

Opinion



Other Viewpoints

Obama asks us to remember history

People who watched President Barack H. Obama's inauguration and speech will talk about this historic moment in American history as he became the 44th President and the first African-American to take the oath.

The more than 1.5 million who stood or sat in the cold Tuesday morning in Washington, and the millions around the world who watched the event on television or heard it will remember where they were when he took the oath of office.

For many Obama's speech was less stirring than they expected, hoping for that well turned phrase like the ones from Kennedy or Roosevelt years ago.

We felt President Obama covered the right bases in his speech, and felt he was trying to convey his message about the importance of the past and the seriousness of the economic and military problems we face today.

He began by laying out the problems the nation faces as he starts his term:

"Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened. ..."

He said the issues we face are part of the heritage of the nation, and called on the people to become part of the solutions:

"We remain a young nation, but in the words of Scripture, the time has come to set aside childish things. The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; ... the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

Obama reminded the audience things were not easy for those who founded our nation nor has the path been easy.

"For us, they packed up their ... possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops and settled the West; endured the ... whip and plowed the hard earth. For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn."

Talking about his plans for the government and to get the economy moving Obama said these are not beyond the ability of the people and the country.

"The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works — whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified."

He tried to reach out to other nations and let them know relations can improve if they want them to.

"We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense, and for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken; you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you."

"... To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history; but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."

President Obama put the challenges we face in perspective and then called on all of us to be involved.

"What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation and the world ..."

He evoked the words of George Washington during the cold days of the war and put a challenge to all those who heard him on Tuesday.

"Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back, nor did we falter ..."

The speech was a remarkable effort to inspire and to be realistic about the challenges we face. — *Tom Betz, Goodland Star-News*

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansan.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
s.haynes @ nwkansan.com

NEWS

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter
aheintz @ nwkansan.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard @ nwkansan.com

Marj Brown, Vera Sloan - Society Editors
colby.society @ nwkansan.com

ADVERTISING

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

Heather Woofter - Advertising Sales
hwoofter @ nwkansan.com

Tyler Zolinski - Graphic Design
tzolinski @ nwkansan.com

Jessica Estes - Classified Ad Desk
jestes @ nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Tammy Withers - Office Manager
twithers @ nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support @ nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris,

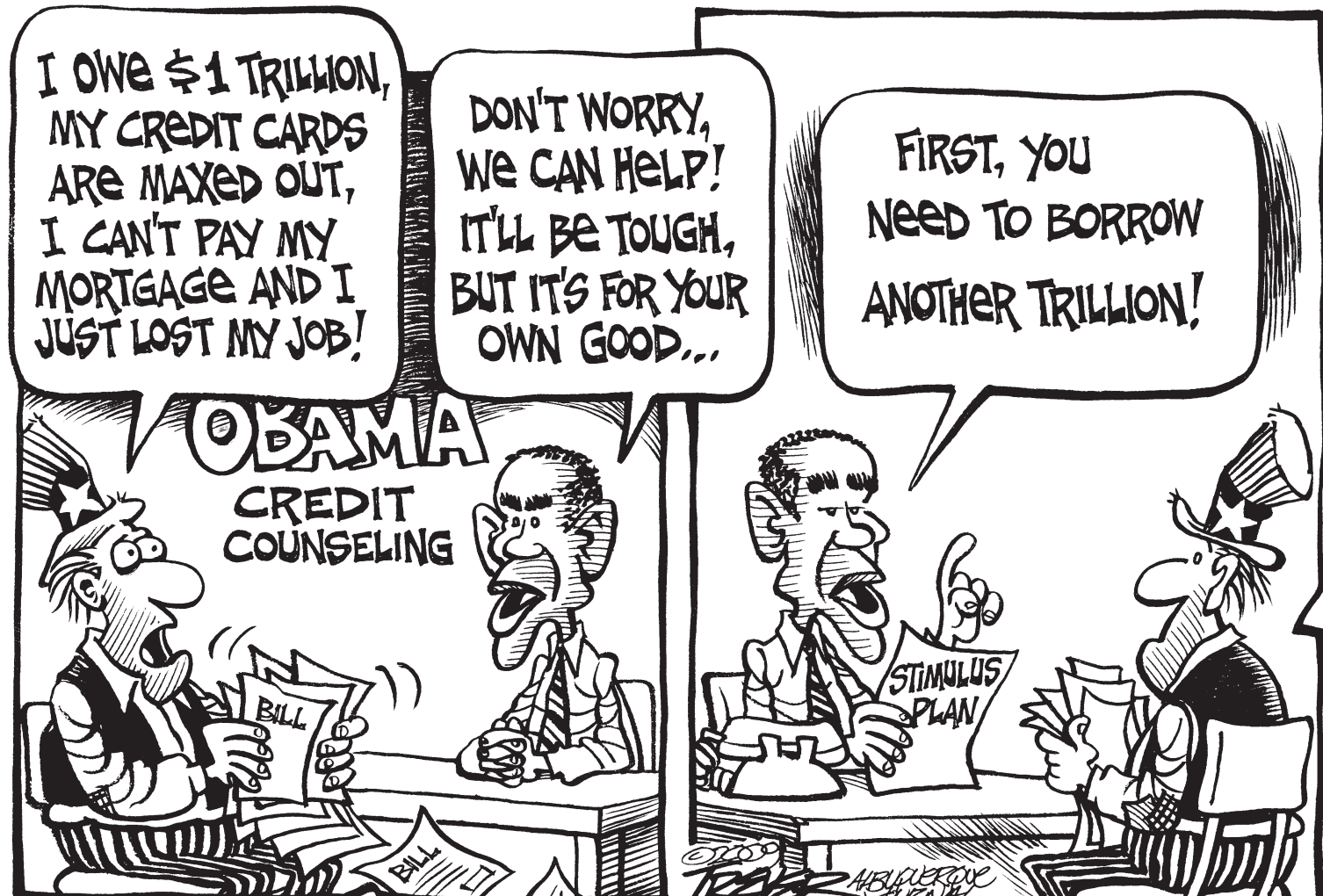
James Ornelas, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Daniel Spillman

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, Kan., 67701.

