

# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### Not a sealed deal

**From the Topeka Capital-Journal**

Good news for cattle ranchers, and therefore good news for the state of Kansas: Japan announced it will call off its ban on imported American beef.

But some Americans see themselves as Charlie Brown, who in the “Peanuts” comic strip, was fooled every year by Lucy, who promised to hold the football so Charlie Brown could punt it. Every year she pulled it away and Charlie Brown landed flat on his back.

The Japanese on again-off again ban has cost the U.S. beef industry more than \$3 billion in sales since it was first imposed in 2003.

If the Japanese are satisfied with their inspections of American processing plants over the next few weeks, Japan could resume importing U.S. beef by late July.

Some in Congress, including Kansas’ own Sen. Pat Roberts, are skeptical the Japanese are serious. They have introduced legislation requiring the Treasury Department to impose tariffs on Japanese exports if Japan fails to reopen its market to U.S. beef by Aug. 31.

That seems not to be a customer-friendly tactic. The Japanese have been tough customers to deal with, but it appears we have made the sale. Why take a threatening posture now?

### Your turn Holton’s gain

**Fawna Haremza McFee Colby**

Just a note to say I am so sorry that we are losing from our community, the Beims family, in what appears to me to have been poorly handled situation.

He is a good high school teacher, one the young people certainly respected. He is a very good wrestling coach, a good community worker and supporter, while his wife works in the medical community. We want young people in our communities and then we drive them out

I, for one, am sure sorry. Mitch and Courtney, however, I certainly wish you the best. I know that Colby’s loss will definitely be Holton’s gain.

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](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansan.com) or [pdecker@nwkansan.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansan.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

#### Where to write, call

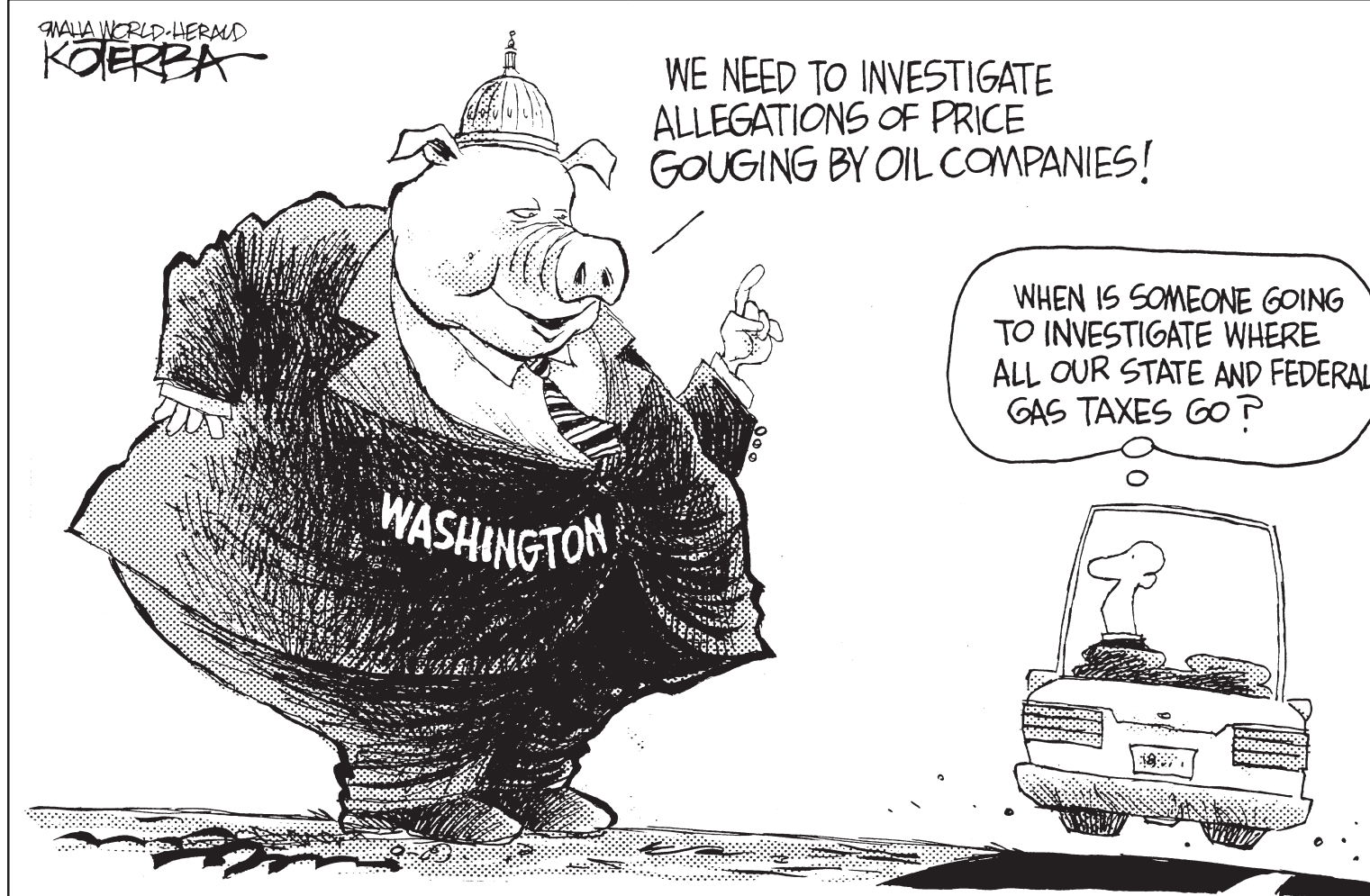
**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774

