

# Opinion



## A Kansas Viewpoint

### Another survival of the fittest

**From the Norton Telegram**  
President Ronald Reagan was an actor who ended up in the White House. So why shouldn't Fred Thompson, former U.S. Senator from Tennessee, and also an actor, find his way to the same place?  
Thompson said over the weekend that he is giving some thought to tossing his hat in the ring. One would wonder if there is enough room for one more hat in that ring. But those who study politics feel Thompson could be the candidate to bring the Republican Party together, a party that is showing cracks in its foundation.

Currently, Thompson has the role of Arthur Branch on NBC's hit drama, "Law & Order." Among his other credits is the movie "The Hunt for Red October."  
Thompson was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1994, and left in 2003. He was chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. He was elected to fill the unexpired term of Vice President Al Gore.

The possible presidential candidate hasn't set any deadline. He is going to sit back and see how the situation unfolds.  
Briefly speaking, the candidate in-waiting is pro life, opposes gay marriage, supports the decision to hike the number of troops in Iraq, and is against gun control. He also said on FOX News Sunday that he would pardon "Scooter" Libby now, White House aide, who was convicted last week of perjury and obstruction of justice, instead of waiting the appeals route. It needs to be mentioned that Thompson is a fund raiser for Mr. Libby's defense.

With Rudy Giuliani being haunted by his behavior when he divorced his second wife, and a few other issues in that arena, the road for the former New York City mayor just might get a bit too slippery for him to navigate. Giuliani currently leads the field at this early point in the campaign.

Sen. John McCain and former Gov. Mitt Romney are also prominently mentioned, as is Kansas Sen. Sam Brownback. McCain seems to have faded somewhat of late, but those who follow campaigns see this as nothing of significance. They do say, however, that Thompson needs to make a decision soon because the nominees of the two major parties will be determined by the end of February in 2008.

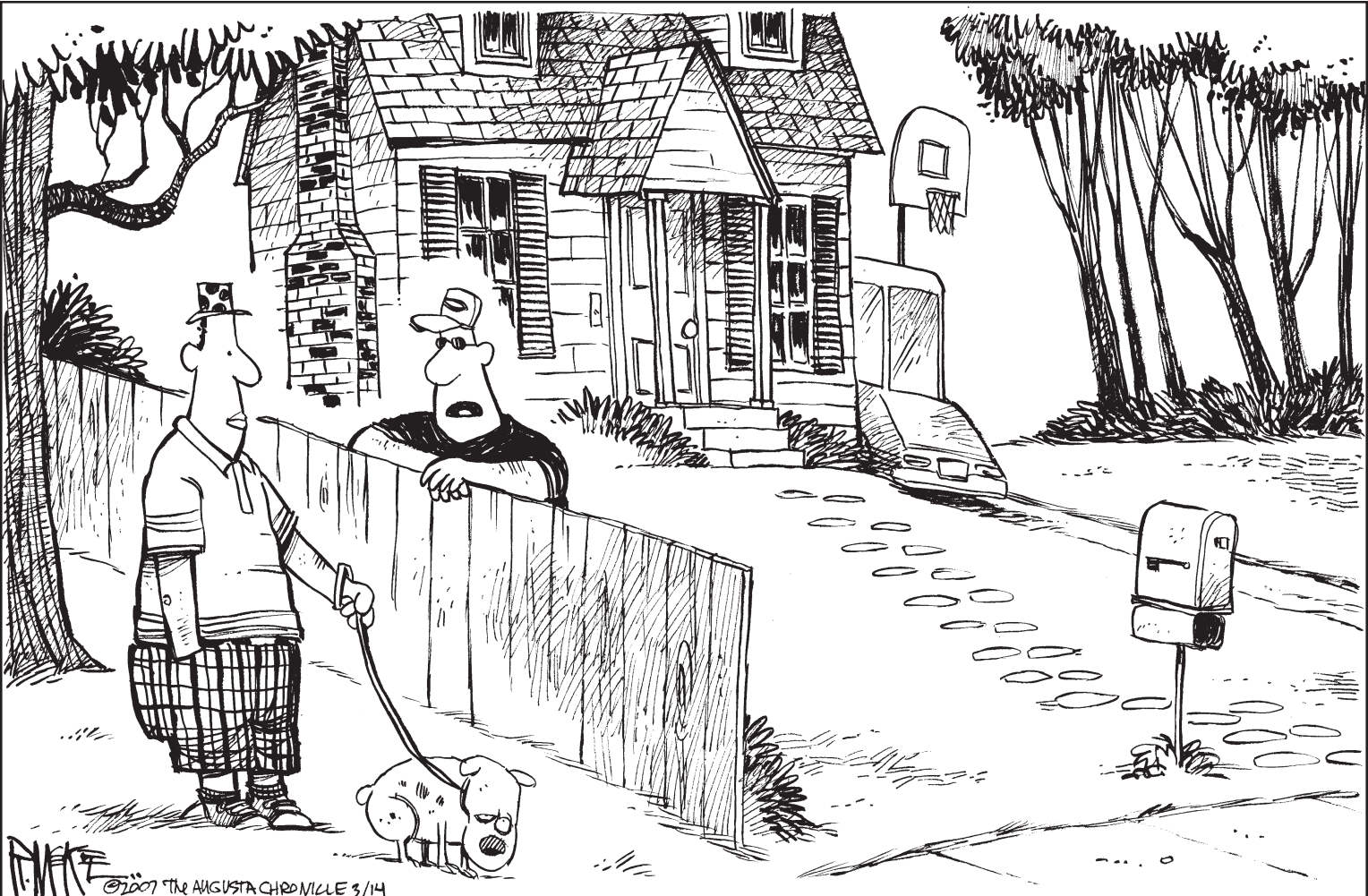
Also waiting in the wings is war critic Republican Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, who said Monday he will make a decision on a presidential run later in the year.

