

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Statue funding could help patrol and KBI

This just doesn't make any sense. But Gov. Bill Graves, while slicing through the budget, trimmed \$563,000 from the Kansas Highway Patrol's \$26.8 million in planned spending and \$285,000 from the Kansas Bureau of Investigation's \$12.9 million budget. That comes to \$848,000.

The highway patrol cuts will mean they will be scratching their heads trying to figure out ways to keep troopers on the road. And for the KBI, it will mean giving second thoughts before assisting in some criminal investigations.

And all the while, the governor took no action, as far as we can tell, to eliminate the wasteful spending of nearly \$1 million to place a statue of an Indian atop the capitol dome.

Eliminating the statue would restore the cuts to the state patrol and the KBI. It's that simple.

It's called priorities.

The governor, however, is adamant that the statue go up atop the dome which will be up so high nobody will know what's up there. If it need be at all, it should be placed at ground level so all of us paying for the thing can at least see what we've paid for. We can only hope that some of the gawking tourists don't throw their necks out trying to get a look at what's stop the dome and end up suing us.

We still favor keeping the light bulb burning atop the dome to guide tourists to our capital city.

When the light goes out up there it will be as dark as it is down here for the state patrol and KBI to find their way in the budget tunnel. —Tom (TD) Dreiling, Publisher

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous.

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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715

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COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701

freepress@nwkansan.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published daily, every Monday through Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

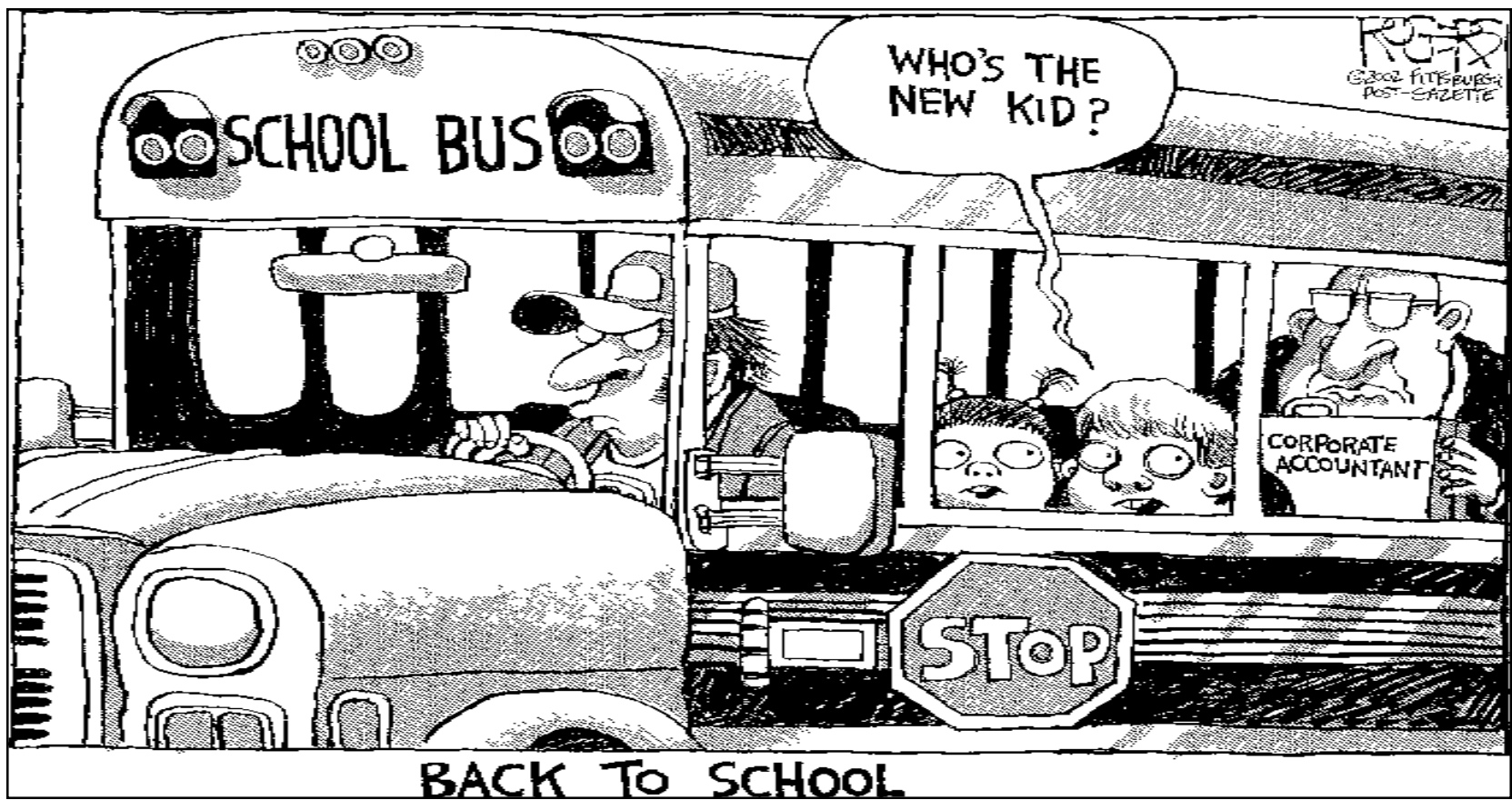
PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$32, 8 months \$47, 12 months \$64. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$44, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$72. Other Kansas counties and surrounding states: 4 months \$51, 8 months \$61, 12 months \$75. All other states, \$75, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company



