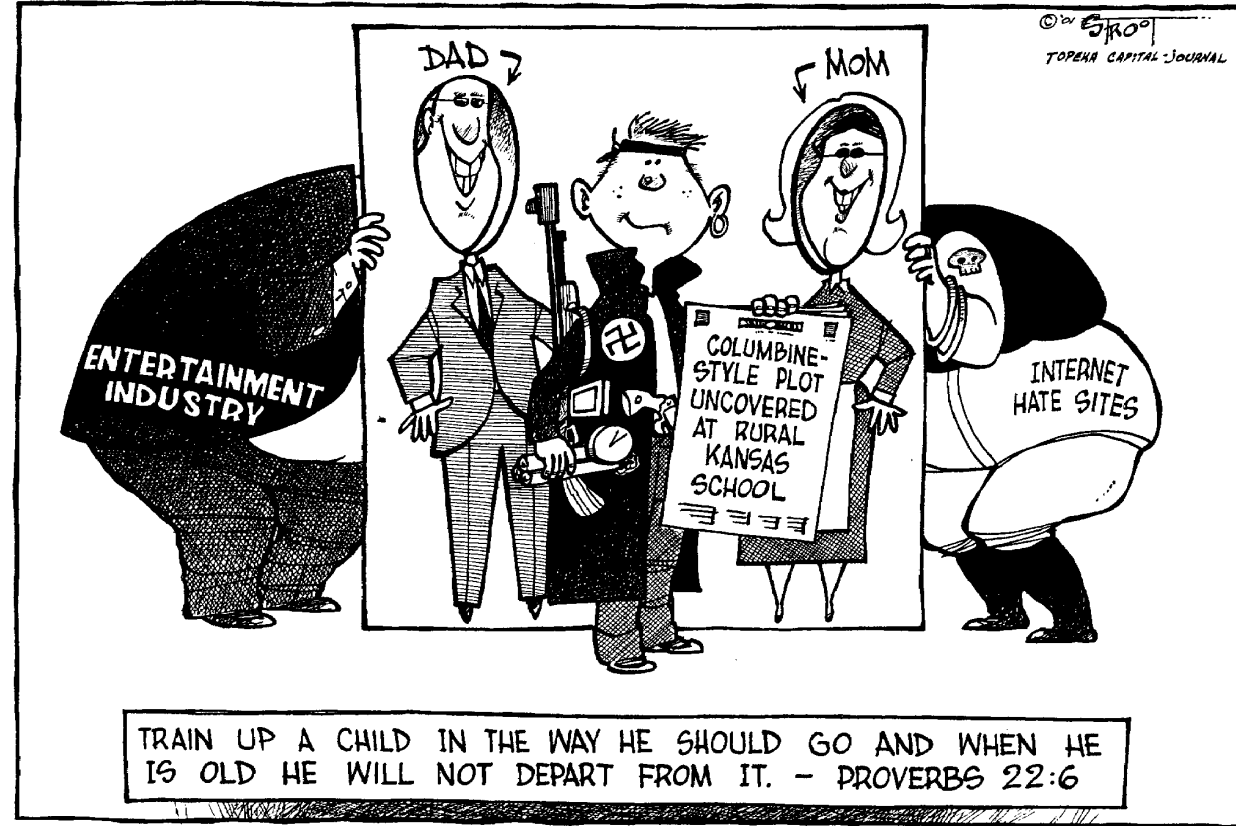
And that is the real reason why we need tax cuts in our boom economy — not to stimulate more growth in business, but to limit the growth of government. Kansas will top the \$9 billion mark in a "tight" year, even though the Legislature cuts taxes four years in a row. This year and last, there was room for growth even after the cuts. Without them, though, spending would be much higher.

The same is true at the federal level. Unless we cut taxes and give some of this money back to the people who own it, the spenders will get ahold of it. And it's not their money; it's ours.

Good sense, common ethics and fair play all demand that when government takes in more money than it needs, it should give it back. Not just find new ways to spend.

And that's what should happen this year.