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.



Playing cat and mouse, the people lose

My daughter was screaming in my ear. I had a little trouble demodulating the message, but I did figure it out.

"He did it again!" she screamed.

Oh, I thought. Husband? Dog? Boss?

Could have been any of 'em. I was afraid to ask, almost. But when I got her to slow down, I did.

"He did it again, Daddy."

Who?

"Louie!"

That's her favorite cat, the one who purrs in her lap when she reads at night and sleeps by her pillow. Usually.

"Did what?" I asked. "Oh. My."

Again?

Seems Louie had caught a mouse. Just a little one. And brought it into the bedroom to show his favorite human, proud cat that he was.

"He meowed to wake me up," she said. "It must have been 3 a.m. When I tried to ignore him, he must have let it go."

"I could feel something with little feet running around on the covers."

Then, she did what any woman in her right mind would do. She screamed.

Bad move. Louie lost the mouse, it ran under something. Louie jumped off to chase it.



Steve Haynes

- Along the Sappa

By this time Nik, her husband, was up. Poor guy, what choice did he have?

He suggested catching the mouse, which Louie was hunting. Felicia, wisely, I think, vetoed that plan. She banished Louie from the bedroom and shut the door for the night. Then they went back to bed.

"That mouse wasn't coming back up on the bed on it's own," she said.

In the morning, they let Louie in and he found the mouse. He played with it for a while, but Felicia said it was just a baby, and after a while she felt sorry for it.

After a brief chase, they managed to catch it with a dustpan and Nik got the job of taking it down the block.

Seems they have a no-kill, catch-and-release policy for vermin, a little soft-hearted for my tastes, but it's their house.

And people wonder why city folk want them to stop killing prairie dogs and coyotes?

Anyway, a day or two later, Louie caught one of the adult members of Clan Mouse. He, too, got to go for a short walk.

But Felicia says she's rethinking her close relationship with her favorite feline. She says Louie may be banned from the bedroom.

I find this hard to believe, because she's really fond of that cat, but her logic is impeccable. This is the second time she's brought a mouse to bed. The result was similar the first time.

And Felicia figures it'll just happen again. She's threatening to banish him for all time.

Me, I'll believe this when I see it. She has the cat habit bad.

And I think this whole scene sounds pretty entertaining. I'd like to be there to see the next show — and watch proud Louie bat the poor mouse about.

But the kids would get more sleep without all that entertainment.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

Education, energy top week's agenda

As things continue to ramp up in the 2009 Legislative session, I wanted to highlight a couple areas that we are beginning to address: Education:

Concerns have been raised that any potential budget cuts will affect the classroom dollars allocated to our children's education. I wanted to make sure that everyone knew that we are not targeting classroom dollars. One can reasonably assess that the education budget is roughly divided 65 – 35 percent with 65 percent going to the classroom and 35 percent being allocated to expenses that don't directly impact the classroom.

The big misconception here is that every dollar cut from K-12 funding directly affects a child's education.

The education community defines classroom funding as those funds that directly impact the classroom, as opposed to those that indirectly affect the classroom. In making our cuts, the legislature's charge is to see that cuts affect the indirect costs without affecting direct costs of delivering our education product. Cuts are not only possible, they're inevitable, and can be made without affecting the costs widely accepted as being the direct costs of classroom education. When cuts are made, I know that local boards will make the needed cuts in areas that indirectly affect the classroom. The Legislature is confident that they will make prudent cuts consistent with the education community's own distinction between the 65 percent classroom figure and the remaining 35 percent. Higher education will be held to a similar standard and expected to share the burden.

The Legislature needs to focus on long term solutions. To apply any sort of quick fix on the 2009 budget would be irresponsible; it would only increase the burden in later years. The budget situation is probably worse than it currently appears. That being said, it is important to shore up the 2009 budget quickly in



Jim Morrison

- Capitol Review

order to begin work on the bigger task of the approximately 800 million dollar 2010 budget deficit. Any reasonable solution requires that education and the 51 percent of its share of the budget are considered in any long term plan.

Energy:

We had a briefing this week on the overall state of energy in Kansas. This is in preparation for a House Energy Plan that is currently being crafted.

The bill, while not in its final form, will likely include the use of cutting edge technology to reduce emissions while providing incentives for customers through net metering. Net metering gives consumers' credit for putting energy back into the grid through alternative generation methods such as solar. The bill will emphasize the importance of the development of alternative forms of energy.

These alternative forms, namely wind in Kansas, are very important. However, wind is not reliable 100 percent of the time. We need a stable energy backbone to supplement any drops in wind production or increases in demand as well as to provide the transmission infrastructure to move energy across the state.

The Holcomb facility represents one of the most impressive energy plant proposals in the nation.

The proposed Holcomb Station expansion creates more than 300 permanent jobs earning over \$16 million per year. The project will create over 2,400 jobs during the construction period, with workers earning more than \$78

Representative Jim Morrison

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, (7785) 296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

