

from other pens...

Kids need help deciding what to eat

Ask most kids what they think about daily servings of fruits and vegetables, and there's a good chance they'll wrinkle their noses.

Now a cheeseburger, fries and soda — that's the kind of fare that gets high marks from children, and no doubt in part because they've been conditioned.

A recent report showed that in 2006, the nation's largest food and beverage companies spent about \$1.6 billion on marketing their products, much of that for carbonated drinks.

Meanwhile, the nation faces a disturbing trend in childhood obesity, due in part to the not-so-healthy foods youngsters prefer. The problem threatens to shorten average life expectancy nationwide.

Now a federal agency charged with protecting consumers is recommending another way to get the message across.

The Federal Trade Commission is calling for industries to use the power of marketing to encourage young Americans to eat healthy food.

The agency recommends the food-and-drink industry shift its considerable marketing efforts to entice television to make healthier choices. That would mean, for example, relying on popular TV and movie characters to push healthy snacks, fruits and vegetables instead of sugary, fatty foods that contribute to unhealthy weight gain.

Sounds sensible enough. But if that's to work, the marketing that promotes healthy eating needs to reach parents, the ones who make decisions on what kinds of foods their children are allowed to eat.

Let's face it: Youngsters don't fret over their unhealthy diets. Without proper direction, they can be expected to veer away from the food that gives them a strong foundation for growth.

Marketing can be a powerful tool. But unless it hits home and persuades the people with real power to make a difference — parents — there's little hope messages targeting children alone will reverse the troubling trend of childhood obesity. — *The Garden City Telegram*

where to write

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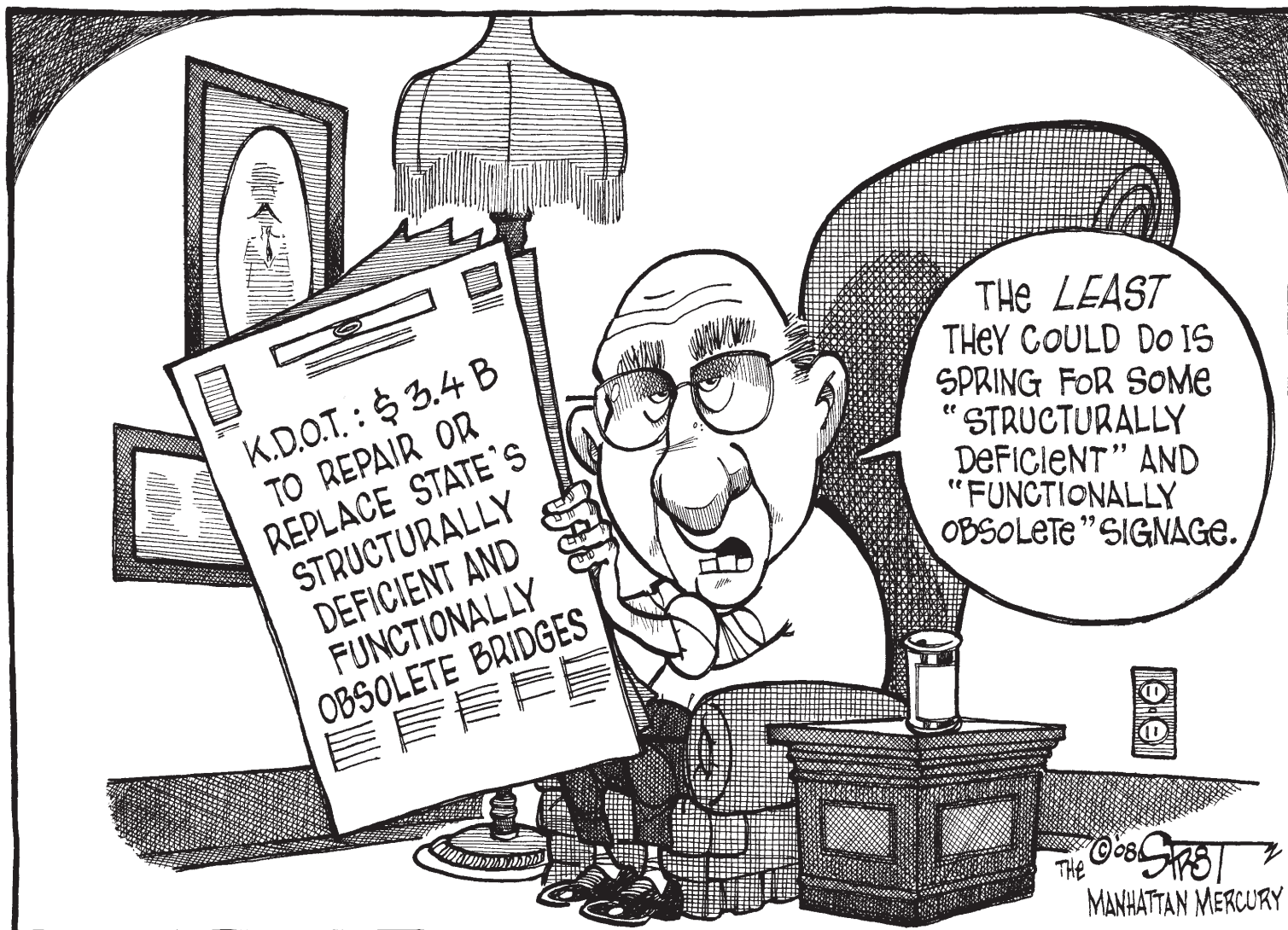
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Ticket hawker had a different pitch

The scalper hawking tickets on the Denver street corner had a different pitch tonight, trying to close a sale to a couple of 20-something guys.

