



Other Viewpoints

Traffic gets in gear with law changes

A couple of new rules of the road went into effect in Kansas, but the most important ones aren’t changing a bit.

“Be cautious, plan ahead, take breaks when you need them and do what you need to do to get home safely,” said Lt. Robert Baker of the Kansas Highway Patrol.

That’s good advice anytime, but it’s especially meaningful as traffic statutes adopted during this year’s legislative session take effect.

The big one allows Kansas motorists to travel up to 75 mph legally on some stretches of state highways and interstates.

Those include Interstate 70 from the Colorado state line to just west of Topeka, the Kansas Turnpike from the Oklahoma state line to K-7 highway in Wyandotte County, Interstate 135 from Harvey County to the I-70 interchange in Salina and Interstate 35 from U.S. 50 highway near Emporia to an interchange in Johnson County. In addition, stretches of U.S. 81 highway and U.S. 69 highway were designated as 75 mph zones.

Another law change allows motorcyclists to ride through red lights if the signals don’t change to green within a reasonable amount of time and if riders can proceed safely. There are times when motorcycles don’t trigger sensors that change lights, and the law gives riders a legal way to proceed.

Both law changes are reasonable, but they will require motorists and motorcyclists to dial up their level of caution.

Another law change related to vehicle safety isn’t so easy to swallow.

Cities will be barred from imposing more than a \$10 fine for a seat belt violation within their limits. They also will be prohibited from charging court costs.

Not only is the fine not a deterrent, the provision against court costs places a financial burden on cities to enforce seat belt laws.

As was the case beginning in July 2010, drivers can be pulled over and cited for no other reason than failing to wear a safety belt. The violation carries such a minimal penalty statewide, however, that a growing number of motorists could ignore it.

Not good, because decreased use of restraints could lead to increased injuries and deaths from accidents.

As with other changes in traffic laws, the change in the safety belt statute is a good reason for motorists to be more careful.

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

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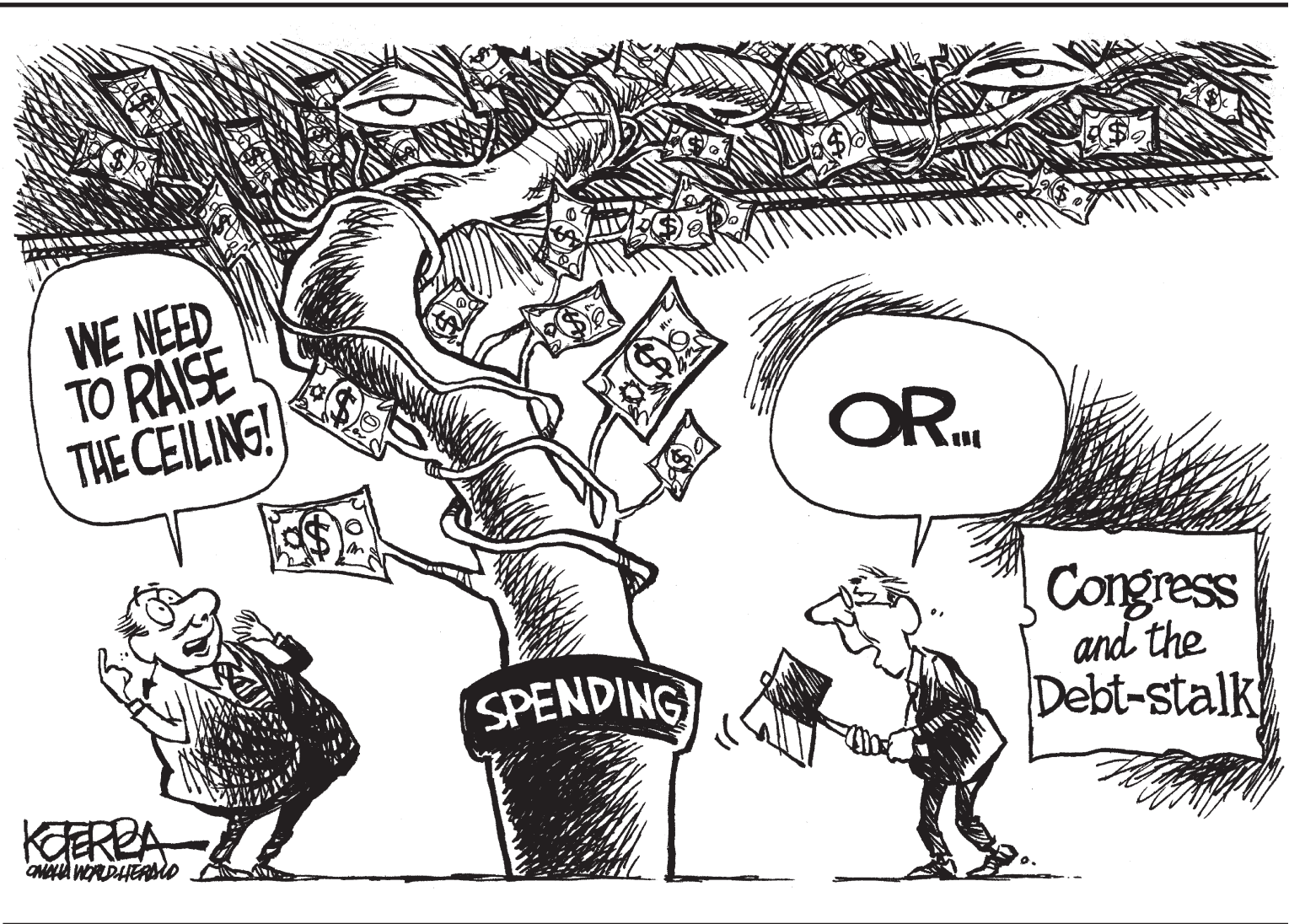
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Swimming pools sure have changed

