

# Opinion



## Other Viewpoints

### Brutality matters in cockfighting crime

Every state adjacent to Kansas has made cockfighting a felony. In Kansas, however, the brutal gambling activity is only a misdemeanor.

That means penalties are light and the risk of jail time is low. A defendant charged in Johnson County with breeding dozens of roosters to fight was granted a one-year diversion last month.

Kansas Sen. Julia Lynn, an Olathe Republican, is sponsoring a bill to make cockfighting a felony. It's a good idea. Tougher penalties would reduce the likelihood that Kansas will become a haven for breeding farms and cockfights.

Cockfighting is not a matter of "some misguided guys who want to kill a chicken on Sunday afternoon," as one lawmaker said when the Legislature debated the issue in 2002.

It's a bloody activity in which promoters replace the spurs of roosters' feet with razor-sharp instruments and send them into pits to fight to a gruesome death so that humans can enjoy the spectacle and gamble on the outcome.

No state wants to appear welcoming to such an activity. Kansas should join the 38 states that have made cockfighting a felony.

— The Kansas City Star, via The Associated Press

### Football program bypasses economy

While most American businesses appear to be facing extreme economic challenges by cutting their work forces, reducing prices to attract customers and initiating other cost-saving actions, the Kansas University Athletics Department apparently believes that KU football tickets for the upcoming season will be in such high demand that they can afford to raise the prices.

Individual ticket prices for the Oklahoma and Nebraska football games in Memorial Stadium will cost \$90 this fall, with tickets to powerhouse non-conference opponents like Northern Colorado, Duke and Southern Mississippi set at \$50 each and Iowa State ducks at \$60.

As yet, no price has been announced for the Kansas-Missouri game to be played in Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium. By the way, at a time when Lawrence and Columbia merchants need all the help they can get and Kansas could use the tax dollars generated by a game played in KU's Memorial Stadium, it should be noted that KU officials — athletics department and top administration — elected to give this game to Kansas City, Mo., for the next five years.

Oh well. They have offset losing this game by scheduling crowd-pleasing contests against such teams as Florida International, Louisiana Tech, Sam Houston State, Central Michigan, Toledo and next year's battles with Northern Colorado and Southern Mississippi. At least tickets to those games don't cost \$90 each.

— Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

## 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

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

### NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

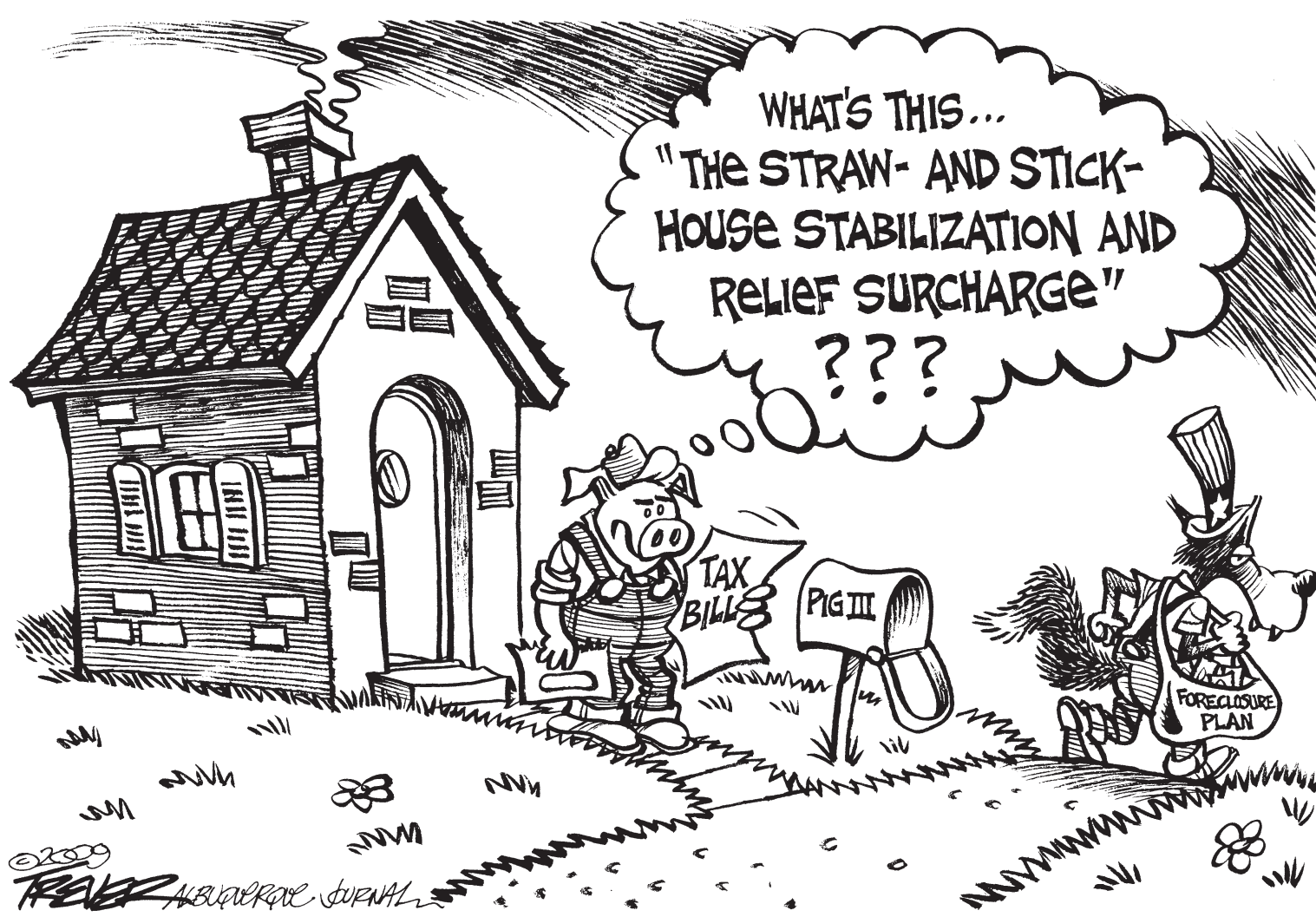
Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Daniel Spillman

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.



### A legacy eases the pain of loss

I didn't know him, just of him. Yet his death has left me pondering about this unavoidable escape from life.

Like I said, I didn't know him, but I still felt sad when I received an e-mail that informed us students that Dr. Joseph Aldrich, third president of Multnomah University, had died. I was sad for those who did know him, who were affected by his teaching, his faith and his way of life. And I was sad for those who didn't — like me.

I have not had to experience the death of loved ones in my family much yet. The most recent death was my grandpa, my mom's dad, in 2006. Its unexpectedness made it painful. Every event in one of our lives, no matter how small, makes us wish he could be here again.

But lately, it seems that death has been crouching at the door of those dear to me. It makes me pause during my busy everyday schedule and thank God for them.

The father of one of my friends found out several weeks ago that he has cancer in his colon and liver. He's the pastor of my friend's church, and the congregation was devastated by the news.

Since the cancer is in about 80 percent of his liver, they cannot operate. And finding a donor can take years. Her dad doesn't have that long to wait, since chemotherapy will only shrink the cancer. The doctors have given him seven months to two years to live.

To cope with this new challenge, my friend



Michelle Myers

#### • A Moment with Michelle

does her best to go on with life, knowing that her dad wouldn't want her to stop her life just because his probably will soon.

Another close friend, whom I have mentioned in previous columns, has a heart problem and the doctors can't figure out what is wrong. The brown-eyed 19-year-old is tall, not bulky and has a laugh that can be detected 100 feet away.

He often faints, sometimes without any warning, because the pain in his chest is so unbearable. His body will convulse and his lungs will let out screams. We don't really know what to do except hold his hands, tell him it'll be over soon and pray. If we talk to him to get his mind off what's going on in his body, the attack usually will go away — but not always. He usually faints, so we sit there and wait until he wakes up.

My friends and I have often wondered how much longer his body can handle these attacks, since they are becoming more frequent and more intense. We want answers. We want to help. We do what we can and make sure that

he knows that we will always be there for him, no matter how bad it gets.