Unique feature at company picnic

I USUALLY don't talk about things we, as a newspaper, do outside the boundaries of our job. But Saturday evening employees of Nor'West Newspapers gathered at Fike Park for a picnic and an especially enjoyable slide show. Nor'West Newspapers include The Goodland Daily News, The Oberlin Herald, The St. Francis Herald, Bird City Times and Colby Free Press, and of course our weekly shopper the Country Advocate. Steve and Cynthia Haynes, owners of the northwest Kansas newspaper chain had an opportunity in May to visit China as part of a National Newspaper Association-arranged trip. Steve is an officer in the association. Their pictures took us into many areas of China you generally don't see, as well as the expected sights. Their accompanying dialogue provided a perspective not often heard. It was a learning experience and you sort of felt like you were there. When you have an opportunity to see trips such as this one through the eyes of people you know, it makes it so much more meaningful. It was an evening of food, fun, fellowship and China. Nice.

SOMETHING new will soon be taking place for those of us — and that's most of us — who keep an eye on the weather. On Tuesday, Oct. 1, the National Weather Service office at Goodland will begin issuing a new daily text product called the *Hazardous Weather Outlook*. This product, said David Floyd, warning coordination meteorologist, will be used to alert emergency managers, the media, and the general public to ongoing and forecast weather hazards. In recent years, National Weather Service offices all over the county have issued weather hazard information to the public in what were called *Special Weather Statements*. However, that information has been provided only during certain times of the year — for example during severe thunderstorm season — or periodically on an as-needed basis.

This type of information, said Floyd, has been so well received nationwide that the National Weather Service has decided to create a new product, issued daily throughout the year, devoted entirely to the discussion of upcoming weather hazards. The *Hazardous Weather Outlook* — to be known as HWO — will



Tom Dreiling

• It's Monday

discuss the potential for events such as severe thunderstorms and tornadoes, high winds, ice storms, blizzards and heavy snowfall. The outlook will typically concentrate on hazardous weather events forecast to occur during the next 48 hours; however, any significant event expected with 7 days will also be discussed.

I'll be anxiously awaiting the HWO to kick in. It'll be another step in providing the updates necessary to keep abreast of Mother Nature's behavior — and I have a hunch that includes a lot of people out here on the High Plains.

DEAR Lord, so far today, am I doing all right?

I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent. I have not whined, complained, cursed, or eaten any chocolate. I have charged nothing on my credit card.

But I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think that I will really need your help then.

EVERY now and then I get an update on various things happening in our town from resident Fred Miller. The one he shared this morning I found especially interesting, so I will share it with you. He notes:

"The arboretum continues to change from one look to another. It's full of birds and color and fun. The humming birds have been migrating through for several weeks now and we've had quite a number stop to visit. Last week we had as many as four coming to our feeders and competing for territory in the arboretum. We've witnessed some pretty exciting humming bird wars.

"For nearly a week a ruby throat would sit on the feeder next to the patio doors facing into the glass. He

was using the reflection as a giant mirror to keep an eye on his territory. He has since moved on.

"A rufous hummer stayed with us for nearly two weeks. He was probably the most aggressive so far. He even chased the gold finches.

"Friday we had a romantic doing courtship dives to impress two other hummers who had stopped at 'Miller's Nectar, Bed and Breakfast.' They weren't paying him any attention. Eventually he gave up and settled for chasing them around the yard at 40 miles an hour.

