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Thursday, April 30, 2015

Two old warships and the folly of economic development

By Eric Boehm | Watchdog.org

In a warehouse in central Pennsylvania, the remains of the Royal Savage are quietly rotting away.

The ship has quite a story to tell. She fought in one of the first battles of the American Revolution, where she was captured, burned and sunk by British naval forces on Lake Champlain. But now she resides in Harrisburg, her remains purchased by the city decades ago after being salvaged from the bottom of the lake.

The ship is only one of many questionable purchases the city made during the 1980s and 1990s as part of a failed economic development strategy. Now, as it recovers from bankruptcy, the city is trying to find a new home for the old ship.

"There is no question the Royal Savage is a historically significant wreckage and the remains do have great importance," Eric Papenfuss, Harrisburg's current mayor, told the Patriot-News. "The question is: why did the city purchase it in the first place?"

Those are great questions, unlikely to be fully answered. But for anyone who has followed Harrisburg's financial turmoil, the story is painfully familiar. Former Mayor Stephen Reed spent years and gobs of tax money amassing a collection of historical artifacts, oddities and trinkets for a Civil War museum (which cost \$32 million and opened in 2001) and a "wild west" museum (which never opened) that were supposed to make Harrisburg a major tourism destination.

In a city that was directly involved in neither the Civil War nor the settlement of



The U.S.S. Constitution

the American West, it was perhaps not the most brilliant of strategies. Where did the sunken remains of the Royal Savage which had been at the bottom of Lake Champlain for 80 years by the time the Civil War and the West were won — fit into these plans? No one really knows.

Reed's glorious plans didn't stop with museums. He threw the city's money after all sorts of economic development projects that helped revitalize the downtown area near the state capitol and brought a minor league baseball team to town. He won election after election — serving seven consecutive terms as mayor from 1982 to 2010 — while simultaneously bankrupting his city.

Now, Harrisburg has a shiny new baseball stadium, a muse-

um about the Civil War and the rotted remains of an old warship. It also has some of the worst schools in Pennsylvania, a dwindling population and no money to replace leaky, 100-year-old water and sewer pipes or the sinkholes they cause all over the city.

About 100 miles south of Harrisburg, in Baltimore, Maryland, there is another old warship. The U.S.S. Constitution isn't piled in a warehouse, but fully restored and anchored permanently in the city's Inner Harbor, surrounded by luxury apartments, an aquarium, a science museum, a convention center, a baseball stadium, light rail lines and enough trendy restaurants to satisfy any foodie.

Kansas AG To Defend Kansas Anti-Abortion Law In Court

By JOHN HANNA
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas' attorney general is telling legislators that defending a first-of-its-kind anti-abortion law in court could cost the state up to \$450,000, as Republican Gov. Sam Brownback commemorates the measure with events across the state.

The Republican governor announced plans Monday for four re-enactments of his signing of a bill banning a common second-trimester procedure that anti-abortion activists describe as dismembering a fetus. Brownback's events Tuesday were at a Catholic church education building in Lenexa and Catholic high schools in Pittsburg, Wichita and Hays.

Brownback signed the legis-

lation April 7, and the new law takes effect in July. The National Right to Life Committee proposed the measure as model legislation, and Oklahoma enacted its own law days after Kansas.

Abortion providers in Kansas say they're considering lawsuits. Attorney General Derek Schmidt told legislators last week that his office could need up to \$50,000 by the end of June, another \$100,000 to \$200,000 during the fiscal year beginning July 1 and up to \$200,000 more for the following fiscal year. Schmidt's office declined to comment Monday on the request, but it was described in a summary of budget proposals from various state agencies prepared last week for lawmakers by their research staff.

His office already has paid outside attorneys \$1.2 million to defend other anti-abortion laws enacted since Brownback took office in January 2011. The state hasn't lost a lawsuit, and Kansans for Life, the most influential anti-abortion group at the Statehouse, is confident the new law would survive a challenge.

"We wouldn't have to pay a penny if nobody sued," said Mary Kay Culp, the group's executive director. "Let the people of Kansas speak and leave it alone."

But Laura McQuade, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri said Schmidt's request for funds shows his office is "aware that this bill has constitutional problems."

Lawyers Defend Arizona Sheriff

PHOENIX (AP) — Lawyers for Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio have objected to questioning of the lawman by a federal judge about a secret investigation into the judge's wife.

Attorney Michele Iafate has filed an objection to the "unorthodox process" that saw U.S. District Judge Murray Snow question Arpaio from the bench last week during a contempt of court hearing.

Iafate argued in a motion filed Tuesday that the sheriff should have been given notice about the line of questioning so he could have prepared answers.

"The court nor any other party previously provided it to defendants nor gave notice that defendant Arpaio would be questioned about it," Iafate wrote.

Arpaio testified that he believed his then-attorney had

hired a private investigator to investigate Snow's wife for purportedly making a comment about the judge not wanting the sheriff to get re-elected in 2012.

The disclosure came as Arpaio testified in the contempt hearing convened after he acknowledged disobeying Snow's 2011 order to stop immigration patrols as part of a lawsuit over racial profiling by the sheriff's office.

Arpaio's second-in-command, Jerry Sheridan, testified Friday that an interview was conducted of the woman who provided the tip to the six-term sheriff about the judge's wife, and the investigation didn't go any further.

Snow has ordered that all records into the investigation, including electronic data, funding, phone records, emails and reports, be immediately placed

on hold and handed over to a court-appointed monitor.

Iafate, meanwhile, wants an opportunity for the defense to review more than 3,300 pages of related documents that were to be turned over to the monitor. The lawyers want to scan for potentially privileged information.

It's unknown when Snow will rule in the contempt case. He has raised the possibility of holding more hearings in June.

It also is unclear what consequences Arpaio might face over the secret investigation. Federal law prohibits trying to intimidate or inappropriately influence a federal judge.

The U.S. Attorney's Office and FBI haven't responded to questions about whether the agencies are examining Arpaio's disclosure that his office was behind the investigation of Snow's wife.

Three KanCare contractors lost \$52 million in 2014

(AP) The companies providing coverage to Kansas' Medicaid system lost millions last year, financial information shows, but cut down on their losses from the year before.

Records indicate Amerigroup, Sunflower Health Plan and UnitedHealthcare lost a combined \$52 million in 2014 after losing about \$116 million in 2013. A document with profits and losses for the three managed care organizations that operate under KanCare was provided to lawmakers and obtained by The Topeka Capital-Journal.

UnitedHealthcare, which brought in about \$818 million in total revenues under KanCare, fared the best of the three companies, losing only \$1.5 million last year. By comparison, Sunflower, with \$1.03 billion in revenue, lost about \$35 million.

Amerigroup, which had \$900 mil-



lion in revenue, lost \$16 million.

The Legislative KanCare Oversight Committee received the figures Tuesday. Although the spreadsheet wasn't provided to audience members, Kansas Department of Health and Environment Division of Health Care Finance director Mike Randol summarized the information for lawmakers during a presentation.

