

We are striving for Energy independence

On the
Prairie Dog
Steve Haynes



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 Mr. 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 is changed. Today, we're beholden to North Dakota and Pennsylvania, which are sucking up much of the cash that used to go to 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.

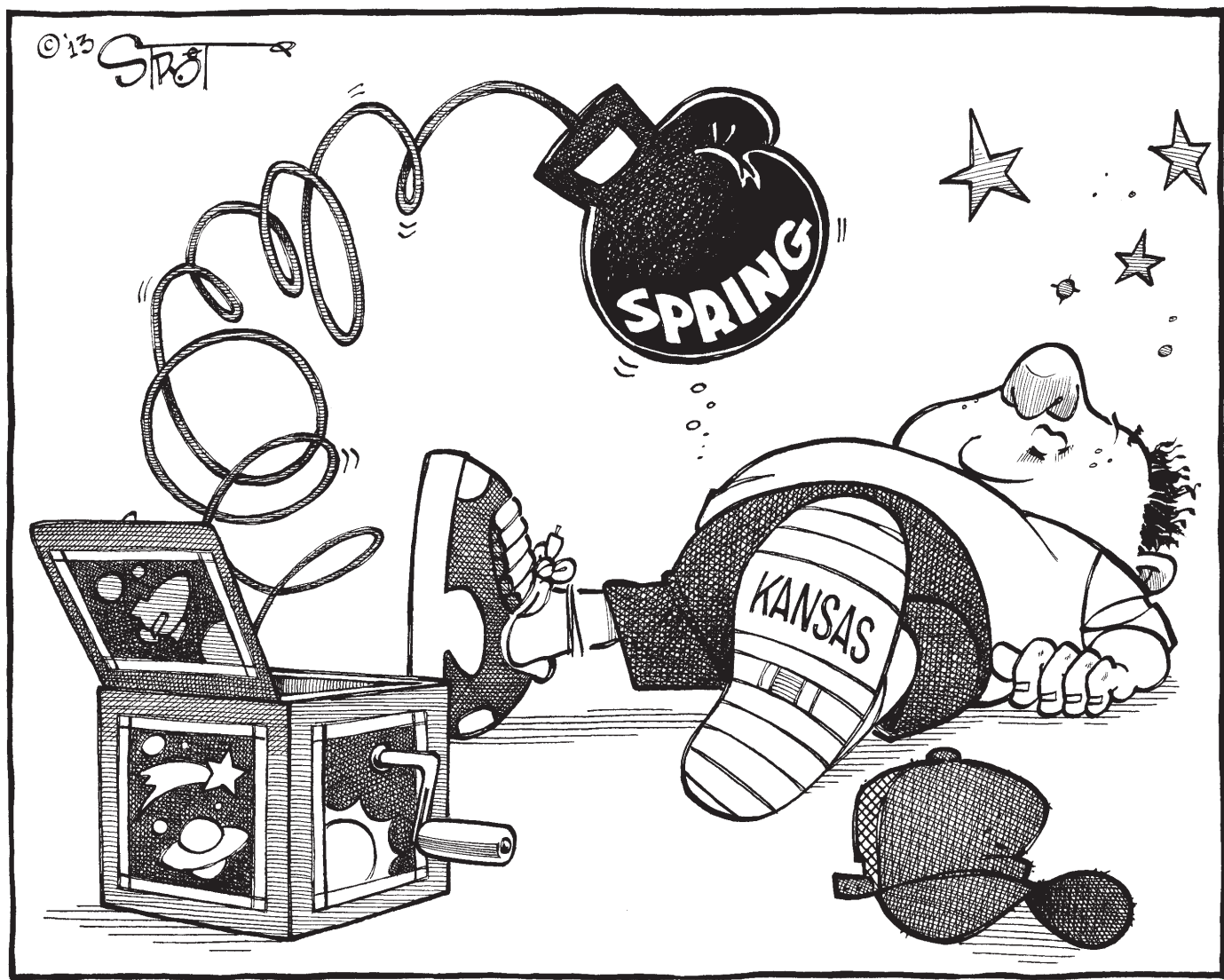
Natural gas is fairly cheap, but only because they haven't figured out how to export much of it yet. World demand is as high as ever. Oil is another story: expanding markets in Asia and Africa, including China and India, have taken up most of the new production. And the U.S. still imports a lot of oil,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



Education isn't what it used to be

Phase II
Mary Kay
Woodyard



When the counselor said to the group of 30-40 somethings, "High school isn't like it was when you were young."

I wanted to stand up and say, "If you think it is different from when these parents were in high school, you should be a grandparent."

Recently, because my son and daughter-in-law had to be out of town, I was the family representative to our grandson's Norton Community High School freshman orientation and I learned a lot.

For those of you who attended NCHS many years ago, Gerald Travis was our principal. He was a great principal. I admired him then and that hasn't dwindled with time. He was serious, all business, and yet most of us realized he wanted the best for us. His way of achieving that was to instill respect and an expectation of appropriate behavior. I think he smiled sometimes, but not very often. Did we behave? I didn't think there was a choice. But would his manner of leadership work with today's society? Doubtful.

Sometimes we all wish we could go back, but going back means the good

and the bad. It means the prejudice, the one size fits all type of learning and it was based in large part on fear. Our principals, mostly male, could be authoritarian because across the nation we were a patriarchal society. From having your knuckles whacked with a ruler in typing to correct your hand position to corporal punishment, school was different. I am not saying it was wrong...for then, but for now, well, that's another story.

Our society is different now. When we were kids, most families had two parents in the home. Most moms were stay-at-home career moms. If you got in trouble at school, further trouble awaited you at home. Families sat down together to eat dinner and households had one television, which everyone

shared, and one phone. And, of course, the family car.

As I said before, times are different. The crux of this orientation meeting was to help parents and their children navigate the high school environment. Counselor Shane Miller and Principal Rudy Perez covered subjects from incentive programs, study skills, college preparation and the importance of sustaining good grades all four years throughout the evening. But most of all what came through was this: We want your child to succeed. We want this to be a positive time and experience for each student and we are here to work with you, the parent, and with your child to accomplish this.

No, it may not be the same, but one thing is. Norton is known for providing youth with the best possible education of the time. We have always sought to have dedicated teachers and administrators. So soon another senior class will depart and a new group of freshman will enter. Life goes on, change and all. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Marriage is a personal matter, not one for the government

This Too
Shall Pass
Nancy
Hagman



We had a lovely Easter. Nice weather for the season's first bar-b-que Saturday night. Good times with all the family at church and Sunday dinner.

Elizabeth brought home a fellow and she let him read the column on marriage. I had a moment of doubt about my opinions: It was clear I am in favor of marriage, wasn't it?

Perhaps it was a bit over the top! Kate asked, "Do you ever get any death threats?" Well, not yet----

I've gotten some fan mail over the years, all nice.

People are usually very helpful. Last spring when I complained about dust in the house I got a call suggesting I have the duct work cleaned.

Some suggestions are less than helpful, i.e. "The best way to eliminate bats is to block the point of entry!" Trust me if I knew the point of entry I'd block it! Maybe we have, happily there has not been a bat in the house for five years!

I recently heard someone describing Libertarians and I realize my stance on marriage could be construed as Libertarian. I've always had the idea Libertarians were sort of fringe nut jobs. The truth hurts!

Last fall upon entry to Bill Snyder Family Stadium, I purchased a Football program. It is filled with what are intended to be flattering, heart-warming, inspirational stories.

There was a feature about KSU

quarterback Colin Klein and his new bride. They live a Christ-centered life and did not kiss until the wedding day. To a person, everyone in our party found it weird. In the summer when the wedding took place, KSU's instate rival sport's board blew up over it. The fans were cruel and insulting.

While I do not understand that level of hatred for the couple there is no doubt, by today's standards, the courtship was bizarre.

During the KSU-Baylor game, at Waco, the television announcers mentioned more than once that both quarterbacks were married. Their fixation on it was as odd as the Kleins courtship.

One of the KSU players was from Waco. The announcers pointed out how nice it was his family got to see him play. His family included a young child. No mention was made of how odd it was for a college football player to have a child. Wouldn't that mean he also had a wife? No mention was made of her.

We can only surmise that two married college quarterbacks are an anomaly; a

"love child" is the norm.

Later I read a story from Shalin Klein's perspective. To paraphrase: Every young person is faced with decisions regarding dating and marriage. Society does not necessarily support Biblical teaching in this regard. By telling their story, Colin and Shalin hoped to encourage others to remain true to their convictions.

After that I was chagrined about the judgments I made of this couple. I'm shocked at the abuse they suffered from other sources.

It is very telling when fans brag about the sexual exploits of their school's athletes. Issue press release about players missing practice to go home for the birth of their third child. Flash the kids on the Jumbo-Tron.

Our society feels threatened by gay marriage but ridicules heterosexuals who marry. It idolizes those who prove their sexual prowess by fathering out-of-wedlock children. It portrays those who believe in chastity as unsophisticated rubes.

All proving my original Libertarian premise: marriage is personal. Churches have the right to define it and decide what forms they accept. If it doesn't fit my definition I can go to church elsewhere. I only get to decide for myself, my daughters and their prospective spouses (just kidding)!

On this issue, government should not decide for anyone!

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