No new names are surfacing on the Democratic side of the ledger. New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sen. Barack Obama are the front runners, with Obama continuing to chip at Clinton's lead. They are trading barbs generally reserved for a two-party battle — Republican vs. Democrat.

We've got a long, long way to go. Even if we know who the nominees are going to be a year from now, they will have another nine months after that do duke it out.

They say the fittest shall survive. We the people, the voters, must be the fittest.  
— Tom Dreiling

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"I LIVE IN CONSTANT FEAR OF TERRORISM, BIRD FLU, GLOBAL WARMING, and NOW APPROACHING KILLER BEES...OTHER THAN THAT, I CAN'T COMPLAIN...HOW ARE YOU?"

## Springing to life

Warmer weather and an extra hour of sunlight are helping chase off the winter blahs. This weekend, I sat outside and read for the first time since November.

It was a little strange, but enjoyable nonetheless.

And this was after watching a Colby Community College Lady Trojan softball game. I was there to take pictures of the game, as well as the dedication of the softball field in memory of Carl Adams, the coach who died Dec. 23.

The team and his family all took the field for the dedication and it was an emotional ceremony. That was just one of many activities in town signaling the end of winter.

Spring officially begins this week, but I keep reminding myself we could still get a snow storm between now and the end of April. Sobering, but I'm not going to worry about it while the weather is so warm now.

"Unseasonably warm" could describe the conditions right now, but I'm not complaining, and I don't think anyone else is either. However, look at the high records for this time of year and the weather we're having right now isn't all that unusual.

After all, it is Kansas. And on the subject of activities, I bet the warm weather is making people dream of summer.

Spring break is this week for Colby students and the college; many clubs are already making



**Tisha Cox**

### ● Off The Beaten Path

plans for the summer, and preparations are under way for summer activities, like the return of the Rod Run.

But that doesn't mean there isn't plenty to do between now and then.

The Prairie Museum of Art and History is in the middle of moving around its gallery to provide more room for activities and meeting space. Right now, they have on display an exhibit of works by local artist Lillie Plummer. Next weekend, they're having activities to celebrate Women's History Month, which is in March.

Colby radio's annual concert at the end of next month will feature Daryl Singletary.

There are so many activities involving the schools. Track, baseball, golf and tennis will fill up the high school schedule. The college's softball and baseball seasons have already started. There are also all of the end of year activities to look forward to — concerts, field trips and graduation.

Sometimes I hear people wonder what is going on in Colby, or say there isn't anything to do.

That isn't true.

One just has to take a look around to find something.

