pinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Election finish marks time to heal

Today may be the day after election day, but it's also the day we should begin the healing process. And there will be many wounds needing attention.

We have a new president-elect, someone who will move into the Oval Office on Jan. 20 as our 44th president.

Be it Sen. John McCain or Sen. Barack Obama, the winner will face a monumental task, a task of their own making. It was their respective campaigns' decisions to go negative, get down and dirty, stretch the truth, push the envelope. Those decisions have now come home to haunt them.

We are assuming this election will be close, despite the 24/7 poll numbers that have been showing otherwise. And if it is as close as indications of the last 48 hours seem to hint, there will be about as many people disappointed as there are people rejoicing at the result.

Those in the disappointed ranks aren't going to just simply blend in with the victors. They will need soothing, soothing as only a compassionate presidential victor can render. And because of the historic nature of this election on both sides of the political ledger, President McCain or President Obama will have to reach into the neighborhoods throughout this vast and great experience called the U.S. of A., to calm the political waters. And that will take time, but hopefully not as long as it took to finally conclude the 2007-2008 presidential campaign. That was crazy!

So, as we close the curtain on this latest political experience, I won't ask God to bless us, because if truth be known He probably ran for cover at the first shot back in '07 and will probably remain there until we straighten out a really messy situation.

Enter: President Obama.

—Tom Dreiling, The Norton Telegram

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. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612,

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 colby.editor @ nwkansas. com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Free Press, its staff or the owners.

Colby Free Press

155 W. Fifth St.

(USPS 120-920)

(785) 462-3963

fax (785) 462-7749 Colby, Kan. 67701 Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

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

Steve Haynes - Publisher

NEWS

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor mballard @ nwkansas

ADVERTISING

Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Manager j.stewart @ nwkansas.com

Heather Woofter - Advertising Sales

Steifon Matthews - Graphic Design

Jessica Estes - Classified Ad Desk estes @ nwkansas.con

BUSINESS OFFICE

Tammy Withers - Office Manager

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator

NOR'WEST PRESS

Iim Bowker - General Manager Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Elizabeth Brock

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

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

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 $\,$ 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 herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail within 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.



Study confirms poor business tax climate

We all know the economic damage from the recent crash of the financial sector is not confined to Wall Street.

Even before the recent meltdown, roughly 30 states faced budget deficits for fiscal year 2009, which began on July 1 for most. More than 20 states are now facing fresh budget shortfalls for the upcoming year, and few remain hopeful that state coffers will recover anytime soon.

During these difficult times, it becomes increasingly important for lawmakers to find innovative solutions to budget problems - without increasing taxes. If families and businesses are required to live within their means, government should as well.

In the face of these budget pressures, many states are looking to target businesses as a strategy to balance the books. As our elected officials think about beginning the annual task of budget writing, they should remember that increasing taxes is not a sustainable answer for budget problems. In fact, it comes at a great

Whenever a state changes its tax and fiscal policies, it directly and immediately influences that state's competitive position for personal and business investment. Especially during an economic downturn, Kansas needs to be doing everything it can to become more competitive, not less.

With this in mind, a new study released by a

Opinions Jonathan Williams

Other

competitiveness in Kansas. The Tax Foundation's 2009 State Business Tax Climate Index shows Kansas' tax system needs some major

Flint Hills Center

improvements. The study ranks Kansas' overall business tax climate 31st out of the 50 states. Our business tax climate significantly lags behind all bordering states, except Nebraska.

In what should be alarming for Kansans, the index ranks Kansas business taxes as some of the worst in the nation. The corporate tax subindex evaluates tax policies that have a direct impact on business — including corporate income tax rates and bases. This year, Kansas ranks 37th out of the 50 states with regard to the corporate tax subindex. This places Kansas dead last among neighboring states

The historical evidence is clear: States that keep spending and taxes low exhibit the best economic results, while states that follow the tax-and-spend path lag far behind. Colorado, for example, was able to restrain government nonpartisan tax research organization based in spending and tax burdens through the Taxpay-

one of the strongest economies in the nation.

With competitors like this sitting just across the border, it should make every policymaker in Topeka aware that changes to policy are not created in a vacuum.

