

from our viewpoint...

Attacks bounce off Gov. Brownback

The Democrats are attacking Gov. Sam Brownback like he was the Creature From the Black Lagoon lately, acting like either they didn't know he was a conservative all these years, or there's something wrong with being against big government.

We'd have to say, though, the stuff they are throwing seems to bounce off with about as much effect as bullets against the creature.

The party has been slinging a bunch of "Occupy Wall Street" rhetoric at the governor, casting him as everything from a corporate tool to — gasp — an opponent of abortion on demand.

What's wrong with that, we're not sure, but far as we know, Sam Brownback, a convert to Catholicism and a heartfelt social conservative, has always been against abortion and against growth in government.

In fact, you could argue, that's why people elected him. After two terms in the U.S. Senate, no one could say we didn't know where he stood. He's never made any secret of his conservative leanings.

But, backed by a conservative Legislature, Gov. Brownback has been more successful than any conservative in recent memory, at least in Kansas, at getting his viewpoint across. He's signed bills restricting abortion, improving the tax climate for business and slashing the budget. He sees that as the way to grow jobs, and wants to look at eliminating the state's corporate and personal income taxes.

Crazy, you say? Or maybe just good economic development policy: people move to states, such as Nevada, Texas and Wyoming, without an income tax. So do employers looking to please their people.

All of this is not to say everyone should agree with the governor. Many members of his own party, especially in the more liberal Senate, split with him over ending state subsidies for local arts programs. He won that fight with a veto.

Disagree with him if you like — and most of us will at one time or another — but the governor's conservative stance is no surprise. A lot of people like it. — *Steve Haynes*

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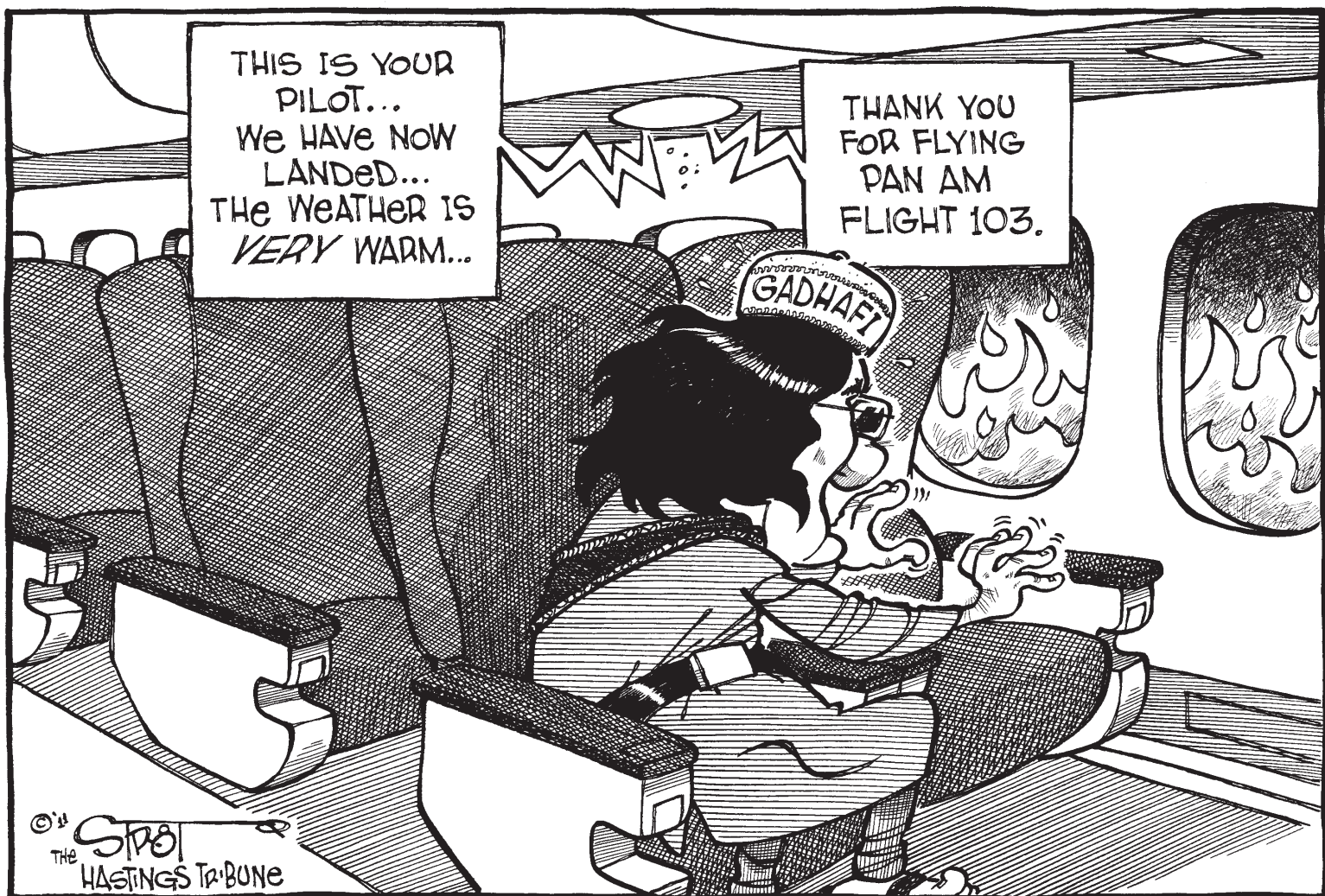
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Time to clean out the purse

