



## Free Press Viewpoint

### U.S. Immigration a point of shame for entire nation

Where would we even begin to fix the tattered, torn, broken, impossible U.S. immigration system?

It makes no sense, everyone calls for "reform," yet nothing ever changes.

We spend billions, then billions more, for tighter security, more walls, electronic surveillance, aircraft and more guards. The payoff: nothing but the worst economy in 70 years seems to slow the flood of immigrants.

People who want to come to our country are degraded, insulted and bullied. They have to pass into our fortress embassies, answer questions, wait in line, pay money, then wait years to come to the U.S. — if ever.

People who want to work here — unless they are doctors, chemists or computer geniuses, well, just forget it. Some days, it's hard for a town to get a foreign doctor through all the State Department's red tape.

How did the nation that earned the Statue of Liberty fall to this mean estate?

It wasn't easy.

Our immigration system, retooled after World War II mostly to keep people out, was built up over years and years. It won't change overnight.

Our economy simply won't run without foreign labor — nothing unusual there. It never has. Neither can the economies of the wealthy European or Middle Eastern countries.

But 30 or 40 years ago, we had a system for migrant laborers to come north and pick our crops. The border existed in peace, with a sort of easy-going back and forth that kept things fluid.

No more. Today the U.S.-Mexican border sports wire, guards, dogs, constant patrols, airborne surveillance, all kinds of unfriendly attitudes. And still, people come here to work.

Why?

Because they need jobs and we have them. They need them badly enough to risk their lives with smugglers, to spend their savings, to risk being caught and sent right back south.

It isn't the Mexicans who created this situation, wanting jobs and wanting to break the law to get them. It was our wealthy and vastly successful economy that produced jobs we cannot fill with Americans.

Another problem on the border that will have to be solved: drugs and smuggling.

As long as we make drugs scarce and expensive here, and people want them, smugglers and gangsters will bring them into our country.

We're only fooling ourselves if we think spending more on enforcement will turn the tide. Demand is too strong, profits too large. And the corrupting influence of the smugglers is too great at the border.

But for the border, the trick will be to make legal immigration both possible and desirable. With a good immigration plan — one without too many restrictions or impossible rules — workers will be able to cross the border legally and we'll know who is in the country. The "coyote" human smugglers would be out of business, and the Border Patrol could concentrate on the bad guys.

That may be too sensible in a nation where most people seem to focus on more guards, more guns, more insults and more money. But we need to try, and soon. We should be ashamed of what's happening today. — *Steve Haynes*

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### Cabin + baby = good family fun

We had all three children and our only grandchild in one spot in Kansas last week, and our daughters seemed a little surprised that we were there, too.

Duh!

The last time all of us were together, youngest daughter was saying "I do," and that was a zoo, as most weddings are.

Thursday the two girls put baby Taylor in her car seat, drove to Atlanta, flew to Kansas City, rented a car and drove to Lake Kahola, near Emporia, to show the baby off to their Kansas cousins, aunt and uncles.

After a little persuasion, their brother took off work in Lawrence and drove out to the lake also.

It was a memorable time: All of our descendants under one roof at one time.

Steve's parents purchased the little lake cabin in the mid-1950s — when the lake was dry, cabins were cheap — and used it as a weekend retreat. Their four children grew up sleeping in the bunk beds in the kitchen, boating, fishing and swimming.

By the time I joined the family, son No. 2 was in college, so there was a spare bunk and soon, a roll-out crib.

Steve's mom updated the little cabin about 15 years ago and it now has three bedrooms as well as the bunks.

We shuffled around over the weekend with youngest daughter and baby in the first bedroom, us in the second and eldest daughter in the third. (Daddy and eldest snore, and young-



**Cynthia Haynes**

• Open Season

est sleeps lightly.)

Son got the bunk beds.

We cooked on the barbecue as various aunts, uncles and cousins dropped by to check out the baby and visit, sort of "relative du jour."

There's nothing like a 10-week-old to bring the family out of the woodwork. Only one uncle didn't show up. He had the flu and didn't want to take the chance of passing it on.

And yes, we have pictures. Pictures of everyone holding Taylor and pictures of people just standing around talking and playing with the various family dogs.

