



Free Press
Viewpoint

Homegrown oil
still costs a bundle

It hasn't been long since our leaders on both sides of the aisle were exhorting us to strive for "energy independence," cutting back on oil imports from foreign nations who wanted nothing good from us and sucked up all our hard-earned cash.

Sen. Ken Salazar of Colorado told the Denver World Affairs Council how the world was feeding at our table, and it wasn't a pretty picture.

The Colorado Democrat would soon become secretary of the interior, and as such, responsible for much of the government's regulation of oil and gas exploration and development in the Obama administration.

"Saudi Arabia is using its oil riches to build four new cities in the desert," he said. "Venezuela is using its new riches to dispense patronage around South America and compete for influence in the hemisphere. Russia is using the oil windfall to increase its federal budget tenfold, buy up currency reserves and challenge Europe and the U.S. on everything from NATO expansion to missile defense. And in the Sudan? The Sudanese are building new skyscrapers."

But Salazar was not alone. Presidents from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush have lectured us on energy independence. But now that we have it, it may not be all it was cracked up to be.

How the world has changed. Today, we're beholden to North Dakota and Pennsylvania, which are sucking up much of the cash that used to go the Saudis. In North Dakota, they're ramping up the state budget to build highways and facilities, schools and jails to serve the oil boom.

The U.S. became a net exporter of fuel this year, and it will be bringing in even more foreign cash if energy companies are allowed to build port facilities to export natural gas, which we have a whole lot of. Even with the excess, however, prices are not going down for most consumer products.

Natural gas is fairly cheap, but only because they haven't figured out how to export much of it yet. World demand is as high as ever. Oil is another story: Expanding markets in Asia and Africa, including China and India, have taken up most of the new production. And the U.S. still imports a lot of oil, even as it exports refined fuel and even crude oil.

Pump prices for motorists remain high and could be headed for record levels this summer. And the truth is, we're lucky.

We may have more oil and gas than any nation – according to the latest estimates of our mineral wealth, far more than the Saudis – but world demand is exploding. The future offers only more of the same. And energy prices, high as they seem, are low here compared to most of the world.

So while we may have to bow now to Bismarck rather than Riyadh, fuel isn't going to get any cheaper any time soon. The best advice is to get used to it.

– Steve Haynes

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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 @ nwkansas.com

