pinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Tie teacher tenure to merit measure

Kansas isn't making the grade when it comes to retaining good teachers and getting rid of bad ones, a new study says. Even worse, most states are putting up marks that are just as

Kansas received a D-plus in a study by the National Council on Teacher Quality. Not good, but what's especially troubling is that the state's subpar grade equaled the national average. Among the more disturbing assertions in the report is that

most states grant tenure to teachers more or less automatically after three years.... In Kansas, the study says, "the state does not require any

meaningful process to evaluate cumulative effectiveness in the classroom before teachers are awarded tenure." Yikes. Tenure safeguards teachers against being fired without just cause and due process Granting it to bad teachers makes it

more difficult for districts to ret rid of them. On the plus side for Kansas, the study said the state requires two annual evaluations of new teachers. However, the researchers went on to say there's no firm policy governing what to do about teachers who get bad evaluations.

There's bound to be a dispute over the state's grade, if only because the study gets into controversial territory with its stance on one of the ways teachers should be evaluated. The council, a nonpartisan group based in Washington, docked Kansas for not basing its teacher evaluations enough on student performance on standardized tests.

We agree with those who say teachers shouldn't be measured only on the scores their pupils get on state tests, but we don't think the study should be written off because of its stance on

None of this is to suggest Kansas is overrun with poor teachers. To the contrary, we believe the vast majority of the state's public educators do a good job.

As with any group, though, there are bound to be some who aren't cutting it.

And with that reality in mind, the study raises legitimate questions about whether Kansas is doing enough to force underperforming teachers out of classrooms. At the very least, the report should prompt debate about when and under what circumstances tenure should be awarded.

— The Topeka Capital-Journal, via The Associated Press

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"FIRST, THE DWARFS GOT LAID OFF FROM THE MINE AND THE BANK THREATENED TO FORECLOSE ON THE COTTAGE. THEN, DOC WAS CHARGED WITH FAILING TO WITHHOLD MY SOCIAL SECURITY SO THEY LET ME GO."

Self-image the biggest cost of crises

The United States is currently experiencing three major crises. We are facing a crisis in the economy, a crisis in confidence, and a crisis in compassion.

All three crises are interconnected. The collapse of the economy was partly caused by greed on Wall Street. This has led to a culture of distrust between Main Street and corporate America. Consumer confidence is low and banks are not lending much money. I don't care how great President Obama's oratory skills are if this trend continues the economy will not get much better. A "Yes-we-can" president can't fix a "no-you-can't" economy.

But what disturbs me even more then the abysmal state of the economy is the economic Darwinism and audacious greed that has permeated through our culture. Our cutthroat business environment and materialistic culture has robbed us of our ability to care for one another. Our neighbor has become our competitor as opposed to our friend.

But this dismal state of affairs isn't all our fault. We have been told by economists, politicians and the media that pursuit of profit is a wonderful thing and anyone who says otherwise is a closet communist. So we work longer hours, buy more things and hope that one day this will fill the gaping hole in our soul. But it never really does. Some people look for alter-Me" Bob Dylan's lyrics captured how I think anorexic because of these commercials? a lot of people feel like in today's economic culture. "The man in me hides sometimes / to keep from being seen, / but that's just because he doesn't want / to turn into some machine."

Many Americans, particularly young Americans, are yearning for an economic system that doesn't treat them like a one dimensional individual only concerned with making a profit.



Heintz Wildcat

Ramblings just don't believe it is the only thing that's im-

The three worst feelings in life are loneliness, hopelessness and fear. Our political and economic system, along with our shallow culture, leaves too many innocent citizens shackled with at least one of these wretched feel-

Look at the way the entertainment industry treats women in this country. Everyday the television screen is full of near-anorexic women prancing around in lingerie adds. Now I will admit I am no better then any other guy when it comes to these commercials. When guys see good-looking women in lingerie we start salivating like Pavlov's dogs. It's simply

our nature, as sad as that may sound. But what is your everyday women supposed to feel when these ultra-thin models are being promoted as the perfect women with the perfect body. Do the advertisers who think up native ways to fill the void in their life. Some these commercials ever feel bad about what that they previously didn't have access to. find religion, some find drugs and others just these commercials do to women's self-esteem? remained depressed. In the song "The Man In How many self-conscious girls have turned

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with commercials featuring beautiful women and I could care less how scantily clad they are. We were all born naked so I never really understood why people get all worked up about a women showing off a little skin. But it's immoral to portray abnormally skinny women as having the perfect bodies. The companies They know making money is important, they who are profiting from this strategy are a per-

fect example of profits being placed in front of people. Sadly, it's just one of many examples.

