

Opinion

Free Press Viewpoint



Gasoline and heat won't be alone

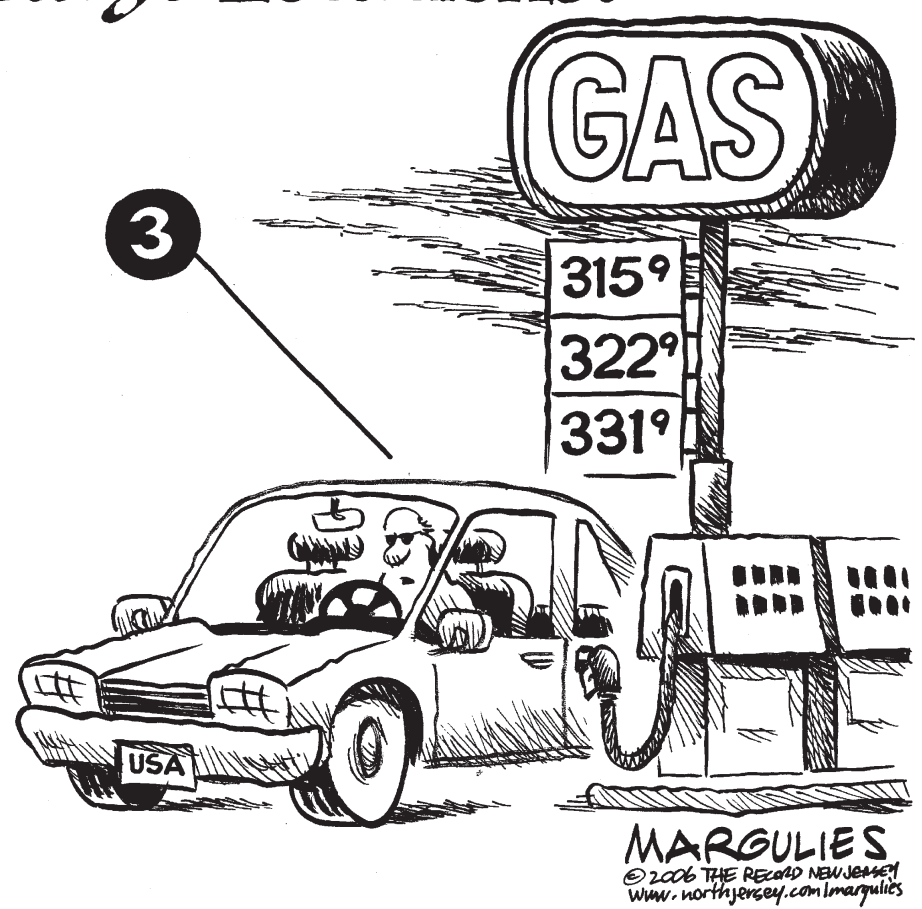
Enjoy this summer because next summer should be worse. Summer 2007 won't be stressed by just the price of gasoline, which could be \$4 a gallon by then, or stretches of 100-plus degree days. It will be the presidential candidates drumming up support while crossing the country. Here in Kansas, we already have had a tiny sample of what it will be like. Hours after Jim Barnett won Tuesday's primary to face incumbent Kathleen Sebelius for governor in November's election, commercials were being aired and promotional material was in the mail. But the race for president will be 10 times worse and more intense. More attack ads, probably worse than the ones in 2004, will be every other commercial on the TV and radio. With the caucuses and primaries starting in early 2008, the Democrats will get their names out in mid to late summer 2007. Democrat Howard Dean was in Iowa, the first state to have a caucus, in early August 2003. That started the flood of other Democrat candidates and accusations against George W. Bush. The Republicans will probably be doing the same thing next August, but the battle will be more within. Who will the GOP want to replace Bush? Expect your TV news and bigger newspapers to have story after story about how the Democrats think they can fix the problems George W. created. The Republicans' platform will be just to tweak what the GOP has done in its leadership since the November 2004 election. The overhyped immigration stories now may also have a different angle by next year. Rather than hear politicians complain how immigration is hurting America, their spin could easily be how to make the American citizenship process easier - just to make those people eligible to vote. Enjoy this summer while you still can. — John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press

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@nwks.com or pdecker@nwks.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the Free Press.

Where to write, call

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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: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

Mideast Hostage Locations:



What do you think?

For the last few months, the Free Press has sampled a variety of cartoons and columnists. The reason for doing so was to offer you a variety of new material for your enjoyment. But, by the end of August, we will be making final decisions on what to keep or what to add. Consequently, we really want to hear from you. We have received a couple of verbal responses asking us to keep *Dear Abby* and the bridge column, while other written letters have indicated change.



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

Although this is an informal survey, we are keeping track of responses and look forward to knowing what our readers' likes and dislikes are. For example, in the spring and early summer, we sampled *Todd the Dinosaur*, *Retail* and *Baby Blues* in the cartoon feature lineup and a poker column to complement bridge. In the last couple of weeks, we switched out *Todd the Dinosaur*, *Retail* and *Baby Blues* and inserted *Mutts*, *Mother Goose and Grim*, and now and then the cartoon, *Crankshaft*. In addition to those, we have sampled other columnists to include *Dan Rather*, *Maria Elena Salinas* and more recently, *Help Me Harlan!*, *Dear Seventeen* and *Dr. Joyce Brothers*. E-mail responses are also welcome to either pdecker@nwks.com or jvannostrand@nwks.com

Speaking of change, it's been great seeing the cooler weather the last day or so. Maybe it's age, but I sure don't enjoy the heat as much as I used to. When I was younger, I can remember sunbathing on our roof and being burnt to a crisp. Not the brightest bulb in the box, but age and many sunburns later, I don't do that anymore. I strayed somewhat off the point with the sunburn story because my main reason for mention-

ing change and heat was to say hotter temperatures usually mean hotter tempers. Not that everyone reacts that way. Here's some true quotes I found that deserve a second look.

- It's no exaggeration to say that the undecideds could go one way or another — George Bush, US President
- "The word "genius" isn't applicable in football. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein," — Joe Theisman, NFL football quarterback & sports analyst.
- "If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure." — Bill Clinton, President
- "Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances." — Department of Social Services, Greenville, S.C.
- "If somebody has a bad heart, they can plug this jack in at night as they go to bed and it will monitor their heart throughout the night. And the next morning, when they wake up dead, there'll be a record." — Mark S. Fowler, FCC Chairman
- "Whenever I watch TV and see those poor

starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry. I mean I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff." — Mariah Carey

- "Smoking kills. If you're killed, you've lost a very important part of your life." — Brooke Shields, during an interview to become spokesperson for a federal anti-smoking campaign.
- "I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body." — Winston Bennett, University of Kentucky
- "Outside of the killings, Washington has one of the lowest crime rates in the country," — Mayor Marion Barry, Washington, D.C.
- "Half this game is 90 percent mental." — Philadelphia Phillies manager, Danny Ozark
- "It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it." While reading through some of older articles and letters from friends, I ran across this one that I thought was interesting. Pay special attention to how it is written. Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervstiy, it deosn't mttaeer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total mse and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihis is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. amzanig huh? Enjoy the fair parade Saturday. — Decker is editor of the Free Press. Her column appears on Fridays.

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Former Starbucks chief says keep estate tax

