

## Schools do have needs; at what price to the state

A good idea: change the law so one government unit can't spend taxpayers' money to sue another government entity for money.

And make darned sure that no subdivision of the state can sue the state for money, financing that whole thing with state tax money.

That's what a Wichita-area legislator, Sen. Dick Kelsey of Goddard, proposed last week as Kansas faced another round of school lawsuits financed by tax dollars on both sides. Kelsey happens to be running for Congress, but that does not mean he can't have a good idea.

What it comes down to is you, the taxpayers, paying to sue you, the taxpayer, to force you to cough up more money for schools.

So let's start by asking, do you want to pay for any of this?

No?  
We didn't think so.

So maybe Sen. Kelsey is on to something here.

Four years ago, in a brazen power grab, the Kansas Supreme Court heard the original "Montoy" school case and ordered the Legislature to come up with nearly a billion dollars more for schools. Never mind that the Legislature, not the courts, is supposed to decide such things as spending levels and tax rates under the constitutional division of powers.

Worse yet, the Legislature caved in and agreed to find the money. But that was then. Now, the state is nearly broke, tax collections

run under estimates nearly every month, and the Legislature and governor have spent the better part of two years cutting the budget for all programs.

Should schools be exempt? The group called "Schools for Fair Funding," led by a group of sharp lawyers who always make money on these cases, says they should. They've ask the Supreme Court to reopen the Montoy case and find that the Legislature needs to dig up that billion.

Many of those who will spend this money, school boards and school administrators, say they need it, or children's educations will suffer. Teachers certainly want to see the money come through.

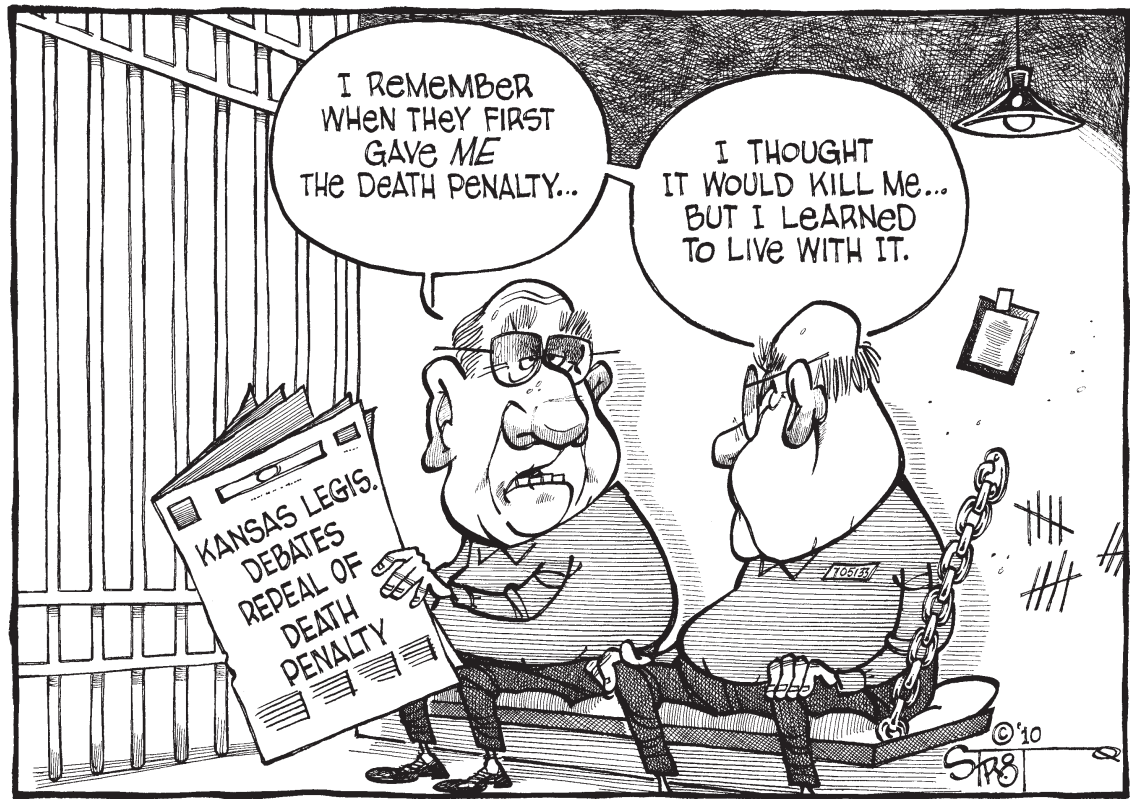
We know schools have needs, but at what price to the rest of the state? Cut colleges and highways even more? Raise taxes with thousands unemployed? Those are tough choices, questions that only the elected Legislature and governor should answer.

