

# Opinion



## Other Viewpoints

### American dream needs some revision

Before all the dust settles, the American economy — and its culture — surely will need a correction.

And it looks like a little dose of pain would do America some good. We seem finally to have arrived at a day of reckoning when our culture of borrowing and spending is over, and we must return to a culture of saving and spending wisely.

We had to wonder, as deficit spending grew greater year after year, what the end game would be. Would there be a day when the debt mounted to a point of collapse?

We seem to be there. We've reached the ironic point when the federal government must push its debt even further to bail out bad loans on the books of the country's biggest financial institutions.

The government has not only set a bad example for how individual Americans balance their checkbooks, government has encouraged reckless spending. ...

Used to be the goal of a financially responsible American was to pay off his home within 30 years. Somewhere along the line, the goal came to be to keep the house payment down, refinancing whenever interest rates were favorable — or buy up to a bigger, better home.

Used to be the American dream was something for which you had to save. In our materialistic society, it has become something for which you simply borrowed.

And that is how this economic crisis started — with willing lenders and willing borrowers who consummated deals that made many people rich and others just appear to be rich.

What a waste the \$165 billion economic "stimulus" checks in the spring now appear to be. We're now staring at \$700 billion for the government to gather up the pieces of this mess — if Congress can get together long enough to commit to this.

And even if it does, recession seems inevitable. Spending already is retracting, and of course, credit is tighter.

And given the excesses of the 1990s and the 2000s, we could use a little of both.

— *The Hutchinson News, via The Associated Press*

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### Just don't blame the carriers

How are we doing so far?

Most of you probably have noticed the paper is running late.

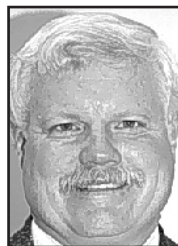
Since losing two of our three news staffers a couple of weeks ago, we've been getting the paper out, but most days it seems to be just by the skin of our teeth.

It's just Andy and me, with a little help from Evan and the others, and we're both new to our jobs here. It'll take us some time to get up to speed. We need to hire a couple of people so we can get to, if not everything, at least the most important meetings and news events.

Until then, please bear with us. Many meetings that normally would have a reporter present may not be covered right now. With just two of us — one and a half really, because I have to help in other departments — we'll get done what has to be done.

Cynthia and Evan help us with pages and items, and others pitch in when they can, but the office staff and the ad department have their own, very full, plates to mind.

Because we can barely manage to finish the pages each day, we've missed press deadlines most of the week. That makes the papers late, and it's hard on our carriers, so we're trying to get better.



**Steve Haynes**

#### • Letter From the Publisher

If you see your carrier, you might stop to thank them. They've been working late and the arrival of the papers has been unpredictable. It's tough on them. We promise to get on time, but it may take a little practice.

I think carriers have been doing an excellent job all along, so if you can, give them a pat on the back. It's not their fault if the paper is late.

The good news is we now have a full crew of carriers, with all routes covered and no mail deliveries in town. That's the first time that has happened for some time. We hope to be able to maintain that situation, but you never know.

We still need someone who can fill in when a carrier is gone, whether sick or out of town or at a funeral. Anyone interested in a little work now and then might stop by and talk to Steifon.

We are looking for an office manager, an ed-

itor, a part-time news reporter and an advertising account executive. If you know of anyone looking for a good job, one of these might be the one.

We expect shortly to be up to full staff and to be running on time. We can't say how long that will take, but not long. Meantime, please keep sending us your news stories and ideas. We are getting everything we have into the paper and we're always looking for ideas on stories, especially things that might otherwise be overlooked.

We're trying to track all the stories we take in, and we seem to be getting most into print. If we do overlook one, please give us a call. We know some things got shuffled aside in the transition, but that should be in the past.

And as always, we appreciate your calls, cards and letters, comments and criticisms. We think we know where we are headed, but we may not always be moving in the right direction.

If we're not, give us a nudge — or a little kick — and get us moving.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he likes to watch trains.

### Fall harvest what feeds the nation

Travel out to the fields of Kansas during October, and you'll see them teeming with the harvesting of fall crops. Combines chomp through the fields of corn, milo and soybeans, eager to dump the bountiful crops into waiting trucks and grain carts.

On gravel and blacktop roads, tandem trucks and semis race back from the elevators so the machines can fill them up again. Fall harvest in Kansas marks that magical time of the year when the world's best producers of food and fiber reap what they have sown.

Seeing this bountiful production underscores the importance of farming and ranching in Kansas. Our Kansas farmers, and their contemporaries across this great land, continually risk all that is theirs; hoping that success is what each harvest and year will bring.

They work with the land, fertilizer, computers and livestock. They must understand markets, people, soil, crops and climate. Their livelihood depends largely on factors that are completely out of their control.

Like all segments of our society today, farming is in a continual state of change. But there are some aspects of agriculture that never change.

Farmers farm to succeed. They farm to grow



**John Schlageck**

#### • Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

and harvest crops and produce livestock. Farmers see their vocation not only as a business, but as a way of life to preserve in good times and bad. They have their feet planted firmly in their soil. They are dedicated to the land and providing us with the safest, most wholesome food on the planet.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates the average per capita consumption of flour and cereal products amounts to approximately 194 pounds a year. When you couple that with roughly 66 pounds of oils, 115 pounds of red meat and 63 pounds of poultry, it's readily apparent why Kansas' harvest is an important time.

Kansas farmers rank in the top 10 in corn production. Today's consumer has the option of using nearly 4,000 different corn products, ranging from corn flakes to corn sweeteners.

Corn remains the top source of livestock feed. A bushel of corn produces about 5.6 pounds of retail beef, 13 pounds of retail pork or 19.6 pounds of chicken.

Countless foods are made from today's fall soybean crop. Some of these include crackers, cooking oils, salad dressings, sandwich spreads and shortenings. Soybeans are also used extensively to feed livestock, poultry and fish.

So if you have an opportunity to visit our state's fertile fields this fall, think about the professionals who are busy providing the food we find on our tables each and every day. Tip your hat, raise an index finger above the steering wheel of your car or give a friendly wave to these producers of food, fuel and fiber who are dedicated to providing for the people of the world.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

