



Free Press Viewpoint

Big 12 greed leaves schools in the dust

The upcoming dismemberment of the Big 12 conference would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. Now, the University of Kansas and Kansas State, together with Iowa State and Baylor, face an uncertain future as outcasts from major-conference football.

Imagine, the Jayhawks, who won the Orange Bowl just two years ago, and K-State, winner of all those games under Bill Snyder and Vince Gibson, cut adrift from traditional games, college bowls and all that. Even KU being a perennial basketball power doesn't seem to count for much.

Neither does more than a century of tradition, dating back to the days of the Big Six and Big Seven, known formally then as the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association. The league dates itself to 1907, though some of the individual rivalries go back much farther, to the dawn of football as we know it.

What happened?
Call it greed, maybe. Call it money, for sure. Call it television.

Maybe the trouble began when the Big 8 saw a chance to grow by scooping up the four biggest and best members of the former Southwest Conference: Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech and Baylor.

That left the rest of the conference out of a league, of course, but who cared if the Big 8 schools would prosper? Money and greed trumped tradition.

Then the new Big 12 voted to move first its offices and then its tournament to Dallas, leaving Kansas City to fend for itself. The tournament did return this year, but the center of action certainly shifted south.

Now, forces are pulling apart the Big 12, and having abandoned many of the old traditions, it lacks new ones to bind its members.

The Big 10 may want Nebraska and Missouri, both original Big Six members. If they go, the story has it, the southern football powerhouses, including maybe the three Texas schools and Oklahoma, might join a vastly expanded Pac 10 conference. That would leave poor Baylor, the only private university in the Big 12, plus weak-sister football schools like Kansas, K-State and Iowa State, without a home.

No "big-time" conference would have them.

And it's way too late now to appeal to tradition. Money has entered the room.

What will happen is anybody's guess. With the kind of television money being bandied about — as much as \$20 million a year for a Big 10 contract, for instance — it's hard to see the Big 12 schools sitting still. Not unless the league can come up with some cash of its own.

Kansas and Kansas State have vowed to work together to save their own skins, but their chances for success may not be bright. Few major colleges can raise money without success on the field. And state support continues to drop.

Are the Kansas universities and their kin reaping the wages of sin?

That may depend on how you value history, tradition and big-time college sports money. Only time will tell.

— Steve Haynes

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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.

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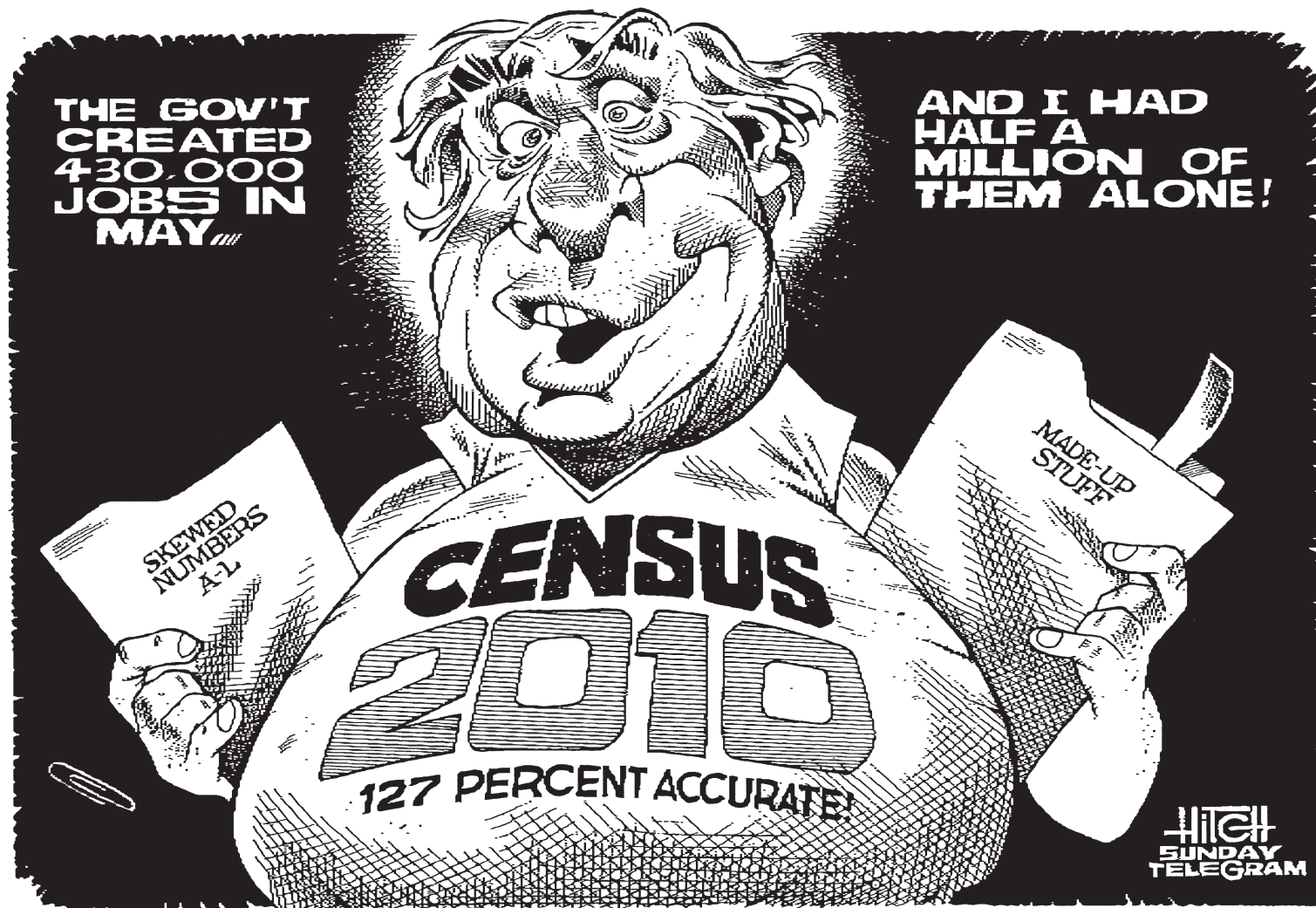
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. 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, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