Randol indicated the figures show the managed care organizations' losses in 2014 were only 46 percent of their losses in 2013. He said the information is taken from filings the companies are required to make with the

Kansas Insurance Department.

Randol didn't offer much commentary on the figures, but under questioning from Rep. Jim Ward, D-Wichita, he said the total loss experienced by the managed care organizations in the past two years was about \$170 million.

"So we're looking at almost \$170 million in losses?" Ward asked.

"Correct," Randol responded.

Representatives of the managed care organizations did address lawmakers, but didn't raise the issue of their revenues, nor did legislators question them about it. Approached after the meeting, Tim Spilker, CEO of UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Kansas, declined to predict whether the company would turn a profit in 2015.

"It's early, right, in 2015. It's kind of like your own personal budget — you never plan to lose money. So we

actually feel really good about the progress we're making in terms of clinical programs and member engagement," Spilker said.

Spilker indicated community health workers and other initiatives will be key to the company's profitability.

When the state created KanCare, it hired three companies with three-year contracts. Each company also has the option of two one-year extensions, for a total of five years.

KanCare's implementation was disruptive, Ward said, and represented a large shift in how services were delivered. A company pulling out of KanCare could turn a patient's life upside down, he said.

Ward said the losses mean the companies are subsidizing healthcare in Kansas to the tune of \$170 million over the past two years.

"They're not altruistic. They're in this to make money. So at some point

in time, do they make different business decisions?" Ward said.

Rep. Willie Dove, R-Bonner Springs, said it takes time for managed care companies to turn a profit. Dove said the companies anticipated losing money for the first three years.

"This is not unusual for managed care. In order to make things work, there is an expected loss of revenue because you're taking in individuals who in many cases have not had proper healthcare coverage, so there's an expected loss," Dove said.

But last year, officials from the managed care companies had suggested they might turn a profit by the end of 2014.

"We're a for-profit company," Michael McKinney, chief executive officer at Sunflower, said in May. "We're designed to make a profit. It just hasn't turned out that way."

Ohio Obamacare expansion costs \$3 billion in first 15 months

By Jason Hart | Ohio Watchdog

Americans' tax burden is already \$3 billion heavier because of Ohio Gov. John Kasich's expansion of Medicaid under Obamacare.

By putting more able-bodied, working-age childless adults on Medicaid than Kasich projected, Obamacare expansion is reducing incentives to work and threatening tradition-

al Medicaid recipients' access to care faster and at greater cost than anticipated.

After Kasich expanded Medicaid unilaterally, a state panel approved \$2.56 billion in Obamacare spending for the expansion's first 18 months. The money was meant to last until July, but it ran out in February.

Kasich's Obamacare expansion cost \$323 million in

March — 84 percent greater than estimates revised just six months earlier.

Using monthly figures released by the Ohio Department of Medicaid, the Republican governor's Obamacare expansion cost slightly more than \$3 billion from January 2014 through March 2015.

Kasich's Obamacare expansion is on track to cost more

than \$4 billion by the end of June.

With federal taxpayers on the hook for all benefit costs and Ohio facing a growing state share in 2017, Obamacare expansion may soon consume 10 percent of Ohio's budget.

"Comparing budgets to actual and holding those responsible accountable is how private enterprise would work and, in

my opinion, also how government should work," State Rep. Paul Zeltwanger said in an email to Ohio Watchdog.

Expressing concern over Obamacare expansion's promised federal funding, Zeltwanger said the federal government "already has way too much debt and cannot support all of these additional costs from Obamacare let alone \$1.3 billion overruns from one

state."

"I want Ohio to be part of the solution" instead of adding to the \$18 trillion national debt, Zeltwanger said. "As elected officials, we need to show fiscal discipline and restraint. We owe this to our children."

Zeltwanger suggested Medicaid reforms should be put in place before the state even considers expanding the program.

Riley County Minutes Cost Taxpayers \$700 Per Month

Riley County Commission Minutes

April 16, 2015
8:30 AM Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance

1. Public Comments
Commission Comments
Business Meeting

3. 2015 LEPC Membership List

Harrison presented the 2015 LEPC Membership List request.

Move to sign the letter addressed to CEPR for updating Riley County LEPC Membership list.

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Robert Boyd, County Commissioner
SECONDER: Ben Wilson, County Commissioner
AYES: Boyd, Wells, Wilson

4. 2015 Asphalt Program Contract

Shepek stated one of the projects on the list of asphalt project is a 1/2 cent sales tax project.

Move to approve the contract for the 2015 Asphalt Program with Shilling Construction Co., Inc., in the amount of \$1,094,841.90.

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Robert Boyd, County Commissioner
SECONDER: Ben Wilson, County Commissioner
AYES: Boyd, Wells, Wilson

5. Approve payroll/ accounts payables (when completed)

Move to approve the payroll vouchers in the amount of \$282,087.52 and the following warrant vouchers for April 17, 2015:

2015 Budget	Review Minutes
County General 231,393.57	6. Board of Riley County Commissioners - Regular Meeting - Apr 13, 2015 8:30 AM
Health Department 50,197.62	Move to approve the minutes.
JJA Prevention St Formula 2,967.75	RESULT: ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
Court Technology 111.98	MOVER: Robert Boyd, County Commissioner
County Auction 178.00	SECONDER: Ben Wilson, County Commissioner
Riley Co Juvenile Service 4,457.34	AYES: Boyd, Wells, Wilson
Motor Vehicle Operations 3,499.27	Review Tentative Agenda
Special Alcohol 4,420.00	7. Tentative Agenda
21st Jud Dist Teen Court 727.46	Press Conference Topics
Riley Co Adult Services 5,634.90	8. Discuss Press Conference
Capital Improvements Fund 28,448.87	Pat Collins-Rural Fire Activity
Emergency 911 5,755.74	Rich Vargo-USD 383 LOB Mail Ballot Election
Solid Waste 153,957.22	Stephanie Watts-MPO Open House
County Building 7,591.01	9:00 AM Bob Isaac, Planner
Road & Bridge Cap Project 15,156.37	9. Amend Section 16 of the Riley County Sexually Oriented Business Code
RCPD Levy/Op 15,095.97	Isaac presented the text amendment for section 16 of the Riley County Sexually Oriented Business Code.
Landfill Closure 617.36	Motion to sign Resolution No. 041615-10 A resolution adopting amendments to the Riley County sexually oriented business code, as incorporated by Resolution No. 072904-29, Adopted July 29, 2004 that provides for the management of sexually oriented business within the unincorporated area of Riley County.
Riley Co Fire Dist #1 8,861.92	RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
University Park W&S 5073.80	
Univ Park Capital Project 162.74	
Hunters Island Water Dist 964.20	
Carson Sewer Benefit Dist 44.88	
Deep Creek Sewer 73.75	
Moehlman Bottoms 441.65	
Valleywood Operations 292.78	
Terra Heights Sewer 864.92	
Konza Water Operations 2,575.81	
Lakeside Heights Sewer 13.64	
TOTAL \$549,580.52	

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Robert Boyd, County Commissioner
SECONDER: Ben Wilson, County Commissioner
AYES: Boyd, Wells, Wilson

Nussbaum named vice president for advertising for McClatchy

Kim Nussbaum, the president and publisher of The Wichita Eagle for nearly four years, has been named vice president for advertising for McClatchy Co., parent company of The Eagle.