I guess I shouldn't have been amazed. This is the age of the caring man. The guys all grabbed the baby as fast as the girls.

First it was uncle Lacy. My son acted as if he had been around babies all his life when, in truth, he's the baby of our family.

Steve's brother Doug rocked her and cooed to her. His baby girl is 14 now, and you can tell, he misses having a baby in the house.

Then there were the cousins — Willie and Andy. They both took their turns.

Willie handled her like he does one of his art

pieces — with a mixture of care and deftness. He's a glass blower and knows how to handle delicate objects.

To my knowledge, Andy has never had a chance to hold a baby, but as we looked around we spotted him watching a movie on television with Taylor fast asleep on his chest — just the way she does at home with her Daddy.

After meeting and greeting all the relatives in eastern Kansas, we all drove to Concordia to see my mother.

This was about the best Mother's Day gift you could have given her.

Living in a nursing home after a stroke and broken hip, she couldn't make the wedding in Georgia a few years ago, but her room is plastered with pictures of her grandchildren and her first great-grandchild, starting with Taylor's sonograms and going through the latest set she got in the mail last week.

It was a great weekend, and we hated to come home, but it was time for the three girls to fly back to Georgia to husbands and father, and time for us to come home to cut grass, check mail and get ready for another week of work.

But, we have pictures. Let me show you the pictures!

*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](mailto:c.haynes@nwkansas.com)*

### Stroke treatment can save a life

To the Editor:

Stroke is the third-leading cause of death in the United States and a major cause of severe, long-term disability. In fact, more than 700,000 people suffer a stroke each year — about one person every 45 seconds.

May is American Stroke Month. This is an important opportunity to highlight the risk factors and warning signs for stroke, and to emphasize that seeking immediate treatment can mean the difference between life and death.

Stroke is not inevitable, and it does not have to be deadly or debilitating. Stroke can be prevented by awareness of personal risk factors, and working with a doctor to eliminate or manage these. If you have even one warning sign, rehabilitation and survival are probable if you seek prompt medical attention.

To help prevent a stroke, the American Stroke Association recommends that everyone:

- Maintain a healthy weight through diet and physical activity.
- Control high blood pressure.
- Do not smoke, and avoid secondhand-smoke.
- Treat disorders that increase the risk of stroke, such as diabetes, irregular heartbeat, and heart failure.

Signs of stroke include the sudden appearance of any of the following:

- Weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body.
- Dimness or loss of vision, particularly in one eye.
- Loss of speech, trouble talking or comprehending speech.
- Severe headache with no apparent cause.
- Unexplained dizziness, unsteadiness, or a fall.



### Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

If even one of these shows up, it's crucial to get help right away by calling 911.

I encourage readers to pause during American Stroke Month and consider their health. A variety of helpful tips can be found at [www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org) or by calling (888) 4STROKE. Make the pledge to prevent stroke. Lives depend on it.

Dr. Colleen Lechtenberg  
Kansas City, Kansas

*Dr. Lechtenberg is medical chair of the Kansas Stroke Task Force and a stroke neurologist at the University of Kansas Hospital.*

### Public television asks for your help

To the Editor:

Imagine PBS without the voice of Western Kansas — without the regional farm, political and special programs that Smoky Hills Public Television provides.

That image could be a reality. On May 10, the state Legislature voted to slash \$900,000 for the Kansas public broadcasters — more than half the \$1.6 million allocated to Kansas pub-

lic broadcasting.

This would be devastating loss to Smoky Hills Public Television and PBS stations across the state. For Smoky Hills, it means 15 percent of our operating budget will be cut.

The cuts will affect all Kansas PBS stations, but the ones hit the hardest will be the rural western Kansas stations like Smoky Hills.

Smoky Hills covers 71 counties in central and western Kansas. This cut would most certainly mean we would have to cut back in areas that set us apart, the local programs that we feel serve as a voice to the people in our area.

There is time to change this decision, but not much. We need your help. Call the governor's office at (877) 579-6757 and ask him to line-item veto this amendment and restore the money to Kansas Public Broadcasting.

Kari Sparks, Bunker Hill marketing and communications manager, Smoky Hills Public Television

### 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.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