**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](mailto:jmorrison@ink.org) web: [www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison](http://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](mailto:ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us)



### At the end of the games

Kind of crazy what people will do.

But at least some of those people know when to say when.

People are still talking about Colby KQLS radio station’s hands-on-marathon held last week. Twelve people were selected to place a hand on a hot tub in an effort to win the tub. Rules were pretty simple when the event started Thursday. Last person to have their hand on the tub, and still standing, wins the tub.

Jeff Harlow won, not long after sunrise Sunday. But the last moments before he won were the real story.

Station General Manager Mike Fell asked me to be a judge the first few hours. Judges had to make sure contestants were following the rules.

Mike said he has heard other stations have similar promotions and he wanted to try it. In the late 1990s, an Omaha, Neb., station once did the same thing, but with a new SUV. Six people sat in the car and the contest lasted days longer than KQLS’ event.

One of the nation’s, biggest, unusual contests of recent years happens Tuesday at Nathan’s Famous hot dog restaurant in Brooklyn, N.Y. It is a hot-dog eating contest.

For the past five years Takeru Kobayashi of Japan has won. Last year he threw down 49 dogs, with buns, in 12 minutes. He only weighs 144 pounds. The contest was once televised by ESPN, the sports network giant. Brooklyn is on a hot-dog eating contest circuit.

Food-eating contests are becoming popular, including a committee overseeing the contests that have prizes in the thousands of dollars.

**John Van Nostrand**

- Line in the Dust

Not a contest, but I have heard of restaurants offering like a 5-pound hamburger with all the trimmings at a proportionate size. If the person eats it all in a determined amount of time, they get the meal for free, their name on some plaque and used in an advertisement.

I can’t really complain about those kind of contests considering I have been involved in one.

In Iowa, a Girl Scout district starts Girl Scout cookie season with a cookie-eating contest. The contest, which I have been a participant, is staged in the middle of a Des Moines mall where hundreds of people watch. I made it to the championship round.

We also sometimes just like to have certain things. Games are not required.

About every Christmas, there is usually some rush of people at a store to purchase the hottest toy of the season. People line up at the front door in the middle of the night, only to run over the store manager when he opens the door, and maybe get ran over by the people behind them on the way to the shelves.

I wonder how many of those toys end up as a family heirloom or in a yard sale.

People always seem to have the time and money for what they want. Some people have also replaced their hearts with their wants.

But what happened on the front lawn of Colby’s radio station has a silver lining. Three contestants dropped out within the first 24 hours. At sunset Saturday, 48 hours into it, there were four contestants left. Reasons for people being disqualified ranged from leg failure to being distracted by flies or their hand-held techno-toys.

The ninth contestant fell out of the race at about 1:45 a.m. Sunday. Contestant number 10 quit at about 7 a.m. leaving only Jeff Harlow and Chad Zimmerman.

Fell was back judging at the hot tub Sunday morning. Harlow and Zimmerman told Fell they had enough and were wondering if they could decide the winner by a flip of a coin. Fell agreed.

Seconds after the coin landed, Harlow knew he could land in the hot tub. Zimmerman was awarded a Colorado vacation prize.

The contest was a hit for KQLS considering the talk by listeners in the station’s reception area.

Trying to win hot tubs or new cars is an escape from our daily lives and struggles of finding new tires for the car, watering the tomato plants and making it to our kids’ T-ball games.

But Fell put it appropriately.

“Those guys knew they had lives to get back too,” he said.