Every woman's purse is a gold mine of interesting stuff.

I'm not the type of person who changes her purse with each outfit. In fact, I hate having to change bags. It's a pain, and I can never find anything in the new bag when I do.

A new bag is either too small for all my stuff or so large that I lose everything in the bottom.

However, now and then the old bag has to be cleaned out. Don't ask me how all the crumbs and bits get in the bottom. I certainly don't carry crackers around in it. Well, not for the last 25 years or so since my children started school.

Last week, my purse just got too much for me. I had to clean it out. Dump everything on the table, sort the contents, turn the bag inside out and shake it well.

Then it was time to inventory the contents, return the "good" stuff and toss out anything that I couldn't identify, was outdated or a duplicate.

First back in goes my wallet. I certainly need that, although it probably needs a good cleaning all on its own. Maybe another day. There aren't that many crumbs in it, anyway.



cynthia haynes

• open season

Checkbook, calendar, reading glasses, sunglasses, small notebook (how come I can never find that when I need to write someone's name down for a future outline?), spare card holder (and I still can't find my insurance card when I need it), four pens, sunscreen (I didn't know that was in there), gum and a small hairbrush all need to go back in.

The two only slightly used tissues and a lone calcium pill get tossed.

Now to clean the little pockets on the sides.

Let's see what we have — business cards (Dang, I was wondering where those were last time I was at a convention and didn't have a card) and three clean plastic bags, useful for leftovers or when walking the dog, although I usually keep recycled bags in my pocket for the dog.

Then there's my packet of condiments and sweetener.

I love coffee, but I can't stand it straight. I have to have cream and sweetener. And, it's always amazing to me that while McDonald's can stock every form of sweetener known to man, La Restauranté Expensiva keeps nothing but Sweet and Low, or saccharin, which I detest.

My condiment packet contains salt, pepper, mustard and ketchup, as we frequently stop at Sonic on trips for a quick burger and I hate to have to ask the carhop to go get me something I can easily carry, especially during a busy period.

My son-in-law was amazed and amused that I carry condiments in my purse, but he eagerly grabbed a couple of mustards for his hot dog last summer when we were all at a baseball game in Augusta, Ga.

Last in my cleaning project are the outer pockets. These seem pretty clean. The only things in there are lipstick, lip balm and hand sanitizer. All that goes back in and I'm in business for another year.

I wish my closet was that easy to clean — but then I haven't cleaned it out in more than 10 years, so it's had more time to collect "crumbs."

The power of rural



dr. robert moser

• state health officer

We're approaching a first-time observance for the State of Kansas, and for me, this celebration is something that hits close to home. National Rural Health Day is Nov. 17, and I'm part of the nearly one in three Kansans who have invested time and energy into the small towns and farming communities we know and love.

I think most will agree these rural regions are the essence of Kansas. The selfless, community-minded spirit you'll see in Kansas and other places in rural America helps provide commodities and services to our nation and others.

