

Opinion

Your turn

What's wrong with Holcomb plan?

Gary Davis Menlo

You recently printed an excerpt from the Salina Journal opposing expansion of the coal fired electrical generating plants of Sunflower Electric at Holcomb with supporting arguments from Wes Jackson of The Land Institute of Salina.

I find it amusing that nobody mentioned that this coal fired electrical generation plant sits on top of one of the largest natural gas deposits in the world.

It is critical that the U.S. become energy independent. The coal deposits of the U.S. dwarf the Mideast's oil reserves. Electrical generation should be half coal and half nuke. If you don't want CO2, it should be 100 percent nuke.

We should be using Fischer-Tropsch technology and clean coal technology to refine gasoline and diesel from coal. We should maximize ethanol and soy diesel production. Every time we stick the gas nozzle in our tank, we are giving the terrorists the money to kill us.

The Salina Journal claims that this coal fired utility hurts Central Kansas and Salina. How? Southwest Kansas seems pretty happy with it.

The Salina Journal says: "Pollution from dirty fuel and aquifer depletion should be enough to stop this project." Clean coal technology exists. The exhaust gases are scrubbed. The exhaust gases meet the EPA's clean air requirements. GMD-3 does not allow any new wells, so the water rights would have to be purchased from farmers. No new load would be put on the Ogallala. Salina is not on the Ogallala Aquifer. When did they get so concerned about it?

The Salina Journal says most of the power would be exported from Kansas. Well, most of the wheat and soybeans which we grow are exported from Kansas. Does that mean we are supposed to stop raising wheat and soybeans?

Salina Journal uses Wes Jackson, founder of The Land Institute, to support their arguments. I quote from The Land Institute's web site: "Farming, in Jackson's view, is humanity's original sin."

Some of your farmer readers might not be too amused with his philosophy.

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*.

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Can anything kill the iPod?

Christmas shopping has obviously begun, since Black Friday just passed. All the stores have their wares out, ready for shoppers, including the still sought-after mp3 player.

I think it's still the Apple iPod, but given how many there are out there now, it's hard to tell. But I do know the latest to hit the market isn't exactly the much hoped for iPod killer.

The Microsoft Zune has been in the works nearly a year now, and finally hit store shelves within the past two weeks.

I got to play with one in Denver a week and a half ago, and I wasn't too impressed.

Looking at the reviews so far, neither are the real tech-heads.

One over the weekend even went so far as to call it a "brick."

I wouldn't go that far myself, but when one compares it to the sleek bit of technological joy that is an iPod, it doesn't stack up.

Bigger, thicker and longer than an iPod video, the Zune allegedly has some wireless capability and pre-loaded with some music. It also has a control wheel/button set up kind of like what Apple has, but frankly, it was unwieldy.

Now, this is all based on just a couple of minutes, but I bet somebody somewhere will love the Zune.

After all, there are now enough mp3 players out there to satisfy most needs.

They are about the size of a pack of gum, and it isn't an Apple. I have a Zen, a Christmas gift last year, that is small, and sleek and black. And I don't even have to use my computer to put music on it. Instead, it hooks up to my CD player.

It has seven hours of music so far, and space



Tisha Cox

● Off The Beaten Path

for about 12 hours more. And it only has a 1-gigabyte memory.

Besides Zens, there are the Sansa, Lyra, and many, many more.

Most of the players have gotten bigger than 1gig, all the way up to 60 or 80 — big enough to put a couple of movies, or even music videos into memory to watch later.

Mp3 player screens might be small, but the resolution is good, and makes them ideal for long trips.

Even though I have what one could call a minimalist player, I'm happy with it. It suits my needs just fine, and I can even walk away from my player for very long periods of time, but it's amazing how others have come to depend on their say, iPod as much as their laptop, cell phone or Palm Pilot.

Any mp3 player can also be used as a portable harddrive. Plug it into the computer and drop in photos, documents, presentations and more.