I guess that's the scary thing about death. We don't know when the inevitable will come. So we have to make sure that we're ready for when it does.

The announcement of the death of Multnomah's Dr. Aldrich is posted on the University's blog, with comments from students and friends filling the page.

A comment by a student read, "His legacy is part of my identity."

Another said, "I have (a) small, simple frame I keep on my desk that I unabashedly kept from Dr. Joe's desk. It reads:

*I Surrender my Life into the hands of God, knowing He has predestined for me His best.*

*I will count the cost and by God's grace I will pay the price to become the best that I am capable of becoming. I will hold to my course and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I will finish strong.*

"Yes you did Dr. Joe, yes you did." I hope I do, too.

Michelle Myers, a Colby native, is a student at Multnomah University in Portland, Ore., majoring in Bible and journalism. She enjoys the 32 Starbucks found within five miles of her campus.

### Environmental regulations a certainty

The old saying that the only things certain in life are death and taxes could be expanded in today's world. This saying should include government regulations.

For farmers and ranchers, the very nature of working with land, water and livestock means there's a certain amount of government oversight. It comes with the territory.

That said, farmers and ranchers believe regulations must be clear, stable and transparent. Something they can count on. Something as reliable as the Kansas wind.

When it comes to environmental regulations on the farm or in the workplace, farmers, ranchers and businesses believe such stipulations should be managed within a proven, structural framework with public input.

That's why agriculture has thrown its support behind a comprehensive energy plan being worked in the Kansas Legislature. This plan would include regulatory stability.

There are plenty of reasons to support such legislation. Most importantly, it will provide stability to the regulatory environment. Kansas businesses, including agriculture, should not be unfairly burdened with more stringent rules and regulations than the federal government demands.

After last year's decision by the state Department of Health and Environment to deny construction permits for a pair of coal-fired power plants in southwestern Kansas, it's time to bring clarity back to the way our state does business. To deny construction permits for this pair of rural-electric plants, designed to serve Kansas, Colorado and Texas co-ops, because of potential carbon-dioxide emissions was wrong. Neither state nor federal regulations lists carbon dioxide as a pollutant.



John Schlageck

#### • Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

"Denial of those permits was uncalled for and should not be allowed to stand," Kansas Farm Bureau lobbyist Brad Harrelson says. "When you have action taken by a state agency that exceeds its authority, then we become a state where our laws no longer apply."

Last year's decision to deny the air permit not only denies our state the expansion of much needed electric generation and increased revenues, it sets a terrible precedent for economic development in Kansas.

The department exceeded its authority and Kansans are concerned about what arbitrary decisions could come next. Some could very well affect agriculture.

Farmers and ranchers could benefit from this new energy source, Harrelson says. They could fire their irrigation engines and run their operations more economically.

Construction of the plants would also lead to economic development in a part of the state desperate for jobs, income and business.

"Kansas is in the throes of a very deep recession, like the rest of our country," says Sen. Steve Morris, a Hugoton Republican. "For our state to ignore nearly \$4-billion in economic development and 2,400 jobs during the seven-year construction period is beyond me."

Morris said he believes the Legislature will support a balanced, comprehensive energy

plan.

"It's important to move forward with clean-coal technology, nuclear, gas, geo-thermal, solar and wind energy," the Kansas Senate president said. "Our country has the coal resources to last for several hundred years."

In addition to an economic shot in the arm, regulatory certainty is key to help attracting new jobs to our state. Concerns about the uncertainty of our state's regulatory environment have been echoed by independent businesses, manufacturers, farmers and ranchers and others from Scammon to St. Francis, from Rolla to Reserve and all points in between. And that is not to mention those outside our state's borders who ever thought of doing business in Kansas.

All Kansans should continue to seek clarification on this issue and support an energy policy that is environmentally responsible and promotes a viable economic solution to Kansas' needs. To do so will invite new businesses to Kansas, and allow current businesses to expand by giving employers the stability of regulation that is uniform and consistently applied.

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.

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.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

