

Opinion

A Kansas Viewpoint



Indifferences start to add up

From The Garden City Telegram
 Connie Morris called it an oversight. Responding to an inquiry into the lack of western Kansans on new Education Commissioner Bob Corkins' transition team evaluating the Department of Education, Morris — a State Board of Education member from St. Francis — also said it was difficult to recruit western Kansans to travel to Topeka.

Perhaps Morris missed news that Garden City Mayor Janie Perkins recently was appointed to the Kansas Board of Regents and is among a number of local residents willing to head east to represent this part of the state.

Sadly, finding a Corkins transition team participant from her district didn't warrant as much consideration from Morris as a recent swing through western Kansas, in which she and Corkins visited 12 communities.

Few of their 30-minute stops were at schools. A political pitch for charter schools and increased competition for public schools — not a look at current school operations — was the priority. Educators understandably were frustrated by that indifference, which presented yet another reason for a new organization to pursue ousting Morris and three other BOE conservatives up for re-election in 2006.

The Kansas Alliance for Education, chaired by Don Hineman of Dighton, hopes to replace the four with more moderate members. ...

The Alliance, spurred by BOE conservatives' irresponsible move to downplay evolution and clear the way for intelligent design and other religious beliefs in science classes, also opposed conservatives' choice in Corkins, who had no professional education experience and lobbied against public school interests.

Hineman and fellow alliance members are among many Kansans who want to unseat the four BOE conservatives set on promoting a right-wing political agenda.

And in replacing them, hopefully return the BOE focus to where it belongs: on what's best for the state's public schools and students.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkansan.com or pdecker@nwkansan.com.

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- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us



Remember Kansas for your holiday gifts

The holiday spirit is in full swing and, like many others in Colby and across the country, I am dusting off the ornaments and other holiday knick-knacks, while humming, "It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas . . ."



Patty Decker

- Deep Thoughts

Maybe not everybody is humming Christmas songs, but for me, this is the greatest time of the year. In fact, I even splurged and bought a lighted necklace.

It's really cool — but, then again — once I start wearing it, I might need to tone down those flashing lights.

Being a procrastinator, though, there's still a lot of presents I need to find for family and friends — so — while I am thinking about it, I thought I would share some ideas.

In the baking department, Colby has many stores with specialty mixes for classic desserts — as does Hutchinson for bread pudding or hot fudge cake or muffin mixes from a muffin factory in McPherson.

While browsing through the mail at the office, I ran across a lot of gift ideas that are made right here in Kansas. Of course, the Prairie Museum of Art and History and many other locations around Colby offer some unique ideas as well.

Although I cannot believe I am talking about food so soon after Thanksgiving, another item I read about was an authentic Croatian bread called *Povitica* that is available at a bakery in Lenexa or three flavors of Bengali chutneys from a place in Lawrence.

Afer all, buying products manufactured, grown, processed, or handcrafted in Kansas for holiday gifts or for entertaining is a great way to support our state's small businesses.

As I mentioned before, the museum has a lot of things that would be great stocking stuffers, food items, etc. If you haven't visited the museum in a long time or any of the many other businesses around town — it might be fun to look in "our own backyard."

Here was another interesting food idea for the nature lover in all of us — Bird City Seed — oddly enough located in Bird City.

This seed is not for human consumption, but I am told they make birdseed ornaments. It could be the perfect gift for someone with everything — or maybe for one of our favorite outdoor feathered friends.

For those having a few guests over for the holidays — it could be made even better with a meat and cheese tray featuring Kansas products.

I also ran across some other mail giving advice on spending money or not spending money.

Here are some suggestions for those of us who may not have lots of money to throw around for Christmas.

A couple of ideas I read about included Emporia for summer sausages and Lindsborg for cheeses.

The tips were provided by Dr. David Bennett, a developmental psychologist at Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics.

As he put, we need to turn those negatives into positives during the holiday season. For example,

- It's OK for children to know that times are tough. While they may feel financially deprived, they should not feel emotionally deprived or loved any less.
 - Remember your time is a gift. Bake cookies with your child; read a story together.
 - Keep the traditions you can afford. You probably can still afford to decorate the house together or have a traditional holiday breakfast.
 - Have your children look through their old toys to see what they can give to someone else.
 - Give your child a gift you know he or she will love, not the one the advertisements say kids love.
 - Even people who are experiencing financial stress can find that volunteering is food for their spirits. An example might include volunteering your family to serve a holiday meal at a food kitchen or shelter.
 - Practical items can become gifts. If your daughter needs a new winter coat, wrap it up and put it underneath the tree.
 - Give your kids a game they can share with each other or with the entire family.
 - Remember that books are lasting, non-breakable presents. Read them to younger kids for a bonus gift.
- As our families become more and more excited about the holidays, we all need to create a "thankful attitude" and when we do, it's just too hard to be down or depressed.
- Have fun getting ready this season! And . . . watch for me in my lighted necklace.
- Patty Decker is editor of the Free Press.*

Your turn

Thanks for the honor

Mike Baughn
 Thomas County Sheriff

I would like to publicly thank Father Dana, the Blus Mass and reception Sunday, Nov. 20.

The service was a blessing to me and the members of my office who were able to participate.

The thanks tendered us for our service and protection was truly appreciated and having the mass at the Thanksgiving holiday was especially meaningful to us. I trust that our service to the Thomas County community to be worthy of their recognition.

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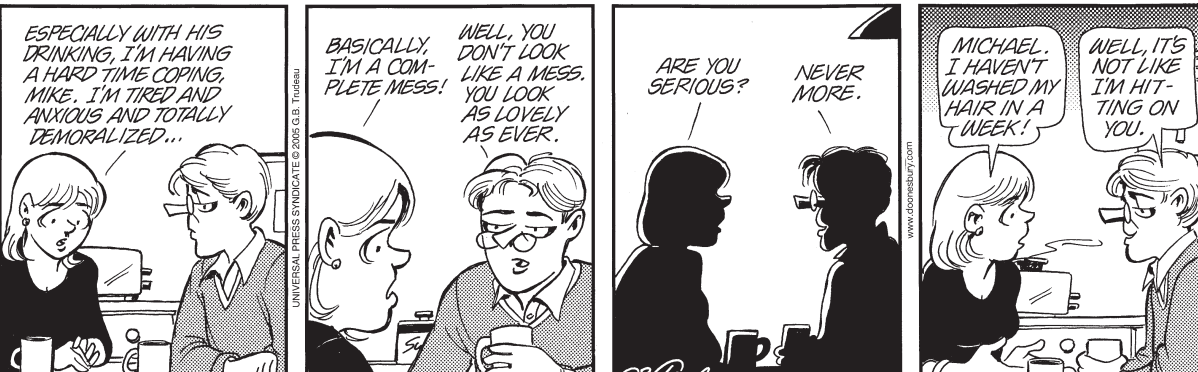
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Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau



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