— Steve Haynes



Enjoy the trip, but watch for friends

I've always said you couldn't go anywhere without running into someone you know — or someone who knows someone you know.

We went to the Colorado Press Association convention last weekend, the 20th straight year we have attended the convention. Every year there is at least one surprise.

This year, there was a lawn and garden show going on at the Denver Convention Center, which is just six blocks from our hotel. Since I didn't have anything special to do on Friday afternoon, a friend and I headed for the show.

My friend Mary was off checking on landscaping ideas for her new home while I was aimlessly wandering around when I heard a voice behind me. "Boy, someone from *The Oberlin Herald* should write about all this," the woman said.

I turned around to see LaVern and Carolyn Burtis from Oberlin standing behind me, grinning like crazy.

Since Carolyn works across the street from our office, I see her almost every day. But not usually in the middle of Denver.

I was, however, ready for her, since



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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this sort of thing has happened to me before.

"This is why you can't ever have an affair," I said. "No matter where you go, someone will know you."

As I finished this little speech, I noticed that a woman standing behind the Burtises was a little bug eyed. I'm not sure who she thought was having an affair, but it looked like she was planning to stay around a bit longer and find out, if she could.

It turned out that the Burtises were at the show on a whim also. They had been passing through and decided to see what was up, especially since LaVern has been doing a lot of landscaping at the Good Samaritan Center, where he works.

I didn't have a chance to tell them how Steve had been interviewing a cute young ad salesman in a town about an hour from where we lived in Colorado once years ago. While they were sitting at a restaurant eating and discussing the job, no fewer than three folks from our little town walked by with raised eyebrows.

I was the one doing the eyebrow bit one New Year's Day a dozen or so years ago when I stepped off an elevator in Denver and came face to face with a publisher I had known for years and the lady he was escorting. It was early morning, he didn't live in Denver and the lady was not his wife.

Well, maybe he was just interviewing a new ad salesman.

It's tough to sew on the road

Threading a needle at 60 miles per hour is quite a feat, but embroidery at 60 is even better. We're on our way to Mexico, and to pass the travel hours, I wanted to work on a baby blanket that has been promised for almost three months.

Progress is slow because every bump in the road leads to a needle-stick, and right now, my thumb looks like a pin cushion. Just so I don't bleed on the blanket.

—ob—

I guess I opened myself up to speculation about my new "do" when I revealed last week that I had permed my hair. A beautician friend mentioned that she had enjoyed the column, so, in desperation I asked, "Shelli, what can I do with it? I can't even comb it."

"You could try a hot oil treatment," she advised, "but leave it on overnight. Maybe even wrap it."

"OK," I think, "This will 'tame' it down."

I poured on two bottles of Alberto VO5 (one is usually enough). Now, for the wrap. All I had on hand was pink Saran Wrap left over from Christmas.



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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With my oily hair plastered to my head, I tried to get the wrap to stay, but had no luck. Finally I had to call for help.

"Jim, could you please come here a minute?"

I explain my plan and expect his cooperation. He doesn't have any more success than I did. The roll of wrap kept coming out of the box and getting tangled.

Finally, I said, "You hold it still and I'll turn."

Now picture this. A grown man holding a box of pink plastic wrap, one end placed firmly on his wife's head, as she begins to rotate in a counter-clockwise motion, covering her head (and eyes) in a cloud of cherry-colored film.

No wait. It gets better. With my head swathed in plastic, we headed off to bed, but when I laid my head down, my turban wanted to "squirt" off. I complain. Jim has a solution.

One of the "sheet garters" had come off his side and he had it on the night stand.

"Why don't you make a chin strap to hold it on?" he suggested.

I knew I couldn't sleep with one hand holding it on all night, so I said, "Why not" and buckled it on.

Did it work? Sort of. I still have LOTS of curl, but, at least it's manageable.

Bottom line. I might be the only girl with curl in Mexico.

We need to attract married folks

You hear a lot of talk about how we need to keep young people in town if we want to save our community, but it is one of those things that is easier said than done.

In today's world, there is little to attract young people to rural communities. We send them off to college in bigger towns, and hey, once they've seen the bright lights, how you gonna get them to come back to the farm?

