

Other Viewpoints

It's up to Kansans to promote Kansas

First, there was the Faces & Places Tour designed to promote Kansas tourism. Now, we also have the Healthy Kansas Vacations campaign designed to stimulate local economies while making Kansans happier and healthier.

Both sound like good ideas to us, but if we really want the word to get out about the great places to visit in Kansas communities, we'll all have to lend a hand.

As part of the Faces & Places promotion, an initiative of the Kansas Department of Commerce's travel and tourism division, state tourism officials and Kansas travel enthusiasts will visit 34 events or locations this summer and share their experiences via Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

The marketing for Healthy Kansas Vacations, a joint venture by the state tourism division and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, will include television spots, newspaper and magazine advertisements and billboards to encourage Kansans to vacation in Kansas.

The attention being devoted to the state's attractions and activities is welcome, but Faces & Places can't visit every community in Kansas that has something to offer, and Healthy Kansas Vacations, financed by \$100,000 from Blue Cross, can't buy a billboard or advertisement touting every attraction.

It's up to the rest of us – and local visitors bureaus or tourism offices – to take it from there. Kansans, who have never been shy about heading for the mountains or beaches when we could afford it, haven't always been the best self-promoters when it comes to things to do and see in our own communities.

We can do better, and we should. Topekans have an abundance of things to show visiting family members and friends, who just may pass along the word when they get back home. And when we go on the road and are asked what there is to do and see in Topeka, we shouldn't be shy about touting the city.

We know no other community in the state has a Capitol undergoing a \$300 million-plus renovation to show off. Granted, the job isn't finished, but what has been done – including House and Senate chambers – is beautiful.

Beyond that, there are museums galore worth visiting. Just to name a few: the Combat Air Museum at Forbes Field, the Mulvane Art Museum at Washburn University, the Kansas Museum of History and the Holby Museum of Military History at the Ramada Hotel and Convention Center. There also is the Brown v. Board National Historical Site, and there are many private art galleries worth a visit.

The botanical offerings at Lake Shawnee, Gage Park and Ward-Meade make a pleasant walk that's well worth the time. The number of special events staged throughout the year are too numerous to mention, and we aren't going to try for fear of omitting some.

The tentative agenda for the Faces & Places Tour calls for an August visit to Heartland Park. The track is a great asset that annually puts Topeka in the national spotlight. But it doesn't define Topeka unless you're a die-hard drag racing fan.

There's much more here to show our visitors, and if they leave town having seen little more than the inside of a mall and a restaurant, we aren't even trying.

– *The Topeka Capital-Journal, via The Associated Press*

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"I USED TO THINK SHE WAS REMARKABLY DIM, BUT NOW I THINK SHE'S ABOUT AVERAGE."

Dyejob carries unforeseen risks

I knew this was nothing but trouble.

Cynthia had just come back from the hotel's spa, where she'd had her eyebrows and lashes dyed – for the first time ever.

She'd been talking to our daughter Felicia, who's been dyeing her hair (started going grey at 25, like me) for years and always has her brows touched up, too. Since the natural color of Cynthia's eyebrows is invisible, she thought she'd like to try that, too.

To me, it just sounded expensive. I don't dye my hair, let alone my eyebrows, though if the girls cut it any shorter (the hair, I mean), I may have to dye it just so you'll know it's there.

Anyway, she came back from the spa all excited.

"Wow," she said. "I never knew I had so much eyebrow."

It wasn't exactly a unibrow, a la Frieda Kalo, but it was bushy.

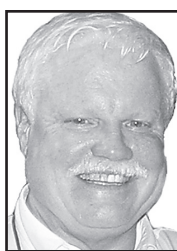
"Uh, I thought they'd sort of shape it or something," I said. Then came the question.

"What?" she said. "Do you think they made my eyebrows look fat?"

"I can't answer that question," I said, ducking. "but those pants do make your butt look big."

Liz gasped. Cynthia elbowed me, but what was I supposed to say?

"Well, they're just fuller than I expected?" I thought I'd taken the wiser course. Criti-



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

cizing the new eyebrows could have been really painful. I mean, she'd just paid for them. And I wasn't going to ask how much, either.