Ante up, the bugs are in the game

I've been really bugged this last week. It started out with ants in my kitchen. This seems to be an annual problem. Little bitty ants suddenly appear behind the coffee maker. They crawl around the canisters, behind the sink faucets and down the cupboards.

I don't know where they come from, although one year I found them trooping in through a miniscule hole in the kitchen window from outside. I quickly cut off that entrance and stopped hundreds of them in their tracks with a can of Raid.

I suppose the latest hole, which I have yet to find, is still there, but I haven't found an entire colony moving into my house bag and baggage, this year anyway.

This year it's just an ant here and an ant there.

I'll see one moving along the drain board. In a few more minutes there's another on the window sill.

Finally, on Sunday, I moved the canisters, coffee maker, toaster, soap and scrubber, cutting board and window decorations to the kitchen table. Then I took the Raid and gave the window ledge, back splash and sink edges a good shot. I'm also going to get some new ant traps from the hardware.



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

I put some new ones out a few weeks ago, when I first noticed my unwelcome visitors, but there seems to be more ants than traps, so it's time to up the ante, again.

While the ants are annoying, the other problem I came up with this week was truly creepy. It still makes my skin crawl to think about.

I found a tick in my hair. He was just wandering around looking for lunch. What he found was the bathroom and toilet.

I hate ticks. They just creep me out. There's something so nasty about them, and not just that they suck your blood and carry all kinds of diseases. Heck, mosquitoes do that, and they are just an annoyance.

The next day, I was working at a pharmacy and I reached up to adjust the back of my ear-ring. I lost one last summer and now I check the backs a couple of times a day to make sure they are still secure.

I seemed to have two posts on the back of one ear. It took me a few seconds to figure out what I was feeling, and then I yelped. (I'd have "screamed like a little girl," but I was working, and besides I'm getting closer to the "yelled like a little old lady" age.)

Beth, my co-worker, looked and sure enough, the second post was a tick.

She removed the offending insect with a pair of tweezers. He came out with some skin attached, but apparently had not had time for much of a meal.

I took the tweezers with their burden to the bathroom and gave Mr. Tick an after-dinner drink of fresh toilet water.

Then I swabbed my ear with peroxide and tossed the tweezers.

Yuck. Talk about being bugged.

I'm not sure why a disease-carrying, blood-sucking tick is worse than a disease-carrying, blood-sucking mosquito.

But they are. They really, really are.

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

Concealed handgun law modified

This is the second segment of state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer's session-end report. Others will follow as space permits:

SB 306 – Personal and Family Protection Act: Amends the Personal and Family Protection Act, which established the concealed carry law. The changes remove some current provisions, modify others, adjust fees, add new provisions and make technical amendments. The bill changes the term "weapon" to "handgun" and deletes several requirements that must be met before a license is granted to carry a concealed handgun. It maintains requirements that individuals must be at least 21 and a resident of the state or county where the application was made. A provision is added that allows a person to carry a concealed handgun while a concealed carry application is pending if certain criteria are met.

The conference committee report for SB 306 passed 37 to 2 on May 6.

SB 368 – Driving Under the Influence Penalties: amends the effective date of criminal penalties for third, fourth or subsequent convictions for driving under the influence in HB 2096 from the 2009 session from July 1 to July 1, 2011. The bill amends the penalty for a second conviction to require a one-year suspension of driving privileges, which may be modified after a 45-day hard suspension. Driving privileges are restricted for the remainder of one year to driving only a vehicle with an ignition interlock device and restricts the person to driving to and from work, school, treatment or to the ignition interlock provider.

