

# Opinion



**Free Press  
Viewpoint**

## Obama's promises now face reality

President Obama will have plenty to think about after he takes office in January.

His inauguration will be a momentous and historic occasion, marking the first time a member of any "minority" group has become president.

It many ways, it marks the end of not one era, but many: slavery, segregation, civil rights, the fading of race as a major issue in American society.

But as the celebration dies down, the new president will have to turn to face his problems, and they are legion.

The world's economy is in as perilous a condition as it has been since Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1932.

After dealing with crises in credit, banking and finance, the government turned around to find the U.S. auto industry dying at its doorstep.

Should the new president save General Motors? Is it a key-stone of the system, or just a dinosaur that should be allowed to perish? If GM goes, will Ford or Chrysler or any of the thousands of parts makers who depend on Detroit make it, or will the entire industry go down the tubes, leaving us at the mercy of foreign brands?

These are not questions to ask lightly. The cost of error will be high. To let the entire auto industry collapse might threaten the very foundation of the U.S. economy. But at the same time, the government is running out of money to save any skin but its own.

Congress is debating \$25 billion for Detroit, but GM alone may need more.

Nor is it just the U.S. economy the new president will have to worry about. Japan has slipped into recession already, somewhat ahead of the U.S. China, India and the rest of Asia may not be far behind. So might Europe.

The world is suffering. Predictions that the economy will recover in 2009 or 2010 seem wan in the light of GM's problems, and Japan's.

Then President Obama will have to reconcile his promises with the reality on the ground in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

He may well be able to start bringing more troops home from Iraq. Experts say the war there is all but over. Afghanistan is another matter. Afghanistan is a sinkhole for foreign troops. Just ask the Russians.

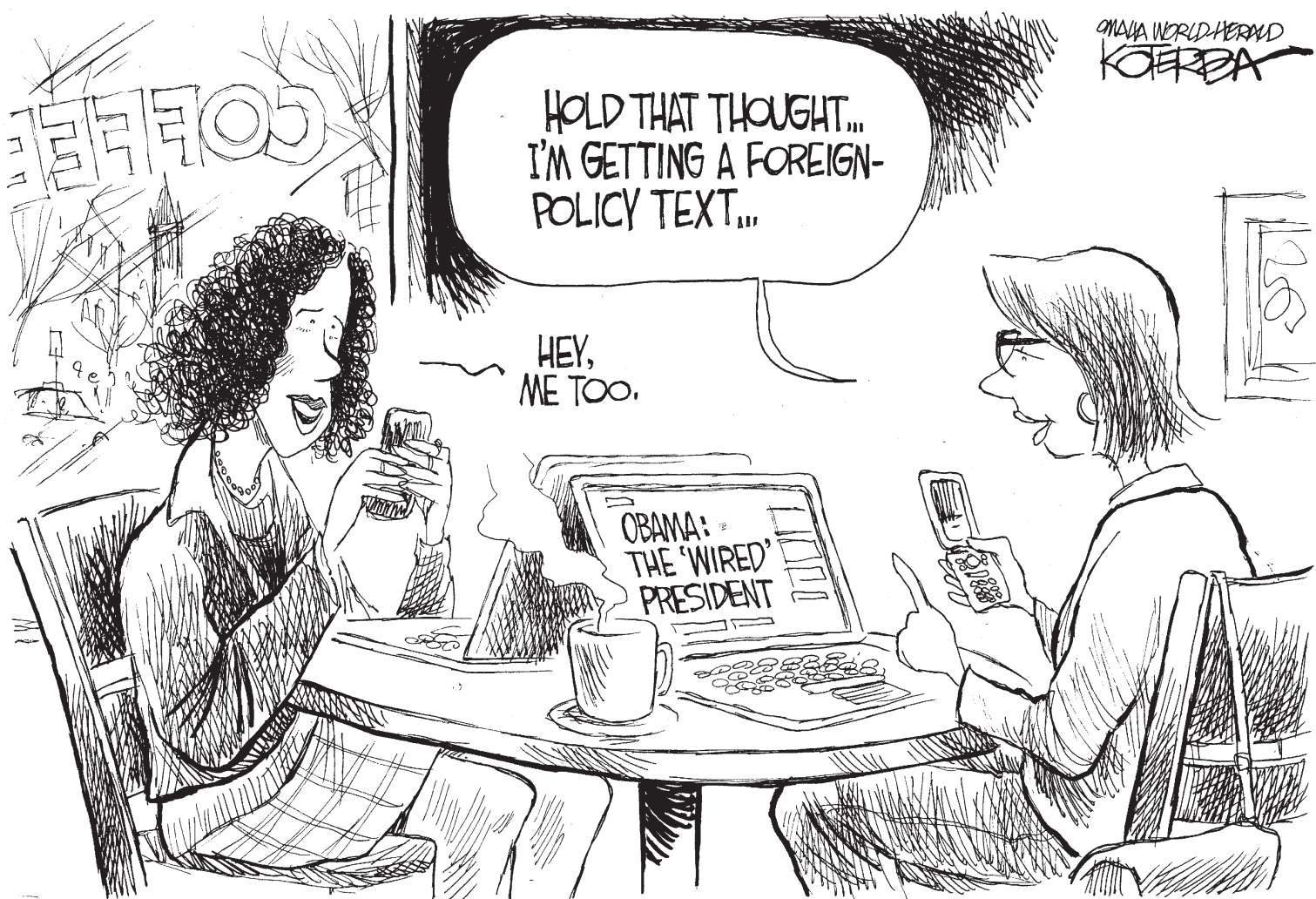
Our early success there belies the fact that we have not eliminated the Taliban or run al Qaida to the ground. They are resurgent, resupplying and resting in Pakistan to continue their attacks on NATO forces.