We were in Newport, R.I., where New York's super rich of a bygone century built gaudy, excessive summer mansions. Today, the biggest, built by several heirs of the Vanderbilt railroad fortune, are public museums, owned and maintained by the Newport Preservation Society.

They give tours, but since our hosts have connections – and relatives who live on the island – ours was conducted by the chief conservator. He told a lot of good stories.

The first thing I couldn't figure out when we toured the largest mansion, the Breakers, was why all the bath tubs had four faucets, not two.

It was no surprise that the house, built in 1895, was completely wired for electric lights, or that it had running water. No fine home built then would be complete without the latest innovations.

Nor that the tubs were carved out of solid marble. Legend has it the staff would draw two baths for every one taken, the first just to warm the stone. No Vanderbilt every drew his or her own bath.

But four faucets?

Why, hot and cold running sea water from one pair, fresh water from the other, of course. Bathing in sea water was considered healthy back then.

Everywhere you looked, there was gold leaf, marble, antique furniture. The excesses of the Gilded Age, I'm sure, have their equivalent in the mansions of Internet billionaires today, though through our eyes, they may seem quaint.

But when Commodore Vanderbilt was building railroads, and his sons were running them, they were as cutting edge as computer chips and smart phones today. And a few who get in early – and are very lucky and work hard – make great fortunes from any innovation.

Next, it would be the Rockefellers in oil; now, it's Bill Gates in software. But I'm sure his mansions are much more environmentally responsible.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

'Clean' increase a 'dirty' deal

On May 31, the House voted 97-318 against raising the country's legal debt limit from \$14.3 trillion to nearly \$17 trillion. There were no provisions to cut or to cap future spending, however, so I voted against it. In essence, this would have increased the credit card limit while making no plans to pay down the outstanding balance or to reduce the rate at which debt is accumulated. As I have pledged, I will not vote for any increase in our nation's credit card limit unless there are both real spending cuts now in the short-term and long-term changes such as a balanced budget amendment. America's future depends on ending Washington's addiction to overspending. Our children and grandchildren are counting on us to secure their access to the same American Dream you and I have enjoyed.

This increase without any cuts was branded as 'clean.' In typical Washington fashion, the adjective selected to describe this expansion of debt was chosen carefully so as to confuse voters. 'Clean' is usually associated with something good, but in this case it was a misnomer. Instead, this increase was nothing but a dirty deal for America. The U.S. and its taxpayers deserve better than what the President sought.

The solution America needs now is one that cuts the deficit, caps spending, and balances the budget. Alongside this fiscal reform should be reduction of regulation and repeal of Obamacare. These changes are necessary to restore



U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp

• Capitol Notes

confidence in the American economy.

America is becoming a credit risk, and that fact is not lost on anyone outside of the Beltway. Confidence in America's private sector lags as a result of Washington's comfort with adding to the country's red ink. Large actors – like Standard & Poor's, which downgraded America's long-term credit outlook – see America as a dangerous bet, rather than as a bona fide borrower. Smaller actors – including businesses of all sizes – are fearfully waiting for Washington to send its bills and past-due statements to them.

Unfortunately, there are too many examples of what happens when spending goes awry. One need only look to the situations in places like Greece and Portugal to see what the current course holds for America. In Greece, gross government debt is 152 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and unemployment is 16 percent. In America, our debt is 99.5 percent of the GDP and growing. If 9 percent unemployment is uncomfortable

now, imagine what it will be if Washington does not send a clear message to job creators that it is serious about fostering a culture of prosperity!

Though Kansas' job situation is better than what many other states are experiencing – and for that we are fortunate – Washington's debt crisis does not bode well for job growth here or in other parts of the country. Employers need certainty that from one year to the next, the taxes they pay and the regulations they comply with will not grow. If this debt crisis is not controlled, then employers will have to foot the bill through higher taxes. In other words, Washington's instability and irresponsibility translate into employer inability to create jobs.

It is more likely than not that Washington will have to increase the debt limit. Given that the country borrows more than 40 cents of every dollar makes this inevitable for the time being. The only responsible thing to do with this set of circumstances is to demand real, significant changes that cut deficits, cap future spending, and balance the budget in the very near future. These changes will truly clean up Washington's mess once and for all.

Congressman Tim Huelskamp represents the First District of Kansas. He serves on the House Budget Committee.

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