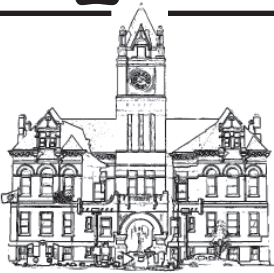


# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### Would VP Sebelius help or hurt?

#### The Wichita Eagle

Kansans think enough of Kathleen Sebelius to have elected her governor twice, the last time with a hefty 58 percent of the vote. And for the past year, her approval rating in SurveyUSA’s monthly polling has averaged 65 percent — stratospheric compared with some of her fellow governors.

But it’s a long way from being esteemed by Kansans to being vice president. Or so it seemed, before the national political media started assessing Sebelius as a potential running mate for Democratic nominee Barack Obama.

The collective vetting seemed to peak with Washington Post blogger Chris Cillizza devoting two days to Sebelius’ pros and cons. The Huffington Post’s Sam Stein credited her with offering “a heap of electoral promise but with small but significant question marks.” Feminist lightning rod Camille Paglia endorsed her, declaring that “an Obama-Sebelius pairing would be visually vibrant and radiant, like a new day dawning.” Others have weighed in as well. ...

The most obsequious commentators would have people believe Sebelius can deliver women voters and moderate Republicans to Obama en masse — too much to ask of any running mate. They also make much of her role in resolving the school-finance impasse and eliminating the Graves-era budget shortfall, and of her 2002 decision, as insurance commissioner, to block the sale of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas.

On some level, the basis for Sebelius’ stardom — that she’s a Democrat twice elected to govern a heavily Republican state — is being misunderstood. She has benefited from the serial inability (or refusal) of the ideologically fractured state GOP to find a consensus candidate, which helps explain why polling indicates her selection wouldn’t even win Kansas’ six electoral votes for the Democrats.

#### 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**, 2202 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, Kan. 66612. 785/296-7676  
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**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399  
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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 or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.



### Elite eight



#### John Van Nostrand

##### • Line in the Dust

its own style of architecture. Enough said.

3. Colby Visitor’s Center: I feel honored center-volunteer coordinator Ralph Fischer has me on his list of people to call when needed. The center is a very comfortable and inviting building with air conditioning and couches that don’t let go of you. This is the kind of place where you can feel at home walking barefoot into the bathroom. That is my measuring stick. Some visitors have told me our center is much better than ones in big cities because it’s more personal than commercialized.

4. Genesis: Thomas County’s food-drive for the needy organization tugs at the heart. It’s just a little office on Range Avenue but it has a big result. The amount of support they get from either citizens or area businesses is incredible and shows what they do is an honest-to-goodness need. If you really want to know what Christmas is all about, go help with preparing the food boxes. You’ll forget what you want for Christmas.

5. Colby Community College: Occasional lectures for the public, free concerts by the band and choirs and all the sporting events give Colby a little sample of what it’s like at the big, four-year university towns, just with smaller crowds. (College needs a homecoming-like event. I’ve seen tiny high schools without football teams do that with success.)

With area school districts concerned about enrollment, the college must do what needs to be done to survive and still be appealing to potential students.

6. Shepherd’s Staff: I’ve been to occasional meetings at the conference center in tiny Rexford. The center bleeds potential. Any large-number organization or employer should consider having conferences or workshops there. Rexford doesn’t have any distractions (which is a good thing, in this case) and has plenty of room to stay overnight, or two. For years, during the school year, kids from the area meet there once a month to develop their faith.

7. I’d like to put all the churches in one category, I just don’t know what to call it. College Drive Assembly of God finds ways to help people in need. Colby Wesleyan Church reaches out to unchurched kids and families in town and isn’t much different than big-city churches on donating to missionaries around the world. Baptist church on Webster is reaching kids with remote-control cars. United Methodist has some fun summer events for kids. You get the idea. Churches are just one unique way to get involved in Colby and know more about the residents.

8. Fike Park: Big, beautiful playground - and fun according to my kids. Plenty of parking, park benches, picnic tables and shade trees. Basketball hoops. Tennis courts. Horseshoe pitching. Watching all of that is like animating a Norman Rockwell painting.

Remember, voting ends Monday. The top 16 sites are expected to be on another ballot beginning July 18. You’ll see that too in your Colby Free Press.

— John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.

### Your turn

## NASCAR to help with blood drive

#### Vicky Coppel Red Cross senior donor recruitment representative

NASCAR fans know a thing or two about speed and adrenaline. So does the Red Cross. That’s why this summer I am thrilled to announce that these two great brands have teamed up to help promote the ongoing need for blood donations.

During the 2008 NASCAR Sprint Cup season, Red Cross blood donors can participate in an exciting new partnership with 3M Corporation, Roush Fenway Racing and #16 driver Greg Biffle.

Thanks to a generous donation from 3M, the Red Cross will have a strong presence at nine

Sprint Cup races. The Red Cross logo will appear on a full paint scheme at two races and will be included on the #16 car at an additional seven races. Greg Biffle will also wear a Red Cross-branded fire suit.

Every day more than 38,000 people in this country need blood donations to help treat everything from planned surgeries to car accidents. NASCAR fans can join Biffle, who is also a blood donor, in helping to save lives. Red Cross hopes the more than 75 million passionate NASCAR fans will become loyal Red Cross blood donors like Greg Biffle.

Race to the Colby blood drive Wednesday, July 9 from noon to 6 p.m. at the City Limits, 2227 S. Range Ave. Everyone who comes in donate will receive a NASCAR lanyard. Call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543) to sched-

ule an appointment. Please bring your donor card or photo ID.

The Red Cross is also launching a new Web site, www.redcrossracing.com, where race fans can sign up and earn points every time they participate in a blood drive. Points are redeemable for Red Cross Racing branded items including caps, t-shirts, leather racing jackets and limited edition die-cast cars. All online participants will also be eligible to win an all-expense-paid trip for two to the Checker Auto Parts 500 at Phoenix International Speedway on Nov. 9. The prize package includes airfare, hotel, and two race tickets.

Be a winner this summer and join Red Cross Racing. The need is constant. The gratification is instant. Give blood.

#### 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.

### Mallard Fillmore

#### • Bruce Tinsley