Yet it may not be a simple matter of shifting forces from the Mideast to Afghanistan. As we did in Iraq, we may need to rethink the entire plan in the mountainous Asian nation. Just moving troops will take months.

There are many books to read about this war-torn land, but watch sometime — if you can find it — the screen adaptation of Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King." Then rent "Charlie Wilson's War."

For President Obama, the celebrations will last a few days. The trials will begin soon after.

Envy not the new president. We'll soon see how well he lives up to the comparisons to Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy and Martin Luther King. — *Steve Haynes*



## E-mail fraud is out there, so watch out

Someone handed the office manager a sheet of paper on how to avoid e-mail hoaxes and scams. They wanted us to publish it.

That's not the sort of thing we publish. We do local news — school board, sports teams, harvest, festivals, clubs, babies, you name it. We cover our towns, not the world.

But, I do get a lot of e-mails and have had to change my address twice in the last few years in the hopes of escaping some of them. So, I wasn't adverse to looking over the page and passing on a few tips, especially since the cats have been unaccountably well behaved this week.

I hope everyone remembers the one big sign of a fraud — be it e-mail, or Moses Pray (Ryan O'Neal) selling Bibles to widows in the movie Paper Moon: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. People don't give you money, and if they ask for money, run, do not walk away.

Here are seven telltale signs of a scam:

- You don't know the person who sent you the message or you don't recognize the address.
- You are promised something with little or no effort on your part.



**Cynthia Haynes**

• Open Season

- You are asked to give money or personal information, such as Social Security or bank account number.
- The request has a close time line. You must do something right now.
- The sender wants to remain anonymous or have the information remain confidential.
- The sender offers to send you proof of their legitimacy. What they would send is fake.
- Look at the e-mail address. Do they say they're from the government but have a .com address?

- Don't even open up an e-mail from someone you don't know. You wouldn't open your door to a stranger. (Well, maybe you would out here in northwest Kansas, but, not if you lived in a city.)

You've put yourself on a no-call list. You've requested that the post office not send you junk mail. You don't bring garbage into your home and dump it. So why would you allow just any stranger into your home via the Internet.

If you start to get too much "spam," you can change your address. It's not a perfect solution, but you can send your friends and business associates the new address and be (relatively) spam free for a while, or you can continue to wade through hundreds of requests for money, offers of loans and pitches for everything from hot chicks from Russia to male and/or female enhancements.

If you do change your address, remember not to sign up for "hot" offers, sign up for "free" vacations or visit shaky-sounding websites. These will get your address, sell it to spammers and then — you'll have to change it again.

Your choice.  
*Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com*

## Rural students still get outdoors

Rural students have always had a wealth of field experiences. That made them easy to teach in biology class.

Mention squirrels burying walnuts, or hawks capturing mice, and they know what you mean. Rural students have been a great source of wildlife scientists and fish researchers and other field scientists. But that is changing.

Even though students in rural schools still dress in flannel and denim, not all of them have the outdoors experience you expect. Today, you can drive a new tractor into the field, circle the edge, and this will direct a computer program to perfectly plow or disc the field. The "driver" is only needed in case it gets mired in a mud hole. Enclosed in a cab and with earphones for downloaded music, a farm kid easily misses the rabbits and foxes and ragweed. They are not really "in" the field anymore.

And science teachers in rural schools are noticing the puzzled looks they get when they describe squirrels burying nuts or quail flying from nests. I tell my colleagues to ask benchmark questions, such as "How many flowers can you name?" And the result has been a drop from several dozen a decade ago to just a few today. There are still many country kids in Kansas. But today more and more, rural students are no more comfortable in the field than our city kids.

And it is not just recognition of meadowlarks and honeybees and other common wildlife that is being lost. There are a lot of lessons about real consequences that are only learned by working in the field. If a wagon breaks down and you don't fix it properly — the bailing wire breaks — you learn that the real world is



**John Richard Schrock**

• Education Frontlines

a hard teacher.

