

## Other Viewpoints

### Census silliness a misplaced cost

The state of Kansas is spending about \$650,000 this year to statistically send college students home.

It's important that students complete the census adjustment form, said Secretary of State Chris Biggs, "so they are counted in their hometowns during redistricting."

But why is that important?

Well, for one thing, the Kansas Constitution requires the secretary of state's office to conduct a student census and use those numbers to adjust the federal census. The state has decided that students at public and private universities and colleges in Kansas shouldn't be counted — as they are in the federal census — in the communities where they attend school and live for the majority of the year.

Instead, according to Kansas laws, they should be counted in their "home" counties where they visit their parents on school holidays and maybe for a couple of months during the summer.

Like all states, Kansas uses census totals to balance population numbers when drawing legislative and congressional districts. However, Kansas apparently is the only state that is unwilling to accept federal census figures for that purpose and conducts a costly separate count to move students back to their "home" addresses.

It's understandable that people in Lawrence and other Kansas cities that are the home of sizable colleges would be irritated by this policy. Although those cities provide utilities, streets, law enforcement and other public services for these students for most of the year, they are not allowed to count those students in figures that will determine their representation in state and federal legislative bodies.

The fact that college communities may be underrepresented in the Kansas Legislature or Congress probably is of little concern to many state officials, but in a tight budget year, it seems those officials would at least be concerned about the amount of money that is being spent to complete such a questionable process.

The secretary of state's office reports it has received more than 100,000 student census responses and, of the 25,000 that have been processed, about 30 percent had errors that required state employees to call for information or clarification.

Depending on how much staff time is required for these follow-ups, \$650,000 may be a conservative figure for how much this census adjustment costs Kansans. It would be interesting to know from a practical standpoint, how much impact this shifting of students actually has on the redistricting process.

The question Kansans should be asking — perhaps of candidates in the upcoming campaign for secretary of state — is whether this additional student census is worth \$650,000 — or anything — to the state. If not, maybe it's time for Kansas to join the rest of the Union and base its redistricting process on the federal census.

— Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters.

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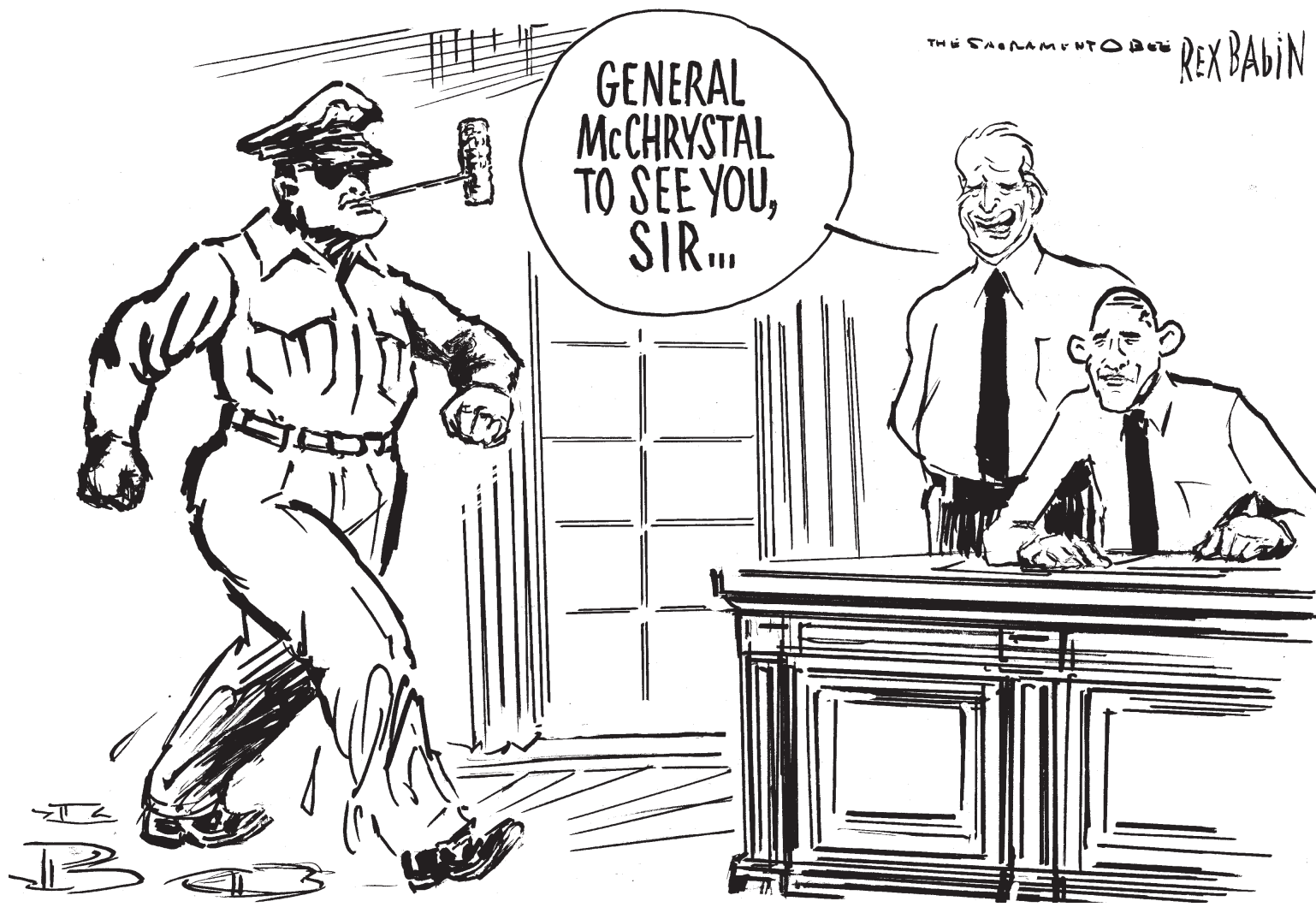
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### Eastern friends sightsee in Dresden