On a positive note, the Kansas Legislature has passed a bill to phase out the estate tax and the corporate franchise tax in Kansas. A bill passed in the 2008 session will reduce Kansas' corporate income tax. This is a step in the right direction, but there is more to be done to attract businesses to come and create jobs.

Hopefully, the State Business Tax Climate Index will remind lawmakers in Kansas that further reform of the state's tax system is necessary to foster a competitive business environment for the 21st Century. Today, business capital is liquid and mobile, and can easily be shifted between competing opportunities throughout the international marketplace.

In these difficult times, it is important to remember the consequences of raising taxes. As this study shows, in the battle for business investment, Kansas only ranks a lukewarm mediocre.

Jonathan Williams is a fiscal policy fellow with the Wichita-based Flint Hills Center for Public Policy and director of tax and fiscal policy at the American Legislative Exchange Council. His biography is at www.flinthills.org/ content/view/24/39/, and he can be reached at williams.jonathan.p@gmail.com. For more Washington could help highlight this need for ers' Bill of Rights in the early '90s, creating about the Flint Hills Center, go to www.flint-

Muck rake needed for campaign autumn

You have to love autumn of 2008. The leaves are starting to fall, local sports teams are in the playoffs, we've even had a snow day already.

Last week, I put my car in the ditch because of the snow, but there is something that I find much more treacherous than the snow, and that is the mud that is being flung all over the na-

While it is the time of year to dust off the leaf blower and get rid of those pesky leaves, I find that people this year are out for a different kind of garden tool, the muck rake. I don't believe that Wal-Mart carries this item, but if you turn on the news, read the paper, or even go to a coffee shop, you should be able to pick one up pretty cheap.

Joe the Plumber captured the hearts of Americans. He is even considering a run for Congress in 2010. (\$100 says he gets it.)

Sarah Palin has reunited the right and Joe Biden brought a long track record to the Democratic ticket.

John McCain and Barack Obama both know how to fix our problems, and they prove it by attacking each other.

Nothing screams "unity and change" like a negative campaign ad. I will be the first to admit that I am easily drawn into a debate. I love some good, spirited political rhetoric. But boy, we seem to have gotten local, haven't we? I think for a county this size, this is starting to get a little personal, a little hurtful and very divisive.

The generation after us (OK, I'm pretty young, maybe my generation) looks up to everyone who has an opinion on this race. What

Letter Drop

Our Readers Sound Off

are they seeing when they look up to you? Are they seeing a united front that wants a better Thomas County? I think you know the answer

So what can we do? Tell them it's just politics and that they don't understand? Ask any parent of a teen how well that goes over. Pretend they don't realize what's going on? Ha! What then is the solution? Why not try focusing on something positive?

In the midst of these heated and negative debates, I have some good news to share with

Last week was National Red Ribbon Week, when we celebrate drug-free lives. What many people don't realize is that there are more drug- and alcohol-free teens now then there were five years ago.

Five years ago, when asked if they had consumed any alcohol in the past 30, days 62 percent of Thomas County sixth, eighth, 10th, and 12th graders said "no." That number has gone up consistently over the past five years. Last year, for the same age groups, 82 percent said "no." This is outstanding improvement.

Self-reported marijuana use in the past 30 days went from 92 percent "no" to 96 percent "no" among the same age groups.

While national trends are going down, Thomas County is out in front. We have shared these statistics with people from all over the United States and everyone is astounded at our numbers.

There are many more categories where we have seen positive trends among our youth over the last five years, and we know that this will continue. We are proud of our teens here in Thomas County. They are great kids, who come from great families.

So, the next time that you turn on the news, or read the editorial page or overhear people talking negatively at the store, remember: Thomas County isn't all "doom and gloom." While it's true that some of our adults may act like kids, some of our best leaders are the youths, and that is a future worth looking forward to.

 Brock A Fairbrother, Colby Project director for the Thomas County Coalition, Northwest Kansas Regional Prevention Center.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter was written before the election, and was held out of the paper in the heat of the sheriff's race. It's message seems as appropriate now as it was last week, however. - Steve Haynes



Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley

