pinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Corporate jets are good for Kansans

Provincial interests came before popular opinion when Kansas lawmakers pushed for Congress to lighten up on the corporate executives who fly business jets. The clash of interests was a classic test of public policy-making.

House legislation initially had prohibited financial institutions from owning or leasing private aircraft if they got federal money from the \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program.

Many Americans, sick of the excessive compensation and perks lavished on seemingly undeserving corporate barons, no doubt like the sound of that. Automaker CEOs, too, heard about this when they flew to Washington on their corporate jets the first time they sought handouts to save their companies.

Members of Congress asked them point-blank if they would be willing to fly home on commercial airlines. They said "no," by the way.

But anyway, to see this provision pop up in TARP-related legislation was no surprise.

But manufacturing corporate aircraft is a key industry for Kansas. So Kansas lawmakers complained that such legislation would serve to curtail economic recovery in at least one industry even as government tried to revive another.

Rep. Dennis Moore, D-Kansas, sent a letter to the bill's author, House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank. And Republican Congressman Todd Tiahrt of Wichita did likewise.

"A bailout for one industry and pink slips for another is not economic stimulus," Tiahrt wrote to Frank.

Tiahrt received the good news recently that Frank had accepted Tiahrt's amendment to strip the language from the TARP legislation.

The corporate jet provision was well-intentioned. Many Americans likely cheered that stipulation on the bailout money. But it was symbolic and obviously had other unexpected and undesirable consequences.

Corporate executives and boards hopefully are hearing the message nonetheless. Corporate excess had reached a sickening extreme before this recession. But micromanaging the private sector as Frank sought to do isn't the American way.

-The Hutchinson News via the Associated Press

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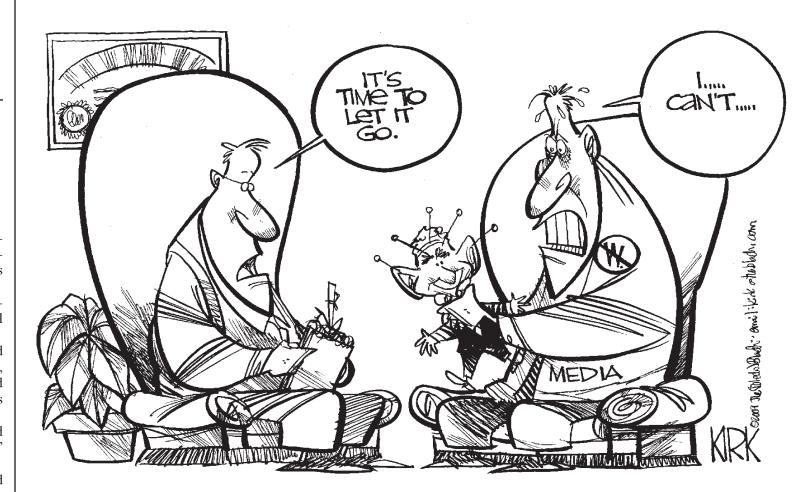
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Sports fans show community spirit

Colby sports fans are a dedicated bunch.

Driving around Colby, you can't help but notice all the Colby Eagles' license plates. Businesses are adorned with signs wishing Colby teams good luck in their next game. People walk the streets with Colby Eagles sweatshirts. It doesn't take long to figure out this town loves its sports teams.

There is something homespun and heartfelt about this towns support for its athletic teams. It is always nice to see people of different opinions come together and support something. It's enough to make a pessimistic person rethink his feelings about the world.

Traveling from game to game, I always run in to the same old-timers no matter who is playing. It could be the Colby Community College basketball team or the Colby High School wrestling team and they will always be there. These fans' loyalty to Colby sports shows how, at its best, sports can bring a community together.

The great thing about sports is it transcends issues related to political affiliation, race, religion and age. People with distinctly different political beliefs can come together to support their favorite sports team. Sports can bring together people of different generations. In other words, sports is one of the most inclusive activities people take part in.

Andy Heintz Wildcat

business. No matter how much you try, it is hard to go through life without stepping on someone. It seems like one person's loss is often another person's gain. After being confronted with these uncomfortable facts, most

Ramblings

problems for a while. Some people's form of escapism consists of drug or alcohol use, others find it through reading, while others find sports to be a healthy

us find ourselves seeking a form of escapism

that will make us forget about the world's

way to forget about the real world for a while. Many people in this city have adopted sports as a way to relieve the tension caused by life's trials and tribulations. But sports in Colby is more than merely a form of escapism. In Colby, sports offers a glimpse of a closelyknit community that cares about each other. In other words sports is away of life.