So, how do you entertain visitors from the East Coast on a Sunday evening?

Well, it's summer, so we did summer things.

First, we had snacks and drinks on the deck and chatted for a while. They'd been on the road all the way from Columbia, Mo., barely taking time for lunch along the way. It took a while to get them to sit down, but the weather cooperated and the storms to the south cooled things down a little.

And in the nearly 18 years we've lived here, the trees in our yard and the neighbors' have grown. The deck can be a shady paradise in the evening.

Then, we grilled thick, juicy burgers. I told Cynthia we'd have to cheat on our diets a little to make them thick, but it was company. A surprise to me, Mark, who's a big guy, if trim, ate two while college-age young Mark stopped after one.

I'm not sure I could eat two big burgers anymore. And I'm not trim.

After supper, we had to walk up the street and see the vultures roosting on the water tower. Not every plains town has a unique wildlife show like that. Apparently, it's not too common in New Jersey, either.

Then we got to watching the thunderstorms to the south. A big one was growing just east of



Steve Haynes

#### • Along the Sappa

Selden, beautifully lit by the setting sun. The business end, where tornadoes sometimes form, was clearly visible, so I offered to run them down to the junction for a closer view.

The storm started to peter out about the time we got down there, but it was still spectacular to watch. And hey, easterners don't get much storm chasing time — except with the weather shows on television.

We wound up touring Dresden, where they asked a lot of questions about grain elevators, some of which I could answer. On a Sunday night, there was no one in the office to ask.

We drove home up the "old" gravel highway to Oberlin along the Bremer Road, stopping several times to avoid deer. We talked about the crops in the fields and some of the history of that area.

And got home in time to give a tour of our house. They were more than ready for bed, but the storm chasing did keep them awake.

Mark and Liz and young Mark planned 11 hours on the road Monday to Dubois, Wyo., where they planned to camp for a couple of days until they could get into their condo in Jackson Hole.

They left at midmorning, their huge canoe and two bikes weighing down their little van. (Our cats thought this was a pretty cool place to explore, and I was a little worried one of them might just join the road trip.)

Young Mark put on his headphones and crawled into his nest in the back seat. I think he likes books better than scenery.

They declared it to be the best visit ever, but I'm inclined to think no one else ever took them storm chasing.

They planned to stop and visit other newspaper friends in Imperial, Neb., on the way to Wyoming. I'm sure Imperial doesn't have vultures on its water tower, though it's a nice little town.