Nussbaum's last day at The Eagle will be May 29.

"The bulk of my career has been in the advertising department, working with the local sales teams and all sizes of advertisers," she said Monday. "I'm looking forward to focusing on it full time as we navigate through our changing and growing audience."

Nussbaum's appointment to the post at Sacramento, Calif.-based McClatchy is part of the company's previously announced corporate reorganization to strengthen its sales and marketing efforts and accelerate its digital revenue growth. In her new position, Nussbaum will be based in Sacramento.

"The more I've talked to individuals within McClatchy the more excited I get," she

said.

McClatchy also announced Monday that Don Burk, vice president for advertising at the Star-Telegram in Fort Worth, Texas, will become corporate director of sales.

"Both Kim and Don have contributed to McClatchy's digital transformation and revenue diversification," McClatchy CEO Pat Talamantes said in a news release. "They are both high-energy people who have great respect among their peers, and I know they'll have even greater impact across the company in these new roles."

Nussbaum, 49, came to McClatchy and The Eagle in August 2011 from the Abilene Reporter-News, an E.W. Scripps newspaper in Texas where she was president and publisher.

Nussbaum has worked more than 30 years in newspapers, primarily working in advertising and marketing leadership roles before becoming a publisher in Abilene in 2007. Before joining McClatchy, she had worked for other E.W.

Scripps newspapers, as well as Gannett Co. newspapers.

Nussbaum said she is proud of the strong team that she is leaving in Wichita.

"I'm proud of our newsroom and its investigative reporting on state and local issues, and our continued attention to mobile news for our rapidly growing audience," she said.

Nussbaum said she also is proud of the Together Wichita effort launched under her tenure at The Eagle. The community improvement initiative comprises 21 Wichita companies that fund projects such as the Keepers on Parade public art project and the Memories

Park on the western edge of Sedgwick County Park. The group's 2015 project is to install signage on the walking and bicycle path near K-96 in northeast Wichita.

"To me, that just represents the power of a local media company," she said.

Nussbaum said that her newspaper career has taken her to other states outside her native Texas, including Missouri and Oklahoma.

Her time in Wichita holds one distinction.

"We probably have some of the best friends (in Wichita) we've ever had," Nussbaum said.

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When: Gates open at 1 p.m. Sept. 6, with the concert at 6 p.m.

Where: Alcove Spring Historical Park, 6 miles south of Marysville

Cost: \$55 for adults; \$15 for children 12 years and younger

Tickets: On sale Friday at www.oort.org or (844) 252-6830

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Topeka Symphony Orchestra to perform in September at Alcove Spring

By Jan Biles
Topeka Capital-Journal
 MARYSVILLE — The Topeka Symphony Orchestra will be traveling to Marshall County in September for an outdoor concert at Alcove Spring Historical Park that has been several years in the making.

The Orchestra on the Oregon Trail concert will be at 6 p.m. Sept. 6 on a 10-acre meadow at the 246-acre, largely undeveloped historic park, 6 miles south of Marysville on the Oregon-California Trail.

Kyle Wiley Pickett, music director and conductor of the 70-member orchestra, said performing music in the natural setting of Alcove Spring will be “an unparalleled experience,” which will kick off its 70th season.

“We will be playing music perfectly suited to its surroundings, which will make it very meaningful and special,” Pickett said. “It should really make the music of the frontier come to life to hear it out on the plains.”

John Schwartz, producer of the event and trustee of the Alcove Spring Historical Trust since 1999, said the impetus for the event came from area residents who had expressed a desire to have a large outdoor concert in Marshall County.

“It planted the seed,” he said. Wayne Kruse, director of the Marshall County Arts Cooperative, met with representatives of the Topeka Symphony Orchestra in 2014, and plans for the concert were initiated.

Pickett said the concert will

feature “music appropriate to the place and time,” including “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” Broadway show tunes and western selections, such as Aaron Copland’s “Hoe-down” from “Rodeo.”

The orchestra will rehearse in Topeka and then travel by bus on Sept. 6 for an early morning practice and sound check at the site, which has no running water or electricity. The musicians will perform on a stage in a portable, tent-like amphitheater.

“It’s important to take the orchestra outside of the hall (from time to time),” Pickett said.

The gates of the site will open at 1 p.m. for an afternoon of activities that will include tour-guided and self-guided nature walks, wagon rides, a

pioneer encampment, other musical acts, food and cowboy poetry. Dancing, stargazing and ghost tours will follow the concert. In the case of rain, the concert will be rescheduled for Sept. 7.

Schwartz said the overall budget for the event is \$160,000, and about \$40,000 in patron donations have already come in.

Tickets for the Orchestra on the Trail concert go on sale Friday. Schwartz expects the tickets to be sold out by the end of May.

Tickets, which are \$55 for adults and \$15 for children 12 years and younger, can be purchased at www.oort.org or by calling (844) 252-6830.

Kansas oil production rose in 2014, gas dropped

Oil production increased in Kansas in 2014 despite falling prices, though natural gas production continued to drop.

The Kansas Geological Survey released production numbers for 2014 on Monday. Kansas produced 49,521,056 barrels of oil in 2014, which was about 2.7 million more than it produced in 2013, or about a 5.7 percent increase. That put oil production at its highest level in Kansas since 1995.

The value of the oil produced went down, however, from \$4.11 billion in 2013 to \$4.09 billion in 2014, because of rapidly falling prices in the second half of the year. Production and exploratory efforts related to oil and gas tailed off toward the end of 2014 as the prices dropped, according to KGS.

Natural gas production fell by about 7.4 billion cubic feet to 287.6 billion cubic feet, a 2.5 percent decline. Gas production in Kansas has dropped every year since 1996, except in 2008.

The value of the natural gas produced actually rose, however, because of unusually high prices in February, when gas sold for \$5.36 per thousand cubic feet. The gas in Kansas was worth \$1.3 billion in 2014, up from \$1.1 billion in 2013.

Ellis County was the top oil producer in Kansas, with about

3.4 million barrels in 2014, though Harper County wasn’t far behind, with 2.9 million barrels. Harper and Sumner counties both saw a notable increase in production as drillers explored different areas of the Mississippian limestone play, which lies under south-central and southwest Kansas, KGS geologist Lynn Watney said in a news release.

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Kyle Wiley Pickett



John Schwartz

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Jim Rose

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NEW USD 378 SCHOOL BOARD

On 7 April the voters of USD 378 chose the entire "Falcons Forward" slate to become the four new board members. We congratulate these new members on their election and wish them great success in meeting the challenges facing the school district.

The electorate expressed an overwhelming concern about the dysfunctional performance of the school board over the past few years. At the public forum on Sunday before the election, each member of the elected slate stated his intent to consider all viewpoints, listen to the will of the people, and work openly with everyone.

