



Other Viewpoints

Running a state, not a campaign

It's too bad Gov. Mark Parkinson isn't running for election to his job next year. Based on his record thus far and his mature approach to governing, he would be a good candidate.

Then again, one reason Parkinson has been effective in his first three months as governor is that he isn't running and can focus on bipartisan solutions rather than politics.

Despite calls from Democrats to reconsider his decision not to run for governor in 2010, Parkinson told *The Eagle* editorial board last week that he's "really, really not running."

If he were running, he would have to spend a lot of time in a call room raising campaign money, and there would be no reason for Republicans to help his administration, he said.

That's not what our state needs during this economic crisis....

In trying to govern from the middle, Parkinson has taken some heat from both sides.

Environmental groups were upset about his settlement with Sunflower Electric Power Corp. to build a coal-fired power plant near Holcomb. But Parkinson contends that the deal was needed in order to get the Legislature to approve renewable energy legislation....

Conservative lawmakers complained that the state budget Parkinson helped craft didn't cut enough spending — a view reinforced by the state's continued drop in tax collections, which forced Parkinson to make allotment cuts earlier this month. But Parkinson argued that "one of the most important things a government can do during the time of a recession is to keep as much money flowing in the economy as possible."

Though he will be governor for less than two years, Parkinson hopes that when he leaves office people will say at least two things: that his administration, "in a calm, responsible, thorough way, managed the state budget through these difficult times without panicking and without dismantling the infrastructure that generations of policy leaders have created," and that "we've laid the groundwork for Kansas to be a regional leader in energy and also renewable energy."

If so, that would be an excellent legacy for him and the state.

— *The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press*

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Round and round she goes around again

If my memory serves me correctly — and it sometimes doesn't — I read in a past *Colby Free Press* story that someone had suggested they might want to build a roundabout at the entrance of Colby on South Range, where we turn into McDonalds and Arby's.

Thank goodness someone nixed that idea because roundabouts, they argued, are difficult for people to figure out until they have experienced them a few times. After our experience in the past few days, I wholeheartedly agree and am casting my vote against roundabouts.

We took a car trip to Cheney, Wash., recently to celebrate the golden wedding anniversary of my sister Ann and her husband Jim. My brother Dick and his wife Barbara rode with us. My older sister Shirley, also came over from Richland, Wash., for the occasion.

Later, while visiting Shirley at her home in Richland, we received our first piece of advice about roundabouts. Shirley said, "Always keep to the outside lane on a roundabout, or you will never get off of it," so we had already had some roundabout advice.

Later, on our way home, we had reserved rooms at a motel in Avon, Colo., a small tourist town near Vale made up mostly of condominiums, motels, hotels and businesses.

The directions to our motel were: turn left at the roundabout, turn right at Beaver Creek Boulevard and the motel would be one-fourth mile on the right. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Dick was driving at the time and we were all giving him instructions as we went left on the roundabout. The first street sign we saw said "Beaver Creek," no boulevard, and the sign was positioned so you really couldn't tell which direction it pointed. We went on, and the next sign said "Beaver Creek Place," not boulevard, so we went on again.

Dick was getting frustrated with the instruc-



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

tions he was getting from the rest of us, "Remember, stay on the outside lane. Don't turn here, it's not a boulevard."

The next sign said "Beaver Creek" also, but not boulevard, and we were all the way around the roundabout and headed around again. This time, he got off the circle on the last Beaver Creek sign and headed down a street that had no motels on it. We ended up in the parking lot of a grocery store.

Jim decided to go into the store for information about where our motel was. Just as he went in, Dick stopped a carry out boy and asked for directions. When Jim came back we found they had been given different directions. We took Jim's, and headed back the way we came.

This time, when we came to the roundabout we exited on the other side where it also said "Beaver Creek." We had been directed to pass a Denny's, a post office and a bank. Our motel would be right next to the bank.

We never saw Denny's or the post office, but we finally did see a bank and, sure enough, our motel was where it was supposed to be.

After finding our rooms and carrying in our suitcases, we were exhausted and hungry, so we decided, since Denny's was supposed to be close, we would eat there. We drove around the area several times and never did see a Denny's, so we went up Beaver Creek Place. That was the main part of town, but we still didn't find a Denny's, and finally we found ourselves back in that same grocery store parking lot.

Jim was driving this time and called to a lady going to her car and asked her if she knew where Denny's was. She told us to go right to Beaver Creek and turn left and when we came to the roundabout.... At that point I think she noticed that when she said roundabout, our eyes glazed over, so she smiled and said, "You know what, I'm just going by that way myself, so why don't you just follow me." So we did.

She led us back to where we came from and just before we got to the bank, she waved towards a parking lot on our right and motioned for us to turn in there. We found that it was the parking lot of the post office. We didn't see a Denny's, so we drove on through, and guessing that somehow we missed it, we drove through again.

That's when I said, "You know, I have a feeling that this Denny's will look like no Denny's we have ever seen before." We looked at each building very carefully now, and finally we saw a very small Denny's sign on a brick building with windows you couldn't see in and an entrance facing away from the parking lot. Since it was past meal time, there were only one or two cars there. It turned out to be a very nice place to eat.

When we had eaten and were walking to the car, Dick said, "Isn't that the parking lot of our motel over there behind the bank? We could have walked over here." We couldn't help but laugh about all the time and gas we had wasted.

Before we left the next day we felt like we had become well acquainted with the roundabout, but I knew we didn't need one in Colby.

Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here.

Protect seniors in health care reform

The debate over health care reform legislation continues to churn along in Congress. The tide of this debate changes with the wind and no one knows for certain when or if there will be a vote on a bill. The one thing that must be certain with health care reform, however, is that Kansas seniors must be protected and their access to health care must be preserved and enhanced.

Congress must preserve Medicare and protect the 45 million seniors across the country that depend on the program for their health care needs. On July 21, I introduced House Resolution 663, legislation urging the House of Representatives to invest Medicare savings back into the program instead of funding new government-sponsored health care programs. We need to bring some Kansas common-sense thinking to health care reform. Recent projections report Medicare to be bankrupt by 2017. Additionally, the Medicare trustees recently reported that the "unfunded liability" of Medicare, or amount of benefits promised that are not covered by taxes, is nearly \$38 trillion over the next 75 years. It makes no sense to siphon money from a cash-strapped program that seniors rely on to expand government and create a brand new government program. This logic will only exacerbate the health care access issues we have in Kansas.

House Democrats would like to overhaul our health care system by creating a massive new



U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran

• Capitol Notes

government-sponsored health care program that would be funded through \$820 billion in taxes and \$500 billion in cuts to Medicare. Our hospitals and other care facilities in Kansas already operate on razor-thin margins because they serve an increasingly aging population across a wide geographic area and receive a Medicare reimbursement level at or below cost. Reducing reimbursements in this manner, at the same time that Baby Boomers increase Medicare enrollment by 30 percent, will mean fewer providers and diminished health care access for Kansas.

With the staggering shortfall facing Medicare, spending our "savings" will reduce the care our seniors currently receive by cutting critical health services and limiting care options in Kansas. Medicare cuts are more than just numbers on a budget forecast. These resources determine whether Kansas seniors receive the care they need. Medicare represents a promise made by the federal government to the American people, and we should be work-

ing to fulfill this promise and not diverting funds away from this responsibility.

I will continue working to find a better way to improve the choices we have for affordable and available health care in Kansas.

Write us

The *Colby Free Press* encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses not pertaining to a public issue.

Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

