

Tax Freedom Day sounds good, but...

What a bunch of baloney they are tossing at us again. They, the government — federal on down the line. April 24, and we bet you felt the impact immediately, was Tax Freedom Day, the day, supposedly, we get to keep more of what we earn because we are now working for ourselves.

We should be celebrating — no more taxes! Whoopee!!
Now back to reality.

It might sound OK, but it's just another nutty thing coming from the Nutty Hill in Washington. It's their way of trying to convince us that there is light at the end of the tax tunnel. But when you consider it has taken nearly four months to clear out the tax burden, and you listen to the three presidential candidates tell us what they are going to do for us (for or to us) if elected, Tax Freedom Day will probably be 'celebrated' in May next year.

Tax Freedom Day — we often wonder who came up with that nutty sounding title — simply means we will continue paying the tax bill each day of the remaining days in 2008.

But each year it seems those who represent us can hardly wait to get the word out — Tax Freedom Day! We are surprised that special day has not been declared a federal holiday so we can all have a free day from work and hold one gigantic nationwide celebration.

Next time you buy something and the clerk totals up the bill and applies the tax needed, just tell him or her that you've already paid up.

Yea, that'll fly like a kite with a tax bill attached.

— Tom Dreiling

Thumbs Up

To... Norton Community High School 'Drafting Team.' The beat goes on, you make us proud! (called in)

To... All Service Learning Day participants. Good Job! (e-mail)

To... our Daycare Providers, for all you do. (called in)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tom.d@nwkansas.com, telephone 877-3361 or 877-6908, fax 877-3732, mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave 67654 or drop by the office. Thanks for your continuing input. -td)

Your turn

Hats off to Service Day students

To the Editor,

I wish to express appreciation to the 14 students, their teacher and sponsors, who participated in the Norton Junior High Service Day on April 22 at the Andbe Home.

What they accomplished in the short time at the Andbe Home is truly remarkable.

They did a great job, and their families as well as our community should be proud of the junior high and these students who performed these deeds for all of the residents of Norton.

Thank you,

Ellen Gibson
Environmental Services
Andbe Home, Inc.

Your political connection

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★ **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**, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

★ **State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, Room 262-E, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

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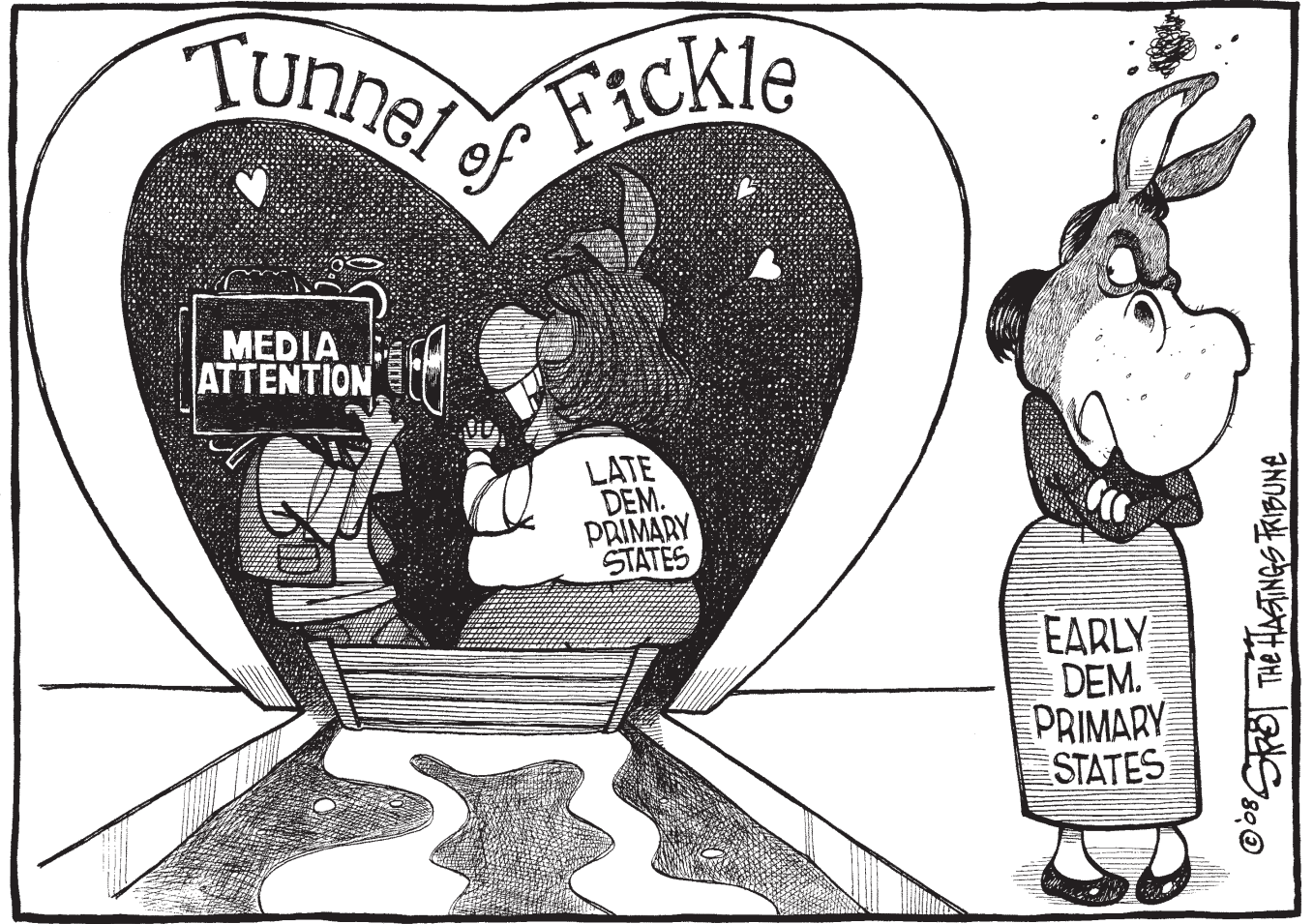
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Coffee at our house only way to start day

