



# Opinion

## Community given chance to vote

Dear Editor,

The USD 297 school board has given our community the opportunity to vote on an issue that has been researched for many years.

The possibility of a new gym has intermittently been on their agenda for more than 20 years. I applaud the current board's decision to send this issue to the voters, in USD 297, on Nov. 4.

Earlier letters to the editor have addressed the safety issues of our student athletes and student athletes from visiting schools that either practice or participate in the grade school gym. These letters have already addressed the smaller dimensions of the grade school gym's effect on style of play on this court.

I concede that there will be opposition to this project. Our community is made up of a population of varying interests. There are always limited funds available during any time period for capital improvements within the community. A progressive community exhibits a well-balanced coordinated plan for the maintenance and improvement of these assets. There will always be questions as to the priority and need for any project.

Despite a declining population trend in our county, St. Francis still maintains a positive, aggressive attitude towards providing the best possible standard of living for our current residents.

We are also mindful that we must maintain a sense of viability and opportunity to attract our youth to return and new residents to come to our community. We have attractive business and residential districts in our town. We have maintained and improved our public buildings quite well. The appearance of the courthouse, city hall, library, and our schools are a testament to this commitment.

Recent additions and remodeling of the health care facilities in our county also demonstrate our focus on the future. The newest addition to the list of fine public buildings is the recently completed fire house/EMT building. The completion of this large project is proof of our spirit of volunteerism.

To maintain the balance of de-

### Letter to the Editor

velopment in our community, it is imperative that any new capital expenditure project is well planned and that it serves the needs of a cross section of residents. The new proposed community gym will meet these multi-purpose needs. These needs include:

Safe, adequate, convenient building for practice of sports and for public sporting events.

Dedicated public concession area for all fall, winter and spring sporting events.

A commons area available for use by community groups.

A walking track available to the community for year round exercise and wellness programs.

The potential for exclusive use of the grade school gym facility for current and additional elementary school activities.

A new public building's positive impression on new families, potential business owners and visitors from other communities.

The school administration and school board have been very open with the public regarding the need and use of this new facility in our community.

The superintendent, principal, staff and board members have provided information and answered questions regarding the bond election and proposed community gym to various groups and organizations.

The school web site has an excellent link to factual information regarding this project. This and other valuable information about our school can be viewed at [www.usd297.org](http://www.usd297.org). The community gym project can be found under "General Obligation Bond Election To be Held" at this site.

Some may question whether our school system over emphasizes extra-curricular activities, and for the parents and grandparents following their children's many activities, this may seem true. However, our school maintains a well-balanced educational opportunity for all our students.

The St. Francis Junior/Senior High School was recently awarded the Governor's Achievement Award for the 2006 - 2007 school year. This award is based on the performance of our students in the Kan-

sas Math and Reading Assessment exams. The St. Francis Junior/Senior High School was one of 19 out of more than 340 high schools to receive this award in the state of Kansas.

Our school is also well ahead of Kansas' current expectations for all its schools to meet the federally mandated No Child Left Behind program requirements by 2014. The St. Francis community is receiving an excellent return on tax expenditures to educate our students. Consider this, the governor's achievement award is given only to the top 5 percent of all the high schools in Kansas. Yet the St. Francis school district's total mill levy is one of the five lowest of all our neighboring 26 school districts in Region 9. We are getting more bang for our bucks.

Others may question why our school district would take on a \$2.5 million indebtedness with a history of and projected declining enrollment.

This is the same question faced by most rural school districts in Kansas, and for sure, all our neighboring 26 school districts in Region 9. In spite of this declining enrollment trend, over 30 percent of the school districts in Region 9 have some level of indebtedness for capital improvement. If the projected 6.25 mills to build the community gym were added to our existing mill levy, the USD 297 total mill levy would still be one of the lowest seven levies of the 26 neighboring school districts in Region 9.

The school board is wise in recommending that general obligation bonds finance this project. This reserves the use of the current and future capital outlay funds to maintain buildings, upgrade computers and improve the energy efficiency of the physical plants.

Please plan on attending the community forum at the high school auditorium on Thursday, Oct. 16 at 7:30 p.m. to learn more about this project.

By any means educate yourself and then vote on Nov. 4.

