

Opinion



Other Viewpoints

Don't immigrants need education to blend in here?

It is unfortunate that some lawmakers want to continue fighting the immigration wars in Topeka during the coming session.

High on the list of issues the anti-immigration crowd wants to take on is in-state tuition for undocumented children.

Kansas, like some other states, allows illegal immigrants to attend Kansas universities at in-state costs if they graduate from a Kansas high school and are seeking legal status.

There are about 170 students taking advantage of this law in Kansas.

Instead of seeing this as a practical solution to help children achieve and assimilate, some lawmakers call it aiding and abetting illegal immigration.

These same lawmakers also want illegal immigrants in Kansas to be ineligible for bond if they are arrested, and to have everybody arrested checked for citizenship status.

Let's create a few gulags while we're at it.

This view of immigration as only a police issue is sinking the Republican Party nationally and will have reverberations in Kansas.

Immigration policy is broken. The federal government needs to enforce border security and help create a path to citizenship for illegal workers already here.

This will eventually happen, in some form.

State lawmakers should not piecemeal immigration policy in response to public clamor.

—The Arkansas City Traveler, via The Associated Press.

Where to write, call

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

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: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (7785) 296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail s.haynes@nwkansas.com or colby.editor@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Free Press, its staff or the owners.

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 Wofter - Advertising Sales
hwofter@nwkansas.com

Tyler Zolinski - Graphic Design
tzolinski@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

NORWEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

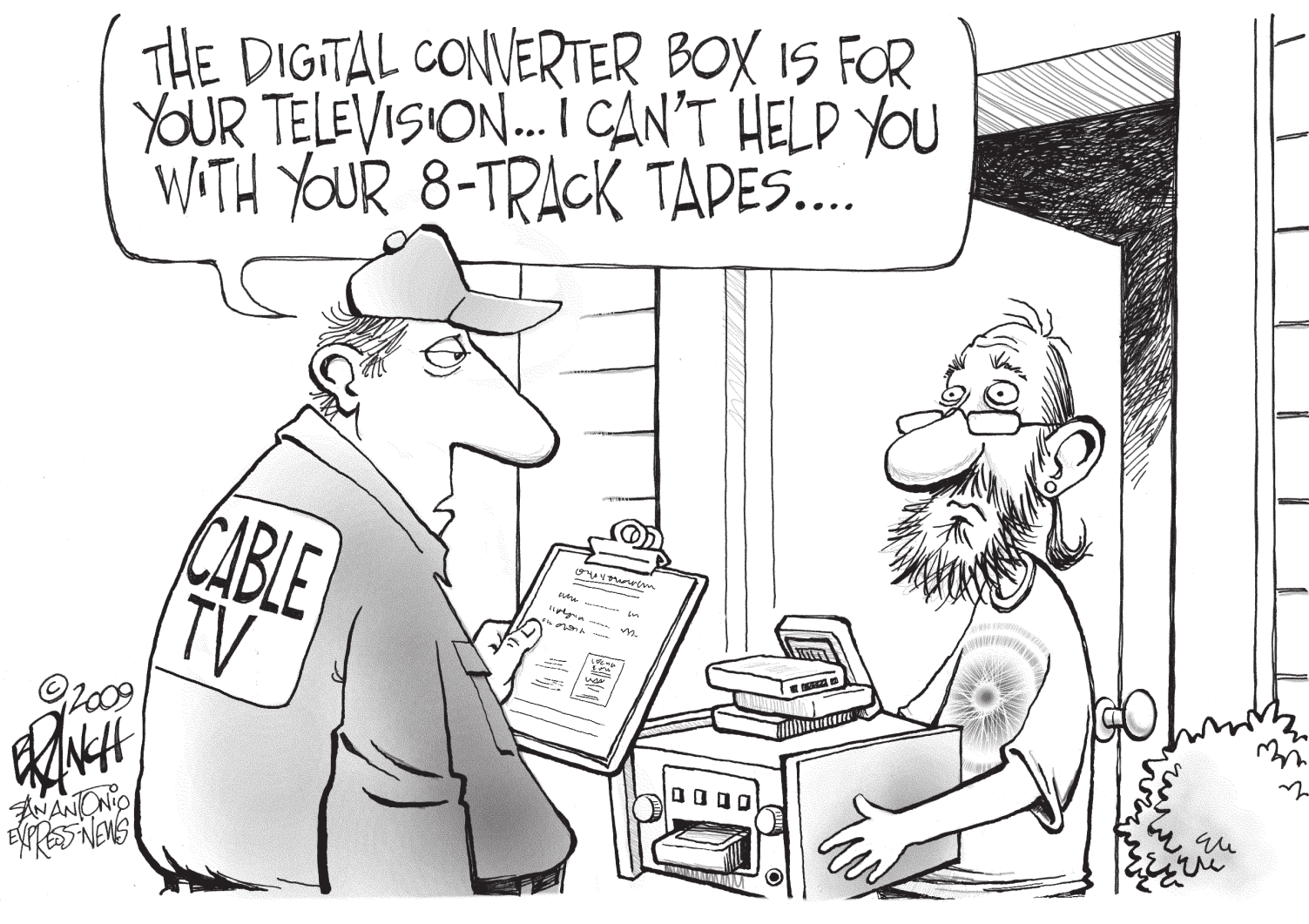
Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Elizabeth Brock

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 NorWest 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.



The more things change in a year ...

The weather changes so quickly here. Friday it was 64 degrees and Saturday, just half that at 32.

Then Sunday, the mercury soared into the 50s again.

It's a little like living on a yo-yo, but Kansans get used to it.