*John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press*

### What are we thinking?

One might think John Kerry was in charge of the Democratic delegation to Capital Hill. All they do is whine, cry and wring their hands until someone else does something, then claim it was their stolen idea all along.

The latest foolishness concerns Gen. George Casey’s proposals concerning possible troop reductions by 2007, which Democratic leaders say are simply a politically motivated rehashing of their own proposals. They are half-right.

General Casey’s visit is politically motivated. Anyone who can’t see that is truly blind. And his proposals are rehashed as well. They are the same thing the administration has been saying since shortly after Baghdad fell. The general basically said that we will leave as soon as the situation is stable enough to do so.

Will we be able to do it? I don’t know. There have been a lot of mistakes made both in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the Democratic Party has yet to come up with a solution to any of them. In fact, most of their suggestions will make the situation worse.

As long as we are infidels in the Muslim Holy Land, we are going to be hated. Rep. John Murtha’s (D-Pa.) idea to pull back to Kuwait is simply returning to the policy that got us attacked five years ago, putting American troops on Arab soil.

Murtha may have been a good Marine, but he is determined to fight and lose Vietnam all over again.

Anything that gives the insurgency a timeline is also doomed to failure. All they have to do is outwait us and then hit us while we are leaving until the perception, and perhaps the reality, is that we are running away with our tail between our legs.

The only answer is to win and the only way to win is to frighten the insurgents more than they frighten the people. We have got to be meaner, tougher and smarter. Only then can we win the confidence of the Iraqi people.

You see, they don’t have to like us, want us there, or even agree with us, but they do have to trust us to always take out the bad guy and all of his friends, wherever, whenever and whoever they happen to be. When that happens, the bad guys, have no place to hide and their days are numbered. Failure to do that has been our biggest mistake.

Frederick the Great said that cabinet wars, are best fought out of sight and perhaps he was right.

**Jay Kelley**

- Speaking MyMind

I think our troops are all up to the job, but all the hand-wringing on the home front every time our sensibilities are offended is costing us this war.

Don’t think for a minute that Al Qaeda and all the other nutcases out there are not watching CNN, Fox News and whatever other channel they can get.

Don’t think they don’t hear the reports of failed recruiting goals and take that to mean we are unwilling to fight. Don’t tell me about your willingness to fight somewhere else. We are at war in Iraq and that is where we had better be willing to fight.

Don’t think they don’t see the politicization of the court-marshals and think we are soft. We know their own manual tells them to claim torture immediately after capture and yet we still give them air time.

Maybe we shouldn’t wonder why they think we are stupid.

This is not Mr. Bush’s war anymore than it was Mr. Lincoln’s war or Mr. Roosevelt’s war. It is our war and we had better win.

If we are not willing to win, then we had better just run, because that is what we’ll be doing for the rest of our (short) future.

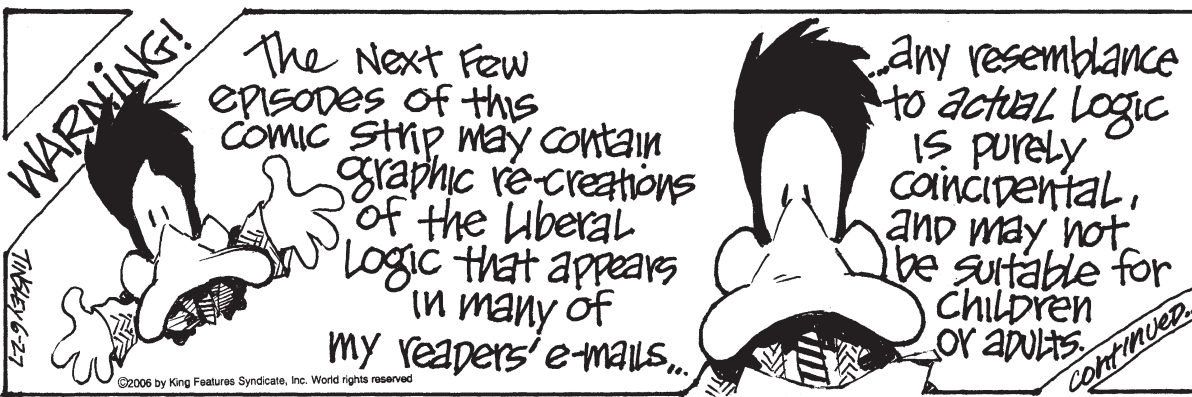
*Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is [jkelly@st-tel.net](mailto:jkelly@st-tel.net).*

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### Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley



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