This Man of the Plains can well remember when public swimming pools were more than just a place in which to swim.

In my days as a youngster, the public pool in our area of town was drained once a week, then thoroughly cleaned and refilled over the weekend for another week of fun and whatever else might take place.

“Whatever else might take place?” you might ask.

Well, yes, kids being kids they found it more convenient to answer mother nature’s call in the pool rather than to get out and head for the small wooden huts near the pool. Those huts were designed to allow swimmers to change from street wear to swim wear and to use the bathrooms provided to rid themselves of water that badly needed to exit their bodies.

You get the picture.

Mondays through Wednesdays were the best days to swim because the refill was able to withstand, to some degree, the urge of the wild. But when you figure in Thursdays and Fridays – wow! The water began to take on a real cloudy look, much like the clouds overhead preparing to drop rain.

You could always spot the kids in the midst of doing something in the pool they knew they shouldn’t be doing. They would simply stand there quietly with hands on their hips and wearing a grin that in itself was like broadcasting the action taking place.

But we were fortunate to have that swim pool in our neighborhood.

On occasion, we would make use of the much larger municipal swimming pool in the southern part of the community. That was the crown jewel! Clear, crisp, running water, a slippery slide within the pool itself, and two



Tom Dreiling

- Man of the Plains

levels of diving boards.

A fancy tan-colored stone building allowed you to change into your swimsuit in two large rooms equipped with stalls. Stalls? Boy, that was really uptown!

Additionally, the municipal pool had a snack area atop the building that sold potato chips, ice cream, candy, pop, etc. Sometimes they even had dances on Saturday nights.

We didn’t use that pool much because there was a charge to get in. And money then, much like now, wasn’t always available.

Fast forward. Today, many public swim pools are equipped with all sorts of attractions, designed to keep the swimmers entertained. They also attract many non-swimmers who just enjoy taking in the carnival atmosphere. I honestly have no idea what some of that stuff is for.