Getting the job done is a real test that provides a real sense of accomplishment. No amount of M&Ms or gold stars in a teacher's grade book provide quite the same motivation as making things work in the real world.

This rapid decline in nature experiences is detailed in the book "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder" by Richard Louv.

With a childhood in Independence, Mo., Louv returned to suburban Overland Park for one of the first interviews in his book. He writes of a mother who orders her kids — who are complaining about being bored — to go out and spend two hours in the backyard fields. They begrudgingly go, to come back much later, excited at having discovered nature for the first time. The next day, the mother again suggests they go play in the field. "No," the children reply. "We already did that."

This failure to go out into the field corresponds with the recent rise of electronics. Louv documents in his book the major shift in experiences between the 1946-1964 generation who played outdoors, and the current generation who mostly do not.

While Louv focuses on the social conse-

quences of isolating children from nature, I am concerned with our source of future field scientists. While speaking at a regional meeting of scientists who study insects, I asked how many became excited and entered our field from: Reading books? None! Watching television documentaries? None! Having a great teacher? None!

How many became entomologists from collecting in the field? All hands went up.

Where will our next generation of field biologists come from?

Education leaders warn of the "digital divide" — an inequality between those who have computers and those who do not, whom we assume will be left behind. They overlook that children immersed in computers and video games and television no longer have basic experiences that are vital to a healthy and creative life. With the "digital divide," it is the children with digital toys who are left without an understanding of the natural world and the maturity that comes with facing real consequences.

Under No Child Left Behind, our schools are locked down for test preparation, and field trips have all but disappeared. If we are to preserve some field-experienced children, it is up to parents to take them on field vacations and promote 4-H and Boy and Girl Scouting.

The coasts and suburbs may have seen the "last child in the woods," but here in Kansas, we have not reached the point of the "last child in the prairie." Not yet.

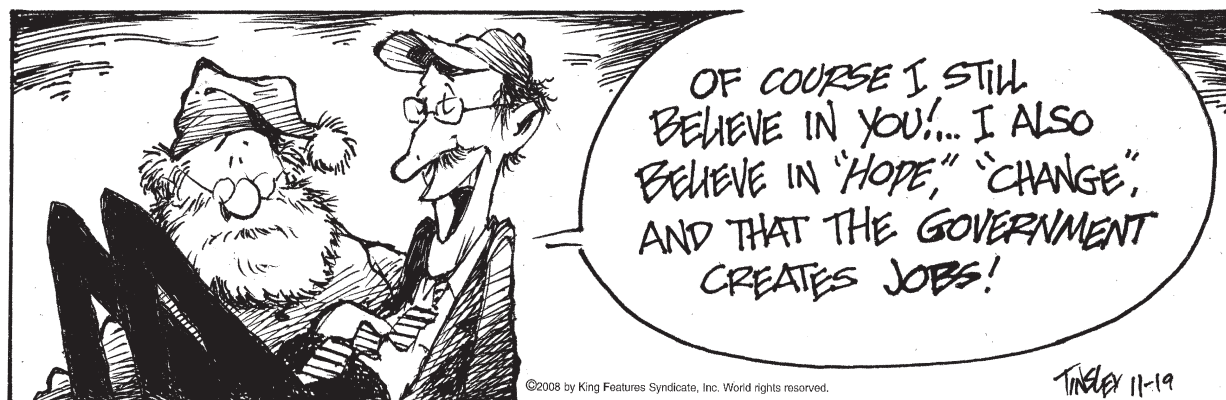
*John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.*

## Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 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  
**U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



**COLBY FREE PRESS**  
 155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
 Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor@nwkansas.com  
 State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

**Steve Haynes - Publisher**  
 s.haynes@nwkansas.com

**NEWS**  
**Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter**  
 aheintz@nwkansas.com

**Marian Ballard - Copy Editor**  
 mballard@nwkansas.com

**Marj Brown, Vera Sloan - Society Editors**  
 colby.society@nwkansas.com

**ADVERTISING**  
**Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Manager**  
 jstewart@nwkansas.com

**Heather Woofter - Advertising Sales**  
 hwoofter@nwkansas.com

**Steifon Matthews - Graphic Design**  
 smatthews@nwkansas.com

**Jessica Estes - Classified Ad Desk**  
 jestes@nwkansas.com

**BUSINESS OFFICE**  
**Tammy Withers - Office Manager**  
 twithers@nwkansas.com

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
 support@nwkansas.com

**NOR'WEST PRESS**  
**Jim Bowker - General Manager**  
 Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris,  
 James Ornelas, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Elizabeth Brock

**THE COLBY FREE PRESS** (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.  
**PERIODICALS POSTAGE** paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

**THE BUSINESS OFFICE** at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail within Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.