



## Other Viewpoints

### Spending sprees could benefit others

The six candidates running for the western Kansas seat in the U.S. House of Representatives collectively spent \$2,530,502 campaigning through the 2010 primary election.

Actually, when the final campaign spending reports come in, we're likely to find that number considerably higher. Current reports only run through July 14 and don't include the high-paced spending that occurred in the final two weeks of the campaign.

Regardless, the current numbers show that candidates spent \$25.77 for every vote cast in the Republican primary.

Here's a short list of ways in which that \$25 per vote could've been better spent:

A gift card to Dillon's for the 13,472 people who filed unemployment claims in June. That \$2.5 million, spread amongst those 13,000 people could've purchased seven gift cards for each and every person who was out of work in June.

School supplies for First Call for Help. Susie Christopher said this week that she has more than 2,000 kids signed up to receive school supplies for the upcoming year, and she's worried that she won't have enough supplies to go around. Supposing that each setup costs around \$50 — including the backpack — the money spent on campaigns could've bought more than 50,000 backpacks filled with everything a kid needs to start off school on the right foot.

The food bank always needs food, and there are always people who could use it. We don't know how much food \$2.5 million can buy, but I'm guessing it's enough to keep the shelves stocked for some time to come.

Of course, the money spent on this campaign was donated, given freely and in some cases eagerly to one of the six candidates who just as eagerly hoped to work in Washington. These candidates weren't forced to spend this amount of money on television ads and slick shiny fliers — they, too, spent it freely with the idea that they'd represent Kansas and its voters.

But it doesn't change the fact that it costs entirely too much to wage a campaign for any office, and that money spent on school supplies or food for people in a tight spot would be a much more worthwhile endeavor.

— Hutchinson News, 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 274-W, 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 225-E., 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@nwkansan.com

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**Steve Haynes - Publisher**  
s.haynes@nwkansan.com

#### NEWS

**Kevin Bottrell - News Editor**  
kbottrell@nwkansan.com

**Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter**  
aheintz@nwkansan.com

**Marian Ballard - Copy Editor**  
mballard@nwkansan.com

**Vera Sloan and Rachel Bomba - Society Editors**  
colby.society@nwkansan.com

#### ADVERTISING

**Heather Woofter - Advertising Representative**  
hwoofter@nwkansan.com

**Andrea Bowers - Advertising Representative**  
abowers@nwkansan.com

**Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative**  
kballard@nwkansan.com

**Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design**  
khunter@nwkansan.com

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Robin Tubbs - Office Manager**  
rtubbs@nwkansan.com

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
support@nwkansan.com

#### NORWEST PRESS

**Richard Westfahl - General Manager**

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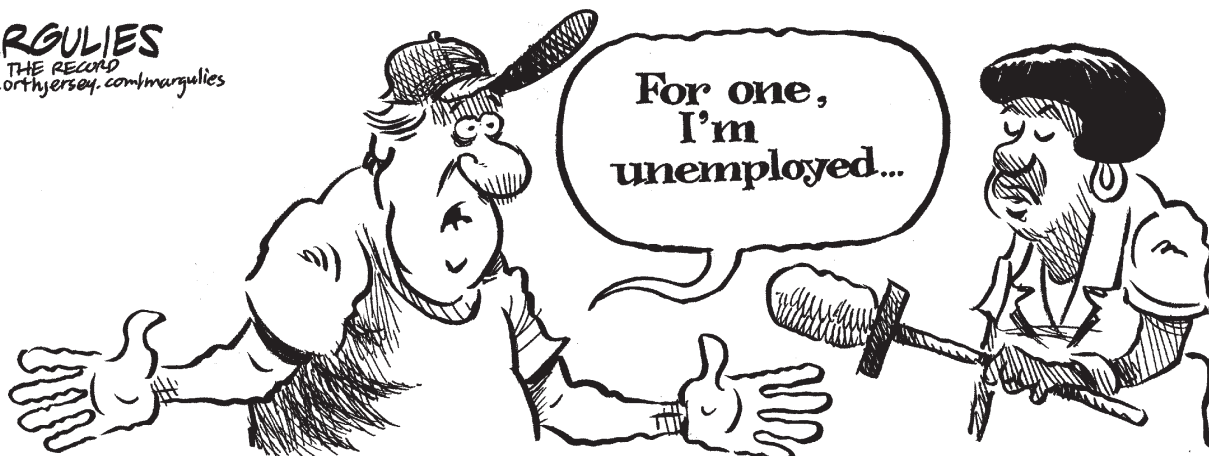
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## Bob Dole's legacy should be well filled

Five years ago, I had the great good fortune to spend an hour and a half with Bob Dole, the former Kansas senator and Republican presidential candidate.

Folks in western Kansas know Bob, of course, because he was their congressman for eight years before he was elected to represent the whole state in the U.S. Senate in 1968. I first remember meeting the former war hero in my folks' living room when he was campaigning, and Dad was the Republican county chairman.

He and Dad had been county attorneys about the same time, though Dad only served two terms, in Lyon County, Bob four in Russell.

With others from the KU College Republican Club, I hit the primary circuit that summer. Dole rallies, I remember, were tame by college standards; some candidates had drinks, but Dole served pineapple juice.

Bob became a fixture in the Senate, ran for vice president, then president, serving twice as majority leader. In 1974, he offered me a job, asking me to come to Washington as his press aide.

