

# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### Suspending gas tax is not smart idea

From The Hays Daily News

...Rep. Nancy Boyda, D-2nd District, co-sponsored a bill last week that would suspend collection of federal taxes while prices are above \$3 per gallon. With federal taxes at 18.4 cents per gallon and the average state's portion at 27.4 cents, the potential savings for consumers could be immense. But only in the short run, since money available to repair our nation's roads would be cut significantly.

This is potentially a very bad piece of legislation. The only component that makes it palatable is the provision Boyda inserted that would replace lost revenue by rolling back tax breaks for big oil companies. ...

Recently, the House passed a gas-gouging bill that targeted unfair pricing at service stations. They're not the ones making the money. In fact, if they don't have a convenience store accompanying the station, their profits actually go down as prices go up.

So who does that leave? The big oil companies. And since Congress can't seem to rein in the excessive profit-taking by these companies, we're not confident rolling back tax breaks will be tolerated by the industry or actually enforced by the government.

We appreciate the thought of looking out for us little guys. But what appears on its face as worth pursuing is not worth the paper it's written on. Congress would be much better off forcing the oil companies to reduce their profits instead of shortchanging our vital infrastructure. Boyda's proposal should be rejected.

#### 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.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail [jvannostrand@nwkansas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansas.com) or [pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

#### Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774

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

**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

**State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Rm. 143-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e-mail: [jmorrison@ink.org](mailto:jmorrison@ink.org) web: [www.morrisonfamily.com](http://www.morrisonfamily.com)

**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 [ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us](mailto:ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us)

### COLBY FREE PRESS

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

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.

**John Van Nostrand - Publisher**

[jvannostrand@nwkansas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansas.com)

#### NEWS

**Patty Decker - Editor**

[pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com)

**Tisha Cox - General Assignment**

[tcx@nwkansas.com](mailto:tcx@nwkansas.com)

**Jan Katz Ackerman**, Area Reporter

[ackermanjk@ruraltel.net](mailto:ackermanjk@ruraltel.net)

#### ADVERTISING

**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director**

[crystalr@nwkansas.com](mailto:crystalr@nwkansas.com)

**Kristi Powell - Advertising Sales**

[kpowell@nwkansas.com](mailto:kpowell@nwkansas.com)

**Emily Wederski - Advertising Sales**

[ewederski@nwkansas.com](mailto:ewederski@nwkansas.com)

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping, Ad Building**

[japplegate@nwkansas.com](mailto:japplegate@nwkansas.com)

**Everett Robert - Circulation, Classifieds**

[erobert@nwkansas.com](mailto:erobert@nwkansas.com)

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**

[support@nwkansas.com](mailto:support@nwkansas.com)

#### NOR'WEST PRESS

**Jim Bowker - General Manager**

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Judy McKnight, Jim Jackson, DeLisa Allen, David Erickson, Betty Morris, and Dana Huthansel

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and 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. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.



## What is work?



**Patty Decker**

### • Deep Thoughts

While cleaning out some closets the other day, I ran across a book titled, "Careers: Exploration and Decisions." I think it was something one of my children brought home years ago.

Cleaning closets takes a long time for me because I can't help but look at things before I shuffle them off to another location. Consequently, while flipping through the pages, I found the material fascinating and worth reviewing.

For instance, one section of the book involved work and what is work.

Given I didn't try to think too hard on the question, my first answer would certainly have something to do with a job.

Yet the word — work — can vary in meaning depending on different people's interpretations at different times and in different situations.

As a child, my parents often said the most gratifying work would be something we enjoy doing and the bonus would be getting paid to do it. More than four decades later, I still agree with them.

One of my sons loves tennis. He plays every chance he gets. Although I don't think he has aspirations of going pro, he does somehow want to keep tennis (and other activities, such as music) in his life.

Sometimes he has told me it would be great to be an assistant coach or work with younger kids. It may not be his career, but as he begins searching for a career choice, he would like to include this small part into his daily activities as an adult.

Thumbing through the pages, another major point of the book was trying to help people avoid making poor occupational choices. The way to avoid doing that is understanding who we are and what we need.

I found it interesting that there are more than

20,000 occupations to choose from. Honestly, I don't know if I could name even a fraction of what those jobs would be. Even with broad knowledge of what people do in my own job, the number of jobs available is still mind boggling to me.

There are many reasons why people choose their occupations. The theories they came up with are varied, but each has value.

• They say one theory is *early childhood influences*. This theory says adults tend to look for work in situations like those they enjoyed as children. They might also avoid work that brings back painful childhood memories. Citing an example, the experts said a child who grew up in a warm, accepting family might choose a career like teaching, sales or social work. On the other hand, a child who grew up in a cold, rejecting family might be inclined to choose non-person directed careers such as astronomy, accounting or engineering, which normally don't require a lot of contact with people.