Within these rural communities you will find unique health care challenges surrounding access and capacity.

Prior to my appointment this year as the Secretary for Health and Environment and the State Health Officer, I practiced family medicine in western Kansas for more than 20 years with Greeley County Health Services. I've seen a great deal of innovation from health care providers in rural Kansas, and those efforts haven't slowed.

Rural communities have promising opportu-

nities on the horizon to reshape the way health care services are delivered. Together, with other local, state and federal partners, rural Kansas can be a powerful force for assessing and addressing the health needs in all regions of the state. We're focused on expanding healthy behaviors; knitting together an improved, integrated health system; bringing quality doctors through the Smoky Hill Family Medicine Residency Program and planning better care management for the chronically ill.

We have a shortage of health care providers in many areas of Kansas, which is coinciding with the increased demands of an aging population suffering from chronic conditions and larger percentages of un- and underinsured citizens. Rural hospitals and health care providers struggle daily as pressures on funding make it challenging to serve their residents.

We're hopeful, however, because rural health systems are innovative, and the state of health care in Kansas is changing for the better. We're doing more to leverage our partnerships and craft programs to improve health outcomes.

On Nov. 17, Kansas will join other states in celebrating National Rural Health Day and the Power of Rural. While we recognize the unique health care challenges facing Kansas' 89 rural counties, we reflect on the prevailing innovation, resilience and commitment to excellence demonstrated year after year.

For more information about rural health care in Kansas and National Rural Health Day, visit our website: <http://www.kdheks.gov/olrh/ruralhealthday.htm>

We look forward to you joining the Kansas Department of Health and Environment on Nov. 17 as we highlight the best of rural health. Take a moment to thank your rural health care provider.

Robert Moser, MD
Secretary and State Health Officer
Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Hays ready to educate mid-level dental help

The Kansas Legislature is considering an important proposal that would help solve the state's dental care shortages by creating a new kind of mid-level provider, thus strengthening our dental care workforce and making it easier to get dental care. Rigorous training and education of these new providers — called registered dental practitioners — will be essential to ensuring all Kansans receive top-quality dental care.

Our motto at Fort Hays State University is "Forward Thinking, World Ready," and we believe by becoming the first four-year university in Kansas to offer a bachelor's degree program for registered dental practitioners, we're truly living up to that commitment. If the Legislature approves the bill, registered dental practitioners will operate as part of a team with dentists and dental hygienists — similar to how nurse practitioners, physician's assistants and other providers work with medical doctors.

There's no question our dental care workforce needs reinforcements. Ninety-three of the state's 105 counties don't have enough dentists to meet their residents' needs, and 13 counties don't have any dentists at all. As a result, Kansans are at risk for suffering un-



dr. dean hammond

• fhsu president

necessarily from preventable dental disease, missing school and work and possibly incurring serious health consequences. This is a particularly serious problem in rural parts of the state, including western Kansas, which is Fort Hays State's primary service area.

Registered dental practitioners would work as part of a dentist-led team, providing routine but commonly needed services like cleanings, fillings and certain types of extractions — services that complement those provided by dental hygienists while supporting the work of dentists, who would be freed up to provide more complicated care. This model has been used successfully for nearly 100 years in dozens of countries, and, more recently, in Minnesota.

Fort Hays State has developed a similar type of education program for medical diagnostic imaging specialists. This successful program would be the model for our registered dental

practitioner proposal.

We are exploring an option with the Kansas Board of Regents to allow new students to complete their education with both their dental hygienist and registered dental practitioner licenses, while offering hygienists currently in the workforce the opportunity to return to school and become registered dental practitioners. We believe this approach would produce the greatest benefit for patients and our state's workforce alike.

Midlevel dental providers are being considered in many states facing dental care shortages similar to ours, and it is clear these new providers will become an integral part of the dental care workforce. At Fort Hays State we are excited by the opportunity to be involved in the creation of a workforce to provide desperately needed care for so many Kansans.

We must act now to shore up our dental care workforce. It is time for Kansas to bring in registered dental practitioners so more Kansans can get quality dental care when and where they need it.

Dr. Edward H. Hammond
President
Fort Hays State University