

Opinion

Another Viewpoint



Exxon Mobil treats its CEO right

By Jim Hightower
Did you make \$144,000 last year? Only 2 percent of Americans are paid that amount of money for a year's work, but Lee Raymond is one of the lucky ones. Until he retired last December, Lee was CEO of ExxonMobil for 13 years. Oh, mind you, he wasn't paid \$144,000 a year...or even a month... or for a week's worth of work.

Lee took \$144,000 in pay each and every day of his 13 years at the helm. He drew this daily pay even on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. His total haul during his 13-year tenure was \$686 million.

And now we learn that Lee has been given another sweet dollop of largesse by ExxonMobil. Instead of a gold watch and a pat on the back, Lee was given a pension package worth \$400 million. Factor in this wad, and Raymond walked away with the equivalent of \$229,000 a day for his years as CEO. Assuming he worked eight hours every day, that's \$28,000 an hour!

An official Exxon statement said simply that this kingly sum was a fair reward for Lee's "outstanding leadership of the business." Well, yes, ExxonMobil flourished during the Raymond years, especially at the end of his term — and the executive suite at corporate headquarters even was dubbed "The God Pod."

But corporate governance experts note that the company's success was not due to any god-like genius by Raymond, but to easy profits generated by the windfall rise in oil and gasoline prices. Exxon's oil wells pump out more crude every day than Kuwait's, and it is the world's largest refiner of gasoline — so it's wallowing in profits from both its wells and its gas pumps.

So remember, every gallon of ExxonMobil gasoline you buy will be pumping a little more of your cash right into Lee Raymond's pockets.

Jim Hightower is the best-selling author of "Thieves In High Places: They've Stolen Our Country And It's Time To Take It Back."

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. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

Where to write, call

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- 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



This is no horse play

I sat down the afternoon of June 10 to watch the Belmont Stakes, mainly out of habit after what happened to Barbaro during the Preakness.

First race was the Acorn, a stakes race for 3-year-old fillies. I turned the channel to the race just in time to see the horses being loaded into the starting gate.

As they were getting ready to start, the No. 5 filly Miraculous Miss reared and flipped in the gate. She got stuck underneath, and was flailing and kicking trying to get free. The fillies on either side were immediately pulled from the gate, and Wonder Lady Anne L, along with Miraculous Miss, were scratched from the race.

Thankfully, the filly didn't appear to be injured, mainly spooked from the ordeal.

The race went off without a hitch after that, and later, so did the Belmont itself.

Since the Preakness and the national broadcast of what could have been Barbaro's last moments, horse racing has come under a lot of scrutiny.

I read an article in Sports Illustrated that detailed how many horses are put down each year from catastrophic injuries, and just what is being done to make the sport safer.

Much is being done — like changing track surfaces to cut down on injury. Barbaro's surgery itself has shown that such efforts are making a difference.

The bottom line is horse racing is a billion dollar industry in the United States and that's not going to change.

In 2005, the Jockey Club, the governing body of thoroughbred racing and the registry for the breed, commissioned a study on the impact of the industry nationwide.

It turns out that it's a \$101 billion industry. That's right \$101 billion. Stunning? Yes. That includes the value of the horses them-



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

selves, the farms, feed, salaries, trucks, fuel — everything.

I majored in animal science at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater before changing my major to journalism. I had the intention of going into the equine industry and learned how much of an impact the industry has in one state.

It's amazing, and the industry has no less impact in Kansas. Even the backyard horse owner contributes — with the trickle down from hauling a horse to a 4-H show or the vet.

While the equine industry has a huge financial impact nationwide, it also has its downside.

The attention paid in the past three weeks to how dangerous horse racing can be proves that.

Two weeks ago, a colt in the English Derby was put down after breaking a leg, one of hundreds who die each year.

Barbaro's owners have thrown their support behind legislation banning the slaughter of horses for food. Many thoroughbreds end up going to slaughter after their careers are over — those that are too broken down for any other purpose, the unwanted, or horses with a less than viable economic future.

I think the horse racing industry deserves some understanding, and needs to educate the public on just how horses are raised and trained

for the track. It's not just about going to the track and making a bet. Life and death are on the line for the horses and jockeys each time they step onto the track.

I understand people may not want to know, but they need to know that so far, the industry has made it as safe as it can be, given current technology. The horses themselves are an unknown quantity. Like with Barbaro, one never knows when an otherwise healthy 3-year-old will take a misstep, and break a leg.

I think that could be part of the problem. At 3, horses are nowhere physically mature.

They have the size and muscle of a full-grown horse, but they are not done growing. Their bones have not reached their full strength either.

A few years ago, the American Quarter Horse Association was dealing with a problem where many 5-, 6- and 7-year-old animals were broken down before their time. They were not unridable, but lame and with chronic problems.

Research showed many of the animals were shown and ridden hard at 2- and 3-years-old, an age when the growth plates in the front legs have not matured.

They raised the showing age a year and so far, the problem has become less widespread.

All it took was a little concern and a little research.

I'm not saying things will change overnight, but with diligence and perseverance, things can change.

After all, doesn't a species that gave humanity flight without wings deserve that much?

Tisha Cox is a reporter for the Colby Free Press.

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

John Van Nostrand - Publisher
jvannostrand@nwkansan.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansan.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcx@nwkansan.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkansan.com

Jasmine Crotinger - Advertising Sales
jasminec@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwkansan.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701. THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association. **SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$38, 8 months \$53, 12 months \$70. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$50, 8 months \$62, 12 months \$78. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$57, 8 months \$67, 12 months \$81. All other states, \$81, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company

Your turn

Thanks for a great day

Virginia Hopper Colby

What a perfect day for picnic in the park last Thursday.

The lunch provided by the Mothers of PreSchoolers was delightful. Thank you for such good family entertainment. The MOPS group and the Trinity Lutheran Thrivent Group were

acting together providing a Join Hands Day project where the generations learn to work together and enhance the lives of many.

Wasn't the group showing an appreciation to all in attendance for a lovely experience?

I am looking forward to the next performance. Thank you very much to the Mothers of PreSchoolers.

Hildyard needs help

**David Jennings
Judith Sears
Terry Cousins
Colby**

Many people throughout the area have asked what they can do to help Dr. Victor Hildyard regarding his hearing with the Kansas Board of Healing Arts.

In response to this request, a fund for Dr. Hildyard has been established at Peoples State Bank in Colby to help defray legal expenses.

Contribution to the Legal Defense Fund for Dr. Hildyard may be dropped off at any Peoples State Bank location or mailed to Peoples State Bank, P.O. Box 869, Colby, KS 67701.

We encourage those of you who support Dr. Hildyard to join us in our efforts to help. We may not have the political contacts in Topeka or the deep pockets to buy his exoneration, but by joining together we can make a difference, and someday have a hospital that is truly a "citizens" hospital, where the physician of our choice can practice and attend to us when we need care the most.

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have questions or suggestions.

David Jennings(785) 460-6324 home(785) 462-6361 work

Judith Sears460-7793

Terry Cousins(785) 443-3350

Mallard fits the bill

We have showed you what we can get and you have responded.

Mallard Fillmore will replace Doonesbury as our opinion page comic starting today.

For the past few weeks we have sampled Mallard Fillmore, along with Doonesbury. But we heard more from Mallard Fillmore fans than Doonesbury fans to keep Mallard Fillmore.

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

