



Other Viewpoints

Drinking, driving demands stiff price

Kansas’ lawmakers wasted no time getting down to the business of proposing legislation once they gathered in Topeka for the opening of their 2011 session.

They should move with the same sense of urgency to consider a bill introduced by Sen. Tim Owens, an Overland Park Republican.

Granted, urgency means one thing to most of us and something quite different to legislators, who must deal with committee hearings, proposed amendments and votes, committee votes, floor debate and yet another vote – then repeat that because it must happen in two chambers before anything is ready to send along to the governor for his signature.

In the case of Owens’ bill, we’ll settle for starting that process as soon as possible.

Kansans have been remiss in dealing properly with those in our midst who insist, repeatedly, on getting behind the wheel of a vehicle after they’ve had too much to drink.

The rest of us far too often read and hear about traffic accidents, some of them fatal, in which one of the drivers was intoxicated and actually had a record of multiple drunk-driving offenses.

There is no magic cure for this problem, and Owens’ bill won’t make drunken driving a thing of the past. But it should help.

The bill, as introduced last week, would require that interlock devices be installed on the vehicles of everyone convicted of drunk driving. The devices are designed to prevent an intoxicated driver from starting the vehicle. The bill also would increase penalties for first-time offenders and require treatment. Anyone convicted of a fourth offense would have to serve prison time.

The bill, the work of a state panel that studied our laws for two years before proposing its reform measure, also calls for creation of a central repository for records of drunk-driving arrests, prosecutions and convictions. That information now isn’t always shared among all the different jurisdictions in the state, and that often leads to a drunken driver being treated as a first-time offender when he or she actually has multiple offenses.

It’s unlikely Owens’ bill will sail through the process without amendment – very few do – but legislators should resist pressure from any who suggest rendering it toothless.

For too many years – make that decades – Kansas has been punishing its drunken drivers, especially repeat offenders, as though they are a minor inconvenience. They are not. They are deadly hazards and should be treated as such....

– *The Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press*

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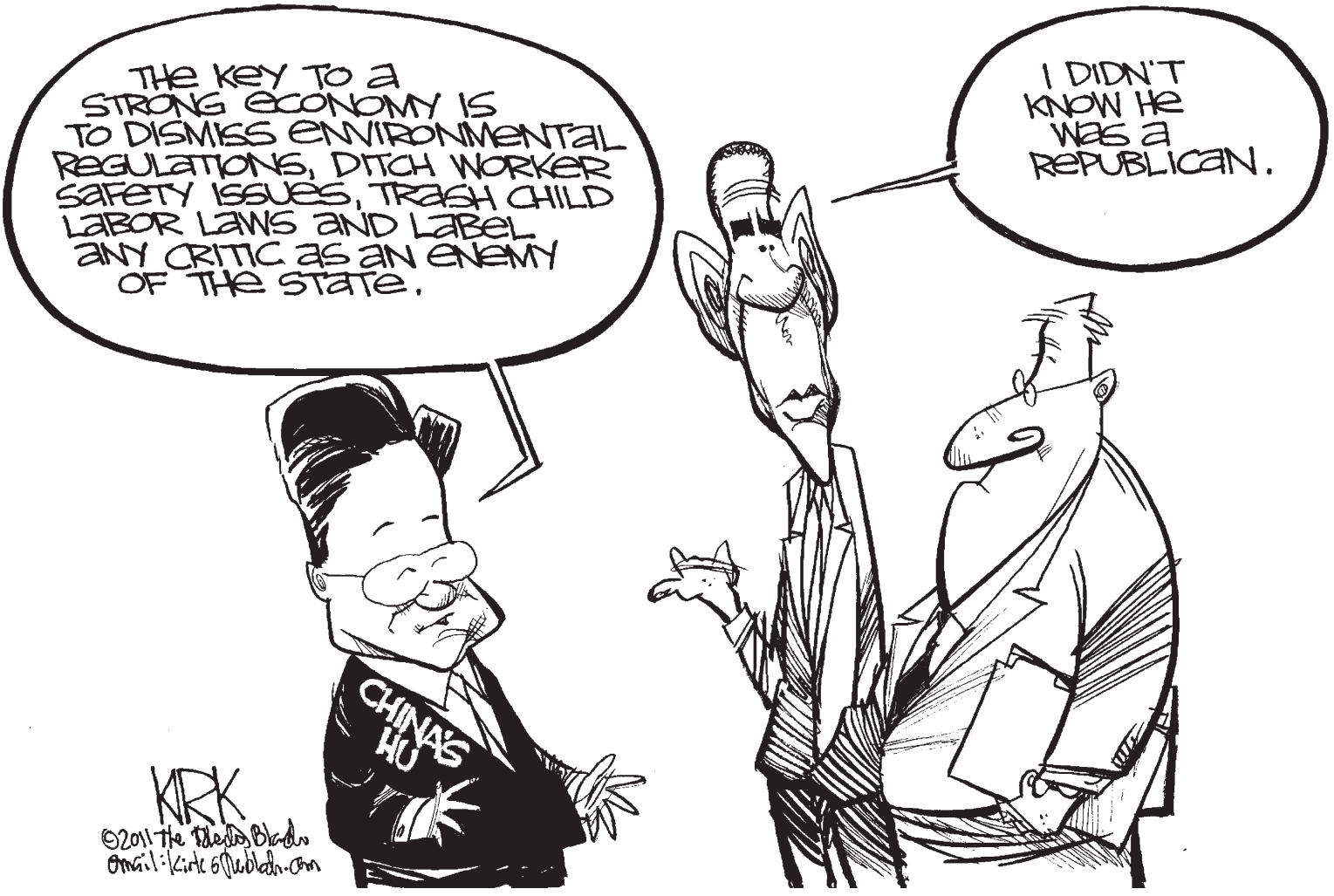
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Boys finally fulfill their potential

