



Opinion



A Kansas Viewpoint

Shut ‘er down

By Ken Poland,
Back in 1948 my dad kept me home from school, one day in early October. He couldn’t find enough men who were willing to put in a hard day, pitching bundles to a threshing machine.
The rest of the crew, that day, were about 40 years older than me. They had all had extensive experience with threshing machines and had a good time sharing stories about their experiences. One of those experiences they demonstrated was when the last bundle was thrown into the feeder. They took off their hats and threw them in the air and watched as their hats went into the machine with the last bundle. The season was over!

I’m sure it was the last time any of them pitched to a threshing machine. I participated one more time after that.
Many years later, I pitched a few bundles into the machine on the fairgrounds. I doubt those fellows in charge of the demonstration had nearly as much experience as the men who shared their stories and demonstrated how to roll out the separator drive belt, how to properly lay the bundles into the feeder and the celebration of getting rid of their sweaty and dirty old hats.

They also shared a few stories about tricks, pulled in “the good old days.” One was how to get a break. All the pitching crew would get together and throw their bundles in butt first and slug the machine. They got to rest while the rig operator cleaned out the plug and got things running again. They just told me how it was done.

We didn’t do it, as the operator was a friend and they had all matured enough to just say, “Shut ‘er down, we need a rest.” Incidentally, this young fellow was glad to hear them say that, and we took a break.

I thought about that day 60 years ago, as I watched President Bush walk off the stage following his last State of the Union address. It isn’t quite the end of his season, but it is getting closer. I don’t know about his hat, but my hat will go into the air in celebration when his last official signature is finally scrawled! If I could, I’d say, “Shut ‘er down now Mr. Bush, we need a rest.”

My birthday was just a few days late to allow me to vote in 1952. I have participated in 13 elections since then. My choice hasn’t always won the election. Most of the readers of this newspaper won’t agree with me, but I think we have experienced three of the worst presidents in the history of this nation in that period of time.

In my study of history, Democrats have elected a few presidents that fell short, but none, in my opinion, fell as short as Nixon, Reagan, and G.W. Bush. Reagan and Bush racked up the largest deficit spending records in the history of our country. Their 16 years of tax cuts and increased spending just haven’t worked! I guess they just didn’t have the voodoo skills to make “trickle down theory” work.

All three of those presidents had more than their share of scandal and inept appointees in their administrations. I think the state of the union was worse at the end of their presidencies than at the beginning. I’m not expecting any spectacular turn around in this final year of G.W.’s term. FDR’s New Deal created jobs while providing new public buildings, dams, conservation practices, utility construction, etc. Eisenhower’s highway projects created jobs. Those two presidents didn’t depend on lowered tax rates, tax refunds and cash handouts to jump start the economy or provide needed infrastructure to keep the economy strong. Those programs may have created temporary deficits, but, they created long term economic stimulus and structures to maintain the culture.

Those programs have a proven record of success. Colby has had the long term benefit of a school building, city building, hospital, swimming pool, rural electrification, bolstered farm income, interstate highway and maybe more that I don’t know about. Trickle down theory and cash handouts will not match those successes.

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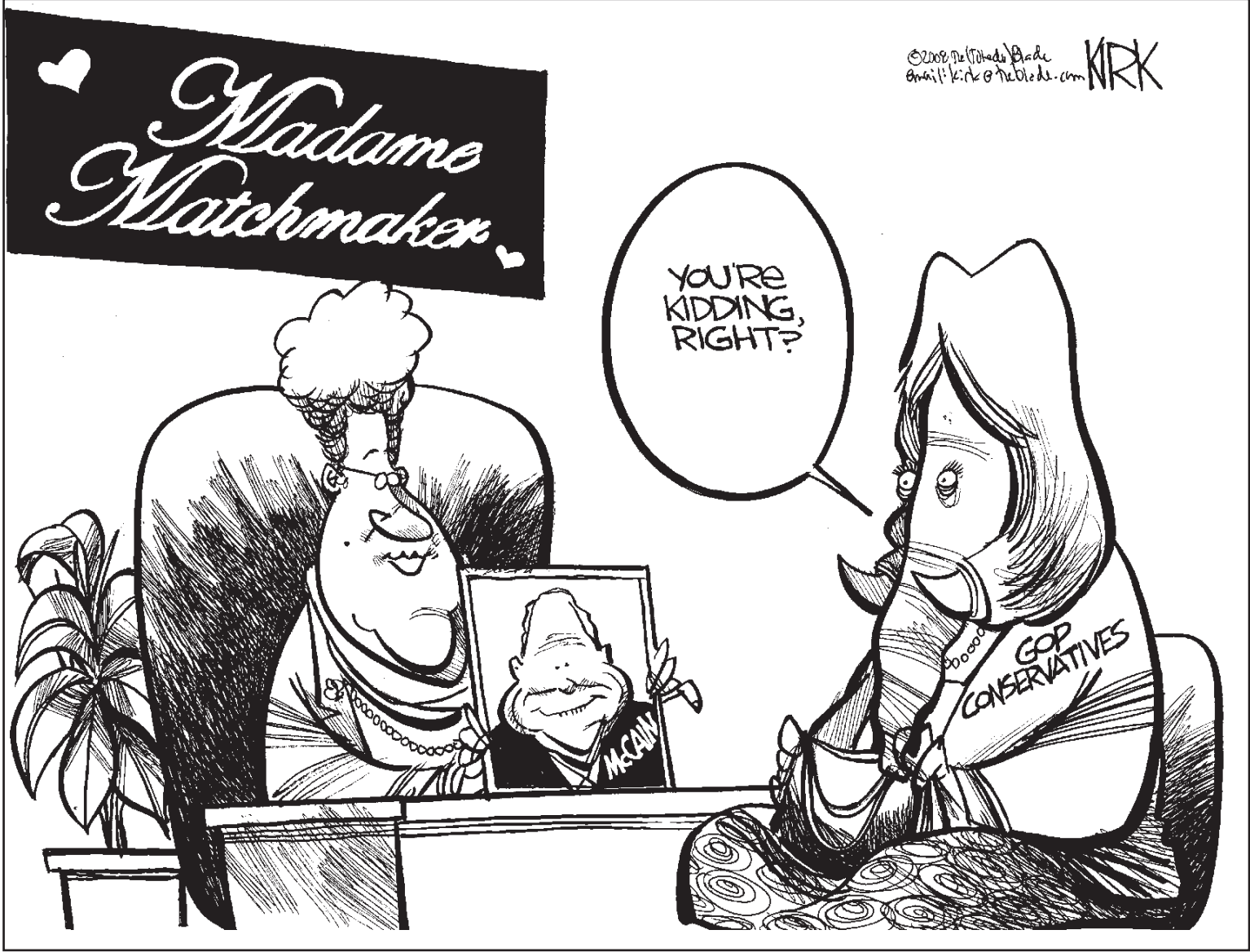
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Missouri responds to tax bill

