



Other Viewpoints

National ranking a Kansas challenge

Given that the state has cut higher education money by 12 percent this year, it took a bit of nerve for Gov. Mark Parkinson to challenge the Kansas Board of Regents to push the public universities to a new level of academic accountability and quality over the next 10 years.

And Parkinson’s preferred definition of success for Kansas’ state universities is dubious — to improve their “mediocre” overall position in *U.S. News & World Report’s* annual ranking of the nation’s universities.

The magazine’s ranking may be how the college recruitment and fund-raising games are played. But the list hardly seems a fair and accurate gauge of how Kansas’ regents institutions are doing. And reforms that would impress *U.S. News & World Report* may not serve the interests of Kansas and its students.

That said, Parkinson’s recognition of the importance of the state’s universities and desire to improve them was welcome....

Parkinson’s proposed means to his desired end also have merit, including higher admission standards and greater focus on retention and graduation rates....

A point made this week by new Kansas State University President Kirk Schulz was well-taken, though: that stricter admission standards could disproportionately affect minorities, who are over-represented among those applicants who don’t meet current qualifications.

In his blunt speech — which was a reminder of how rare visionary thinking is among Kansas governors — Parkinson gave the regents and all Kansans plenty to consider, about the potential role of community colleges and technical schools as well as the state universities. He even suggested that if the regents present “strategic plans that show an upward path and the funding needs to get there,” the Legislature and alumni will provide the necessary dollars.

“My belief is that the Legislature will fund success,” Parkinson said.

Maybe. But especially with university presidents talking about possibly responding to state budget cuts by capping enrollment, the regents must balance the quest for excellence with the need for accessibility.

— The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press

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: jmmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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 @ nwkansans.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 @ nwkansans.com

NEWS

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor kbottrell @ nwkansans.com

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter aheintz @ nwkansans.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor mballard @ nwkansans.com

Vera Sloan and Aubrey Spencer - Society Editors colby.society @ nwkansans.com

ADVERTISING

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

Heather Wofter - Advertising Sales hwofter @ nwkansans.com

Kathryn Ballard - Graphic Design kballard @ nwkansans.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Robin Tubbs - Office Manager rtubbs @ nwkansans.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator support @ nwkansans.com

NORWEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager

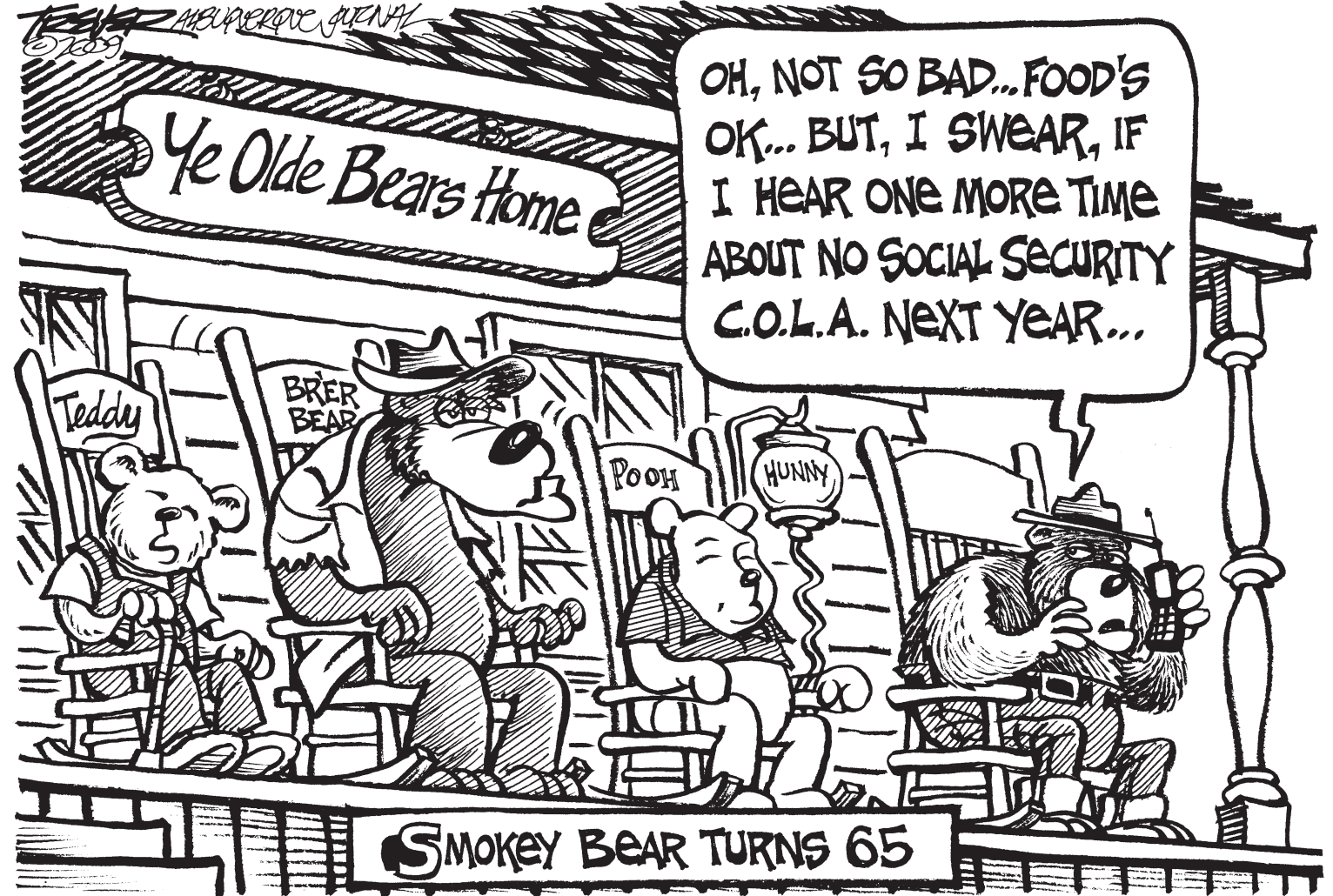
Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, Jim Bowker, Judy McKnight, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Daniel Spillman, Patricia McGoyne, Kris McCool

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 NorWest 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, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



Trees grow wonderful memories

Recently, I received a donation request from one of my favorite charities, the Audubon Society. They also sent a questionnaire asking, did you ever plant a tree? climb a tree? have a tree swing? have a tree house? and other questions such as that.

This brought up a lot of memories for me, the same as I am sure it would for a lot of people. As it so happens, I have always felt a fondness for trees because, during my early childhood days one, of the places we lived in Oklahoma City had a giant cottonwood in the front yard. I spent many hours sitting up in that tree during the warm summer days and just daydreaming.

In fact, since I, like most active children, would sometimes come up with some strange ideas, I derived a new method of getting up into the tree. I tied a loop in the end of a rope and put my foot into it. Next, I threw the other end of the rope over the tree limb I wanted to get to and commenced to pull on that end of the rope to raise myself up into the tree.

This worked well until I let go of the rope to grab onto the limb. I missed the limb and went



Marj Brown

- Marj’s Snippets

falling to the ground head first. My mother said I was only unconscious a short time. The doctor said, since I had fallen on the soft dirt under the tree and not onto something hard, I didn’t really do any lasting damage. (Now I’m sure some of you who know me today might argue that point. However, that’s what the doctor said.)

Later, when we moved just outside of Oklahoma City to a small town named Bethany, we could go just up the road from our house to the home of a family named Krale and play in the forest that covered several acres behind their home. In those days, the movies of Tarzan, with Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O’Sullivan, were popular with all of us, so we spent our summers running through those

woods, happily climbing those trees and playing Tarzan and Jane.

Here in Colby, Jim built a tree house for our kids in the large elm in our backyard, and I think all of our kids will agree that it gave them many hours of fun when they were growing up. However, that tree went the way of many of the old elms here in Colby when so many of them became diseased and had to be cut down. We were all sad to see it go, because it was like losing a member of the family.

Three or four years ago, another tree sprouted up to take its place, so I let it grow even though I had no idea what kind of a tree it was. I’m still not sure what kind of a tree it is, so I asked Sharon Steele, who is a Master Gardener. She wasn’t sure, either, but she suspects it is related to the ash family. However, it really doesn’t matter to me what kind it is, because I think it’s a beautiful tree.

Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it’s one of her favorite things to do.

Health care proposal makes reader sick

To the Editor:

“It is the duty of the patriot to protect his country from his government.” – Thomas Paine.

It is every American’s duty to be a watchdog on everything our government does. Government has too much control now, and they are wanting more.

Our founding documents are simply a set of rules limiting the intrusion of government into our lives – basic rules that the three branches of our government have violated for many, many and, yes, many years. I hope people are waking up to the fact that the freedoms they have always had have been under attack for generations. It’s not my opinion; it’s a fact that I woke up to over 25 years ago, and people thought I was crazy when I tried to talk to them. Now I hope and pray they are waking up!

There is nothing in the Constitution that guarantees anyone insurance of any kind. Why does this present batch of elected officials think it can be crammed down the throats of Americans who do not want it and see no way to pay for it, given that America is broke?

I am sick! I am sick of the “stimulus package.” I am sick of this Congress spending our children’s and grandchildren’s future. I am sick of not hearing or seeing in print all the changes Congress wants to make with health care in America. I am sick when I think of what passage of this bill could mean, not only for me and my family, but for millions of families across America.

If the health care bill had been passed before now, neither my Dad nor any of my grandparents would have had any medical treatment before they passed away. My Mom may not get the medicine she needs if it does pass!

Medicare (for the elderly) and Medicaid (for the poor) are broke, so let’s fix them. Don’t add millions more people to a system that has grown so out of control. Fix Medicare and Medicaid before you do anything to the entire health care system. Private insurance works for more people than you might think.

Yes, there are glitches in the insurance industry. So tell Congress to have the insurance companies put together more comprehensive and affordable plans, so that more people can



Free Press Letter Drop

- Our readers sound off

get insurance that is portable in the job market.

Ask Congress, “Where is all this money supposed to come from?” If they start taxing the big corporations, they’ll just leave the United States. If they tax the small businessman or businesswoman, they will have to cut even more jobs or go out of business entirely. So, that means he will be taxing everyone? Don’t we all pay enough, or too much, in taxes now?

I am sick of the president and this Congress trying to shove health care reform down our throats. This bill may sound good to some people, but I hope they will sit down and discuss it with their doctors. Any insurance/Medicare coverage they have has to be better than some bureaucrat (who has no knowledge of medicine), sitting up in Washington, dictating rules to anyone’s personal doctor!

I trust my doctors. I trust God more than I do someone 3,000 miles away who I have never met. I do not want my or my family’s health records to be “online.” It is too easy these days to hack into a computer.

Yes, I know, Obama and Congress have backed off the issue for now, but what is going to happen when a vote is called for on the floors of the House and Senate? Will the senators and congressmen/women stand firm for their respective districts, or will they buckle under the pressure from the White House and the president’s cronies?

I hope and pray the Kansas delegation will stand firm in both the House and the Senate and say “NO!” to the health care bill in any form or disguise.

Thank you for reading.

Jari Skiles, Colby

Friends found here

To the Editor:

On Friday, Aug. 21, we were passing through Colby in our recreational vehicle to reach the Interstate when it broke down. Lucky for us, a gentleman stopped and offered assistance. We now have a friend for life.

Bruce Bandy of Commercial Signs escorted us into his yard and he and Josh diagnosed the problem. We had to order parts that wouldn’t come in for a few days.

Bruce set us up with electricity and water and told us we could stay put until the vehicle was fixed. Bruce and his wife Lea even invited us to stay with them at their home. We have never known such kind, friendly and hospitable people.

The other positive experience of our breakdown was the time we spent in the Prairie Museum. The Kuska exhibits were amazing, and we now have knowledge about the first settlers in western Kansas.

Thanks again to the whole Bandy family. Sherry and Paul Hepworth Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses not pertaining to a public issue.

Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