Coffee. Some gotta have it. Some can't stand it. There doesn't seem to be a middle ground. It ranks pretty high at our house. After our "good mornings", the first question of the day is, "Did you make coffee?" Whoever gets up first (and I admit, it's usually Jim) is in charge of preparing our caffeine fix.

We're not coffee purists — we drink the pre-ground stuff from the store. It doesn't have to be fresh-ground beans for us to enjoy it. We drink the brand Senor Valdez grows.

Although, a lessor known brand on sale can sway us. We really like the gourmet brands but will never pay the price. A special treat is a double latte at the local coffee emporium.

We like our coffee with cream. Lots of cream. And, that can be the powdered

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



kind, half-'n-half, table cream, occasionally the flavored kind, even heavy whipping cream. Just not milk. I would prefer to drink it black than add milk.

Oh, that opens up another can of worms — or maybe another cup of coffee. Those that have been drinking the stuff since their mother put it in their baby bottle, usually think "strong and black" is the only way.

If a spoon doesn't stand up by itself,

it's only fit for pansies. There seems to be some machismo undertones attached to the ability to consume coffee so strong you have to chew it.

Jim and I have differing opinions on what makes the perfect cup of coffee. I happen to like it a little stronger than he. I told him, "You can always add water to make it a little weaker." But, you know what? If he makes it, I'm gonna drink it. And, I'm gonna like it.

I'm just glad I can. So many people can't tolerate the caffeine. Good or bad, I don't know, but I can drink coffee right up until the time I turn out the lights and say, "Good night. The party's over." I shut my eyes and go to sleep.

That may change someday, but for now, I'll have another cup. Make that four creamers, please.

We need to make our needs known

One of the accomplishments of the Eisenhower Administration was the passage of the Federal Highway Act on June 29, 1956, creating the interstate highway system. Under Ike's leadership, the new system connecting all parts of the country brought tremendous change and economic development.

When I was growing up on the farm, I remember neighbors working together to maintain our rural township roads. A tractor drawn road grader was passed around to grade the roads.

Every so often, the township would hire a contractor to elevate the roads. This loose dirt would turn into a pile of dust until a soaking rain would turn the road into a quagmire. Eventually, farmers would drag and grade the road back into condition.