If any Colby High basketball fans left the Community Building on Saturday afternoon without grins plastered on their faces after the boys got their first win, someone should check if they still have a pulse.

It was pretty near impossible not to be happy for the boys after they hammered Hugoton 59-43 in their final game of the Paul Wintz/Tom Bowen Orange and Black Classic. I’m sure many players’ parents breathed a huge sigh of relief after the final buzzer. While not much was said, I’m sure many had wondered if the team would win a game this season. I wasn’t optimistic after the game at Goodland.

The Eagles had gone into the third quarter of that game leading by three. It looked like that elusive first victory was finally within their grasp. But the Cowboys went on a 25-0 run in the fourth, which left me with a bad taste in my mouth. I’m sure the same was true of many fans.

I looked for reasons to be optimistic, but I couldn’t get past the forceful nature of that fourth quarter run by Goodland. Any optimism I was able to muster seemed more like self-deception than reality.

But coach Jerad Johnson still believed his team was not playing up to its ability. His players bought into this idea, and it showed on Saturday. I’m happy to say they proved me wrong.

It seems appropriate that seniors Spencer Tubbs and Corbin Stephens led their team to Saturday’s win. Both have faced their share of adversity this year.

When Tubbs missed point-blank shots or mishandled a pass, you could hear murmurs and groans coming from some in the Colby fans. Never loud enough to cause a scene – most Eagles’ fans are too respectful to behave that way – but loud enough that it was noticeable. It wasn’t that Tubbs made more mistakes than anyone else; it was just that when your 6 foot 7, people expect more of you. Even though he had gotten better and better as the season progressed, it seemed like folks always expected him to do more.

Some fans quietly voiced complaints that Stephens was trying to do too much. Stephens, a natural athlete with a scorer’s mentality, has had to handle the ball much more than usual this year. And no matter how positive a picture you try to paint, there were games where he had a lot of turnovers. Sometimes it was tough to watch because you could see the frustration on his face.

So it was gratifying to see both players excel on Saturday, but to say Stephens played well on Saturday is to ignore his solid play throughout the tourney.

In the third quarter against Hugoton, Stephens was everywhere and doing everything, knocking down a three pointer, penetrating and feeding Tubbs for a bucket inside, and crashing the offensive glass. Hopefully, he took some time to enjoy the win. He deserved it.

To say Tubbs played a big part in Saturday’s victory would be an understatement as well. He owned that game. His 23 points and 10 rebounds properly reflected the dominating role he played.

The senior center was a picture of efficiency, making shot after shot inside against a Hugoton team that didn’t seem to have any idea how to stop him. Tubbs played the way people, somewhat unfairly, had always expected him to play. Tubbs crashed the boards hard, blocked shots, made a running one-hand shot and banked in turnarounds. He was like a machine, dropping in shot after shot.

If the two seniors can replicate their performances in the coming weeks, the Eagles could start winning.

It has not been an easy season. The boys always exerted great effort, but they didn’t get to see the fruits of their labor until Saturday. Even though it has been far from a perfect season, in many ways it was the perfect game.

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.

Dairy visit shows kids where it starts

“Do you remember what we’re going to do?” Lynda Foster asks the 75 youngsters.

“Yeah,” they sing back in unison.

“What’s that?” she asks.

“Be quiet,” they shout.

“Because if you don’t, what do the cows do?” Foster asks.