As they prepare to take their seats we hope they will consider the following three suggestions to guide the board's planning, supervision, and oversight of district matters. These suggestions are specifically for the USD 378 board members, but could well apply to other school boards in the area.

First, we hope they will professionalize the decision making process used by the board in directing the business of the district. All too often, the school board seems to brainstorm and stumble its way to decisions instead of following an orderly, problem solving approach. We hope the new board will form committees and working groups to gather, brainstorm, and investigate all pertinent facts and information over time and bring this to the full board for discussion. When a major issue requires discussion and decision, they should have a special board meeting for just that issue instead of trying to discuss major projects in fifteen or twenty minutes of an already overloaded agenda. In the case of major projects, such as bond

issues or large spending projects, they need to have a special community forum specifically designed to inform the public of the proposed course of action, and explain why the board favors such a course. Then, with the public feedback, they should go back and finalize their decision making on the issue.

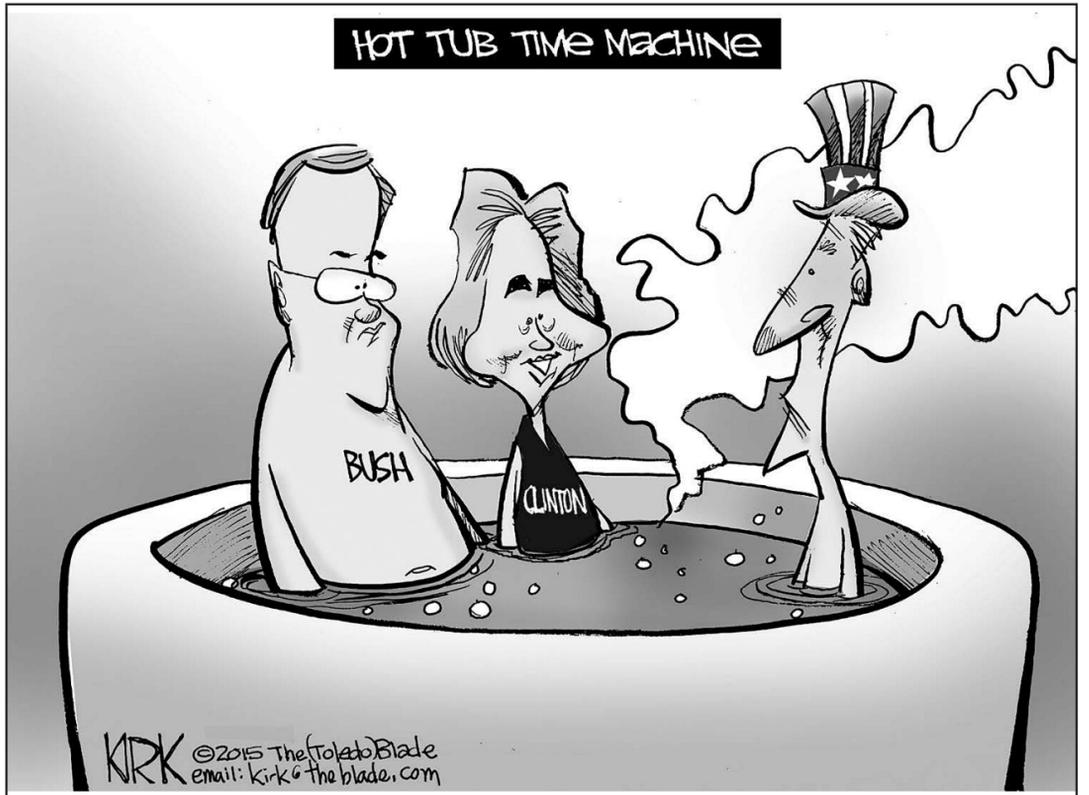
We applaud the current board for holding two meetings a month instead of one, but even that is not enough to do the job properly. Each newly elected member asked for the job, now we ask them to use effective organizational processes and commit the time and effort necessary to do what they promised in the campaign.

Second, we hope the new board will prioritize. We don't mean use platitudes like "take care of the kids" or "provide a first class education". We mean specific priorities that are useful in guiding spending decisions or determining what items to place in a bond issue.

Is the first priority sports? If not, then why spend close to half a million dollars on a building for wrestling and weightlifting with almost no classrooms at a time when we are lamenting alleged spending cuts. Is curriculum the priority? In what specific way? More curriculum offerings? More teachers? More academic subjects? More trade related training? Perhaps the current board knows what their specific priorities are, but it is not clear to us. If the board doesn't have concrete priorities to guide the spending and other decisions it makes, it will get nowhere, accomplish nothing of importance, and spend all its time putting out fires. On the other hand, even with severely restricted resources, if the board acts based on defined, specific priorities, it will make progress.

Third, we hope the board members really will listen. That doesn't happen now. Yes, patrons are permitted to address the board, but it is a meaningless exercise. The person speaks, the board president thanks them, and then the board goes about its business as though nothing were said. The people feel they have no real voice with the board, unless it is the private ear of a member they may happen to know. We

The Conservative Side...



recommend the board hold at least a quarterly town hall, in a place other than where the board normally meets, and that this town hall be a true give and take where the tax payers and the board can have a back and forth dialogue. These meetings must be professional and orderly, but they shouldn't necessarily be comfortable for the board members, or the tax payers for

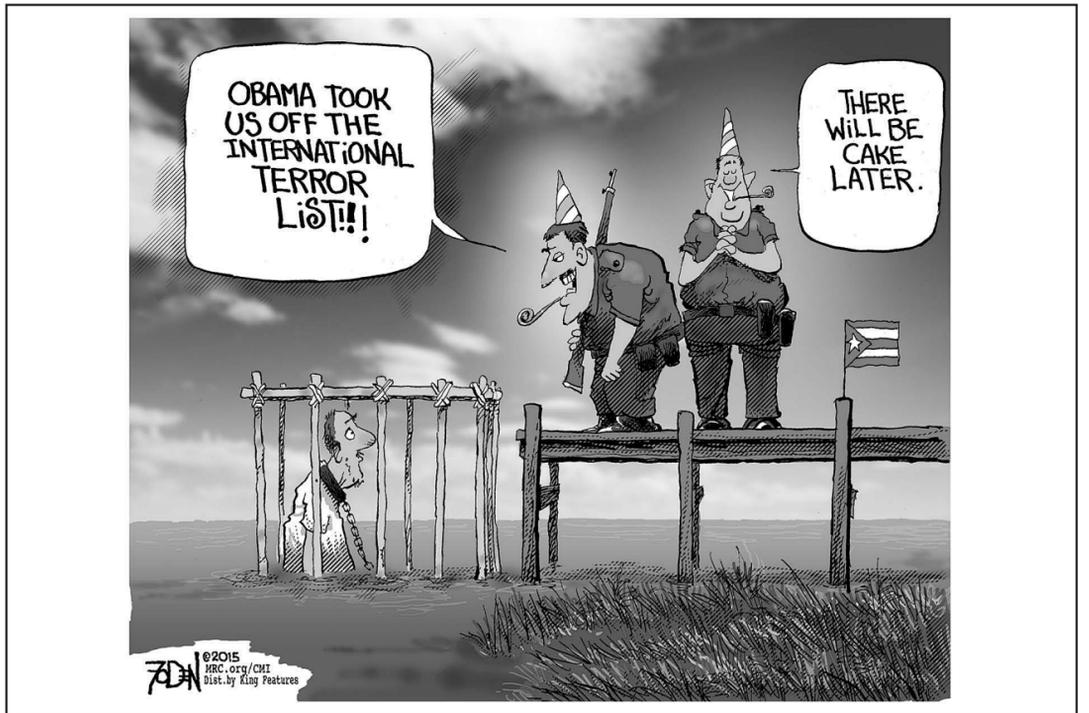
that matter. By having these town halls the board will at least give people the chance to voice their concerns, ask questions, and get answers.