But above all else, how is it fair to use taxpayers' money to pay for a suit against the state?

We hope Sen. Kelsey's measure becomes law. We think he's right.

His measure will not protect the state from being sued. Anyone with an interest could file a similar suit, using money donated by school board members, administrators or the teachers' union, say, but it would save the rest of us from paying to sue ourselves.

Let's hope this passes. — Steve Haynes



## Shopping on line is so dull

I cheated out last week and ended up making the guest of honor wrap her own present for a party.

It all started out innocently enough with a baby shower invitation for my youngest daughter. Her sister is giving the shower to celebrate our first grandchild. Unfortunately for me, it will be held where they live, in Augusta, Ga.

I responded to oldest daughter, and she wasn't a bit surprised I wasn't going to make it. Neither daughter had expected me, but they both knew I wanted an invitation to the shower.

I had already decided on my present, sheets to go on the Pac-N-Play combination playpen and portable baby bed that we had already bought for the new grandchild.

I had to go on-line to purchase the sheets at the Babies R Us web site. Man, I hate to shop on line. It's so impersonal, so mechanical, so dull. Still, the only way to get the sheets was visit one of the specialty stores or go on line. Since driving four hours to shop wasn't an option, I got out my computer.

The sheets were \$9.99 apiece or a set or a whatever, and I ordered two — one yellow, one green. At the checkout button, they added the delivery charge and asked if I wanted my purchase gift wrapped. Of course, I wanted it wrapped. It's for a baby shower!

I hit the button and was told that on top of the \$19.98 for the sheets,



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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\$2.87 for tax and \$6.10 for shipping, I would be charged \$4.99 per sheet to have the gifts wrapped.

Ten bucks to wrap a couple of sheets? Couldn't they do it as one package? I would pay \$5, but not \$10. That was outrageous!

I canceled the gift wrap and added a package of cloth diapers that the expectant mother also wanted. The diapers were \$2 more than the gift-wrap service, but I felt better about spending my money on them.

The next step was where to ship them.

They could come to me and I could wrap them and send them on. That sounded like a lot of work.

They could go to my older daughter, the hostess. That sounded like the best bet, but oldest daughter was already overseeing the party and is well known in the family as the person to most likely order your present on line. That girl is more connected to the Internet than Steve Jobs. Besides, most importantly, I didn't have her address on me and no, I don't have it memorized.

So the third option was to have

them sent to the almost-new mother.

I called youngest daughter and gave her these orders:

"Lindsay, my love. I purchased the sheets for that play-pen thingee Daddy and I got you. They'll be delivered to you.

"You are to wrap them in appropriate paper and give them to your sister. When it's party time, you will unwrap your presents and exclaim over them suitably."

She didn't blink an eyelash.

"Right, Mom. I got some blue paper with yellow duckies on it that I used on Sandy's present two years ago. I bet nobody will remember it."

"Since I'm not paying to have the presents wrapped," I said. "I bought a package of cloth diapers instead. You can wrap them or not as you please."

"Oh goodie," she replied. "This baby thing is getting kind of expensive."

Oh baby! You ain't seen nothin' yet!

## It was a good barter for all

It's time to pay our debt.

A few months ago, our good friend, Wayne, was getting new front room furniture. We thought his old set looked pretty good and went with our family room's cowboys and Indians theme. A deal was struck and we agreed to help sheetrock, texture and paint a spare bedroom at Wayne's house in exchange for the furniture.

Wayne was in no hurry to have the room done, but now, the time has come to settle accounts.

Jim will take care of the heavy stuff and I'll move in for paint duties.

All in all, I think it was a good barter for all parties.

— ob —

Anyone who knows me, knows I am a creationist. I believe in a young earth and I believe the Bible account of creation in six days. But, with that being said, IF I were an evolutionist I would have to agree with the nominees for this year's Darwin Awards.

Every year the least "evolved" among us are recognized with these awards. There is a list of the top ten and one of the nominees was the guy who tried to siphon gas from a motor home parked on a street in Seattle. When the police arrived at the scene they found a very sick man curled up next to the motor home. Upon questioning, the man admitted to trying to steal gasoline, but he had plunged his siphon hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the motor home declined to press charges saying it was the best laugh he'd ever had.