As the number of people using the highways continues to rise, the traffic

Citizen Duties Bob Strey



counts are increasing rapidly. Roads are increasingly clogged in the larger metropolitan areas. Our need to maintain a viable farm to market system is challenged by roads built for lighter equipment and loads. Every year, old wooden bridges collapse under the weight of large semi loads of grain.

Citizens need to support efforts to care for our roads at the local, state and national level. People need to encourage individuals to run for county and township offices so the work of caring for the roads

is given a priority. Likewise, people in city government must advocate the necessary steps to keep their roads healthy.

At the state level, we need community leaders who will advocate for the improvement of our highways. These roads are vital to our economic development.

State officials need to hear from local leaders about the needs in our area. Hopefully the study to be done by the Docking Institute will provide a plan to take to Topeka that will include major improvements to Highway 36 in the next 10-year plan.

Responsible citizens need to let state representatives and officials know what needs to be done to maintain and improve our road system.

Likewise, citizens need to support efforts by local leaders to improve our airports.

(bkstrey@hotmail.com)

A day in the life of Congressman Moran

First District Congressman Jerry Moran's office in Washington was a busy place this past week, evidenced by a portion of his weekly report. People from all walks of life travel to Washington to confer with Rep. Moran on a variety of interests and concerns.

Here is a sampling:

• Donna Bales of Wichita, Julie Pinkerton of Dodge City and Sandy Kuhlman of Phillipsburg were in with the Kansas Hospice and Palliative Care Organization to talk about Medicare payments for hospice care. Dr. William Clifford of Garden City and Dr. Susan Moser of Manhattan were in with the American Academy of Ophthalmology to advocate for changes to the formula Medicare uses to reimburse physicians. Dr. David Laha of Overland Park and Dr. James Reeves of Lawrence were in to discuss foot care and Medicaid coverage of podiatric care.

• Members of the Kansas Hospital Association were in to talk about the challenges of operating public hospitals, rural health care priorities and the need to prevent Medicare payment cuts to physicians. In with the group were Tom Bell and Steve Poage of Topeka; David Bradley of Junction City; Bob Mullen and Terry David of Lyons; Vicki Hahn of Leoti; Jackie and Roger John of Phillipsburg; John

Capitol Views Rep. Jerry Moran

Kuhn and Terry Lambert of Emporia; Charlie Grimwood, Michael Terry and Cheryl Mason of Salina; Randy Peterson of Wichita; Mark Miller of Abilene and Mary Sweet of Greensburg.

• Linda Williams of Lyons, Julie Roth of Roeland Park and Peggy Marlal of Emporia were in with the American Health Information Management Association to discuss the importance of privacy in electronic health records and the need to update medical codes. Gary Brunk and Bruce Linhos of Topeka were in with the Pew Charitable Trust to talk about the need to support kinship care in the foster care system. Alan MacDonald of Olathe was in with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association to discuss staffing issues at the Federal Aviation Administration.

• Tim Stevenson and J. Mark Slater of Kansas City, Walter Berry of Wichita and Steve Meadows of Olathe were in with Berry Companies, Inc. to talk

about the need to invest in our highway infrastructure and eliminate the estate tax. Dr. Laurie White of Dodge City, Dr. Mike Hattan of Hays, Dr. Mike Malone and Dr. Todd Fleischer of Topeka and Dr. Nathan Klutz of Manhattan were in with the Kansas Optometric Association to tell me about legislation affecting optometrists. Jane Conroy of Emporia was in with the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners to discuss funding education programs and the need to provide greater access to primary care services. Dr. Chuck Rice and Dr. Ken Odde of Manhattan were in with the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions to express the importance of competitive grants to the agricultural research done in Kansas. Larry Dreiling of Hays and Ron Pomeroy of Belle Plain also stopped by to visit.

• Several Kansans came to my Washington, D.C., office this week for a tour of the United States Capitol building. Among the visitors were Sue Pingleton of Shawnee Mission, Elaine Reed of Solomon, Janet Peterson of Great Bend, Gladys Johnson of Ellis and Thomas and Evelyn Clements of Eskridge. Also in were Wayne, Elaine and Jessica Theel of Emporia and Jason, Rachel, Kyra, Karsten and Amara Mohn of Salina.