We currently have too much "mission creep" and "spending creep" when the board generates and develops projects because it does not follow a process that allows it to identify all germane information,

decide upon a course of action with full facts, make decisions to meet the acknowledged highest priority need for the district, then gain majority support from the community. If the new board will professionalize its decision making process, specifically prioritize district needs as it sees them then act based exclusively on the priorities, and if it will let

the people have a voice, the four newly elected members will truly act on their promise to make USD 378 the best school district in Kansas, and the Falcons will once again soar.

Respectfully,
Glen R Hawkins
Larry and Chris Tawney
Tom and Sylda Nichols



— King Crossword —
Answers
Solution time: 21 mins.

JAG	BASED	WOK
OVA	AROMA	IRE
BELL	TOWER	LEE
EMU	NEALON	
COMMAS	DRIP	
ABA	NAP	SLOPE
SOYS	LAM	SWAY
HEFTS	YAM	EVE
LEAS	TOURED	
BLOTCH	ITS	
LOW	HOTSHOWER	
AGE	ERASE	ICE
HER	METER	GOD

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Kansas lawmakers have lots of tax ideas but little consensus

By JOHN HANNA
AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas is expected to increase taxes to close a budget shortfall, but the Republicans who control the Legislature don't agree on the outlines of a plan, yet. Republican Gov. Sam Brownback wants to protect the major income tax cuts he championed in 2012 and 2013 to help stimulate the economy, though he has proposed slowing the pace of future reductions. He's pushing to increase tobacco and alcohol taxes and has said he's open to raising the state's sales tax.

At least a few GOP legislators have suggested the state must rethink a personal income tax break for business owners, prompting a group representing small businesses to run a radio ad campaign to counter the idea. Lawmakers also could consider raising the state's gasoline tax.

The projected budget shortfall for the fiscal year beginning July 1 ballooned to about \$800 million after state officials and university economists this month issued new, more pessimistic revenue projections. Legislative researchers say lawmakers have identified spending cuts and other proposals for narrowing the gap to \$422 million.

Legislators return from their annual spring break April 29 to wrap up business for the year, and the state constitution requires them to balance the budget. They'll be finishing a detailed spending blueprint for state government while drafting a plan for raising revenues.

"It certainly has a lot of moving pieces," said Republican Sen. Jim Denning, of Overland Park, who's involved in both tax debates and drafting the final version of the next budget.

Brownback's long-stated goal is

phasing out income taxes, seeing it as a "pro-growth" policy. The state reduced its top personal income tax rate by 29 percent and exempted 281,000 business owners and 53,000 farmers altogether. The governor calls the latter policy a "small business accelerator."

The governor and his top aides have said increasing tobacco, alcohol and sales taxes to close the budget shortfall is acceptable because it's part of a long-term shift toward taxing "consumption" instead of "productivity." Brownback said the state still would be phasing out income taxes.

"What you try to do in legislating — or I think in this job as well — is propose a direction and, then, anything that moves you toward that direction, you support," Brownback said during a recent interview. "Anything that moves you away from that direction, you oppose."

His proposals would nearly triple

the tax on a package of cigarettes, to \$2.29 from 79 cents, and raise the tax paid by consumers on packaged liquor to 12 percent from 8 percent.

Denning said the state could raise \$75 million during the next fiscal year by raising the sales tax to 6.3 percent from its current 6.15 percent. He said there's some interest in increasing the state's gasoline tax by 5 cents a gallon, to 29 cents.

He also said the law exempting business owners and farmers from income taxes is flawed, arguing that it went further than ensuring that business profits weren't taxed as income, as opposed to the compensation owners pay themselves. Denning said he and other lawmakers believe narrowing the exemption is fair.

Rep. Jerry Henry, of Atchison, the ranking Democrat on the budget-writing House Appropriations Committee, said: "Some level of consumption taxes and income taxes will come into

play." But the National Federation of Independent Business is running statewide radio ads against any backtracking by lawmakers on past income taxes cuts. The group argues that the tax break for business owners gives the owners of small firms the confidence to expand their businesses.

"If you change this tax policy, you're just showing small businesses that you don't have a safe environment," said Patti Bossert, president of Key Staffing in Topeka, a member of NFIB's national board.

Brownback also is wary of the idea of tinkering with the policy, saying it's aimed at small businesses that collectively are the state's "job-creating machine."

"I'm not very enthusiastic about complicating a situation that has strong clarity and attractiveness to it now to your primary job-creating group," Brownback said.

After historic arguments, court to rule on same-sex marriage

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pivotal Justice Anthony Kennedy, whose vote could decide the same-sex marriage issue for the U.S. did not tip his hand Tuesday in historic arguments at the Supreme Court. But Kennedy's record on the issue could give encouragement to gay and lesbian couples.

As advocates and protesters

demonstrated outside, the author of the court's three prior gay rights rulings talked about the touchstones of dignity and concern for children in same-sex households that drove his favorable earlier opinions.

But he also worried about changing the definition of marriage from the union of a man and a woman, a meaning that he said has existed for "millennia-plus time."

"It's very difficult for the

court to say 'We know better'" after barely a decade of experience with same-sex marriage in the United States, Kennedy told Mary Bonauto, a lawyer representing same-sex couples.

The 78-year-old justice's likely role as a key, perhaps decisive vote by the nine-member panel was reinforced during arguments that lasted 2 1/2 hours in a rapt courtroom and appeared to divide the court's liberal and conservative jus-

tices over whether the U.S. Constitution gives same-sex couples the right to marry. Those couples can do so now in 36 states and the District of Columbia, and the court is weighing whether gay and lesbian unions should be allowed in all 50 states.

"Same sex couples say, of course, 'We understand the nobility and the sacredness of marriage. We know we can't procreate, but we want the other attributes of it in order to show that we, too, have a dignity that can be fulfilled,'" Kennedy said in an exchange with lawyer John Bursch, who was defending the state marriage bans

Tuesday's arguments offered the first public indication of where the justices stand in the dispute over whether states can continue defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman, or whether the Constitution gives gay and lesbian couples the right to marry. In the court's last look at same-sex marriage in 2013, the jus-

tices struck down part of the federal anti-gay marriage law. Federal courts with few exceptions have relied on Kennedy's opinion in that case to invalidate gay marriage bans in state after state.