"Since humming birds don't stay here during the summer we have to settle for enjoying them during their migrations. Used to be we'd take the feeders down around mid September because it was said the birds could be enticed to stay too long. We have since learned that's an old wives tale. Migration happens whether there's plenty of food or not. Males migrate first then females come through late in the season."

HAPPY Birthday to...

Aug. 26 — Anna Fyfe, (twins) Mollie and Marie Herbel, Shawna Cox, Melvin Rucker Jr.

Aug. 27 — Eddie Miller, Casey Wiens, Lori Wilson, Kay Wessel

HAPPY Anniversary to...

Aug. 26 — Willard & Joan Hartley, Gene & Frieda Jones, Lyle & Ranell Lunsway

Congratulations! Call us at 462-3963 or email td@nwkansan.com

to have your special day mentioned. Also, please keep us informed of any changes. Your help is needed. Thanks, in advance!

HERE'S something to ponder: You are throwing a party at your home. Do you know what 40 percent of your guests are doing? This may surprise you but a study reveals they are snooping in your medicine cabinet in your bathroom.

YEP, it's Monday!

Dreiling is publisher of the *Free Press*. His column appears Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Lobbying, it's all in the family

Donald Kaul

• Another Viewpoint

I was alarmed the other day to find out (via the New York Times) that relatives of powerful politicians are getting jobs lobbying Congress. For example:

—Joshua Hastert, the 27-year-old son of Republican House Speaker Dennis Hastert, lobbies on behalf of high-tech industries. (No slave to convention, Mr. Hastert affects a goatee and a pierced tongue; he apprenticed for his job by running a record store.)

—Linda Daschle, whose husband Tom is Senate Majority Leader and a Democrat, is the public policy adviser at one of Washington's top lobbying firms, specializing in aviation companies.

—Chester T. Lott, the son of Trent Lott the Senate Republican leader, represents a variety of clients, many of them in the offshore oil and gas business. He also runs a string of Domino Pizza franchises, giving his proud father an opportunity to say (as he often does in speeches): "My son is a small businessman."

Surely you can see the basis for my concern. Why, if one of these politicians were to use his influence on behalf of his kin, we might get legislation that unfairly favored some companies and industries over others. We might even get unwarranted subsidies for companies that didn't deserve them.

Fortunately, I was relieved to learn, that doesn't happen.

The young Mr. Hastert, for example, says that he would never lobby his father on behalf of his clients and that, so far as official Washington is concerned, he's just another lobbyist with a pierced tongue.

And Senator Lott says that he doesn't discuss relevant legislation with his son. Same with Mr. and Ms. Daschle. So apparently it's all OK.

As Ms. Daschle says, "Why should a spouse, just because she is married to a high-profile public official, have to walk away from a career?"

Why indeed?

Ms. Daschle, of course, could just as easily have chosen a career as a doctor or lawyer or airline stewardess or nurse, but I'm sure that her high school guidance counselor long ago assured her that she was uniquely qualified to be a lobbyist, and so young Linda's life path was set.

It is a testament to her great love for her husband that she would jeopardize her career by marrying a politician who was to become Senate Majority Leader. But, through luck and pluck and unremitting hard work, she surmounted that handicap to get where she is now.

It is even more rewarding to imagine a typical scene in the Hastert household today. Joshua pops his head into his father's study and says: "Hi Pops, can I have the car?"

"The Speaker's limousine? I suppose so. Where are you going?"

"To dinner with some important clients. I want to impress them. By the way, can you get the House to

float a \$40 million loan to a high-tech company I'm representing? The firm is good for it, it's just that they've had unusual expenses lately. Legal fees, bail, you know."

"Oh, I guess so. I'll arrange for it next Tuesday in committee."

"Gee, thanks a million, Dad. I don't know what I'd do without you."

He goes out the door and Mrs. Hastert comes in. "Dennis, you're spoiling that boy rotten, do you know that?"

"He's a good boy, Mother. I don't want to disappoint him."

"You never had anybody arranging limousines and \$40 million loans for you when you were his age. You were coaching the wrestling team at Millard Fillmore high school."

"I know, dear, but times change. The other day Trent Lott got the president to lend his son Air Force One for a corporate golfing outing."

These are not unique situations by any means. Other Washington politicians whose sons, daughters, wives and brothers work as lobbyists include Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, White House chief of staff Andrew Card, Jr., and Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada.

None of them, however, allow those relationships to influence them in any way.

If you don't believe it, ask them.

Is this a great country or what?

Donald Kaul recently retired as Washington columnist for the *Des Moines Register*. Feedback to td@nwkansan.com. The views expressed are those solely of the writer.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