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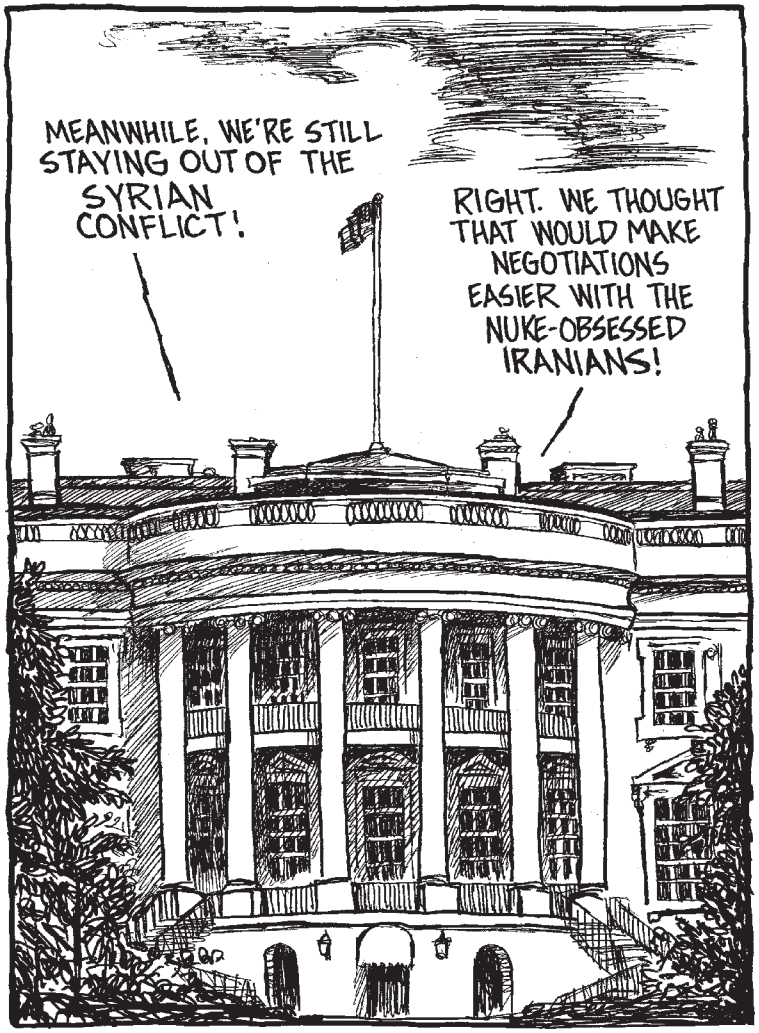
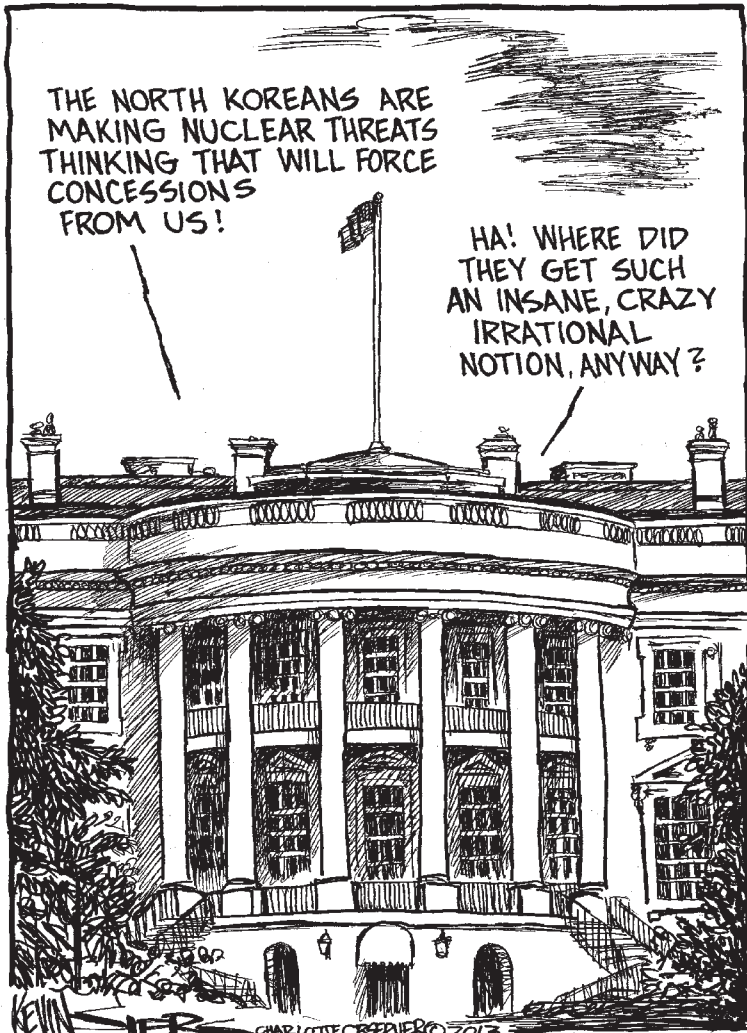
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. 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



Spring plowing overlaps fall harvest

Spring is here, and it's gardening time.

A week ago, Steve mowed the lawn for the first time this spring and I cleaned out the long lily bed out front.

On Sunday, it was tiller time. Steve had already talked to Joe down at the hardware store, and he had the tiller ready to go.

We have two gardens – the main one where we grow cabbage, carrots, corn, squash, beans, peas, lettuce, spinach and anything else that strikes my fancy, and the side garden, which is just a three- to four-foot wide area on the south side of the house. That's where we put our tomatoes and green peppers. Last year, I also put in chilies, but then I couldn't figure out what to do with them when I picked the crop.

So while Steve tilled the side garden, I picked the last of my 2012 produce.

Yep, that's what I said. I picked vegetables in April.

Last fall, I dug only about half of my carrots. The rest I just left in the ground and put a little fence around.



Cynthia Haynes

- Open Season

I had done this last year without putting up any barrier, and when it came time to dig the second half of the carrots in the spring, I didn't know where they were. Steve eventually found them with the tiller, which was not the best way to preserve them, but they were all nicely sliced up for salads.

Last fall, I decided that I wasn't going to do that again. So after digging up a pile of carrots, I put a fence around the ones I left.

On Sunday, with storm clouds on the horizon, Steve tilled like crazy and I dug, dug, dug.

As soon as I had my carrots out of the ground, the tiller was going over the ground

where they had been.