The court divided 5-4 in that case, with the liberals joining Kennedy in the majority. Their questions on Tuesday suggested they would vote to extend same-sex marriage nationwide, while conservative justices' questions and comments were much more skeptical.

Justices Stephen Breyer and Sonia Sotomayor both said marriage was a fundamental right and a state would need a truly compelling reason to deny it to a class of people. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said heterosexual couples would retain the same marriage benefits they currently have, whether or not same-sex couples also could marry.

Bursch argued repeatedly that states could prohibit same-sex unions because marriage always has been about biologi-

cal bonds between parents and their children.

Justice Elena Kagan said some people have difficulty with that argument, finding it "hard to see how permitting same sex marriage discourages people from being bonded with their biological children."

If the definition of marriage is changed, Bursch said, "then adults could think, rightly, that this relationship is more about adults and not about the kids."

The actual cases before the court involve same-sex couples in which both partners want recognition as adoptive parents.

Most of the questions from conservative justices appeared skeptical of gay-marriage arguments.

Chief Justice Roberts said gay couples seeking to marry are not seeking to join the institution of marriage. "You're seeking to change what the institution is," he said to Bonauto.

Kansas smokers unhappy with proposal for cigarette tax hike

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas smokers are upset about plans to sharply increase the cigarette tax to help fill a budget hole created by Gov. Sam Brownback's income tax cuts and say they will take their business to Missouri or Oklahoma if the tax hike passes.

Brownback has proposed boosting the tax on cigarettes from 79 cents a pack to \$2.29 to address a deficit of about \$422 million. The proposal isn't popular among some lawmakers, especially those who live on the border with Missouri, which has the nation's lowest cigarette tax, at 17 cents.

"Trickle-down economics did not work in the '80s with Reaganomics, and it is stunningly clear that it's not working here," said Robin McAlpine, a smoker who lives in Wichita. "I shouldn't be punished or penalized so that the governor can close the gap on his failed experiment."

McAlpine is one of 29 smokers who responded to a Wichita Eagle questionnaire about the proposed increase (http://bit.ly/1DnrXS9). Of those, 18 said they would buy tobacco in a neighboring state if the tax increases, while seven said they would quit.

Rep. Marvin Kleeb, an Overland Park Republican who chairs the House Taxation Committee, said lawmakers may consider passing a smaller tobacco tax increase than the one Brownback proposed.

Mark Eberly, a Derby smoker whose wife died of lung cancer, said he thinks the state would lose revenue from its heaviest smokers because of cheaper prices in neighboring states.

"It's not just like, 'Hey, I think I'll go grab a pack of cigarettes,'" he said. "It's planned — they know they're going to smoke. They're going to go where they can save money."

At \$2.29 a pack, the Kansas tax would be \$1.26 higher than Oklahoma's and \$2.12 more

than in Missouri.

"I don't think there are that many smokers that will generate that kind of revenue that Brownback estimates," said Suz White, who said she has been buying cigarettes outside of Kansas for six years. "Especially if people go across state lines."

The Kansas Division of the Budget projects the higher tax would generate nearly \$81 million more during the next fiscal year. The estimate includes a 20 percent drop in sales, which is about what Kansas saw when it raised the tobacco tax in 2002.

Ray Thorp, a Wichita resident who said he buys cigarettes for his 21-year-old daughter, said he would purchase smokes out of state when it's convenient, but otherwise would be resigned to pay the higher Kansas tax.

"On the whole, it sounds good to tax the sin taxes," he said. "But really, why do I have to pay for someone else's good fortune?"

Obama nominates No. 2 at Coast Guard to run TSA

By JOSH LEDERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama nominated the U.S. Coast Guard's second-in-command on Tuesday to run the Transportation Security Administration, tasking Vice Adm. Peter Neffenger with keeping passengers safe amid increasingly complex threats from the Middle East and beyond.

Neffenger, who has served as the Coast Guard's vice commandant since 2014, has served in the Coast Guard since 1981 and once oversaw port security in Los Angeles and elsewhere in California. He also was the deputy incident commander for the oil spill that resulted from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion.

If confirmed by the Senate, he'll replace former TSA chief John Pistole, who announced his retirement last year after 4 1/2 turbulent years leading the agency best known for its role screening passengers at U.S. airports. With a workforce of more than 60,000 employees, the TSA runs security operations at more than 450 airports.

Obama described Neffenger as a "recognized leader" who had taken on the nation's critical challenges in the past. "The talent and expertise Vice Adm. Neffenger brings to his new role after more than three decades at the U.S. Coast Guard will be valuable to this administration's efforts to strengthen transportation security," the president said in a statement.

Neffenger's nomination comes as the agency struggles to address evolving threats that have become even harder to detect since the TSA was created in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Under Pistole, the TSA began looking at how to beef up security without infringing on commerce, trade and tourism.

U.S. intelligence officials have warned that extremists from the Khorasan Group, al-Qaida-linked group in Syria, have schemed with bomb-makers from al-Qaida's Yemen affiliate to find new ways to get explosives onto planes without detection. Last year the TSA asked for additional screening measures at certain overseas airports, such as requiring pas-

sengers to turn on laptops, tablets and other electronic devices.

Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., who sits on the Senate's Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, welcomed the nomination and said the TSA needs "strong leadership and a coherent strategy" to ensure the best security for the U.S.

"Filling this vacancy is a critical and long overdue step in that process," Ayotte said.

Pistole, who now serves as president of Anderson University, drew consternation from airlines and lawmakers when he announced plans to allow passengers to carry small knives, bats and other previously prohibited items with them onto flights. Pistole eventually had to withdraw that proposal.

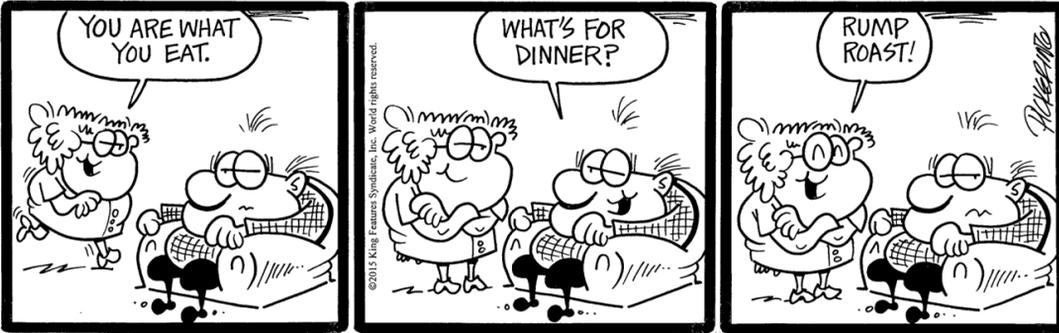
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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



