



## Other Viewpoints

### 'Worst possible' outcome on health

Kansas is primed to get the worst possible outcome of a federally run health insurance exchange, thanks to Gov. Sam Brownback's decision not to support an application for a state-federal partnership.

Brownback previously rejected \$31.5 million in federal money allocated to help the state create a computer system for its own exchange. He said he expected the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the federal law mandating creation of the exchanges. When that didn't happen, he said he would await the outcome of the presidential election, assuming that Republican Mitt Romney would be elected and quickly have the law erased from the books. So much for that.

All along, the Kansas Insurance Department, guided by Lawrence's Sandy Praeger as the elected state insurance commissioner, has been laying the groundwork for an exchange that could be operated by Kansans, for Kansans. Her staff had prepared an application that would have enabled the state to take on plan management and consumer assistance. Kansas would have received federal money to spend on creating the partnership exchange, but only if Brownback supported the application and the 2013 Legislature authorized spending them.

Bye-bye. Kansas will have to live with a federally run exchange. The governor is sticking us with the least palatable alternative, probably deliberately. "My administration will not partner with the federal government to create a state-federal partnership insurance exchange," he said, "because we will not benefit from it, and implementing it could cost Kansas taxpayers millions of dollars."

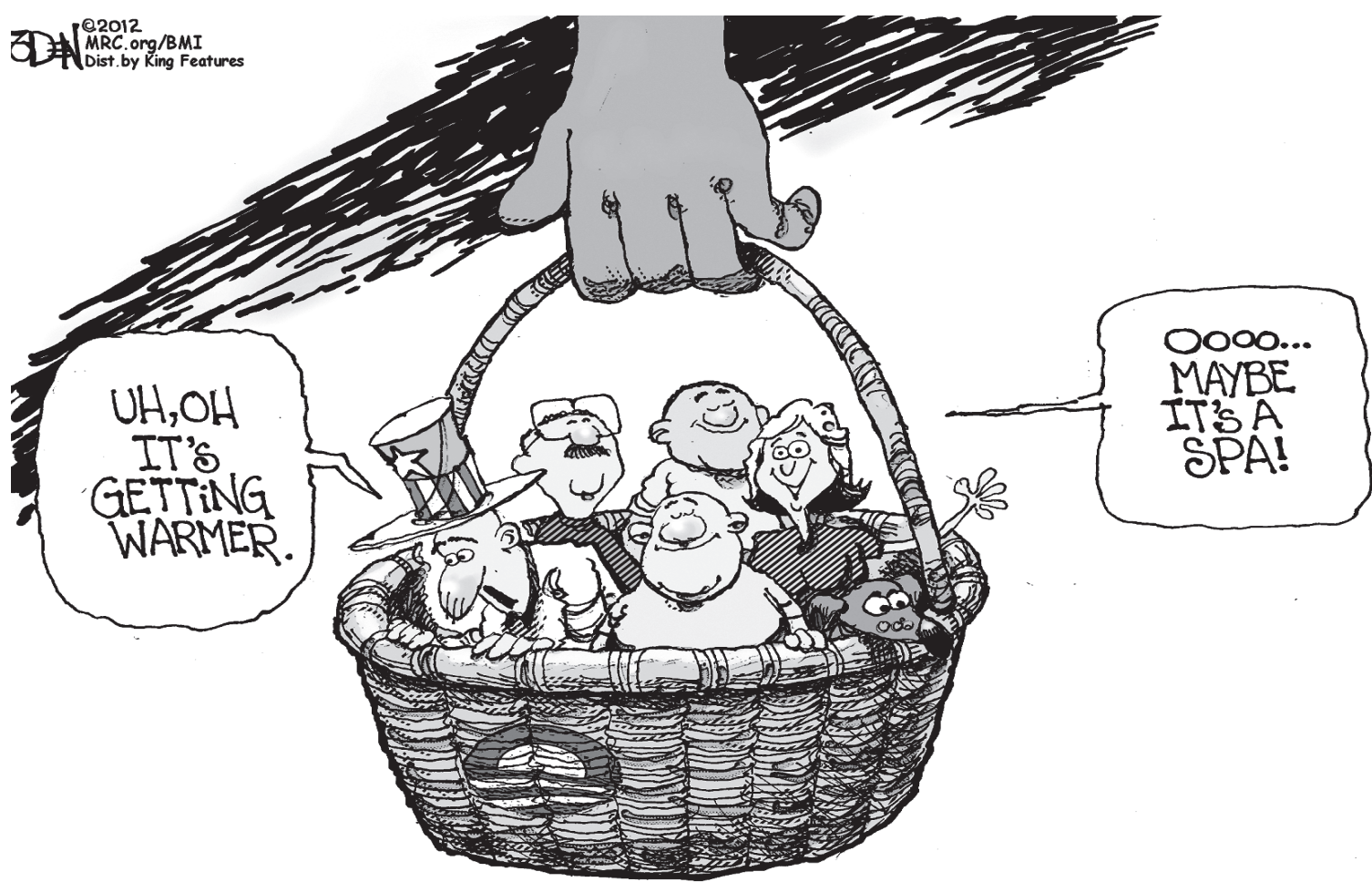
The expectation is that the default benchmark plan for Kansas now will be the largest health plan by enrollment in the state's small-group market. This is the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas Comprehensive Major Medical-Blue Choice PPO product, amended to meet all the "essential health benefits" required by the federal plan.

