

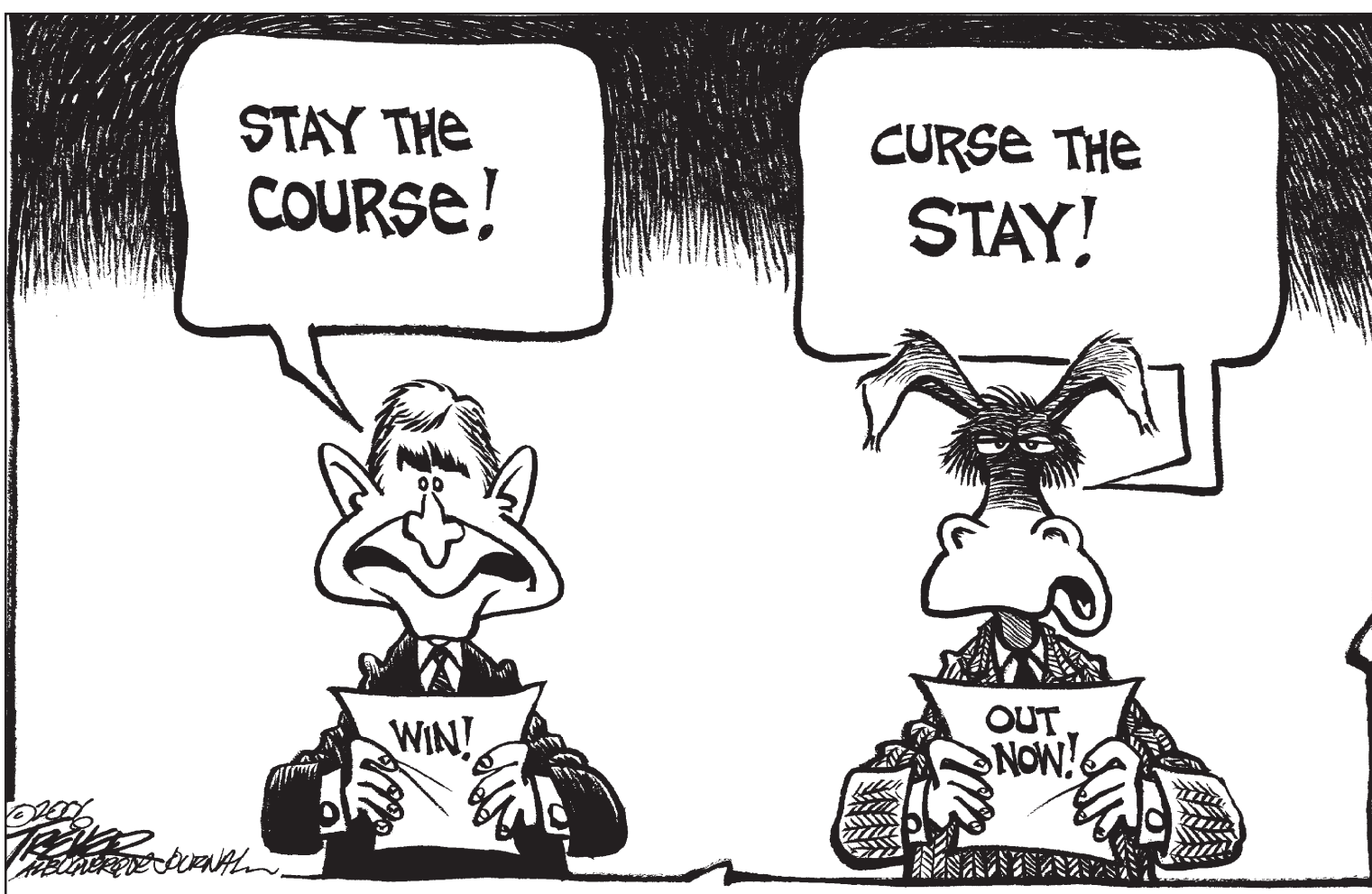
Opinion

Free Press Viewpoint



We'll have to do more with less

By Steve Haynes
 Kansas needs to make a lot of decisions about water, and not all of them involve issues in the state's control.
 Kansas farmers pump more water out of the Ogallala aquifer underlying the western plains than nature puts back, drawing wells down each year. Eventually, there won't be enough water to grow irrigated corn out here.
 The big question is, should we slow down now, and make the water last? Or wait until we have to?
 Water in western Kansas river basins, including the Republican River drainage in our northwest corner, isn't adequate to cover current uses, especially irrigation wells in the so-called streambed aquifers. (These are separate from the Ogallala.)
 The state isn't giving out new well permits, but our use is more than interstate compacts allow. Nebraska farmers below us do the same.
 Kansas is suing Nebraska in the U.S. Supreme Court to get its fair share of water from the river. Where does that leave northwest Kansas farmers?
 There is water in most of our federal reservoirs, but less every year during the turn-of-the-century drought. All of the lakes out here in the northwest have fallen during the current drought.
 Already, irrigation is losing out at these lakes, designed more than a half century ago as "multiple use" facilities. Recreation, cities, storage and industrial use seem to win out.
 Back in eastern Kansas, though, the reservoirs are being sucked down to perpetuate the folly of barge navigation on the Missouri River. Relentless releases designed to bring the river up just a few inches draw down lakes which have become vital to the Kansas economy.
 Over the years, the Army Corps of Engineers has deepened, narrowed and straightened the river channel to help move barges. In dry times, that's not enough, though, and the Corps calls on Kansas water.
 Who benefits? Barge operators, mostly. Grain and other commodities moved on the river could be moved by taxpaying railroads and existing highways rather than using federal dollars to dredge and straighten the river.
 The deep, fast flow barge operators threatens fish and other river life, with little benefit to anyone in this state.
 We're not alone in this. Nebraska and Dakota economies depend on federal reservoirs, too. Many people up there want their lakes left at levels that promote recreation. Drawdowns to promote barge traffic can leave boat ramps and marinas high and dry, driving off boaters and fishermen.
 All across the plains, farmers face the same decisions about wells and irrigation. There's not enough water anywhere.
 The right thing to do is to maximize the resource, which means using water well and wisely. Knowing what that means isn't always easy, but one thing is for sure:
 In the future, we'll all have to do more with less.
 — Steve Haynes is owner of Nor' West Newspapers which includes the Colby Free Press



Consistency is the key

Although my children are now young adults, I still enjoy reading John Rosemond, a child psychologist, who once again hit the nail on the head when he talked about how some children like to gamble on discipline.
 He likened an undisciplined child with a compulsive gambler in that, despite evidence to the contrary, they both feel like they are winners.
 Rosemond cited this phenomena during a trip he made to Las Vegas and how he observed a woman playing the quarter slot machines.
 He said as he watched her, though, he noticed that she continued tossing in quarter after quarter in the machine and appeared to be anxiously waiting for the big payoff. Finally, about 10 quarters later, lights started flashing and bells were ringing as the machine spit out five quarters.
 Her next reaction was one of delight and exhilaration as she scooped up the quarters, fist in the air, yelling happily that she had won.
 As Rosemond put it, here was a woman overjoyed at having lost five quarters. "Could she not do the math?" But then, he went on to explain, that it suddenly occurred to him that this woman's thought processes were akin to those of an undisciplined child.
 "The slot machine paid this woman just enough, and just often enough, to cause her to believe she was beating the system," he said. "She was in thrall to a fantasy, one that had transformed her from a housewife into a compulsive gambler." Then Rosemond spoke of a seven-year-old girl whose parents wanted his help in "curing" their daughter's chronic disobedience.



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

The problem, according to these parents, was that in response to any instruction of any sort, their daughter would pretend not to have heard or simply refuse to comply.
 Typically, the girl would stomp her foot and yell something defiant, as in, "No! I'm busy right now!" The parents, Rosemond said, told him that they "always" made her sit in the "thinking chair" for five minutes when these incidents happened.
 To that, Rosemond questioned, "Always?"
 The mother of this young girl replied, "Well, all right, not always, but most of the time. I mean, we try to be consistent, but you know, it's hard."
 For Rosemond, "most of the time" is the operative phrase, so giving these parents the benefit of the doubt he said, let's say your daughter sits in the "thinking chair" an average of seven out of 10 times when she disobeys.
 In that scenario, most of us would believe that the little girl would get the message. After all, anyone can see she's not winning the disobedience game and the girl is no fool. Actually, Rosemond said, "she's far from it."
 So why then would this little girl continue to

keep disobeying her parents? Rosemond's explanation was that it's for the same reason the lady in Las Vegas kept playing the slot machine. The seven-year-old gets paid off for being disobedient just often enough to make her think she, too, is beating the system.
 Under the circumstances, the daughter cannot comprehend that disobedience, like playing the slot machines, is ultimately a losing proposition. At age 7, Rosemond said the little girl is becoming a compulsive gambler.
 He said it's not manipulative, because she has no more insight into the reality of her situation than the lady in Las Vegas.
 For the lady to stop playing the slot machine, he said, the machines would have to stop giving up quarters. Forever and ever. Likewise, for the youngster to stop playing the self-destructive disobedience game, her parents are going to have to bite the bullet of inconvenience and see to it that each and every time she "plays" she loses.
 Constant vigilance is not only the key to raising children, but is also imperative for all of us in leading happier, healthier lives.
 As I reflect on my own children's upbringing, I think Randy and I did our best be consistent. Now that our parenting years are behind us, though, we are looking forward to "consistently" in spoiling our grandchildren (when that happy day comes).

 Decker is editor of the Free Press. Her column appears on Fridays.

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

Your turn

Can't please everyone

Traci Touslee Colby
 My parents and grandparents have lived on Range Avenue for years. Not only one night a year but for three months out of a year, every other Sunday, we hear the car races at the fairgrounds. Sunday is a work night and you hear it until 11 p.m. or midnight.
 We live with it because it is entertainment. The concert the other night was just that — entertainment. I thought it was a great time, very orderly (thank you law enforcement), a well-planned

event (thank you Holly Stephens).
 It got people of all ages out of the house and off the couch to enjoy a nice Kansas evening. If Holly has it in her backyard, I'll be on the front row and having a great time.
 In a small town there is not a lot to do. So when something like races or concerts come to town or any type of entertainment, you must take advantage of it. Small towns all over Kansas have outside concerts, so sorry to the people at Amber Waves Apartments if it was too loud for you. But next time, take your lawn chairs outside and

enjoy the free music and live entertainment.
 I'm sure Holly spent a lot of time on this project knowing she wouldn't please everyone in Colby. So keep up the great work for Colby. Holly, we thank you. Also, thank you to the museum for hosting such a great event.
 My grandma volunteered there until she was in her late 90s. She wouldn't have liked it either but as things around you change, so must you.
 Can't please everyone, so you got to please yourself.
 Thank you.

Protecting our investments

Jim Tubbs Colby
 If there's one thing farmers understand, it's the importance of property rights. Farmers feel an instinctive drive to safeguard their land and livestock against any and all potential threats. Farmers and nonfarmers alike understand that property rights help individuals and groups protect their investments and pursue a means to prosperity.
 I would like to focus on one type of property right that is critical to farmers' interest but is many times overlooked or misunderstood. The development of a new wheat variety takes a great deal of time, money and research.
 For this reason, the seed companies and universities who develop new varieties are entitled to royalties made from the sale of seed, each variety of which is essentially a unique invention.

Wheat breeding and research programs are sustainable. Only through the profits made each time a farmer buys seed from authorized dealer, and in the end, farmers benefit as well because it is farmers who are able to increase their yields through the continuous development of better, stronger varieties.
 With Roundup Ready Technology in some crops, farmers have already lost the privilege of planting their own seed.
 The same is true for wheat varieties containing the Clearfield Gene. If farmers continue to abuse property rights by illegals selling seed to their neighbors, they may lose the privilege of replanting saved seed of any wheat variety. In most developed countries, farmers purchase new seed every year.
 As a result, seed research abroad is flourishing.

Nothing hurts seed interests more than illegal seed sales that bypass the rightful owners of each unique variety.
 The practice of brownbagging protected varieties threatens the sustainability of domestic crop research and ultimately jeopardizes farmers' ability to remain competitive.
 In an effort to curb illegal seed sales, several wheat-related organizations across the High Plains have joined to form the Farmers' Yield Initiative (FYI) which supports education and enforcement efforts related to crop variety protection. FYI encourages all individuals to get involved by reporting illegal seed sales through an anonymous toll-free tip line, 1-877-482-5907.
 The basic message is this: When you support research and development of new crop varieties, the investment you protect is your own.

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