

## Why shouldn't mother have her say on the air?

After watching the Super Bowl commercials, you have to wonder what all the shouting and complaining was about.

The Focus on the Family ad with quarterback Tim Tebow and his mom was, well, cute, but not exactly controversial.

Women's groups had demanded that CBS not run this ad, apparently fearing that the conservative Christian group, based in Colorado Springs, planned to spring some sort of hidden anti-abortion agenda.

The network, to its credit, stood by its decision. The opponents were way off base, as it turned out. Pam Tebow, who reportedly had a difficult pregnancy with her now-famous son and at one point was advised to consider an abortion, didn't lay any heavy message in the ad.

If you know her story, then you know the choice she made and you know how she feels about it today. It was an effective ad from a lot of perspectives, but it played to choice — something the other side in the abortion debate always claims to back.

Abortion is all about choices, really, and not laws. Women make choices whether the law allows abortion or not — and in the Tebow case, an abortion likely would have been legal under any set of laws. If one side promotes giving women a choice and the other counsels them not to have an abortion, isn't that what a free society is all about?

The really scary thing here is the pressure mounted to get CBS to drop the ad. This was a legitimate, though soft sell, expression of a

viewpoint. It's true that networks often have shied away from anything vaguely resembling controversy in prime-time ads, but there's no law or ethical rule that requires it.

Networks, the press in general, deal with controversial topics in news programs, even in entertainment, all the time. They accept political ads. They accept ads from big corporations that many might abhor. All of this is free speech, protected by the First Amendment.

So where do the liberal women's groups get off calling for CBS to can this or any other ad they might not agree with?

The same could be asked of right-wing groups which demand that networks drop this or that show or ad because it "promotes" something they don't like.

It's all political pressure designed to suppress an opposing view, and it should not be allowed in a democracy. Our focus always should be on allowing, even promoting, opposing views. No side has such a corner on right that it can be allowed to suppress all other viewpoints.

If we truly believe in freedom, then we need to defend freedom of expression, even when we don't like the ideas. That's what the First is all about.

It applies to Focus on the Family the same as it does to choice advocates. Church and family groups have as much right to promote their viewpoint as anyone else.

And any threat to that right is a threat to us all, no matter which "side" we are on.

— Steve Haynes



## Best just to get out of her way

My father-in-law made sure that all his vehicles and those of his children had excellent tires and brakes. His theory was that if the brakes and tires worked, if anything else went wrong with the car, the dang thing would stop.

My husband has followed his father's advice and for the most part, it's worked pretty well. We've had flats and slid off the road, but good tires and good brakes have brought us to stops before we could have any really serious wrecks.

Now, however, I have a special problem. I drive a Toyota Solara, a type of Camry.

For anyone living without newspapers, radio, television or the Internet, Toyota is in trouble for putting out cars with gas pedals that stick. Not every car, mind you, but enough that it's caused a good-size scandal, and I'm glad I don't own any stock in the company.

I haven't heard anything from the company about repairing my faulty pedal, which seems to go down some times and not come back up, causing the car to go faster and faster and faster.



### Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes  
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I may not even have one of those sticky gas pedals. The percentage of vehicles reporting the problem has been pretty small compared to the number of Toyotas on the road.

However, it's always good to be prepared, so Steve and I discussed what to do if the throttle on my car suddenly turns against me.

My first instinct would be to put on the brake, but that has not proved effective, as the brakes will soon burn out. They are just not made to compete with the gas pedal.

A little thought brought up a simple solution — just take the car out of gear. Once the engine is no longer attached to the wheels, it may rage and roar, but the car will stop going faster. It'll slow down and can be moved to the side of the road.

Don't however, put the car in reverse or park. That will kill the engine faster than a shotgun blast to the computer. The transmission, too.

Steve's solution was also very simple: Turn the car off.

Reach up and turn the key to off. This will stop the engine, and even if gas keeps flowing, it won't be able to keep going. It will slow to a stop.

The kicker with this solution is you can't take the key out of the ignition, or the steering wheel will lock. This could be bad, because then you have a car you can't control.

I doubt if I will ever have to use any of these tricks to control an unruly gas pedal, but just in case, I suggest if you see me coming — just get out of the way.

## Cocktail wieners are a hit

That mustard recipe came in the nick of time. If "my" team isn't playing, I don't pay too much attention to football.

But when I realized the Super Bowl was going to be Sunday, I laid in a store of man-sized snacks. At the top of the list was what I call "Mini-pigs-in-a-blanket." I take those little cocktail wieners and wrap each one in a strip of refrigerator crescent-roll dough. After they are baked, you can eat them plain or do what I do and dip them in the sweet-spicy mustard. They disappeared faster than Payton Manning could get his team back to the line of scrimmage without a huddle.

Bet you thought I didn't know anything about football, didn't you? Well, I don't know much, but I do know enough to be able to follow and enjoy the game. Going into this game, I didn't really have a favorite, but I decided to root for the underdog considering all the New Orleans Saints had been through in the past few years.

It was a remarkably good game — as Super Bowl games go. I even managed to stay awake for most of it. Especially during the final minutes when the Saints intercepted a pass and ran it in for the touchdown.



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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But, back to where I started. The snacks were a hit, and the men agreed they were an adequate replacement for supper.

— ob —

I ran into a friend at the post office and we took advantage of the occasion to catch up on each other's lives. Eventually, the conversation came around to our various aches and pains. She said she wished someone in the area would build a heated pool so people could get the kind of exercise they need for arthritic joints and brittle bones.

"Oh, well," she added, "if there was a pool, they'd have to build a fence around it."

"Hey!" I said, "I've got the fence. Now, all we have to do is convince Jim he needs to build a swimming pool inside it."