I also dug up some small lettuce plants that were growing in the big garden. Last fall, I put in some variety lettuce and spinach. Only a couple of spinach plants made an appearance, but the lettuce did quite well, especially one huge Swiss chard plant, which was so pretty I never cut it. This spring, the spinach still is absent without leave, but the lettuce was trying to make a reappearance. It was pretty spotty, however, and I figure I need to reseed if I'm going to get a good crop.

So as the raindrops started hitting the ground, I brought my produce into the house and Steve ran the tiller home.

Now all we need is seeds and sun.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes @ nwkansas.com

Redefined marriage destructive to family

President Obama and I have very different notions of what a family is.

For liberals, the family can apparently be everything from "Heather Has Two Mommies" to "Daddy's Roommate" to Hillary Rodham Clinton's "It Takes a Village." In the opinion of voter majorities in Kansas and 40 other states, however, that does not a family make.

For conservatives, the concept of family is the same as the Judeo-Christian model God ordained, a model supported by every other major world religion. It is the same unit recognized by the laws of nature, the laws of government and civilized societies for thousands of years: one man, married to one woman, with as many children as God should see fit to entrust to their care through birth or adoption. In my case, that means me, Angela (my wife of 18 years) and our four children (who happen to be adopted).

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments recently in two landmark cases concerning homosexual marriage. The Hollingsworth v. Perry case challenges the federal constitutionality of California's Proposition 8, the 2008 ballot initiative approved by 7 million voters to amend California's state constitution to define marriage as an institution that involves only one man and one woman. Windsor v. United States challenges the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, the 1996 federal law overwhelmingly passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1996 that recognizes traditional marriage for federal purposes and protects states from having homosexual marriage imposed upon them by other states.

If at least five Supreme Court justices do not resist the temptation to legislate from the bench, they might overturn Proposition 8 and the Defense of Marriage Act. If that happens, the high priests and priestesses of political correctness will have done irreparable harm to yet another pillar of the American paradigm for our patriotic, wholesome culture – "God, the flag, Mom and apple pie." Activist judges have already expelled faith from the public square (forbidding the 10 Commandments, a cross in remembrance of our military heroes and Christmas Nativity scenes) and decriminalized burning the Stars and Stripes in public. The



U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp

- Capitol Notes

first lady's "Let's Move!" initiative and New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's sugary-drink ban suggest the days of consuming apple pie might well be numbered.

That leaves motherhood. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the congressional resolution that established Mother's Day. Every president since Woodrow Wilson has issued proclamations that pay homage to the significance of motherhood. In 1981, Ronald Reagan wrote: "They shape the character of our people through the love and nurture of their children. It is the strength they give their families that keeps our nation strong." In 2011, President Obama wrote: "We celebrate the extraordinary importance of mothers in our lives. The bond of love and dedication a mother shares with her children and family is without bounds or conditions."

In the Hollingsworth case, though, The Justice Department argues that children do not need mothers. The Obama administration makes the incredible assertion that motherhood is superfluous to rebut an argument that the traditional two-parent family, led by both a mother and a father, provides the ideal situation to raise a child. In defiance of biology, nature and common sense, the administration argues that children need neither a father nor a mother and that having two fathers or two mothers – or more – is just as good as having one of each.

Obama's hypocrisy is not limited to motherhood. Four years before he flip-flopped on the issue of homosexual marriage, it was none other than Obama who proclaimed the singular importance of a father in child-rearing. In his June 2008 speech to a church, then-Sen. Obama said: "We know the statistics – that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime, nine times more likely to drop

out of schools and 20 times more likely to end up in prison. They are more likely to have behavioral problems, or run away from home, or become teenage parents themselves. And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it."

Sen. Obama was right; President Obama is wrong. There is overwhelming social science evidence to corroborate the benefits of raising children in homes with both a mom and a dad. Who among us does not know there are differing parenting styles between men and women and that children deserve both? Government, both federal and state, has a legitimate and defensible interest in ensuring that children conceived by a mother and father are, in fact, raised by their biological mothers and fathers whenever possible.

Redefining marriage to remove parents of both sexes from the equation would further the destruction of the family, the most fundamental building block of society. If that definition is changed by the court, the purpose of marriage devolves to mere recognition of an emotional union. In so doing, the children of America will be shortchanged – and the will of the American people would be once again short-circuited by black robes in Washington.

Rep. Tim Huelskamp, a Fowler Republican, represents the Kansas 1st District in Congress. As a state senator, he sponsored the Kansas Marriage Amendment approved by 70 percent of voters in 2005.

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Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