Now I'm sure this all sounds overly simplistic. I'm sure there are some people in Colby He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, Sports offers us a brief vacation from the who don't really like sports. And it is true sports and opinion writing. nessiness of real life. Real life can be a cruel sports fans can at times get a little too fanatical

about their teams.

I remember having to sit by fans during Kansas State football games who seemed to think the only way to be a true fan was to be as cruel as possible to the opposing team. I have always hated the idea that to be a true fan you have to dislike everything about the opposing team. The times when I have seen Colby fans engage in this kind of illogical behavior has been few and far between. Fans have been more interested in cheering their own team as

opposed to demeaning the opposition. I have enjoyed meeting Colby fans over the last four months. Sports fans have always been an amusing bunch.

Some fans are constantly aiming goodnatured one-liners at the referee, while other seem to know more about their favorite team then the team's coach. There are quiet fans, loud fans, funny fans and serious fans, but in the end they are all fans. Colby has a special group of fans. They have dedicated a significant portion of their time to support the city's sports team. Colby athletes should be very grateful for the support they receive at every

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press.

Cut spending, minimize disruptions

This past week, I had the honor of being sworn in again as a member of the Kansas Senate. I was proud to have my wife Kay and my mother, along with one of my sisters, five of my children, and 10 of my grandkids standing so proudly in support.

Many challenges face our state, and they will demand honest solutions. This budget problem didn't happen overnight, and will definitely be a long time fixing. Spending reductions must be fair and must include all parts of

the budget. These unavoidable spending cuts will be hard to do, but they must be implemented. We must make sure there is minimum disruption to Kansans who rely on state services. We must act swiftly and decisively in making these reductions.

The Kansas Legislature needs to make adjustments in its spending habits to fit within the revenues of this great state. There will no doubt be a lot of finger pointing and "I told you so" remarks, but in the end I would hope that the final legislative actions will best serve all Kansans.

The past eight years has been a proud and humbling experience as I strive to serve the people of Kansas. I've enjoyed the interaction with my constituents, and I respect the comments I receive. Now, more than ever, I need your advice, prayers, and feedback on all is-

I have a new secretary this year and hope you will take the time to contact her and meet her. I was fortunate to have had Mary Rowson the past six years, and I believe my new secretary, Judy Crapser, will be capable and reliable, as well. Here are some of the issues coming up:



Ralph Ostmeyer

State Senator

Budget: Gov. Kathleen Sebelius presented the annual State of the State address on Monday, Jan. 12. She presented her budget Tuesday, Jan. 13.

Senate Bill 23, the Gov.'s rescission bill for the current fiscal year 2009, was introduced in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Jan. 13. Hearings took place today. The committee will begin working the bill tomorrow and may be up for floor debate next week.

Carbon Tax and Cap-and-Trade Policies: The Joint Committee on Energy and Environmental Policy met on Tuesday, Jan. 13, to discuss carbon taxes and cap-and-trade policy options. A panel, moderated by Sen. Carolyn McGinn, included Amy Blankenbiller with the Kansas Chamber; Brad Harrelson with Kansas Farm Bureau; Nancy Jackson with the Climate and Energy Project; Tom Thompson with the Sierra Club; and Woody Moses with the Kansas Cement Council, discussed the impact, benefits, and limitations of such policies and

The Legislature is not planning on taking action on this issue in the near future but discussion is expected to increase at the federal level under President Barack Obama takes office.

Floor Action: This week, the Senate passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 1601, the Joint Rules for the House and Senate. The Resolu-

tion sets the major deadlines for the legislative session. However, the House of Representatives has yet to vote on SCR 1601. As a result, important dates and deadlines for the session have not been confirmed.

The governor's proposed budget shows a failure of leadership. It does not offer a way out of the state's current financial problems. Even if adopted as presented, the state's budget still would not balance in the short-term, the long-term imbalance would not be corrected, and the governor would leave office with budget deficits as far as the eye could see.

Kansas needs a more-responsible approach that will actually address the problem, not just patch over it.

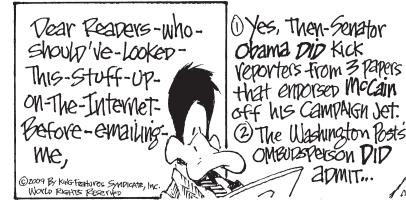
And the ultimate irony: The governor's own budget projections show her leaving office with \$6.1 million in the bank (ending balance) for the FY 2011 budget. That figure is about half of the \$12 million that Gov. Bill Graves left at the end of his term — an amount that Gov. Sebelius repeatedly criticized when she began her first term/ Under this budget, the governor would leave the state in a worse financial position than she found it.

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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.

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Bruce Tinsley



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