

# Keep reading this column for gas updates, Kline says

Dear Attorney General Kline: What can you do to help with the high cost of filling my gas tank? Dear Kansas Consumer: Thank you for your question. It's one our office, and Attorneys General across the country, are hearing more and more as gasoline prices rise to near \$3.00 per gallon once again.

Even worse, the peak summer driving may bring prices to near \$4 per gallon.

The Kansas Consumer Protection Act provides broad protections against unconscionable pricing in general, not just for gasoline. An "unconscionable" price is, in simplest terms, a price that is far beyond what the current market conditions would justify.

Just last fall I met with representatives of gas wholesalers and retailers from across the state to advise them that my office would aggressively investigate any allegations of price gouging in the aftermath of the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina.

You may also recall that this office took action against many gasoline retailers following the immediate and radical price increases that occurred in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

While the amount of price increase under those circumstances was less than what had historically been viewed by Kansas courts as "unconscionable", the special circumstances of that event justified our position.

Since that time the Kansas legislature has passed laws intended to curtail any such future activity. I want to reassure Kansas consumers that the Office of Attorney General is prepared to litigate when gasoline prices rise without sufficient market forces having driven them up.

That being said, most economists opine that in normal market conditions fluctuations of ten, twenty or even thirty cents in the price of a gallon of gasoline is not rare. Such market fluctuations can be the result of threats to the supply or increases in demand.

We have all felt that pain. With instability in the Middle East and China buying oil futures, that pain is likely to stay with us for quite some time.

## Chess school looking for new director

WICHITA (AP) — The Russian immigrant who turned Lindsborg into a center for international chess has left the helm of the well-known chess school he brought to the small Kansas town.

Now the nonprofit group that took over ownership of the financially struggling school earlier this year is seeking another visionary to keep the dream alive.

The Anatoly Karpov School of Chess has formed a search committee to find a director to replace Mikhail Korenman, who has moved to Chicago to be with his family, said Wes Fisk, a board member for the International Chess Institute of the Midwest, the nonprofit group that now operates the Lindsborg school.

"The school was definitely his idea and his baby. He does have a lot of passion. Basically you have to have someone with his talent and his connections working almost 14-hour days to make this thing work," Fisk said. "That kind of passion and dedication is hard to come by."

Korenman left a distinctively Russian mark on the central Kansas community of Lindsborg, which bills itself as the "Little Sweden" of the United States. For decades it has touted its Scandinavian heritage with traditional festivals, foods and folk art. But since the chess school opened, local shops have added Russian food and drinks favored by Korenman and the many Russian chess giants who traveled here.

Korenman has drawn some of the world's most talented chess players to the town of 3,200 people, about 70 miles north of Wichita. Along the way, the city's reputation spread globally as a training ground for young students of the game.

But school's finances could not keep up with Korenman's dreams.

"Financially, we are probably going to be OK for, I would think, at least a year," Fisk said.



**Phill Kline**

• Consumer Corner

Most Kansans realize this market reality.

Most of the complaints received by my Consumer Protection Division about the price of gasoline reflect one of the following three concerns:

1. Why do gasoline prices rise so quickly, but fall so slowly?
2. Why is gas selling higher in some small Kansas towns than in the larger cities?
3. Do gas station owners conspire on the prices they charge for gasoline?

These are all fine questions. I am scheduling meetings with leaders in the Kansas gasoline distribution network to discuss these concerns. I am also taking part in the National Association of Attorney Generals fact-finding missions designed to put similar questions to the national and international gasoline refiners.

My Consumer Protection Division will closely review the Federal Trade Commission's report on gasoline pricing that is slated for release mid-May. That report will likely address all three of these concerns.

President George Bush has asked the Attorneys General of the fifty states to aid the federal government in addressing the gasoline pricing issue, and I intend to do just that. Keep reading the Consumer Corner for updates on this important subject.

Call my Consumer Protection Consumer Information Line at (785) 296-2424, category 8, message 4, for more on gasoline pricing. Report any concerns about gasoline content or measuring devices to the fine technicians at the Division of Weights and Measures by calling (785) 862-2415.

*Editor's note: Attorney General Phill Kline offers this public service to help people avoid becoming victims of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints.*

For further information or to file a complaint, write Attorney General Phill Kline, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th Ave., 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Garage Sales

**405 N. Franklin Ave.** Friday only 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. Rummage sale - dressers, bed, baby items, lots of misc. — 4/27 —

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**350 E. Plum St.** Friday 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. Saturday 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. Name brand toddler girls clothes, size 8 - 14 girls and boys clothes, toys, Coca-Cola decor, Stampin-Up stamps, printer, all size bedding, Boyds Bears. 3 family sale. — 4/27 & 4/28 —

**165 N. Lake St.** Thursday and Friday 1:00 - 6:00 p.m. Saturday 8:00 a.m. - noon. Furniture, kitchen items, lots of misc. — 4/27 & 4/28 —

**940 E. 9th St.** Friday 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. Saturday 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. Crib, baby items, filing cabinets, marble-top coffee table, dining table, children's bikes, toys, clothes, books, videos, misc. — 4/26 - 4/28 —

**1625 S. Franklin Ave.** Prairie Senior Living Complex. Thursday 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Friday 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Scholastic book sale Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Proceeds go to benefit PSLC residents. — 4/26 & 4/27 —

**1/8 miles W. of Colby Hwy 24.** Friday 4/28 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Saturday 4/29 8:00 a.m. - noon. Moving & garage sale: Girls clothes size 6-12, car seat, toys, furniture, bedding, crib, adult clothes, exercise equip., antiques, misc. items. — 4/24 - 4/28 —

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