It seems like every day people are talking about the obesity epidemic in America. Health-experts chastise Americans for not working out enough and the medical insurance industry tells us about the newest pill that will make all our weight problems go away. But is America's obesity problem solely a matter of people eating too much junk food and watching too much television, or is it because many of our poorer citizens are unable to purchase nutritious food? While wealthier people are able to buy pricey organic and other types of nutritious food from health stores, many Americans who live in the inner city have no supermarkets in their neighborhoods. They end up having to buy the majority of their food from fast-food restaurants and liquor stores. Is it really fair or rational to expect these people to be in perfect health?

Instead of blaming the victim our society should be promoting growing urban gardens and designing parks in areas that are currently occupied by vacant lots and closed-up buildings. New parks would eliminate urban blight, provide parents with a place to take their children and would give citizens a place to exercise. Urban gardens could increase employment and provide citizens with healthy food

In the end it is culture that defines a countries character. The current culture in this country has left people immune to the suffering of others. Time and time again profits have been put in front of people. To fix the country, our country must promote togetherness over greed and compassion over apathy.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.

Help the President lead by example

I'm back! A little three-week side trip to hospital and swing bed has taken its toll on my schedules.

I had several hundred e-mail messages waiting for me, not a few of which were forwards slamming the Democratically controlled Congress and President Barak Obama for reneging on campaign promises.

Anyone who has followed political campaigns and congressional activities for any time should now be well aware that all campaigns (left, right, Democrat, Republican or independent) include a certain amount of nebulous pie-in-the-sky rhetoric that depends on cooperation of all branches of government and the world for any chance of delivery. When either party holds a slim majority and the administrative office is held by the minority party, they have a very difficult time dominating the legislative agenda.

As for Obama's reneging on campaign rhetoric, has anything major changed in the two years since his campaign began? Thank goodness he is able to reassess the economic situation and begin looking at priorities that have a chance of rescuing this nation and the world from total economic collapse. Thank goodness he has selected a cabinet that crosses partisan, religious and ethnic lines and he has selected



Ken Poland

Ken's World

people who are not just 'yes men' to carry out his own predetermined agenda.

I just finished watching the inauguration and listening to Obama's speech. Barak Obama is certainly not just an ordinary down-home guy! He is a young man (in terms of politics) with vision and approaches his task in a pragmatic way that inspires people to join in the hope of a better nation and world to come.

He is not promising miracles but is promising to lead and is encouraging all of us to accept responsibility for the mess we find ourselves in. He appears to be a leader, encouraging America to lead the world by example. This seems to be the exact opposite of the previous administration, which attempted to unilaterally drive the world by force and coercion. In all of history, no nation or individual leader has been able to successfully drive the world very far or for very long.

Jesus Christ established his kingdom on earth, but he didn't use force or threat. He demonstrated conservative compassion. He led by example and taught his disciples to do the same. By his example, we are our brother's keeper and we are responsible for seeing to the needs of mankind, around the world. He taught us to trust God and not our own wisdom and power. He taught love that demands personal involvement and action, not judgment that depends upon law, exclusion, and punishment meted out by human position and power.

It would do today's church and religious leaders well to think about leading by example instead of by law and self-proclaimed power. If we are truly a Christian nation, then let's see evidence of trusting in God, instead of trusting in civil authority and military might to force our fellow man to adhere to what parts of scripture we declare mandatory and which scriptures we can, essentially, ignore.

Let us not confuse ourselves. The Kingdom of The United States of America is not the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rcwinc@cheerful.

Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley



