

# Opinion

## A Kansas Viewpoint



### Big oil equals big bucks

**From The Hays Daily News**  
 Forget bank robbery. The best way to make a lot of money in a hurry is to start an oil company.  
 Take Exxon Mobil Corp.  
 Just eight years ago, it was a mere gleam in the eye of a few billionaires and millionaires as they played with their small old-fashioned oil companies, Mobil and Exxon.  
 Then the billionaires decided to put the two together and create an oil company on a scale not dreamed of since John D. Rockefeller napped at his desk at Standard Oil.  
 Last month, Exxon Mobil reported third-quarter profits of \$10.49 billion — the second-largest profit ever reported by a publicly traded U.S. company. The largest profit? Why, that was Exxon Mobil in the fourth quarter of last year.  
 It is amazing what an entrepreneur can do with a good idea, a few billion dollars and a lock on a large share of the supply of a necessary commodity.  
 Of course it did not hurt that, during the third quarter, gasoline prices hit record highs across the nation.  
 It is not much better now. Prices vary from station to station by 10 cents a gallon or more, and prices change so often and so quickly that hitting a red light on the way to the gas station can make a \$2 or \$3 difference in the price of a tank of gas.  
 But prices are down, and Exxon Mobil might not be able to keep up its pace of record profits this quarter. It would not be surprising if profits dropped below \$10 billion.  
 But don't worry, those billionaires will manage somehow to keep food on the table.

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*.

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### Vacation lessons

I took a vacation last week, which included a couple of days visiting family in Lakin, a trip to Denver for a concert and an early Thanksgiving celebration.  
 The trip was partly prompted by the concert, and the fact the past two Thanksgivings, I have gotten snowed in somewhere other than Colby.  
 The trip was awesome, and so was the concert, but the trip itself provided a few lessons.  
 What I learned on my fall vacation:  
 • The Sons of the Pioneers definitely did not have in mind the tumbleweed migration I witnessed on the road last week. Thousands of the things, rolling furiously across the prairie into oncoming traffic like high-speed organic ammunition.  
 • A few hundred different places to pick from for dinner isn't necessarily a good thing.  
 • Just because it looks nice and warm outside doesn't mean it is. It was Colorado, after all.  
 • The traffic circles in Golden, Colo., have not changed, nor has the way people drive them.  
 • Invariably, there will be break-downs of RTD buses in the slow lane, and there will always be someone who gets stuck behind them. Namely me.  
 • Snow on the west side of Denver, Colo., doesn't mean snow on the east side, or any other



**Tisha Cox**  
 ● Off The Beaten Path

- side of the metro area.
- First impressions can make or break a person. And don't believe everything you read or hear before you actually meet someone. Because those first impressions can set everything else to rest.
- "Weird" is relative.
- Sometimes it is good to just let go and see what happens.
- Free parking. Don't ever take it for granted.
- The Who wasn't the best concert in town.
- Low-tech is sometimes the way to go, and it can definitely have its advantages.
- The handcuff comment hopefully didn't get heard by anyone.
- Large numbers of people covered in fake blood will get some strange looks, but strangely, not by the police.

**It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas**  
 Christmas wasn't just obvious in Denver. The signs are everywhere — from here in Colby to Garden City to Lamar to the city itself, retailers are gearing up for their biggest season of the year.  
 Usually, the Christmas music isn't piped into the stores until at least the day after Thanksgiving, but this year, it seems like everyone is getting a flying leap up on the Yuletide season.  
 I don't mind Christmas, and I know it is a huge time of year for the retailers and other businesses, but so much Christmas before Christmas was and is shell shock.  
 Thanksgiving gets lost in the shuffle sometimes, and even on the day itself, the meaning maybe gets taken a little for granted with the big meal and the football.  
 This year, I hope people take a little time to be thankful for all they have and the good weather we're supposed to have this week.  
 That in itself is a reason to be thankful, because it will be good to have a year without travelers getting stuck on the way home.  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
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### Do we really know what hungry is?

The U.S. government has vowed that Americans will never be hungry again. But they may experience "very low food security."  
 Talk about "politically correct." Also included, in the same USDA report, is the following bit of abstruseness.  
 "Among several recommendations, the panel suggested that the USDA scrap the word hunger, which should refer to a potential consequence of food insecurity that, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation."  
 Read that again and tell me it gives you a real clear picture of the hunger problem in society, around the world. Catchy phrases and slogans in bureaucratic publications will do nothing to prevent Americans of ever being hungry again. Changing it from being hungry to low food security certainly will not satisfy the needs of the unfortunate who don't have enough to eat.  
 Talk around the simple fact of hunger and then you don't really have to address the issue. Security is the new buzz word that grabs peoples attention and obscures the real problem.  
 Have you ever been hungry? Of course you have. Miss getting to the table for lunch and how

**Ken Poland**  
 ● Ken's World

do you feel before the evening meal? Hungry. No, that isn't comparable to extended periods of not having adequate food available, but it is hungry. Imagine that hungry feeling persisting for days, weeks, months and even years!  
 Very few people reading this have experienced chronic lack of adequate stomach filling nutritional food. But, there are those, even here in the "land of plenty," who go to bed, quite frequently, without having had access to a solid meal. Changing the description of that condition from "hungry" to "food insecurity" has not done a thing to address the problem or even to make those who have plenty aware that there are some who do go to bed hungry.  
 We excuse ourselves of any responsibility to address this issue because, "Those people are in that predicament through their own lack of ef-

fort." Or, "those people spend all their money on junk food that has no nutritional value." Both of those statements have some truth in them. But berating the hungry for their lack of drive or education does not alleviate the problem.  
 This is not a partisan or sectarian issue. It is a social issue that crosses all political or religious boundaries.  
 We celebrate Thanksgiving with festive banquets and suffer indigestion and fret over having blown our diets. Each one of us needs to reflect on the fact that thanking God for our abundance does not fulfill the Gospel requirements set by Christ's example of sharing with the hungry and destitute in the world around us.  
 Our local food bank, administered by Genesis Thomas County, provides you with an opportunity to become actively involved with feeding the hungry. Bread for the World is a national organization that is certainly worthy of your support. Most churches and many service organization have programs that address hunger and malnutrition.  
 The world needs more meat and potatoes not more guns.  
*Ken Poland occasionally contributes to the Colby Free Press.*

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**Mallard Fillmore**  
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