As William Allen White, the Emporia editor wrote in 1896 in his famous screed, "What's the Matter with Kansas?": "Go east and you hear them laugh at Kansas; go west and they sneer at her; go south and they cuss her; go north and they have forgotten her. Go into any crowd of intelligent people gathered anywhere on the globe, and you will find the Kansas man on the defensive. The newspaper columns and magazines once devoted to praise of her, to boastful facts and startling figures concerning her resources, are now filled with cartoons, jibes and Pefferian speeches. Kansas just naturally isn't in it. She has traded places with Arkansas and Timbuctoo."

If he came back today, White might conclude that little has changed.

- The Lawrence Journal-World, via the Associated Press

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GOING TO GREECE IN A HANDBASKET

## Threshing machines hot, dirty to work

This is my second column containing excerpts from the book, "My Life on the Kansas Plains," by Leslie Linville. The book was published by the former Prairie Printers Inc. of Colby. Harold Linville of Colby, one of Leslie's eight children, gave me permission to use this material. I'm sorry to say that Harold died Nov. 11 at the age of 81.



Marj Brown

### • Marj's Snippets

In 1929, Leslie Linville bought a used IHC 15-30 tractor from J. Paul Jones in Winona. He helped Lou Jordan harvest for the summers of 1929, 1930 and 1931.

Leslie recalled that this was when the threshing machine entered the picture. He said these machines were used for years, first turned with horse power, then with steam engines. About the end of World War I, gasoline tractors began to enter the picture. The first ones were huge steel machines, including the Aultman-Taylor 30-60, the Rumley 30-60, the Case, and the Avery. They traveled only 2 or 3 mph.

"The barley crops along the river were mostly bound," Leslie said, "because barley straw made excellent feed. After it was bound and shocked, it might stand in the field until fall or even winter, depending on how soon the threshing machines could get to it.

"Some of these threshing crews had their own cook shacks and a cook. Others were made up of local farmers who exchanged work; but in either case, each crew had its own engine man and separator man. A full crew consisted of 15 to 20 men.

"If the threshing machine used a steam engine, someone had to haul coal and water to them. When these got low, the engine man would blow a steam whistle on the engine and the suppliers would arrive. Those old steam whistles could be heard for miles on a clear day.

"On the gasoline or oil ... engines, the coal was eliminated, but one man had to be on or near the engine and one on the separator, where he could stand up on top to watch all

the moving parts and keep those open bearings properly oiled. There were no pressure-oiled bearings then. A wagon box that was backed up to the side of the machine caught the grain. It was pulled by horses.

"If the bound grain was still in the shock, wagons pulled by teams went into the fields and men pitched the bundles onto the wagons, which were then taken to the thresher, where the wagons were driven along side the feeder that conveyed it into the separator.

"It was hot dirty work, and it took a good man to be able to pitch bundles all day."

The farm women also had a lot to do. Leslie said:

"If the crew didn't have their own cook, and most neighborhood crews didn't, the women got together and prepared meals."

The food was cooked over hot coal or an unpredictable coal oil burner.

"These stoves put out a lot of heat and never cooled off," he wrote. "There was no air conditioning and little refrigeration for food, so the women had their hands full. The men would come in hot and dirty and often had to eat in relays as there was not room enough in the house to seat them all at once."

He said that flies were bad from spring to late fall. Sometimes they were in the homes so bad that they had to open the doors and drive them out with dish towels. Fly paper was hung everywhere.

Grasshoppers were also a menace. Leslie wrote that there were times when the grasshoppers literally kept the alfalfa eaten off until it could not get a start unless the hoppers were

poisoned with poison bait mash. This mash was made of bran flavored with molasses and lemons and dampened with water. This mixture had Paris Green mixed in for the poison. This was scattered in the field, and it was quite effective in killing the hoppers.