"You'll want a good view," he said. "It'll be the last time you see Maddux."

Ah, Greg Maddux. If there's been a better pitcher over the last two decades, I can't think of who it might be. (Someone will, and that might make for an interesting argument, but I digress.)

Seventeen seasons with 15 or more wins since he came up with the Cubs in 1986. Seventeen Gold Gloves for fielding. Career record 353-222, 10th all-time in career wins. Four straight Cy Young Awards in the '90s.

Now 42, Maddux is with his fourth team after two stints in Chicago and a stellar run with the Braves in Atlanta. He has only seven victories this year. No one thinks he'll be back for another season.

Five years from now, he should be on his way to Cooperstown, N.Y., for the induction ceremony. But don't sell Greg Maddux short. He might find a team to pay him next year.

On the mound, he's nothing special to look at. He's businesslike and efficient. He doesn't throw that hard, with his fastball whizzing by at 84-86 mph.

Maddux never was a power pitcher. He's a pinpoint pitcher, picking his spots and more



steve haynes

• along the sappa

often than not, hitting them. By reputation, he's a thinking pitcher who tries to understand what hitters expect and what they will — and won't — swing at.

So you watch him and try to figure out what he's doing, and you don't see much. No fancy curve. No knuckle balls that wander around. Just a lot of strikes.

But look back at the score sheet, and a story emerges. In six innings in hitter-friendly Coors Field, just six hits, all singles except for a booming lead-off home run in the third.

Four strikeouts. One walk. Strikes-to-balls ratio of 2-1. Just 21 batters. Eleven ground outs and two popups. Three double plays erasing some mistakes.

Though he's now mostly a six-inning pitcher, Maddux was throwing so well he went into the seventh, then had to be pulled after giving up a couple of singles. The Padres would get him the win, 8-3.

As he walked off the field, head high, the stadium erupted in applause — for the opposing pitcher. A few of us, those who understood

what we were seeing, stood in admiration. He didn't look up, just touched his cap to acknowledge the ovation.

The night wasn't over, though. While Colorado ace Arron Cook pitched well through five, he fell apart in the sixth, when the Padre's scored five. The score was 8-2 going into the bottom of the ninth, then Colorado got three hits and a walk, scoring one run, with potential for a lot more.

What hadn't been a "save" situation became dire, and Manager Bud Black made the call for Trevor Hoffman, who's to relief pitchers what Maddux is to starters. With 549 career saves, he sets a record every time he goes out.

There's no fanfare for a visiting reliever — in San Diego, they play "Hell's Bells" by AC/DC when he comes on — but Hoffmann doesn't need any.

A strikeout, a double play, it's over. The scalper was more than right. How often can you see two aging legends work, even if they are on the other team?

Good infield play and good hitting are more exciting, but good pitchers are worth a lot more, as Maddux would tell you.

"The reason I make a lot of money," he's said to have told a young pitcher last year, "is because I can throw the ball where I want it." Amen to that.

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By JOHN RICHARD SCHROCK

With the proliferation of cell phones, laptops and other hand-held electronics, parents soon may be deciding whether they want their newborn to have a paper or paperless life.

Choose electronics, and your child will get a 70 percent life.

Though some Kansas high schools brag that they have gone paperless, and their students do all their schoolwork on laptops and Palm Pilots, this "revolution" is a case of the "emperor's new education." Few have dared point out that it doesn't work.

Reading an "e-text" on a digital screen, or conducting a class online presents the image of being techno-savvy. It has a track record of failure.

More than 15 years ago, award-winning industrial psychologist Charles Bigelow discovered that we read computer screens nearly 30 percent slower than we read print. This is due to our eye physiology and to the poor resolution of the media.

"Resolution" is a property we study in biology: how close can two dots appear before we see them as one. And screen resolution is poor. We would need ten times better resolution on screen to read as fast as we can on paper. The new 1080-line HDTV only doubles the resolution, falling far short of solving this problem.

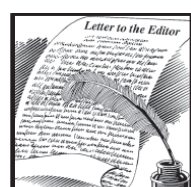
We also comprehend less. Forrester Research found our retention is 30 percent lower when we read online rather than in print.

The message for hi-tech, "paperless" schools is simple: If students are forced to do all classwork at lower speed and comprehension, they will need five years to learn the same material they would learn by reading conventional textbooks in four.

This should be no surprise to most of the reading public. "E-books" came out in the trade market with mystery and romance novels almost a decade ago. The experiment was a failure. Few people could read over 20 to 30 pages before the eye strain became unbearable.

We can and do read screens for bits of directory information. But we need the printed page when it comes to extended reading, from English literature to a biology textbook to a longer newspaper article.

Paperless fraud



from other pens

• commentary

We know this intuitively. What do we do when we find a lengthy article online? We print it off. And that is exactly what the students at the hi-tech high schools are doing: printing off their literature and textbooks.

Virtual schools brag they are saving money on paper textbooks, but they are merely shifting the printing cost to the home.

Computer enthusiasts brag that online courses save trees, but research shows that the electronic age has generated more paper than ever before. And in printing off e-textbooks, the cost in time, inkjet cartridges and paper easily wipes out any savings, not to mention the

energy used while trying to read text online.

The self-published product is shoddy and actually more expensive than a professionally published text. And it doesn't get recycled through other students.

When I hand this research to techno-educators, proving their students are reading 30 percent slower and comprehending 30 percent less, thus needing to go to high school a fifth year, the response has been the same: just rewrite the outcomes for high school.

Translated: just water down the expectations.

And the student's bill for new eyeglasses? That is not their problem.

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