Sincerely,  
Tom Keller  
St. Francis

## Honor Roll

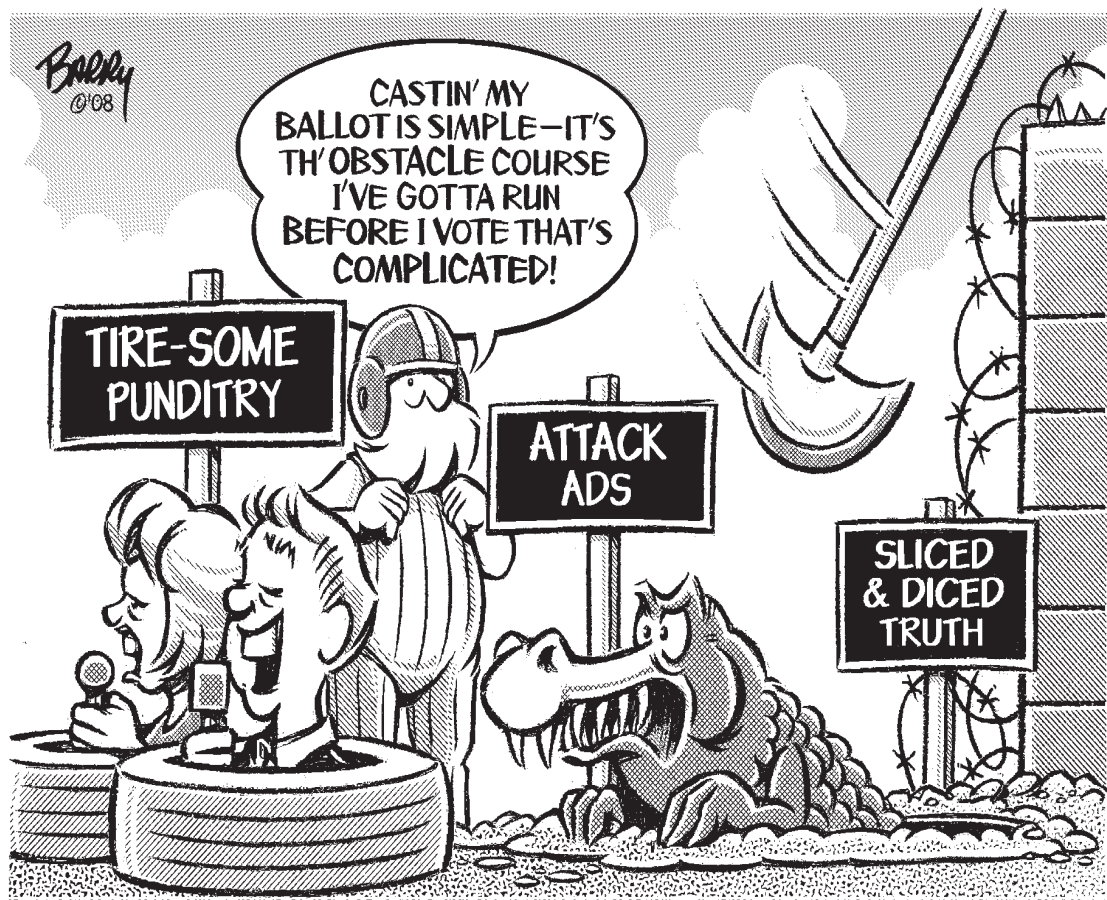
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## Hangin' With Marge

By Margaret Bucholtz



### Raising Kids

by Magaret Bucholtz  
margeb@cityofstfrancis.net

Babies are the greatest gift you can receive! Raising them is a job. They are like puppies. You know how it is when you get that new puppy and you get up in the night to see why it is crying and comfort it and then before you know it you have a dog that is under your feet tripping you and no longer do you want to hear it bark all night.

Babies do the same and grow into kids and kids turn into teenagers. Just when you are used to sleeping through the night, you get to start staying up and going out and looking for them. Worry about what they are doing and yes, every once in a while you have

that guilty thought of "Why did I bother to feed them as babies."

At one point in my life I had heard that one of my children was doing some fighting with other kids and I was really upset.

The night I heard it, I came home and immediately decided to go to town and look for him. Kurt being the level headed person he is told me just to stay home and if he wasn't home at his curfew time he would go to town.

I went to bed knowing that I wouldn't be able to sleep, but at least I would be a little rested when I went out looking.

Funny thing I fell asleep. The next thing I knew I heard someone in the bathroom heaving "Ralph"

on the porcelain pony. I jumped from my bed and ran down the hallway.

Our bathroom is so tiny that I could throw the toilet lid down and turn on the light at the same time. As I held the lid tightly I started in chewing him out.

It was then that I heard this weak little voice say, "Margaret, its me." I looked down and sure enough it was poor Kurt. He had gotten the flu and I hadn't heard him get up.

He told me that the kids were all home and then thanked me for not sitting on the stool lid like he thought I was going to.

## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



[scmcormick@nwkansan.com](mailto:scmcormick@nwkansan.com)  
This is the time of year when a few minutes of porch sitting is a welcome luxury.

The Autumn weather still hasn't kicked in, so the evenings are perfect and still. At sunset, when the skies look more like a colorful painting than the end to an ordinary day, the front porch is the place to be.

With the leaves taking on red and golden hues a neighbor or two waves as they also breathe in the beauty while they walk the quiet streets.

Sometimes we just lounge and take in the scenery. But often the kids stop for a moment to sit on the porch rail and tell us what's going on in their worlds.

Our days seem especially busy

with work and the three kids playing Fall sports. It's like every evening has a game to attend or some kind of function happening.

So when we can steal a few moments from our busy schedules, the front porch is the place we will be.



**GOD SAYS**  
And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.  
Luke 12:15



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332-2380, Pars. 332-3424  
502 W. Spencer  
Norman Morrow - Minister  
Bible Class 11 a.m.  
Morning Worship 10 a.m.  
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

**United Methodist**  
Church Office 332-2292,  
Church 332-2254,  
512 S. Scott  
Pastor Morita Truman  
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.

**Seventh-Day Adventist Church**  
785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams  
Pastor Jerry Nowack  
Sabbath School 9:30  
Morning Worship 10:45

**St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church**  
625 S. River • 332-2680  
Fr. Roger Meitl  
Sunday Mass 11:00 a.m.  
Weekday Mass 8 a.m.  
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

**Salem Lutheran Church**  
332-3002  
Pastor Chris Farmer  
Sunday School 10 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11 a.m.

**Solid Rock Baptist Church**  
412 S. Denison  
Welcomes You!  
Pastor Allen Coon  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30  
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

**First Christian Church**  
Pastor Jeff Landers  
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster  
Bible Fellowship 9:20 a.m.  
Church Service 10:30 a.m.

**First Baptist Church**  
2nd & Scott • 332-3921  
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,  
Wed. AWANA Club, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

**St. Francis Community Church**  
332-3150  
204 N. Quincy Street  
[www.sfccfamily.com](http://www.sfccfamily.com)  
Pastor: David Butler  
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.  
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.  
Potluck & Communion - Every 2nd Sunday  
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

**Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC**  
202 N. College  
Pastor Ken Hart  
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday Eve. Bible Study 7 p.m.  
Communion 1st Sunday of the month

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