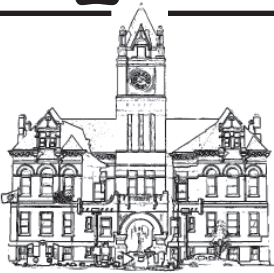


Opinion



Other Viewpoints

Gas price prompts people to stay close

The directors of tourism sites throughout Kansas are saying they got an unexpected perk from the gas price spike — more visits from residents staying close to home.

It is good to know something positive can come out of the difficult economic climate, especially something that highlights the best Kansas has to offer and supports some of our most noteworthy attractions.

But it is unfortunate more residents don't take advantage of their backyard bounty even during flush times. Kansas has plenty to see and do, as the Kansas Sampler Foundation's 8 Wonders of Kansas contest worked to emphasize earlier this year.

In Hutchinson alone, you have the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center, a premier museum of historic space artifacts, and the Kansas Underground Salt Museum, a relatively new addition that celebrates our history in salt and offers the rare experience of descending 650 feet underground.

We also have plenty of cultural explorations to make, whether to Yoder for the Amish culture or to Lindsborg for the Swedish traditions that have made that town well known.

Beyond the obvious sites, the state has plenty of well-kept secrets, which *The News* has explored through a series of stories called "One-Tank Trips," discoveries that can be made with just one tank of gas and which still can be found on the "one-tank-trip" blog at www.hutchcountry.com. ...

For those who still are traveling, the day trip has gained another name — the "staycation" — and it has kept travelers in the state. ...

For state tourism venues, it is an opportunity to benefit from the increased local traffic, but also to get feedback and stay fresh so that local residents will want to make many returns.

For residents, it is an opportunity to truly experience the best our state has to offer — and perhaps to realize that future vacations don't have to require thousands of miles or dollars.

It seems there's plenty to do right here at home.

— *The Hutchinson News, via The Associated Press*

Where to write, call

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Single girl can give some advice

One of my best friends from high school is getting married Saturday, and I have both the privilege and opportunity to journey back home to be a bridesmaid in her wedding.

Those who know me well won't be surprised to hear that I love weddings. The dresses, music, splashes of color, flowers and the moment the groom lays his eyes on his beloved bride all bring warmth to my soul.

A girl will begin dreaming of that moment after she watches her first Disney princess movie. She will then spend the rest of her days searching until she finds her prince. And it's a reasonable goal.

The idea of postponing marriage or not getting married at all is a revolting thought for many people. This dream of finding my prince is still one of mine.

I attended my friend's bridal shower the day before I left for college. As she opened each gift, the person who gave it gave also gave her a piece of marital advice. I was the only one present who gave her a gift, but who was not married, which is probably why I didn't give any advice. But now I wish I had.

My friend and her fiance have probably heard from countless people throughout their engagement that marriage will be difficult, that they need to be prepared for disappointment, and that after a while, they will realize that they would be both disillusioned about their perspective on wedded bliss. My heart sinks for them, because if a wedding is a celebration, why would we celebrate a set up for dis-



Michelle Myers

• A Moment with Michelle

appointment?

I apologize for all of this "advice" they have received. Instead, I would like to encourage them and all married couples in general to rise far above these low expectations.

I don't have any marital advice from personal experience, but I do know some things about friendships and much about relationships. After all, a marriage is built on a relationship, and a relationship is built on a friendship.

The secret to a thriving relationship for a lifetime in the context of either marriage or friendship is a life of selflessness. One of my favorite authors (who has been happily married to her husband for 13 years) wrote, "Nothing will kill a marriage faster than two people who are only concerned with meeting their own needs and desires. But nothing will cause the romance and beauty of a marriage to blossom like two people who put each other's needs and desires above their own."

To simply put it, relationships take sacrifices. Snow White sacrificed her cozy cottage and little friends to be with her prince. Sleeping Beauty abandoned her warm bed and

peaceful sleep. And Ariel, the Little Mermaid, left her sea world to be with the man of her dreams. Such is the requirement to experience a lifetime of a thriving relationship.

Furthermore, I would encourage my friend to embrace her femininity, which will then naturally accentuate her husband's masculinity. A man will be inclined to treat his beloved like a valuable princess. He will protect her innocence, rescue her and demand justice from those who do wrong to her.

As the woman responds to her feminine nature, she will allow him to do these things for her instead of conforming to society's cry for a woman to be independent. A reasonable person will agree that two independent people will not work together very well.

I don't claim to be an expert on relationships. I learn more on a daily basis. But my responsibility as a friend is to share with her and others what I have learned in hopes that she will succeed in all that she hopes for.

It will definitely be a whirlwind trip — I'm flying out Friday morning at 6 a.m. into Denver and returning Sunday morning at 8 a.m. — but my girlish heart can't wait to see my friend fulfilling a little girl's dream.

Michelle Myers, a Colby native, is a student at Multnomah University in Portland, Ore., majoring in Bible and journalism. She enjoys the 32 Starbucks found within five miles of her campus.

State needs to act on domestic violence

As a member of the Kansas Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board, established by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius in 2004, I work with members from the judicial system, the law enforcement community, mental health professionals, advocates for domestic violence victims, and government agencies to fulfill our duty to the people of Kansas, made clear and direct to us from the governor.

When a Kansas adult dies from domestic violence, the board examines that case to ask how things could have been different. We consider the response of officials, how well laws and policies worked, how well everyone did their jobs, ultimately reporting to the governor with recommendations on how the state can better respond to the pain of domestic violence in Kansas.

Beyond reviewing these cases after the fact, the board also works to gather information about domestic violence as a social ill. One example of this is an important study produced last year by the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University. According

Other Opinions

• What people say in Kansas, elsewhere

to this report, domestic violence is the third most important women's health issue in Kansas.

But we cannot gather and review such disturbing information without moving to action. For this reason, the board received a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to initiate a public awareness campaign.

We all need to see that there is more domestic violence than we know about.

We must encourage each Kansan to make a difference in reducing the violence and preventing the deaths.

We all need to remember that informed ac-

tion is better than silence or hesitation when the lives of our fellow citizens are at stake.

Kansans should know that they live in a state where we care about the pain of domestic violence enough to better understand it, and where we are prepared to do something about it.

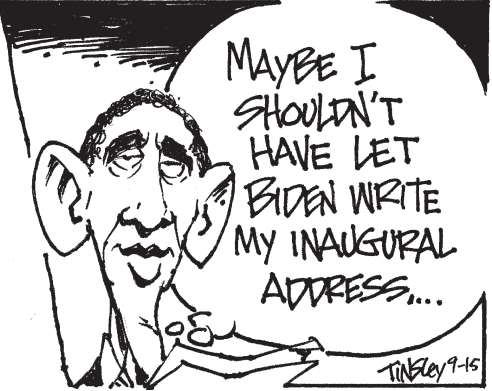
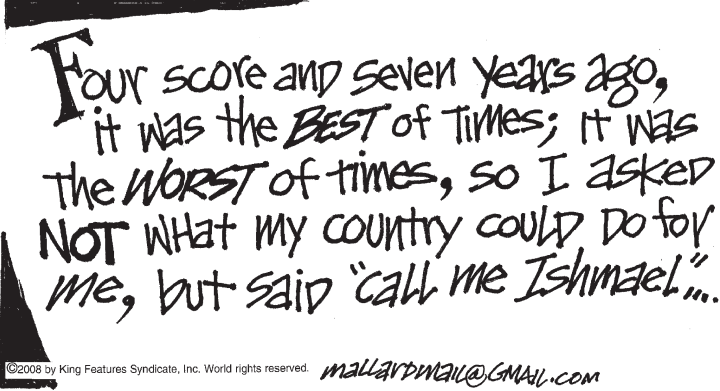
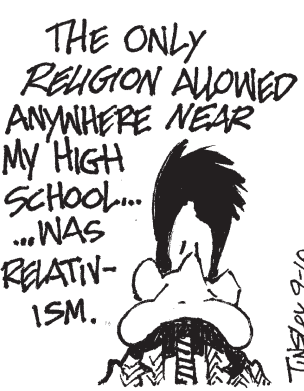
If you are a victim of domestic violence or know someone who is, you can call (888) END ABUSE (888-363-2287) to get help.

Darrell A. Hamlin, instructor of justice studies at Fort Hays State University, is a member of Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board.

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail s.haynes@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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