But of course, the main thing for the players is still music, and even cell phones have built in memory now for music.

However, Apple still has the corner on mp3 players, and I don't know if in the foreseeable

future anyone will come up with something to best it. I guess we'll just have to wait and see.

Even crazier...

Another thing seen in Denver was people camping out at several stores. With tents pitched out front, and sleeping bags, camp chairs — the whole shebang.

During a stop at Target, I finally mustered the courage to ask one of the store clerks what people were waiting for. She said they were waiting for the release of the Sony Playstation 3 and Nintendo Wii.

Most people were camped out for the PS3, which has an alleged price of \$649, and I have heard there were less than half a million available here in the states.

The Wii has a more reasonable price, \$249, and there were enough shipped.

I've waited in line a couple of hours to see movies, namely the "Star Wars" series, and those were kind of once in a lifetime opportunities. I have never, and hope to never camp out for something like a game system.

It was crazy to see so many people waiting days outside in the cold for them. I wonder if they had jobs, or school, or anything that mattered, that the people waiting were away from.

Most were young, teens all the way up to probably late 20s, early 30s.

Kind of makes one question another person's priorities, when they would give up a huge chunk of time for something so trivial.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcx@nwks.com.

Do we need a draft?

New York's Charles Rangel has said he will introduce legislation to bring back a draft during the next Congress. Of course, he's being talking and threatening this since even before we invaded Iraq and has brought at least one bill up since the invasion.

The difference now is that Rangel, a Democrat, will soon be the chairman of the powerful House Committee on Ways and Means. Chairmanship means he gets to set a lot of the agenda in his committee and his committee is powerful enough to set a lot of the agenda in the House.

That means his bill will probably see the light of day this time. Of course, that doesn't really matter in terms of being passed into law. There are enough radicals in the House to perhaps make a debate of it, but even if it passes the Senate, whose Democratic majority is even more razor thin than the Republican majority it replaced, will never go for it.

The fact that it most likely will not pass, however, has been taken as a good reason to dismiss the idea itself as the ramblings of an elderly (Rangel is 76, I think) and somewhat out of touch radical.

The idea, if not the bill, actually has some merit. The plan is to tie the same educational benefits already given to volunteers into a draft system and also to put such necessary, but civilian posts, such as port security, under the draft as well.



Jay Kelley

● Speaking MyMind

Under Rangel's plan, money means nothing. No one is exempt from the draft. As I understand it, even college will not get you out of being drafted.

According to the congressman, it will level the playing field by making the children of the rich and powerful as likely to be called up as those of the poor and relatively powerless.

Reasoning further, if the rich and powerful have children in the military it will keep us out of wars such as Iraq.

All in all, it's a good idea, but it won't work. Oh, it won't fail because of the reasoning Congressman Rangel gives. He actually has a good idea. It won't work because you can't make an American do anything he doesn't want to do.

Remember prohibition? A draft law will have about the same effect.

Those who do not want to go will figure out a way to avoid service and those who are willing will go. The reason our Cold War draft finally failed was that the American people were tired

of it.

By the way, it was the post-draft military, with all of its problems, which finally defeated the Soviet Union by pushing harder than their economy could push back.

A draft today will no more work than it did until the American people are behind the cause. No, we don't have to be in lockstep. We have never had unanimity — there was one nay vote when we declared war on Japan in 1941 — but we have had a vast majority who saw the danger and knew what to do.

The reason a draft worked in World War II was because the majority of people saw the threat and were not only willing to sacrifice, but also expected the same from their neighbors.

We need to be asking some serious questions of our leaders as well. Their service, past and present matters.

So does the service of their children and not just military service during a time of emergency.

Service is a lifestyle which is ingrained early. So is gratitude.

Until we again instill those traits in ourselves and our children, a draft will simply be a hated law to be circumvented.

If we do, however, re-instill those values, a draft may be unnecessary.

Jay Kelley is a local writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelly@st-tel.net.

Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce

Tinsley