But you never know.

Anyway, it's always nice to show off the local landmarks and such, and we do have a lot of grain elevators and deer out here.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he likes to ride and watch trains.

### Trophies of past years missing

#### Event gets kudos

To the Editor:

I am a Colby alumnus and attended the class reunions this past weekend. I looked in the new high school for the athletic trophies from years past that were originally displayed in the old high school. After checking, I have found out that they are not in the old building, the new high school or the museum.

Would someone please come forward and tell us just what happened to the trophies from days gone by? Someone should know, perhaps a member of the school board that served at the time of the transfer to the new school.

We were told that the gossip was that they had been destroyed. If so, someone needs to make an accounting for that action.

Ed Dean, Oberlin Class of 1950

Editor's note: According to the Colby School District, some newer trophies are on display at the high school and intermediate building. The district does not have room for many older trophies, which are in storage but can be brought out on request.

### Bikers say thanks

To the Editor:

This letter was addressed to Dr. Lynn Kreider, president; Skip Sharp, vice president of student services; Barry Kaaz, dean of external affairs; and Debbie Swanke, Colby Community College; Leilani Thomas, Colby Convention and Visitors Bureau; Jeff Horlacher, Horlacher Jewelers; and Jan Barnum, Colby Venture Scouts:

On behalf of Biking Across Kansas, we wish to convey our sincere thanks to each and every one of you and to Colby for making our overnight stay a memorable and wonderful experience. Thank you for all your e-mail correspondence and phone calls in preparation.

Skip and Barry, you were fantastic in helping



#### Free Press Letter Drop

#### • Our readers sound off

our group get settled on the college's green and shady campus. I know we ran you ragged. We heard numerous compliments on how lovely your campus was and it was neat to see people barefooted playing frisbee on the lawn.

Thank you for the months of preparation to get ready for our group. We hope Colby was left with a favorable impression of the people they met on Biking Across Kansas, who represented 30 states from across the nation.

Biking Across Kansas is not just about the sport of bicycling, but it is also about the human experience, the ability to stretch yourself through meeting people and setting and obtaining personal goals. It would not be possible if it weren't for the generous outpouring of hospitality and cooperation from towns like Colby. For this, we are most appreciative.

The breakfast prepared by the Colby Venture Scouts on Sunday morning was a hit with the bicyclists. Your menu was fabulous and the service was friendly and fast. Thank you, thank you, thank you! For discussion purposes at our final review meeting later this summer, we'd be interested in knowing about how many riders ate at this fund raiser.

It was a pleasure working with you. We look forward to our paths crossing again.

Please forward our sincerest thanks and utmost gratitude to all those involved in the preparation for our visit.

Sherry McKee, Salina Biking Across Kansas volunteer committee host city food coordinator

To the Editor,

Chautauqua was a wonderful community event for Colby and Northwest Kansas. We have so many volunteers, financial supporters and especially those who attended to thank.

Volunteers included those who acted as hosts, emcees, youth-camp helpers and Chautauqua committee members. A special thanks to the Pioneer Memorial Library and Prairie Museum of Art and History for the use of their facilities and staffs. Colby Community College was on standby in case of bad weather, and we certainly acknowledge their generosity and cooperation.

As always, our city is so very supportive. The Tumbleweed Chorus and Colby High Plains Lions Club also played an important role in helping to make this project a success. There are not enough ways to thank all of you.

The media was very good to us. Thank you, Colby Free Press and Rocking M Radio stations KXXX, KRDK, KLOE and KKCI. Your coverage and opportunity to inform all about the events was wonderful. We truly appreciate all that you do for us.

A thank you to any of you who had contact with the Chautauquans and scholars. They left very impressed with the friendliness and hospitality of Colby. The kids who participated in the youth camp portrayed historic Thomas Countians well. They were the hit of the show under the tent Saturday night.

Finally, a very big thank you to the boards of the Convention and Visitors Bureau and Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce for allowing their staff to work so much on this project. We are proud of our community, and once again we proved that we are the "Oasis on the Plains."

Leilani Thomas, Colby local coordinator for Chautauqua

### Mallard Fillmore

#### • Bruce Tinsley



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