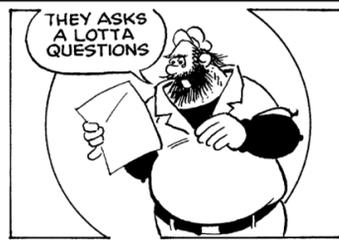
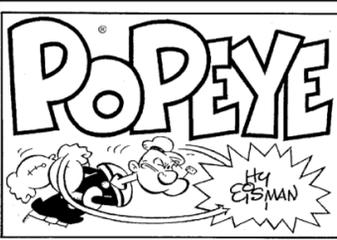
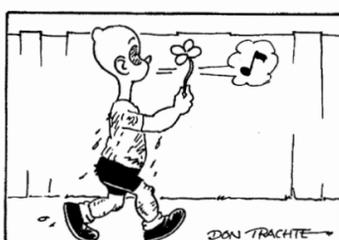
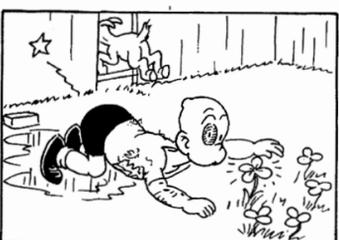
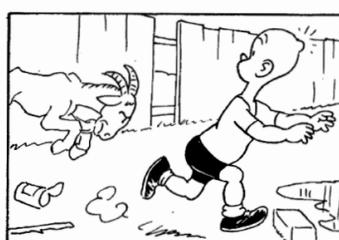
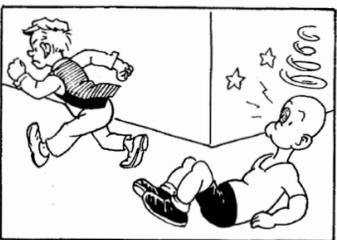
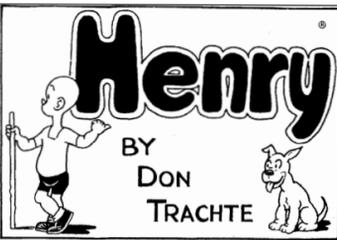
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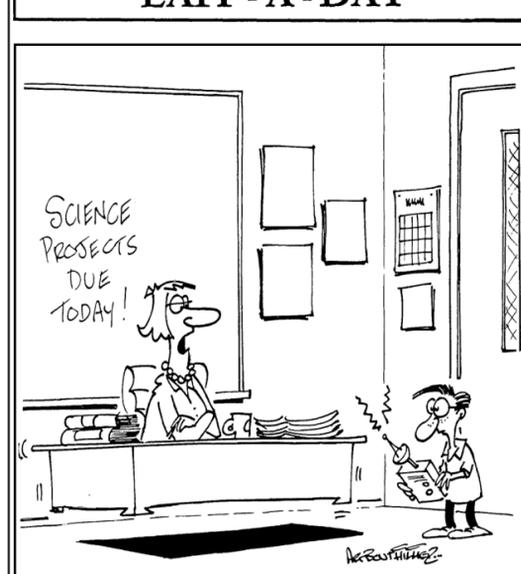


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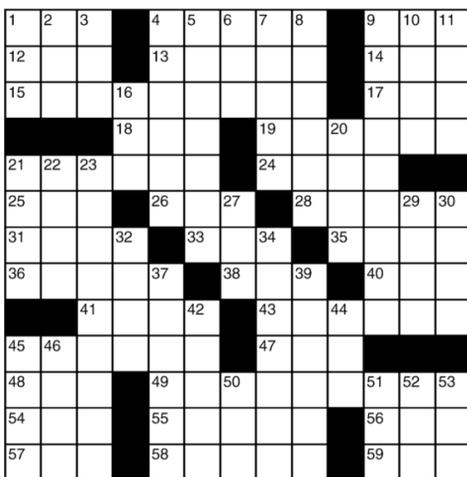
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King Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Binge
 - 4 Founded (on)
 - 9 Stir-fry need
 - 12 Eggs
 - 13 Scent
 - 14 Rage
 - 15 Quasi-modo's workplace
 - 17 Shelter, at sea
 - 18 Flightless bird
 - 19 Kevin of "SNL" fame
 - 21 They give one pause
 - 24 Faucet problem
 - 25 "The — Daba Honey-moon"
 - 26 Siesta
 - 28 Skier's hill
 - 31 Protein-rich beans
 - 33 Felon's flight
 - 35 Move back and forth
 - 36 Lifts to test the weight
 - 38 Thanksgiving
 - 40 Veggie
 - 41 Adam's mate
 - 43 Went sightseeing
 - 45 Ink stain, e.g.
 - 47 "— Impossible"
 - 48 Depressed
 - 49 Bath alternative
 - 54 Candle count
 - 55 Obliterate
 - 56 Hockey surface
 - 57 That woman
 - 58 Parking lot device
 - 59 Deity
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Task
 - 2 St. crosser
 - 3 Guy's companion
 - 4 Bruce Wayne's alter ego
 - 5 Stirring
 - 6 Boar's mate
 - 7 Make corrections
 - 8 "— go first"
 - 9 Energetic
 - determination
 - 10 Sandwich cookie
 - 11 Acute
 - 16 Moon vehicle
 - 20 Has a bug
 - 21 Moolah
 - 22 Reed instrument
 - 23 How pilgrims progressed?
 - 27 Remuneration
 - 29 Macadamize
 - 30 Watched
 - 32 Undo a dele
 - 34 "The Piano Lesson" painter
 - 37 Tribal chief
 - 39 Mom
 - 42 Coastline
 - 44 Gls' entertainment grp.
 - 45 Mediocre
 - 46 Theater box
 - 50 Tit for —
 - 51 Peruke
 - 52 Environmentally friendly
 - 53 Stop signal



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Answers on page 4



Smothered Chicken and Gravy

Ingredients

- 1 cups uncooked regular long-grain brown rice
- 2 2/3 cups water
- 1/2 cup Gold Medal™ all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons seasoned salt
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cut-up whole chicken (3 to 3 1/2 lb), skin removed
- 2 tablespoon olive or canola oil
- 1 cup thinly sliced celery (about 2 medium stalks)
- 1/2 medium red bell pepper, cut into thin bite-size strips
- 1/2 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cups hot water
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Directions

- 1 Cook rice in 2 2/3 cups water as directed on package, omitting butter and salt; keep warm.

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2 In 1-gallon resealable food-storage plastic bag, mix flour, seasoned salt, thyme, paprika and pepper. Fill medium bowl with water. Dip chicken pieces in water; shake to remove excess water. Place half of chicken pieces at a time in bag with flour mixture; shake to coat all sides. Remove chicken; reserve remaining flour mixture in bag.

3 In deep 12-inch nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add chicken; cook 8 to 10 minutes, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides. Remove chicken from skillet; set aside.

4 In same skillet, stir reserved flour mixture into drippings; cook about 2 minutes, stirring constantly, until mixture is light brown. Stir in celery, bell pepper and onion. Cook 4 to 6 minutes, stirring frequently, until vegetables are crisp-tender.