Attracting 20-somethings sounds good, but it's not that easy to sell.

Years ago, young people went off to college and expected to come home to run their fathers' stores and farms, perhaps, but that was years ago. The decline in rural population has been going on for a century, not just in Oberlin but all across the plains, from Canada to Texas.

The advance in agriculture which has allowed to feed an ever-growing world with an ever-shrinking farm population is to blame. The same government that paid farmers to stay on the land was paying land-grant colleges to drive them off.

In the 21st century, though, we are approaching the end of that decline, the day when there are so few farm operations out there that their numbers will stabilize. We are not there; we still have hundreds and thousands of operations across the region which will go out of existence when their owners retire. Meantime, the government pays them



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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to stay on the land. But the decline cannot go on much longer.

When that happens, we will be left with county seat towns which are about the same size they always have been, maybe a little smaller, and a countryside which is largely empty. We will have schools, businesses, hospitals and churches, but fewer people to support them.

As ever, the kids will go away for more education after high school, all but a very few of them. The numbers today in small towns typically exceed 90 percent.

Most of these kids will get used to the city life, the parties and fun that accompany being at school with a few thousand others their own age. At 22, they will not want to move home. They will want the jobs, the challenge and the social life that the city offers. Most of them, anyway.

And we could spend a lot of money trying to lure them back in their 20s without much success. If we get them here, they are liable to be unhappy with

their social life and prospects for a mate.

While we might create jobs, we won't grow fast enough to provide a social life — or a pool of partners.

Our best chance to grow and prosper might be to aim a little higher, toward young families in the 30-plus range. These people match the demographics of our current business and professional population, from farming to retail to medical.

The ones we are looking for are married, have a family or are starting one, and their values have changed. They want the peace and quiet, stability and safety that a small town can provide.

If we can provide jobs or business opportunities to them, there is a real chance they will come, settle in and prosper. With them, so would our towns.

How to get from here to there is another thing entirely. We need more ideas. But knowing what to work for is a start.

Resident enjoys retirement center

To the Editor:

I would like to take this means of expressing my appreciation to those who are responsible for the construction of our beautiful Wheat Ridge Terrace Retirement Center. It's not an assisted living center nor is it an old folks home, such as the Good Samaritan Center. It's a place for those who are tired of maintaining a house, with all its responsibilities and worries. With the price of utilities these days, it would be a relief not to have these. All we have here in utilities is \$10 a month for cable and our telephones.

No one younger than 62 can live here, but then, who would want to? When I was that age, I wasn't ready to retire, as I still had a lot of pep and energy.

Life here is like apartment living, except it has a lot of benefits. We have a beautiful building without any stairs to climb, and just in passing, that is one of the reasons I moved here. We have power doors, which, if our hands are full of packages, can be opened by touching a button. We receive and send out mail here in the lobby. We have a lovely parlor, where we watch videos, television, work puzzles or just watch the fireplace. There is also an organ for any who can play. We have an exercise

room for those who do "sit down" exercises and also a room with exercise bikes.

The laundry room has two washers and two dryers and we each have our days to do our laundry.

In the summer we take comfort in knowing we have a ground-floor-level tornado or storm shelter.

We have a lovely dining room and how nice it is, when we all gather there, at noon, to sit down and be waited on. We talk and exchange news and views. We are a family here, and we care about each other. Our director, who serves us and does so many other nice things for us, is a jewel. The others, who help by bringing our food and also helping serve on weekends, are very much appreciated.

I would also like to say that, here, I can be as sociable as I like or I can go into my apartment, close the door and be as private as I like. I would not go back to stairway apartment living or a house with all its responsibilities and worries. This is not expensive living —

it is worry-free living, and affordable.

P.S.: One day soon, I will have some protection for my car, but, you know... when that soft rainwater falls from above, my car looks as though it has been cleaned and shined.

Eva Bryan
a satisfied resident
of Wheat Ridge Terrace
Oberlin

Letter to the Editor

From the Bible

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:12-14.

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