The economy out here can be like that, too. It was slow last year, even after a good fall crop.

Spending heated up all through 2008, even while the national economy was headed for the tank, as farm prices reached record highs and wheat topped \$12, however briefly.

Anyone who's watched the grain market at all knows a price like that won't last, though. Today the national economy is really tanked, and wheat is in the \$5-\$6 range.

Last summer, everyone was saying \$5 wheat would produce a loss. That might still happen, but there's no certainty.

It would not have been a bad price a couple of years ago. It still may not be a bad price this spring, as long as fuel costs stay down.

Hard to figure, isn't it? Just when we get set for high prices and big profits, they disappear.

Just when everyone assumes prices will "always be that way," things change.

People have a way of taking whatever the situation is today and assuming that's the way things always will be.

Only it never turns out that way.



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

Those of us who grew up with the Cold War "knew" the Soviet Union would always be there to threaten us. Now most the "Iron Curtain" countries are our friends, and most are members of NATO, the decades-old anti-Communist alliance. Go figure.

And sure, the Soviet bear might be reborn in the guise of a newly nationalistic, growling, KGB-let Russia. But the bear lacks teeth, real economic power or a modern military. Wait a few years and we'll see.

Back when we were looking under the bed for communists every night, who would have thought of the Muslim world as a threat to equal the Soviets? No one I can think of. Maybe there was a voice crying in the wilderness, but no one heard it, that's for sure.

Few in this country even knew who Osama bin Laden was when President Bush gravely pronounced his name after the September 2001 attacks. Today, we still don't know where he is, of course, but that is another story.

Then along comes Global Warming, the next bogey man. It's going to drown the earth

under rising seas, if we don't die from the pollution first.

Not to minimize the problem — pollution is awful and needs to be curbed — but in a couple of years, there'll be a new threat and we'll forget about global warming.

And did you hear, last year the earth cooled off?

Anyone old enough to remember how the population bomb was going to bury the earth in unfeedable people should be able to take a long-term view of these pseudo-science scares.

There's always an underlying problem, but like the weather, things change.

And the economy? It won't be as bad out here, where housing prices never rose, as it is in the cities. We'll feel the pinch, but won't suffer a lot.

Be thankful that we missed the housing boom, and that most farmers paid down their debts the last couple of years. With a lot of unpaid farm debt, this year's crash in prices could have been much worse.

By next year? Oh, the weather will be different then.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of NorWest Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

Reforms need to come from us

I have a confession to make. I admire President-elect Barack Obama. I feel like I can relate to him as opposed to previous presidents, including Dubya. Obama has a rare gift that enables him to play to the better angels of our nature. In an era filled with polarizing figures trying to divide the country, it's refreshing to hear someone talk about unity.

Yet while I genuinely trust Obama and believe he will bring this country much needed health-care reform, I'm not naive enough to believe that Obama can change this country all by himself. He is an idealistic pragmatist as opposed to an iconoclastic revolutionary. I doubt he alone will be able or willing to disempower the entrenched special interests that have controlled Washington for far too long.

I firmly believe that change comes from the bottom up, not the top down. The change this country needs will only come when "we the people" demand it.

The first thing that needs to be changed in this country is the incestuous relationship between our government and special-interest groups. Oil companies, the credit card industry, chemical companies, the corporate farm lobby, war contractors, giant investment banks and the pharmaceutical industry all wield too much influence in our government.

The only way to combat this corporatism is for us to demand that all donations made to politicians by lobbyists representing powerful interest groups be made available to the public. This would help us understand what politicians are in the pockets of corporations.

We should also push for a campaign finance reform law that would make it illegal for any person or corporation to give more than \$5



Andy Heintz

• Wildcat Ramblings

to a campaign. I'm afraid that if we refuse to raise our voices against the friendly relationship between our government and special interests, we will be left with a economic system dominated by corporations that put profits over consumers, workers and the environment. This country should represent we the people, not we the giant corporations.

The second thing we should push for is a government that includes "we the people" in its foreign-policy decisions. The majority of our government's questionable foreign policy decisions have been made behind the backs of the American people because politicians did not think the public should be involved in national security matters or because they did not believe idealistic Americans would support cold-hearted policies that put American interests over human rights.

We should be aware of these past policies so we can help craft wiser policies in the future.

The public should also demand that our government come clean about the double standards in the hopelessly misguided war on drugs. According to Alfred McCoy's book, "The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade," our intelligence agency has worked with and protected numerous drug dealers over the years, including the Corsican

mafia in France, the Contras in Nicaragua, the Haitian military, Honduran military generals, and the mujahadeen warlords in Afghanistan. Given our government's tendency to align itself with drug dealers and the large number of nonviolent drug offenders residing in our bloated prison system, it would be wise to choose a new strategy to combat drug use that emphasized treatment and prevention.

All of these uncomfortable facts about government policies became public thanks to some investigative journalists and the Freedom of Information Act signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1966. But how many people really know about these past actions? Maybe 10 or 15 percent? There is something frightening about a free country where the majority of the citizenry are unaware of their government's most questionable decisions.

None of these decisions were made because our government has always been filled with evil minded people. These policies were supported because they were seen as a way to counter communism or Islamic fundamentalism or to protect U.S. interests at home and abroad. But what troubles me is that the public was not made aware of these policies while they were in force.

So, Mr. Obama, please let some light into the White House so the rest of us can be active participants in the greatest democratic experiment the world has ever seen. If he is unwilling or unable to let us be active participants in our country's democracy, then we should protest until light shines into to every corner of the government.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

