

# Opinion



## Other Viewpoints

### Not for us to say: It's time for you to decide who wins

The final week. That's where we are in this presidential campaign. By next week we will be in the voting booth — unless we voted early — to determine the fate of Sens. Barack Obama and John McCain.

One of those two will become president on Jan. 20. Waiting in the wings, should something happen to the successful candidate, are Sen. Joe Biden and Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin.

You hear pundits say, "We don't vote for vice president." Maybe this is the election we will. Both candidates claim they couldn't have done better with their picks. They are comfortable that either Gov. Palin or Sen. Biden are ready to step in should the need arise.

We can only hope voters keep focused, that voters remember what is being said today by either candidate or either candidate's surrogates, has little or no traction. They are in the home stretch and anything goes. We've been through it before and are in the midst of it again. It's nothing new, it's politics.

That all said, one would expect an endorsement at this juncture in the campaign. If you have been waiting, wait no longer. We would simply tell you that if you had a friendly bet as to where the newspaper stands on this election, call off your bet and direct those funds to your favorite charity in our community.

We don't endorse. We vote. That's what really counts. Please join us at the polls on Tuesday.

— Tom Dreiling, *The Norton Telegram*

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**U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124

**State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: [jmorrison@ink.org](mailto:jmorrison@ink.org) web: [www.morrisonfamily.com](http://www.morrisonfamily.com)

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## We need to say we're grateful

A sad, but undeniable fact of life is that we can't stop time. There will come a time when all of us will pass on to whatever awaits us in the next life. But in the end, it doesn't matter so much when or how we died; it matters how we lived.

Whether we like it or not, the World War II generation is getting older. Many veterans have already passed away and others are having to deal with the struggles that go along with old age. But while this generation is getting older, they should never be forgotten.

The world would be a totally different place if it weren't for the sacrifices made by the young men who left their families to battle an enemy that represented evil in its vilest form. Thousands died before their time so we could enjoy the freedoms we have today. There are no words worthy of describing how grateful I am to the people who looked the Devil in the eye over 60 years ago and refused to blink.

It is the duty of the rest of us who live in this country to make sure to make the Greatest Generation's last years on this earth as pain-free as possible — and to let them know how grateful we are.

Both my grandfathers served in World War II. One, Ray Heintz, died a few years ago. He was the definition of a self-made man. He grew up dirt poor with a mentally ill mother. His father walked out on the family when he was young, so he had to be the father figure. He enlisted in the Navy and served in the war, like so many young men his age.



**Andy Heintz**

### • Wildcat Ramblings

After the war, he married my grandmother, Elaine Heintz, and got a job working for Amoco. He made good money, but I'm still not sure exactly what his job was. My grandma eventually gave birth to my father, Tom. Throughout his life, my Grandpa was a self-reliant man. He was tough as nails, but fair and honest. He was an avid sports fan, he loved dogs and he had a great sense of humor.

His health failed him as he got older. He suffered a stroke in 1999 that would change him forever. He constantly struggled to put together sentences, and when he did say something, it did not always come out the way he wanted.

As the years went by he needed more help, and he and my Grandma moved into an assisted living home. There were times when I would watch people talk to him like he was a little kid. They meant well and were just trying to help him, but it broke my heart. A man who had earned every bit of the success he achieved in life deserved better.

He died a few years ago at the age of 84. My Grandma Elaine died later at 85. I miss them both everyday.

Even though he is gone, Grandpa's spirit lives on through my father. He and my Grandpa share some undeniable similarities. Both are loyal, hard-working, honest, independent-minded people whom other people rely on.

My other grandpa, Roy Thoele served in the Army during the war. Other than my parents, there is no one else in the world that I am closer to except maybe his wife, my grandma Joe Thoele. He has been there for me through good times and bad.

He never missed a one of my sports games when I was a kid, and he was always willing to take me fishing even though he has never been crazy about getting dirty. He and my grandma have taken me on trips, and they have stuck by my side during the darkest days of my life.

As much as I hate to think about it, he is getting older as well. He just recently turned 85. I can't see him as much as I like, since Colby is several hours away, but I think about him a lot.

I'm sure there a lot of people with similar stories about the people who make up the Greatest Generation. As much as it pains me to see them get older, I think it is important to treasure the time we have left them. The legacy of they left will live on in the hearts and minds of those of us who were lucky enough to have known them.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.

## Whose team is 'winning' our health?

As you can see by the baseball statistics, money isn't an automatic formula for success.

The New York Yankees, Detroit Tigers and New York Mets have the highest payrolls in the major leagues. Still, they were watching the World Series on television.

The Tampa Bay Rays are second from the bottom in the payroll department. They were playing in the series.

It appears that using data-driven information is working in the major leagues. Having a roster represented by the most convincing player agents, who sell their clients on the basis of past dominance or individual star performance, doesn't seem to always put together a team that wins it all.

Why am I talking about baseball? I know very little about the game, and have little experience in playing it. I don't even follow the news enough to know who the other team in the World Series is.

I am, however, in the game that plays with health care. If my doctor succeeds in convincing my insurance company that I need an expensive new treatment for one of my ailments, I will fall into the "donut hole" early in the year and may have to stop treatment.

You see, I'm not on the team that has the most money to secure the all star physicians or surgeons. I'm not in a position that allows me to take advantage of the latest and most expensive drugs. In fact, I'm on the team that draws its players from the lower end of the middle-income classes. The team that represents the truly working class "Joe-the-Plumber," small farmer category and "kids wrestling dad."

We have to choose priorities and set limits.



**Ken Poland**

### • Ken's World

The United States is far from the top in health care results for all its citizens. We are down somewhere around 29th in infant mortality. We don't dominate developed countries' records in many health categories.

It is true, we have all-star medical performances for those who can afford it. But even those who have health insurance are limited in their ability to access preventive treatment.

Those without insurance must depend on emergency-room care, and these are not usually willing to dispense anything more than minimum treatment. The combination of our three-tiered level of health care has the most expensive overall cost in the world. We spend a higher percentage of gross income on health care than any other developed country.

Why is this? Is it because we let the drug company's and insurance company's lobbyists determine the value and availability of medicine and treatment? Are these agents determining the worth of the medications and the value of the doctor's and hospital's services?

Are those values determined by using "data-driven information" that accurately assesses the results of different procedures and medications? Or are they relying on what the traffic will bear, slick incentive bonuses for the pro-

viders, and misleading or incomplete results in their public advertising campaigns? They deliver the most income for their clients but don't deliver consistently winning teams.

If health care is a competitive game, we — although spending the most money — are sitting on the sidelines and watching neighboring nations win. Do we need to change our recruiting methods? How we tally the score?

I may not have the answers to how we improve our system, but the one thing I do know — we need change. We have far too many people with inadequate care and we are spending far too much for the care that is being delivered.

I don't know if we need socialized health care. I'm not sure how you define that. But I do believe we need a health-care system that meets the needs of all of society, regardless of individual wealth or social status.

Individually we can't or won't accomplish this. That is what government is for — providing, for all of society, what we can't do individually. If that translates into socialized health care, then so be it.

Fiddling with tax credits for insurance premiums is not the answer. Neither is a confusing system of mandatory employer coverage along with government-provided subsidies and policies. Surely we can elect an administration and governing body that can design something that beats what we have.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at [rcwinc@cheerful.com](mailto:rcwinc@cheerful.com).

## Mallard Fillmore

### • Bruce Tinsley