"I have seen fields so thick with dead hoppers that they actually covered the ground," Leslie wrote, "and the smell was quite sickening. A grasshopper could grab a bite out of a man's neck with its pinchers and make him feel like he had been bit by a good sized snake. I have seen fields that were cleaned completely bare by the hoppers, especially corn fields."

Leslie added that other bothersome insects were the red ants and the flying ants, especially on the hot days with no wind.

In September 1930, the Linvilles moved to a farm that had been rented by a family called Stone.

"Now we were back farming for ourselves again," he wrote. "We lived there through some of the worst years of our lives, or until the spring of 1938.

"We became good friends with the Albert (Ab) Kroth family that lived a half mile east of us.... Ab helped me in harvest every year during World War II and after, when it was almost impossible to get help. He was one of the best friends I ever had."

The first year they lived on that farm, they had a heavy volunteer wheat crop and Leslie was able to keep his cattle. He had a bunch of calves to pasture. The Depression was in full force and the "Dirty '30s" hit them hard. When they left that farm, they had one milk cow and a bunch of government feed and seed loans to pay off.

In my next column, I'll tell about Leslie and the blizzard of 1931 and the "Dirty '30s."

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.

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## Outgoing senator thanks voters

To the Editor:

To supporters and fellow citizens of the 40th and 36th Districts:

My wife Ellen and I would like to thank you for your support to our campaign efforts. This was a steep uphill battle from the very beginning, having lost 9 of the 10 counties I represented the last two years and then gaining 12 new counties.

I count it a great privilege and an opportunity of a lifetime to have served in the Kansas Senate for two years to further our rural and Western Kansas interests. In the end we gave the people a choice and that is important to a democracy. I will continue my service in other ways.

Of the things we accomplished, the most important by far was saving the 36th District Senate seat until the next census in 2020. That vote remains in rural Kansas, where it belongs! Hopefully we will be able to retain that seat after 2020, but only if we have a group of rural legislators who can work together alongside our community leaders in a nonpartisan way to grow our rural economy, keep our schools open and strong and build affordable housing for economic expansion.

The challenges in our rural future are great.



### Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

It takes more than simply voting on legislation. It takes vision and "targeted engagement" toward our rural interests to impact our future and stop the population loss. My 32 years of leadership in the Army prepared me well for

this and taught me the importance of living the values of duty, honor, integrity and selfless service as I listened, analyzed and then exercised leadership. I was prepared to continue, but I will pursue other forms of service now. Sen. (Ralph) Ostmeyer will continue to carry the torch for us in Topeka. I congratulate him on his victory.

My deep-hearted appreciation goes out to the great people and communities of northwest and north central Kansas. May we always acknowledge God being with us on this journey. That mind-set will keep us humble, genuine and faithful to our rural core values.

Sen. Allen and Ellen Schmidt, Hays

### 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.

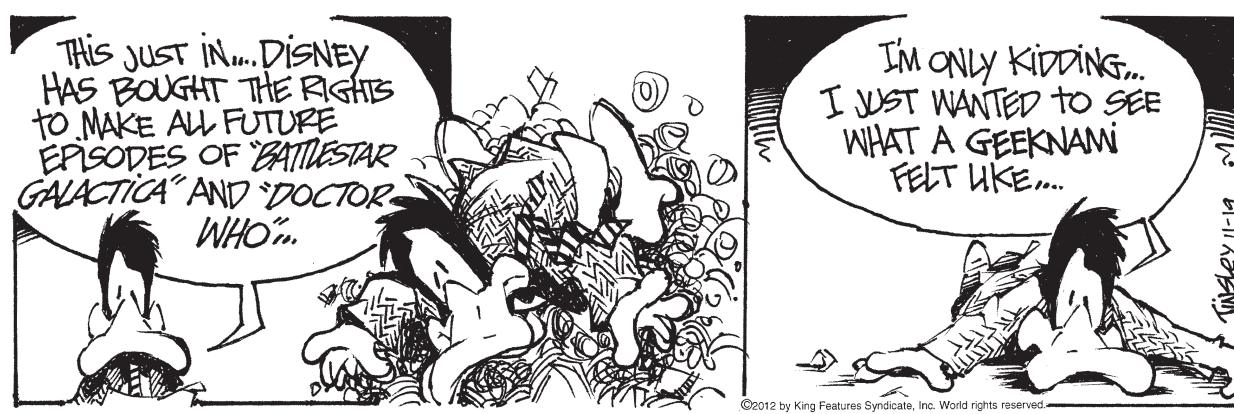
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Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses not pertaining to a public issue.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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