I grew up in a community half the size of Colby — Lakin. Lots of times it was left up to someone to find their own fun, or something to do, but between school and home and work, life finds plenty to keep people busy.

That's why it impresses me so much when communities in this part of the state find creative ways to provide opportunities.

Extension, the library, museum, WPAA, clubs, schools and more provide educational programs, cultural opportunities and such to give people a chance to expand their horizons or have a good time.

Also having lived in a large city, I've learned that one can take so many opportunities for granted.

That's what makes the opportunities here so special. People go to the trouble to schedule and plan events, whether it's a high school basketball tournament or extension program.

And we shouldn't take that for granted.  
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*Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. [tcx@nwkansas.com](mailto:tcx@nwkansas.com).*

## No proof water will be saved

Water issues have dominated legislative discussions these past couple years, and rightly so.

Senate Bill 123 is an act that establishes an upper Arkansas River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This area includes Hamilton, Kearny, Finney, Gray, Ford, Edwards, Pawnee, Stafford, Barton, and Rice counties in Southwest Kansas.

The purpose of this CREP is to reduce withdrawal of the aquifer, improve water quality, protect public water supply, and enhance wildlife habitat. This program will also provide for voluntary retirement of water rights in the Arkansas River Corridor.

To put this into perspective, you could say that this issue is 12 inches deep, and this bill addresses about one-quarter inch of the problem.

More importantly we must not forget the negative economic impact this bill will hand to businesses in these small communities. In my District I can use Ness County as an example.



**Ralph Ostmeyer**

### ● Senator Dist. 40

After a two-year sign-up of dryland acres being converted to CRP acres, it is evident how this type of program has affected the business community. There is always the question of how these counties plan on recovering property tax revenues to support local and county services when values of those acres will be taxed as dryland once implemented.

There is no proof that water will actually be saved. Only three other states have a CREP program in place, and none of them has had it long enough to have any documentation.

Grain elevators, automotive stores, grocery stores, small locker plants, furniture stores, and the list goes on of the potential negative impact to our rural communities. These businesses will either work for less or shut completely down.

Kansas State University has conducted a study that predicts 119 lost jobs and \$14.8 million annual negative economic impact to the Arkansas River Corridor region upon implementation of this program. Originally this bill would have forced these acres into the CRP program, but I am hoping to get a dryland provision added to the wording.

We are still working this bill in the Senate, and I am working hard to help cut losses to these communities.

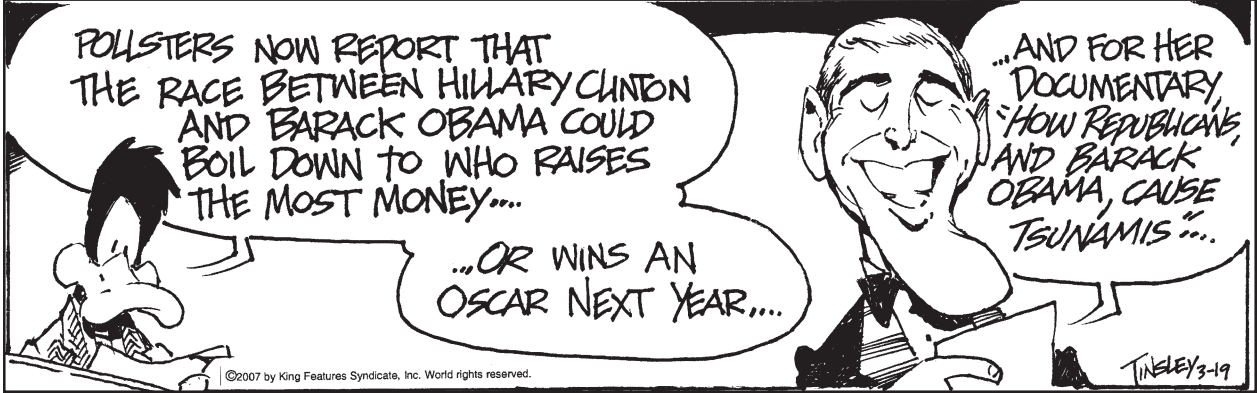
The CREP program in Southwest Kansas may not directly affect my district right now, but I fear what it could mean for us in the future. I also question whether SB 123 will help encourage the next generation to return to the farm.

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## Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce Tinsley



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