5 Stir in 2 cups hot water until well blended. Return chicken to skillet. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 40 to 50 minutes or until juice of chicken is clear when thickest piece is cut to bone (170°F for breasts; 180°F for thighs and drumsticks). Serve over rice; sprinkle with parsley.

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Purple team routs white team 55-24 in K-State spring game

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Kansas State coach Bill Snyder has been on the sidelines for enough spring games to know the difference between a crisp showing and a sloppy one.

The Wildcat's game Saturday, which was moved to Sporting Park in suburban Kansas City due to renovations at Bill Snyder Family Stadium, fell into the latter category.

"When the fans leave early," Snyder said, "that tells you that we were not very good."

The first-team purple squad came away with a 55-24 win, but the Wildcats collectively turned the ball over four times and had several miscues on special teams that led to easy scores.

"We'll somehow, someday become as good as we can," Snyder said. "We just didn't play well."

Snyder's displeasure was the most obvious takeaway Saturday. Here are some more:

QB QUESTIONS: Kansas State entered spring practice with a major question mark at quarterback position after the departure of Davey O'Brien Award semifinalist Jake Waters. If Saturday proved anything, it's that the job is still wide open.

Experienced options Joe

Hubener and Jesse Ertz struggled in the first half, with Ertz tossing a pick-six. Hubener also was picked off, though his attempt was tipped at the line.

Alex Delton, a freshman who joined the program at the semester, made things interesting with his arm and legs after coming on in the second quarter. Delton ran 39 yards up the sideline on one read option. He later wowed the crowd with a 60-yard laser just out of reach of his target.

"I'm always looking for all them to step up," Snyder said of his quarterbacks. "I want all of them to improve, but we were only 33 percent with that today."

BURTON MAKES PLAYS: As a sophomore last season playing behind All-American wide receiver Tyler Lockett, Deante Burton finished with just 17 receptions for 171 yards.

This season, Burton is the player who could be responsible to replace Lockett's production, and he got off to a good start Saturday. He had four catches for a team-high 107 yards, including a 46-yard catch in the first quarter.

"You can never replace a guy like that," Burton said of Lockett. "My thing is that I push myself to be the best I can



K-State's Jesse Ertz hands off to Charles Jones during the Spring Game at Sporting Park in Kansas City, Kansas on April 25, 2015. (KSU Photos by Scott D. Weaver/K-State Athletics)

be and use him as a benchmark."

OH CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN: Prior to the game,

Kansas State announced its list of captains for the 2015 season: Dante Barnett, Cody Whitehair, Travis Britz, Morgan Burns and

Stanton Weber.

Barnett, the lone returning captain, has started 28 games at safety. Whitehair, Britz and

Burns have combined for 61 starts, while Weber has played in 34 games mostly on special teams.



K-State's Nate Jackson intercepts the ball during the Spring Game at Sporting Park in Kansas City, Kansas on April 25, 2015.



K-State's Kyle Klein catches a pass against Ryan Mack during the Spring Game at Sporting Park in Kansas City, Kansas on April 25, 2015.

Kansas Jayhawks lose quarterback Cummings in annual spring game

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — David Beaty's first spring game as coach at Kansas could have gone better.

Senior quarterback Michael Cummings, who is fighting for the starting job, had to be helped off the field early in the second quarter after hurting his knee. Even though he was wearing a red jersey to prevent getting hit, Cummings was tackled by senior safety Michael Glatczak.

"I'm not sure exactly what happened there," said Beaty, who was hired last fall to replace the fired Charlie Weis. "I was blocked on that deal. I've heard conflicting stories."

Cummings had thrown for 43 yards before leaving the game, which the blue team made up mostly of first-team players won 20-7 over a white team comprised primarily of backups.

Beaty said that Glatczak may have been blocked into

Cummings, and that it was too early to tell the extent of the injury. Cummings was still being evaluated after the game.

"He looked up at me and I said, 'Hey man, you OK?'" Beaty said. "He goes, 'Coach, he didn't mean to do it. He got pushed into me.'"

Beaty said that the injury "looked like a complete freak accident."

Meanwhile, two of the Jayhawks' top offensive play-makers never made it onto the field.

Corey Avery, their top returning rusher and receiver, sat in the stands after he was suspended for an unspecified violation of team rules. Wide receiver Rodriguez Coleman, who was arrested last December, was also suspended from the team.

Beaty said both suspensions are indefinite, and the future of both players is uncertain.

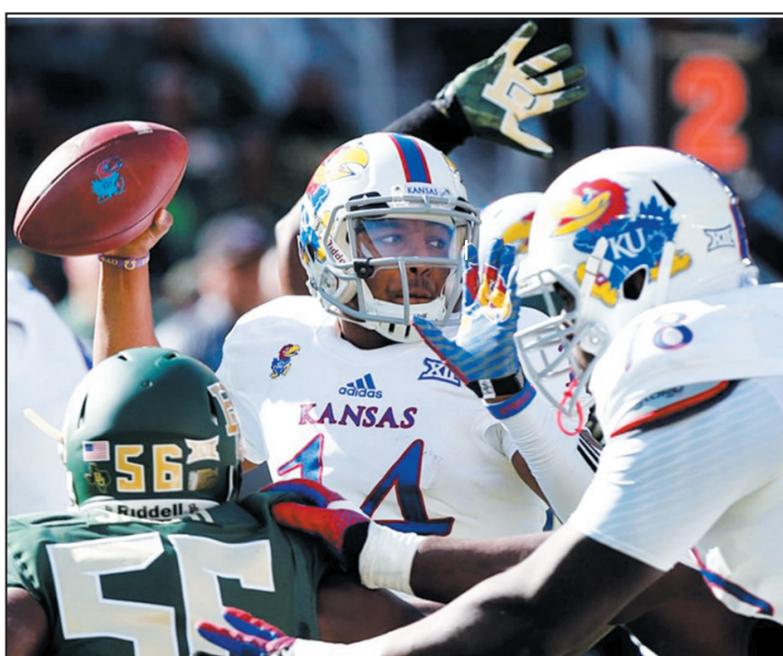
The loss of Avery could be

especially damaging. Not only did he have 848 yards total offense and six touchdowns as a freshman, the Jayhawks are also without backup running back De'Andre Mann, who missed Saturday's spring game with an undisclosed injury.

Montell Cozart, who is competing with Cummings for the starting job, was 16 of 26 for 219 yards with two touchdowns and an interception for the blue team. TJ Millward was just 2 of 8 for 12 yards with a touchdown pass to Sebastian Fairchild for the white team.

Ryan Schadler ran for a game-high 45 yards on eight carries, while Shakiem Barbel and Kent Taylor hauled in touchdown passes from Cozart for the blue team.

The Jayhawks, who have not had a winning season since 2008, are trying to build on a 3-9 finish a year ago. They open their season Sept. 5 against South Dakota State.



Michael Cummings (14) sustained a left knee injury that is going to require surgery. Following his surgery he will work diligently, alongside the medical staff, to get back to the field as quickly as possible.

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