One month into the session and committees are hard at work. The House Energy and Utilities Committee heard testimony and were to work HB2711 last Friday but the committee adjourned without taking any action.

Elections and Government Organizations Committee is preparing for an important discussion on property rights. I anticipate many bills making their way to the House floor this week.

Missouri Lawmakers React to Kansas Tax bill

In reaction to passage of HB 2641 by the Kansas House, Missouri Lawmakers hurried a tax repeal bill though their chambers this week. The bill eliminates the property tax deduction for residents of any state that does not give Kansas residents the same deduction. As a result, Missouri Legislators have drafted an identical bill that would reestablish the deduction. This is a major victory for the House and its leadership who have worked closely with Missouri lawmakers to ensure that Kansas citizens are treated fairly.

Energy

All eyes will be on the House Energy and Utilities Committee this week as it works HB 2711 allowing for expansion of the Sunflower coal plant in Holcomb and establishes new environmental regulations. Specifically the bill establishes a carbon tax emissions cap and net metering. They would be the first environmental regulations in the nation imposed at the state level. Speaker Neufeld formed a Select Committee on Energy and Environment for the Future earlier this week charged with establishing long-term energy policy. The Select Committee will be chaired by Representative Don Myers (R Derby). The bill may not be



Jim Morrison

● Capitol Review

worked this week at all.

Budget

Other than the energy bill, sound fiscal policy is the driving force this session. Budget committees are working hard hearing agency requests. In this tough fiscal time, the best approach for these agencies is to find the money internally by taking a close look at how they have allocated budget dollars in the past and cut out wasteful spending and outdated or under-performing programs. The House Appropriations committee voted in favor of a set of guidelines for the FY 2009 budget.

These guidelines call for the committees to eliminate from the governor’s budget all but the required increases in state general fund spending. This includes proposed budget enhancements and assumed gaming revenues and places even more strain on the state general fund. Also included is support for the state employee pay plan and the five year transition to a new state pay system. Essentially it will hold salary adjustments to 1.5 percent instead of the 2.5 percent recommended by the Governor.

Bills

Sub for HB 2336, An act concerning sales taxation; relating to exemptions; food disaster emergencies; certain construction materials and services.

HB 2730, passed out of my efficiency and technology committee. It relates to public finance; creating the Kansas taxpayer transparency act; defining terms; requiring the secretary of administration to develop and operate a specified web site; enumerating information which shall be made available on such web site; establishing the public finance transparency board and prescribing its duties; and providing for nondisclosure of non-public information. Actually this bill puts into law what has already been started and will be active on March 1 this year. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting way for you to see how the state spends and receives money.

HB 2495, An act concerning income taxation; relating to corporations; surtax.

HB 2774, An act concerning immigration; requiring the adjutant general to request certain information from the United States immigrations and customs enforcement and to establish communications with certain foreign countries.

HB 2775, An act concerning governmental ethics; requiring the reporting of lobbying expenses by municipalities.

HB 2777, An act concerning school districts; relating to school finance.

HB 2780, An act concerning criminal procedure; relating to conditional release.

I really enjoy serving as your Representative in Topeka. I do not return to the area hardly at all during the first four months as I then have more time to help those requesting assistance with state government. I take my duties seriously and am able to dedicate myself full time to this work rather than ‘campaigning’. Your continued prayers and help are greatly appreciated.

Your turn

It is far past time

Margaret Roulier Colby

Tuesday of last week was caucus day for many states including Kansas.

It seems ridiculous to me that we still nominate candidates for the highest office in the

land, the president of the U.S., through caucus instead of primary election.

Years ago, U.S. Senators were nominated in caucus. People complained so that they were finally put on the primary ballot.

In 2008, we are still letting caucuses decide which candidate will run for president. There

is no privacy in a caucus vote.

When I have attended a caucus, there was never any check of voter qualification. Think about that with all the illegal aliens.

It is far past time for presidential candidates to be voted in by primary elections by registered voters.

About those letters . . .

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Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