“They go to the bathroom,” the first-graders giggle.

With that dialogue, the students from Winfield Scott Elementary School in Fort Scott begin their morning tour of the Foster Dairy west of town.

Half the students remain outside to see the feed, facilities and pasture where the 130 Holstein dairy cows spend their day when not in the milking parlor. The others go inside to see the cows being milked mechanically.

While walking around on the outside tour, the first graders see and smell the ingredients fed to a dairy cow, including alfalfa, corn, silage and minerals. They have an opportunity to bottle feed and touch baby calves. They can smell the animals and hear them bah and beller.

The youngsters can see with their own eyes the milk coming from the cow’s udder into the milking lines and into the stainless steel tanks.

“Our main message to these children is that milk comes from the cow and not the grocery store,” Foster says.

With more than 30 years in the dairy business, Foster knows the importance of making an impression on young minds. His family has made a conscientious effort to promote their dairy business from the first time they stepped into a milking parlor.

“You’ve got to hit them at this young age,” she says. “When I see these same kids later in town, and they come up to me and tell me they remember the trip to our farm, I know we’re reaching future milk drinkers and future consumers of other dairy products.

“I believe in promoting dairy every day. The only way we will stay in business is to have contented consumers drinking milk and eating our products.”

Foster and husband Gary have conducted tours on their farm for more than 30 years. According to Lynda, they’ve allowed people to learn about their dairy “from the get go.”

Today, son David helps with the operation. Their “open barn” policy welcomes visitors any time they’re milking, any day.

“We’re milking cows twice a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year,” Foster says. “People can come any time from 4 to 9 a.m. or from 3 to 8 p.m. All we ask is they let us know ahead of time when they’re coming.”

Yes, the Fosters live, eat and breathe their dairy operation. A visitor only has to listen to the genuine tone of voice Lynda, Gary and David use when caring for their cows to understand the love of this vocation. The cows are as much a part of their family as are their children.

And what do the youngsters think about a tour on a working dairy farm?

Most kids say their favorite thing is the milk, Foster says. The kids say they like to drink it.

Some ask if they can get a dairy calf and take it home as a pet.

“Probably one of the cutest things I ever heard a youngster say after touring our dairy was that he was going to get a Dalmatian calf,” Lynda recalls. “You know, one with black and white spots on it.”

The Fosters enjoy and welcome anyone who wants to come out to their dairy and learn about this vital industry.

“I often run into folks in town at the pharmacy, for example, and they’ll ask if they can come out,” Foster says. “I tell ‘em, ‘Call me and come out and see me.’”

The continuous flow of visitors streaming in and out of the Foster Dairy is a concrete testimonial that farmers and ranchers must continue to tell their story. Just like good nutrition – including milk, meat, fruit, vegetables and bread or cereal – is the foundation for good health, promoting their dairy enterprise is a key ingredient for this southeastern Kansas family.

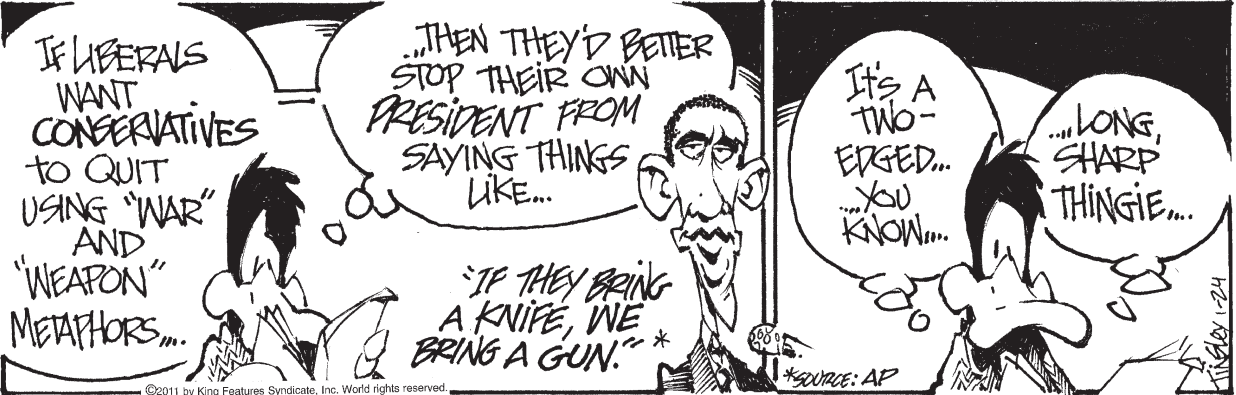
John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

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Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley



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