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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This year's winner is the guy who tried to mug someone in Long Beach, Calif. When his .38 caliber revolver failed to fire at his intended victim, the would-be robber peered down the barrel of the gun and tried the trigger again. This time it worked. The award was given posthumously.

Remember, they walk among us; they drive vehicles; they vote; and frequently have children.

— ob —

Some of my best recipes come from my sister-in-law, Linda. Her buttermilk syrup is to die for.

I wanted to make a batch of her homemade mustard over the weekend but when I looked at the recipe, it didn't designate whether to use white or cider vinegar. When I called to find out she wasn't home but my brother, Jim, said he would ask her.

Later, I got an e-mail from Jim that said, "Linda said she uses white vinegar."

It's a good deal I don't check my e-mail every day, because immediately following my brother's message was an e-mail from Linda that said she had actually mumbled something like, "I don't think it matters."

She added that he normally

doesn't listen to her but, now, he's hearing things she doesn't say.

Bottom line, she still doesn't think it matters but, she always uses cider vinegar.

Just to be on the safe side, I'll use it, too.

### From the Bible

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy in his dwelling place.

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

1 Chronicles 16:24-29 NIV

## Aunt Mary was very special

My aunt Mary breathed her last in Denver last week, marking a milestone in my own journey that I'd sort of hoped to push off for another few years.

For her part, I think at 90 she was ready. Her health had been slipping and she'd had to leave home for an assisted-living apartment last fall after visits to the hospital and a rehab home.

She was the last of her generation on either side of my family. She and mom had two brothers, but Gerald, or "Pete," as we knew him, has been gone for years now and Francis was killed in a work accident while still a young man.

My dad, who died in 1976, had only one sister, and she died only a few years after him. That left Aunt Mary, the one we always felt closest to.

Mom looked up to her older sister. When we visited Denver each summer, us kids got to stay at her house and be around her and our cousin Mary Lou, whom we adored.

It was always exciting to be in Denver, where they watered every day to keep grass growing in the desert and mountains formed the backdrop for everything. I always remember Aunt Mary as gracious, loving and welcoming. And I'm sure we were brats, keyed up as we were on those summer visits. Her husband, Uncle Lou, always welcomed us, and we liked him, too, but Aunt Mary, she was special.

In Denver, they owned drug stores and later Hallmark shops in partnership with his parents. Sometimes we saw them at the store, but always at their home out in south Denver, where she lived for nearly



### Along the Sappa

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50 years.

When we moved on to college, we knew we could stop by Aunt Mary's for a visit, cold tea, dinner or lunch. One year, they loaned me a car to drive up into the mountains.

After we married, Cynthia and I would stop in Denver on our own trips. She always welcomed us then, as young marrieds, and later as a middle-aged couple with kids of our own.

Mary Lou would thank us for stopping to see her parents and being so nice to them, but truthfully, it was never a chore. At 40 or 60 or 80, even at 90, Aunt Mary was the same vivacious and interesting hostess. She'd feed us, or in later years, we'd take her out and feed her. Once we took her to high tea at the Brown Palace Hotel downtown, and it was quite the event.

We planned to go see her today, in fact. She was excited to show us her new apartment, but that was not to be. She went to the hospital on a Thursday. Doctors thought maybe she'd picked up a staph infection, but they never got ahead of it. In less than a week, she was gone.

Someone said she'd had a good life. That would be a matter of perspective. She lived with a bad back for decades, and it left her stooped and frail. She fought off skin cancer

and a dozen other minor ailments. She spent years caring for a husband who never could give up smoking, and paid the price with chronic lung problems.

Then she made a life for herself alone in their house, though someone among her daughter, son-in-law, three grandsons and half-dozen adoring great-grandchildren visited nearly every day.

Whatever the problem, she and mom just faced it. They hardly ever complained. Both faced physical hardships with their health and both took care of ailing husbands at home for years.

Years ago in Kansas City, I'm sure it was said that both had married above their station. It was an era when those things counted. Their daddy worked in an ice cream plant and carried a lunch pail. Dad's father was a big shot editor and Uncle Lou's folks were in business.

They were pretty young girls with iron wills and ambition, I guess, but looking back at it, no two men ever had wives as devoted, as faithful and as loving. They were pretty decent gals, and I grew to admire them greatly.

And while I know it was time, as often is the case, I wasn't really ready to say goodbye.

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