I loved my job in Kansas City, we had a new baby and Cynthia and I had just bought a house. We had no plans to move to Washington, and I told the senator so. There would be days later when I wondered how life would have been different, but I never had any ambition to be anything but a newspaper man.

That day in 2005, Senator Dole was speaking to our group in Washington, and it's customary to assign someone who knows each speaker to greet and escort him or her. I was primed to go up and look for him about 11 o'clock, but about 9:30, someone tugged my sleeve and said, "Bob Dole is here."



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

They had shown him to a holding room, a small side chamber where speakers can wait for their time on stage. It had a table and a few comfortable chairs, blonde wood and red upholstery as I remember. He had one young man with him.

We sat and chatted. Bob asked about my mother, who had been gone several years by then. They both had been born in 1923.

We talked a little about the old times in Kansas. Bob has a talent for summing things up in few words, often marked with a biting humor. He wanted to know who he was following on the dais. I told him Tom Tancredo, the former congressman from Colorado, who was on all the talk shows that year and later ran, briefly, for president.

"Ah, the immigration guy," Dole said. "No bullets."

It was terse, on target, typically Dole. I asked him what he thought of the guy then holding his old seat in Congress, Rep. Jerry Moran of Hays.

"He's doing a good job," the senator said. "We've got to find a way to get him into the Senate."

That was two to three years before Jerry himself admitted it might be a good idea. For years he maintained that he was happy just to be in Congress. He later said he came to re-

alize that he could do more as a senator, and when Sam Brownback honored his campaign promise and stepped down after two terms, there was his chance.

Jerry Moran lacks the war-hero aura that preceded Bob Dole, but the two have a lot in common. Both have the knack for appealing to the entire Republican party. Both are solid fiscal conservatives. Neither was afraid to buck the party leadership when it suited them, though of course, as national chairman and later Senate majority leader, Dole became the party leadership.

His speech that day was a riot, from his opening gambit:

"I know you're all hoping I brought some free samples," he said with a grin, knowing the audience was more than familiar with his Viagra commercials on television. But he switched clients on them.

"It's hard to carry a lot of Pepsi in your pockets," he teased.

That was the Bob Dole I remembered from those days on the campaign trail. I always wished they'd let that Bob Dole run for president. He might have won.

Anyway, it looks like Jerry Moran will wind up in the Senate now. He's a good man, he has the best interests of Kansas at heart, and he'll do well.

So, Bob, I guess we can cross that one off our lists. I suspect you had more to do with it than I did anyway.

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.

## It's hard not to get fat in Kansas today

It's an uphill battle to eat right and stay active, to strike a healthy balance between the calories we consume and the calories we burn in physical activity.

It's a daily struggle to avoid the temptation to devour more food than we should, and a real challenge to develop an exercise plan and stick with it.

For most of us, the fight against fatness is a battle against an irresistible force — a battle that's just too difficult to imagine winning, even when losing is costing us our lives. For the majority of Kansans today, excess weight is a sad but unavoidable fate, a grim destiny that we just have to accept.

But why does it have to be this way? Why is Kansas now the 16th most obese state in the fattest nation on earth, as shown in a report released last month by the Trust for America's Health?

Why have we seen the level of adult obesity in our state jump from less than 15 percent in the mid-1990s to about 29 percent today? Why are we witnessing an epidemic of diabetes, an incurable and costly disease that ought to be rare, but is now thought to afflict about one in 10 adult Kansans?

Why are we seeing between \$94 billion and \$147 billion of our national wealth siphoned away every year to treat diseases caused by obesity, costs that now account for more than 10 percent of Medicaid spending in Kansas?

Most tragically, why have we seen childhood obesity triple in a single generation, putting about a third of our children at risk for de-



Jason Eberhart-Phillips

• Kansas Health Officer

veloping an array of adult diseases many years before their time? Why have we condemned the children born since the year 2000 to become the first generation of Americans to live shorter lives than their parents?

Short answer: We haven't created the public policies that make healthy eating and active living the easy thing for most people to do. We haven't made the default options be the healthy options in the choices people make each day, options that will keep us from gaining unnecessary weight.

Instead of creating "food deserts" in many of our urban neighborhoods and rural regions, where fast food outlets and convenience stores dominate the market, we should be creating incentives to lure full-service supermarkets and other purveyors of fruits, vegetables and other nutritious foods into these areas.

Instead of permitting the aggressive marketing of sodas, snacks and other foods with minimal nutritional value to our children — on television, in fast food promotions and even in schools — we should be setting limits on such advertising and should be actively counter-marketing against overconsumption of un-

healthy foods.

Instead of ignoring the enormous economic costs that an unfettered food industry inflicts on our nation's spending for health care — costs that are taxing every Kansan by spiraling amounts each year — we should be considering ways to subsidize the purchase of healthy foods while raising the prices of foods that harm our collective health.

Instead of designing cities and suburbs that force people into their cars for their daily trips to work, shopping or entertainment, we should be shaping the environment of our communities to promote more walking and biking as part of our everyday lives.

The new report makes it clear that obesity now is so prevalent that it threatens to undermine our nation's future prosperity. Not taking collective action urgently to address the obesity problem at its root causes is no longer an option.

Obesity is everyone's problem, and together we need to get serious about finding solutions that will work for Kansas.

Dr. Eberhart-Phillips is the state health officer and director of health in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. He can be reached at jeberhart-Phillips@kdheks.gov.

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 colby.editor@nwkansan.com.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