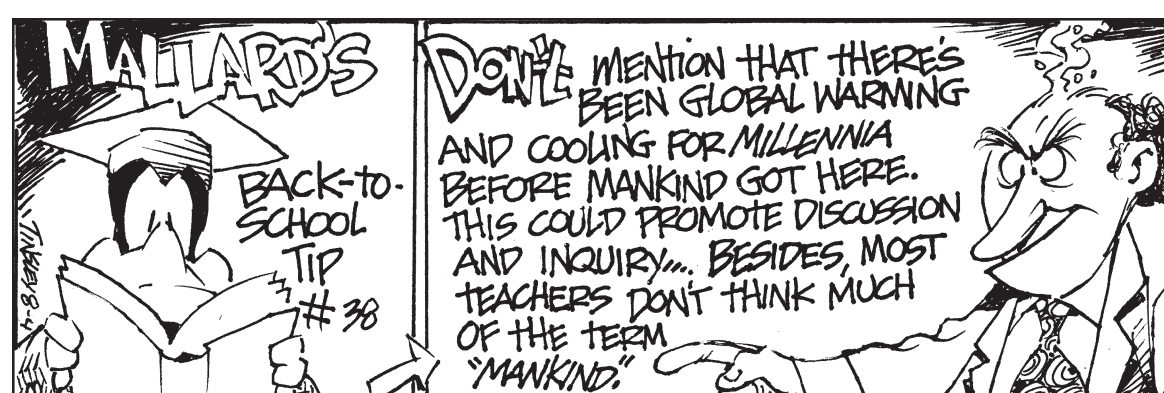
By Howard Behar
The estate tax is still on the agenda within the halls of the U.S. Congress. In our nation's capital, after Congress failed by several votes in June to abolish the federal estate tax, the Senate will soon consider a bill to gut the law and dramatically reduce the tax. This change would be a mistake. Our federal inheritance taxes raise substantial revenue exclusively from those most able to pay — the heirs and heiresses of multi-millionaires and billionaires. The federal tax will raise over \$1 trillion in the coming 15 years. Paying an estate tax is one of the ways that those of us who have accumulated wealth in our society re-fertilize the garden of opportunity that we have benefited from. As an individual and former executive at Starbucks, I know the hundreds of ways our society's investments have helped my company and me. None of us exists on an island — and no wealth can be created without a society that provides a fertile ground of opportunity. I don't sympathize with the wealthy families that have spent millions to abolish the estate tax. Passing on unlimited inheritances is not only bad for our children; it is also unhealthy for a democracy to tolerate concentrations of hereditary wealth and power. It is more important to give our kids educational opportunities and encourage them to make their own way in the world of work. I have a moral responsibility to all the children in our

society, not just my own, to ensure access to quality education. The advocates of repeal talk about how the tax threatens family farms and small businesses. A responsible reform of the federal estate tax will assist closely held family businesses and farms that might be squeezed by the tax. It is irresponsible, however, to let a few hundred households drive a debate over our state and national tax systems. In the coming week, the U.S. Senate will likely vote on an estate tax proposal that will effectively gut the federal estate tax. This proposal will probably raise the amount of wealth exempted from \$4 million for a couple to something like \$10 million, and significantly cut the rate from its current level of 47 percent. This kind of proposal would cost hundreds of billions of dollars over the decade following repeal, and would closely approximate the negative budgetary effects of full repeal. National anti-tax groups are exerting enormous pressure on U.S. Senators who oppose gutting the tax. Such tactics have no place in a dignified and honest dialogue about an important policy matter. Their proposed law change includes pairing an estate tax cut with popular tax breaks that expired last year. Extending these tax cuts has nothing to do with the estate tax but is a form of political pressure. I hope we will be able to see through the subterfuge to understand the vital issues at stake. The key question is: Why now? With an \$8.5

trillion dollar federal debt, it seems an odd time to give the super-rich another tax break. How would we replace \$774 billion in lost revenue? What will this do to our investments in equality of opportunity? When we eliminate or dramatically reduce the most progressive tax in our state and federal systems, we effectively shift the tax burden off the wealthy and on to others. The estate tax should be responsibly reformed, but not gutted. We should preserve the fundamental framework of the tax - and the substantial revenue it generates. I agree with Bill Gates, Sr., that the estate tax is a "gratitude" or "grateful heirs" tax. Financially fortunate individuals like me have a responsibility to pay back society in many forms, including charitable giving. But we also have an obligation to pay an inheritance tax. When the revenue is linked to important services like education and healthcare, the matter is crystal clear. — Howard Behar is the former president of Starbucks International. These are his own personal views and do not represent those of Starbucks. United for a Fair Economy is a Boston-based national, independent, nonpartisan organization that puts a spotlight on the dangers of growing income, wage and wealth inequality in the United States and coordinates action to reduce the gap. United for a Fair Economy, e-mail: stw@stw.org.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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