• A second theory is the *self-concept factor*. In this theory, self-concept is defined as the person we think we are. Consequently, if someone considers themselves to be physically strong and the outdoors type, that person might want to be a heavy equipment operator, logger, or oil field

person. If they think they are clever and a good talker, they might choose to be a salesperson.

• *Personality theory* suggests choosing an occupation that expresses the individual's personality. This theory holds there are six basic personality types: realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising and artistic.

• *Chance* theory says a career "just happens."

I liked the example the experts gave about a college student, who was studying to become an engineer, and while on Christmas vacation went skiing and broke his leg. In the hospital, he met a friendly doctor and one thing led to another with the end result being that the student decided to change his entire career plan, shifting to medicine, because of the positive experience with the doctor.

Of course, there were many other factors that play heavily into career decisions ranging from location to the labor force and timing, education and changes. What struck me most about this publication was how helpful it can be for young people today and how much we, as adults, can help them by raising their awareness to what's out there.

After all, the job we choose is what will occupy the majority of our waking hours in life and it's hard to believe that one expert quoted said 80 percent of all working Americans are in the wrong job. Speaking of work, cleaning closets is not one of my favorite jobs, but when I find little treasures like the one I did, it makes it all worthwhile. As for a housekeeping career, I don't think I would do well with that one at all.

*Decker is editor of the Free Press. Her column appears on Fridays.*

## Cooperation needed to fix flood damage

Congress was out of session for the week of Memorial Day which gave me the opportunity to spend time meeting with many Kansans. I will return to Washington, D.C., tomorrow following the Agriculture Committee hearing in Salina. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

#### Flood and Levee Damage

Local, state and federal officials joined me Friday for a tour of flood and levee damage in Reno County. In addition to the tour, we discussed county-wide recovery efforts and funding options to repair the levee. That afternoon, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) notified me that Reno County was designated to receive Public Assistance for recovery efforts from the recent severe storms and flooding.

The designation also includes Chase, Clay, Lyon, Nemaha, Osborne, Reno, Rice, Saline and Washington counties. A Public Assistance declaration means state and local units of government can be partially reimbursed to repair or replace disaster-damaged public facilities and infrastructure.

Special appreciation goes to Bill Guy and Jerry Schmidt for arranging the tour. I am pleased that officials from the appropriate federal agencies were able to personally witness the extensive levee damage and resulting jeopardy in which citizens of Reno County find themselves. I am hopeful that FEMA, NRCS and the Corps of Engineers can work in cooperation with local officials to find a solution to this pressing problem.

#### Studying Hunger Issues in Kansas

This week, I visited Salina, McPherson and Wichita to learn more about hunger issues in Kansas. As the House Agriculture Committee begins writing the 2007 Farm Bill, I took this

**Jerry Moran**

### • Kansas Rep. Dist. 1

opportunity to hear from Kansans about how to make food stamps and other programs more accessible and efficient.

I met with Social and Rehabilitation Service (SRS) Secretary Don Jordan in Salina to discuss how the Food Stamp Program is working in Kansas. He shared ways that the federal government can change the program to help include more households who may be facing hunger. I look forward to working with the SRS to make sure elderly and rural Kansans who qualify for food stamps are participating in the program.

My thanks to all of the others who hosted and joined us for the stops, including Reverend Steve Kmetz at the Rescue Mission in Salina; Cindy Foley, Director of Salina's USD 305 Food and Nutrition Services; Sherie Rhoder at the Foods Resource Bank in McPherson; and Brian Walker, President and CEO of the Kansas Food Bank in Wichita.

#### Recognizing the Community of Tipton

I was in Tipton this week to recognize residents with my Building Better Communities award. This small community of 250 people has come together to keep vital services in its town, as well as creating new opportunities for area residents.

In the summer of 2003, residents came together to create Tipton Christian School in less than two months after it was announced the lo-

cal public school was closing. The private K-6 facility was constructed entirely with volunteer labor and funded through private donations. The community then utilized the closed elementary school building to start Tipton Academy. The Academy focuses on placing troubled boys in a positive environment through community involvement. Tipton has also maintained an active business community, including companies like Great Plains Manufacturing, which recently doubled the size of its agricultural equipment manufacturing plant, and Hollerich Construction, which is expanding its Tipton-based operation.

#### Kansas Veterans' Forum

On Wednesday, I hosted a veterans' forum in McPherson. Tom Sanders, Director of the Robert J. Dole Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Wichita, and Daniel Umlauf, Director of the Robert J. Dole Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office also of Wichita, joined me to provide updates to veterans about benefits, health care and other veteran-related issues.

About 90 veterans from the area attended and asked questions ranging from access to mental health care to the current backlog of pending claims at the VA. While we have had several recent successes for veterans, more work and funding for mental health and family services must be accomplished to ensure adequate and accessible health care for the men and women who have served our country. I appreciate the people who were able to attend and the hospitality of VFW Post #2715 in McPherson. Thank you to Post Commander Bobby Cox for leading the Pledge of Allegiance and to Kansas VFW State Commander James Graham for introducing me at the beginning of the forum.

## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