Don't think I haven't thought about it. One time, I heard Jim say

building a pool was something he had never done and he always wanted to try it. And, who am I to keep him from realizing all his ambitions?

At our age, though, he better do it pretty soon or we won't be able to afford a full-time lifeguard on our retirement income.

### From the Bible

Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked man ruling over a helpless people.

A tyrannical ruler lacks judgment, but he who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long life.

Proverbs 28:15-16 (NIV)

expect readers to do likewise.

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## Senate considers drugs, jobs

Here's a roundup of activity in the Kansas Senate for last week.

SB 348 (banning Synthetic Cannabinoids) was approved 36-1 on Thursday. It amends the hallucinogenic category of Schedule I controlled substances by adding HU-210, benzylpiperazine (BZP), and two synthetic cannabinoids known as "K2," H-018, and JWH-073. Currently, HU-210 and BZP are listed on the federal schedule but not by Kansas.

At the request of the Kansas County and District Attorneys Association, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee amended the bill to add BZP to the list of schedule one drugs. The Board of Pharmacy believes the bill has no fiscal effect.

On Thursday, the Senate confirmed 12 appointments unanimously, including Robert Daniel Lykins, Juana "Janie" Perkins and Christine Downey-Schmidt to the State Board of Regents; Martin Kennedy as secretary of the Department of Aging; and Joshua Svaty as secretary of Agriculture.

Senate debate on House Bill 2222, the FY2010 budget rescission bill, is likely this week.

The Agriculture Committee heard a presentation by Carole Jordan with the Kansas Department of Commerce and held confirmation hearings.

The Assessment and Taxation Committee met Wednesday for hearings on SB 379, which validates the election granting sales tax authority to Chautauqua County. It was amended into HB 2353 and favorably voted out of committee. It is now up for consideration by the Senate.

On Tuesday, the Business and Labor Committee received an overview of the Kansas Unemployment Fund by Secretary Jim Garner of the Department of Labor. This is a new committee formed during the interim and chaired by Sen. Susan Wagle.

On Wednesday, acting Secretary Bill Thornton gave an overview of the Department of Commerce to the Commerce Committee. The following day, an overview of the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corp. was presented by Kevin Carr, chief operating officer; Kyle Elliott, chairman of the board; and Stan Ahlerich of Kansas, Inc.

The Education Committee met with recipients of the Kansas Teacher of the Year Award and Deputy Commissioner of Education Dale Dennis. Representatives of the Fort Hays State Math and Science Academy made a presentation. Finally, superintendents with the



### Letter from Topeka

By Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer  
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school districts of Wichita, Augusta, Blue Valley, Derby, and Holton gave presentations on their respective school districts.

The Ethics and Elections Committee heard from Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh. Carol Williams, director of the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, made a presentation on Thursday.

The Federal and State Affairs Committee met Tuesday in closed-door session to receive internal updates from Secretary of Revenue Joan Wagon. Before that meeting, they heard from Carmen Alldritt with the Division of Motor Vehicles in the Department of Revenue.

Major Gen. Tod Bunting, adjutant general of the Kansas, provided an update. The committee received an overview of the activities of the Interim Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight. Thursday, the committee finished work for the week when Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz gave an overview of his department.

This week, the Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee reviewed the Kansas Insurance Department report, got an update on federal legislation and financial regulatory activities, and held a joint meeting with the House Insurance Committee to review credit scoring.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the Judiciary Committee held hearings on two bills, SB 208 and SB 375, both proposing to eliminate the death penalty. SB 375 would also create the crime of aggravated murder. The committee is scheduled to work both bills this Friday.

The committee also conducted hearings on SB 376 regarding the Kansas Judicial Review Act; SB 373 which clarifies what municipal ordinance violations require assessment payments; and SCR 1622, a state constitutional amendment that would repeal the Legislature's authority to ban individuals with mental illnesses from voting.

The Natural Resources Committee met Thursday to receive an update from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment on proposed Environmental Protection Agency regulations. In addition, there was a presentation on the

recommended burning of Flint Hills pastures.

The Public Health and Welfare Committee met to consider the appointments of Dr. Andrew Allison as executive director of the Kansas Health Policy Authority and Dr. William Reed to the board. The committee also held hearings on the appointments of Martin Kennedy as Secretary of the Department on Aging, Belinda Vierthaler as the long-term care ombudsman, and Scott Slabotsky to the Kansas University Hospital Authority. The committee reviewed the impact of new federal guidelines for mammography screening.

The Transportation Committee held a hearing on SB 295, which would establish the Motor Vehicle and Safe Mobility Committee to identify and make recommendations to the Kansas Department of Transportation on safeguards that ensure pedestrians, especially the blind and visually impaired, can hear motors of approaching vehicles, particularly hybrid vehicles.

The committee heard presentations on the InSureNet Vehicle Verification System by Jonathan Miller, president of InSureNet, and on the status of Transportation in Kansas by Secretary Deb Miller.

The Utilities Committee held an informational hearing on metro dialing, received an update of stimulus-funded energy efficiency programs by Tom Wright, acting chairman of the Kansas Corporation Commission, and reviewed the activities of utility interim committees.

The Ways and Means Committee held hearings on SB 350, the rescission bill on the current budget. The bill was amended into HB 2222 and is under consideration by the Senate. The committee also received an update on various audits by Barb Hinton with the Legislative Division of Post Audit and a review of the operations of the Kansas Health Policy Authority by Andy Allison, acting executive director.

I can be reached by writing to Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Street, Room 225-E, Topeka, Kan., 66612, or call (785) 296-7399. My e-mail address is Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov.