# pinion



### Other **Viewpoints**

## Local development needs quality roads

Southwest Kansas will have a tough time growing without better highways.

Among routes with more potential to deliver good fortune to the region is U.S. 83.

Public input from a U.S. 83 corridor study launched in 2007 led to alternatives for improvements from Sublette to Scott City....

The Kansas Department of Transportation hopes to identify segments of U.S. 83 along the 70-plus mile corridor for up-

With highway improvements, making roads safer for travel is an obvious priority — as is the part roads play in economic development.

The lack of a four-lane highway into Finney County remains a hurdle to business and industry contemplating a move here.

Sadly, southwest Kansas remains the only part of the state without a four-lane highway.

That's led the Southwest Kansas Coalition, which includes representatives of Garden City, Dodge City and Liberal, to consider various road improvements that would best serve the region as a whole.

The coalition aims to move forward on that initiative, as it should, even in the face of funding uncertainty. The most recent comprehensive transportation plan in Kansas expired this year, and lawmakers must address a new plan and how to pay

Some would argue, as they always do, that the state can't afford more projects, and that such planning is a waste of time.

Such shortsighted thinking ignores the fact that good roads are key to economic recovery, survival and growth. Developing plans to improve highways isn't wasteful in the face of economic uncertainty, it's essential.

Forces determined to improve southwest Kansas highways, U.S. 83 and beyond, are on the right track.

— Garden City Telegram, 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

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# Local values balance globalization

I think everyone is looking for a deeper

Some people find that in religion, others find it in sports or in the military or in their family. But just about everyone feels the need to find something to believe in. We all need some kind of code to live by.

But it seems like the meaninglessness of life that many feel is being perpetuated by today's culture. We have become too preoccupied with material success. But since material success alone is not enough to make people happy, we are left with a world of unhappy rich people unable to find contentment and unhappy poor people aspiring to live like rich people.

Not knowing that objects won't make them happy, many wealthy citizens continue to buy more and more luxuries, thinking this will fill the void in their lives. But that won't happen, because our culture has been lying to us. In reality, human beings are far too complex and multidimensional to be satisfied with only ma-

In the age of globalization, human beings must strive to place their value as citizens over their role as consumers. If we don't try to create communities where everyone has a chance to succeed, we will be left with a world that neither appreciates nor knows where their food comes from or how their commodities were produced.

Everything we buy will continue to be branded with the label of some large corporation that have no real reason to care about where cultural homogenization has destroyed creativity and the cold logic of the marketplace rules the fate of the majority of humanity.

Andy Heintz Wildcat

Ramblings

In America, I hope we strive to rebuild our communities and blaze a new path that values human beings over mass markets. I think rebuilding and preserving community life in our country is the remedy to the current culture of self-image and mass consumerism. Communities help give people a sense of belonging in the world. It makes people feel like their lives have some value. People know that if they are going through some hardship in their lives, there will be someone willing to lend a help-

I felt this sense of community when I visited a craft fair in Colby a few months ago. It was a breath of fresh air to meet the producers of the goods I might be buying. It added a personal aspect to the shopping experience.

I felt this same sense of community when I visited farmers' markets while living in Manhattan and going to college at Kansas State University. I was happy to be buying vegetables grown by actual living, breathing, human beings instead of a faceless global agribusiness organization.

tiny places like Colby. It will be a bland world and Pop stores and restaurants. They each have a distinct culture and style that breaks the monotony of the fast-food restaurants with branches all over the country. Don't get me sports and opinion writing.

wrong. I love fast food as much as the next guy, but local Mom and Pop stores offer a unique homespun atmosphere that can't be re-

There are several positive things about globalization and the free market. Innovations that at one time would have remained in one country will now be exported around the planet to the benefit of everyone. People from poorer countries will gain more access to the markets of richer nations and lower income people in wealthy countries will be able to buy cheaper goods created by workers in developing countries, allowing them to preserve more of their income.

But in this exciting new age we shouldn't allow new gizmos and cheap prices to make us neglect old values or forget the value of sustaining and rebuilding both the spiritual and physical aspects of our communities.

The suburbs, the ghettos and barrios and our rural towns could all be helped by a mass effort to improve community life. People could undertake tasks such as cleaning up existing parks or creating parks in blighted areas, growing neighborhood gardens and supporting local businesses and farmers. They can do something as small as starting a neighborhood custom that a different family invites everyone to dinner every Wednesday.

All of these little things can revitalize neighborhoods and foster a culture fit to meet the multidimensional needs of human beings.

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

## Parent wonders about President's agenda

It was brought to my attention Wednesday night on Fox News that President Barrack Obama has plans to address every child in every school across the country. It was then reported that the children would be given homework as to what they can do to help support their PRESIDENT (not their COUNTRY)!

I have an 8-year-old child, and I have serious concerns as to the content of this message. In an age where my child has to have a signed permission slip to walk across the street, why is it that parents were not told of this, nor informed of the content to which their children will be viewing?

For somebody who professes to an age of transparency, I have to ask myself, "Why is this man pandering to children?" This type of behavior from our president certainly feeds into the skepticism that surrounds his administration. This unprecedented access to children as young as 5 must be questioned.

I have talked to many parents, and all seem to have the same confused look on their faces, which immediately turns to concern. We ask ourselves, is this a civics or government class about the presidency? Is this about the importance of education? Are political views going to be expressed? Or is there something much more sinister involved?

I believe that it is past time for this man to retire his community organizer hat and start being the President of the United States. There are a myriad of problems facing this country, and it would be in all of our best interest for



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

him to focus his energy on domestic and international issues rather than stroking his ego with children.

With all due respect to the president, 43 outstanding men held that office before him and there will be many more after him, none of whom played politics with our children. Hopefully, from the letters and podcasts submitted by our children, he will learn some American values.

Brenda Platt, Colby

### End troop buildup

To the Editor:

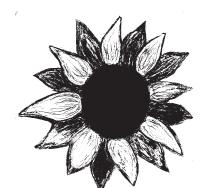
After eight years of war, I am not convinced that continuing to send troops into Afghanistan, with no end in sight, is a well-thought-out strategy. It's time for a new course.

I am concerned that the current military buildup could end up simply driving more extremists across the border into Pakistan, while feeding resentment among the Afghan people about a perceived occupation. A flexible timetable that shows the people of America and Afghanistan that we have a strategy and a commitment to leave is going to be one of the best things we can do to succeed in that country and strengthen our own national security.

As we debate important domestic issues such as health care and the economy, we must never forget our troops currently serving overseas. While there are still four months left in the year, 2009 is now the deadliest year for international forces in Afghanistan since 2004. We are clearly not moving forward, and we can't continue this open-ended commitment

We should all speak out in favor of a flexible timetable for withdrawal. If your senators have not conveyed their views to you on this matter, now is the time to find out because, as you know, the Iraq war depleted our tax dollars to the extent that we have a very steamed citizenry on many issues and nonissues.

Edna A. Hatcher, Colby



#### Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley



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