The bill would take effect upon publication. The conference committee report for SB 368 passed 40 to 0 on May 10.

SB 572 – Appropriations for Fiscal Years 2010 Through 2017 (House Budget Proposal): makes the following changes the State General Fund budget for FY 2011 as compared to FY 2010:

Department of Education

• For FY 2011, a \$133.4 million increase, or



Ralph Ostmeyer

• State Senator

4.7 percent, above the FY 2010 amount.
• Base State Aid Per Pupil for FY 2011 is \$4,012.
• Local option budget funding of \$339.2 million for FY 2011.
• Funding Special Education at 86.2 percent of excess costs in FY 2011.

Higher

• For FY 2011, an increase of \$5.8 million above FY 2010 funding.
• \$5.6 million for debt service payments.
• \$200,000 for the Kansas Academy for Mathematics and Science at Fort Hays State.

Human Services

• An increase of \$46.8 million, or 4 percent, above FY 2010, including:
Veterans Affairs – Increase of \$1 million, 11.6 percent, for operating support.
Department on Aging – Increase of \$5.6 million above FY 2010.
Nutrition Programs – Increase of \$1.5 million or 61.9 percent.
Nursing Facilities – Increase of \$4.1 million or 3.8 percent.
Home and Community Based Services (Frail Elderly) – Increase of \$2 million or 1.6 percent
Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services – \$6.9 million for physically disabled and developmentally disabled Home and Community Based Service Waivers.
• Public Safety: Net increase of \$2.7 million or 0.7 percent.
• \$1.7 million to reopen the Stockton Correctional Facility, provide 128 prison beds.
• \$5 million for state disaster assistance, to-

taling \$50 million including federal money.

State Employee Pay

• Reduce salaries by 5 percent for all state-wide elected officials, legislators, justices and judges and agency heads. Reduction continues for employees for who took a 5 percent pay cut at the end of FY 2010.

• Self-funding by agencies for the state employee longevity bonus payments, savings of \$5.2 million.

• \$8.5 million for year three of the state employee undermarket pay adjustment.

The Senate concurred with House changes to SB 572 by a vote of 21 to 17 on Monday, May 10. The bill was signed by Gov. Parkinson on May 27.

HB 2130 – Primary Safety Belts: Amends state law to require each occupant in a passenger vehicle with safety belts to wear one. The bill allows officers to stop a vehicle for violating seat belt requirements by anyone in the front seat or under 18. The bill continues to require a citation be issued for an adult who fails to wear a safety belt in the back seat only if another law has been violated. The measure establishes fines for violations by adults at \$5, including court costs, beginning June 30, until July 1, 2011, when the fines increase to \$10.

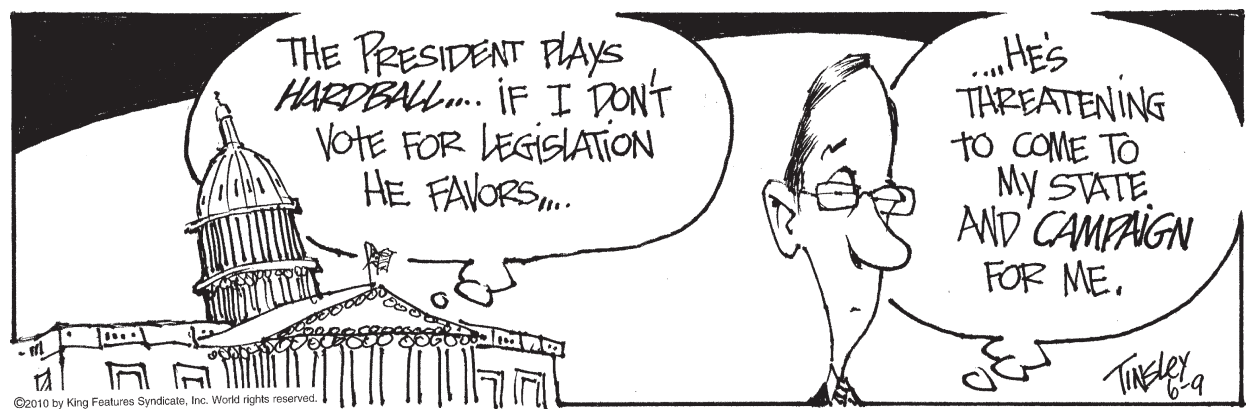
The bill would take effect upon publication. The conference committee report for HB 2130 passed 29 to 8 on Saturday, May 8.

HB 2595 – School Districts, Transportation: Authorizes a board of education to provide transportation to any nonresident pupil enrolled and attending school in the district. Before a district can provide transportation it is required to notify the school board where the pupil lives. For school finance, the nonresident student is counted in the district where they attend school. HB 2595 passed 37 to 3 on May 5.

District 40 Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer may be reached at home now that the 2010 legislative session is adjourned. mail, Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov, or (785) 824-3773.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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