But despite the state-of-the-art design, these newer pools still have one thing in common with the swim pools I remember as a youngster. Yes, if you look around the pool, you will spot a child or two quietly standing there with hands on their hips and a grin on their face broadcasting the action taking place.

Some things never change!

Politically speaking. . .

Let’s get our second little Straw Poll into the

mix. Simply e-mail me who you think will get the Republican nomination at this point in the campaign. That’s all there is to it. My address is milehitom@hotmail.com.

Ahh, I see where Kansas increased its speed limits on the interstates from 70 miles per hour to 75. That’s good news for east-bound Coloradans who now won’t have to slow up when entering the Sunflower State and westbound Kansans won’t have to speed up when moving onto Colorado’s turf. (As if that ever took place.)

Snippets

“... Thanks for using yourself as an example for when it’s time to get out from behind the wheel.... We are facing that problem and will use your suggestions.”

“We’ve tried everything with my husband’s folks to give it up. They looked at us like we lost our minds.... My husband told them if they don’t quit driving, he will for fear he just might be a victim of their stubbornness....”

“Our 17 year old said he will drive his grandfather wherever he needs to go if he gives up driving. Grandpa reluctantly agreed under one condition: that they use his car. A small victory, I guess....”

Snippets to milehitom@hotmail.com.

Have a great day!

Tom Dreiling of Aurora, Colo., is a former publisher of the Colby Free Press and The Norton Telegram, and a former long-time editor of the old Goodland Daily News. He is a life-long Democrat, a curmudgeon come lately and a newly minted Coloradan.

Treasury secretary: what about recovery?

Dear Mr. Geithner:

A year ago, you announced that America was in “Recovery Summer.” Unfortunately, the American public, indeed most of the world, must have a very different definition than the administration of what constitutes “recovery.”

More than two years ago, one of President Obama’s first acts was an attempt to “stimulate” the economy. Dubbed the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act,” America took a huge, expensive risk, borrowing and spending \$1.1 trillion we didn’t have to begin with; yet recovery is nowhere to be found. For 28 straight months, unemployment has exceeded 8 percent, the ceiling the Obama Administration promised we’d never exceed if the Democrat Congress passed this massive stimulus.

If past is prologue, Mr. Geithner, then more government spending will not and cannot be the answer to America’s economic problems.

Last August, in a column you penned in the *New York Times*, there was “good news to report.” Specifically, you pointed to what seemed then to be an uptick in private sector job growth; yet, an average 39,284 private sector jobs have been lost every two weeks since President Obama took office.

You wrote that “businesses have repaired their balance sheets and are now in a strong financial position to reinvest and grow;” yet here we are, a year later, and businesses are still sitting on more than a trillion dollars in cash, a clear indication that they are leery of risking new investments with tax uncertainty



U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp

- Capitol Notes

and no change in the federal government’s balance sheet. An ever-expanding regulatory framework coming out of our nation’s capitol adds fuel to this fire. What was touted by you and the administration as an “investment” in America has been anything but that.

America will find recovery when – and only when – Washington recognizes that it is a natural impediment to wealth and job creation.

Employers would like to invest in new projects and new employees, but uncertainties abound, preventing them from taking the risks necessary to do so. Your demand that we acquire more debt without a plan to pay down the current balance due is unsettling to job creators; they know that eventually the federal government will turn to them through increased taxes when Washington’s creditors are knocking at its door.

At the behest of President Obama, you have come before Members of the House requesting another multi-trillion dollar bailout of Washington’s spending addiction. Instead of focusing all your efforts on raising the debt ceiling, the focus instead should be on what got us in

this credit crisis at all.

Mr. Secretary, the only responsible thing to do is to find a real solution to make sure we never find ourselves in this situation again. Failure to raise the debt ceiling – we are told – will only delay recovery even longer. But given the miserable track record of this administration when it comes to economic predictions, we find it very difficult to accept your gloom-and-doom focus on the debt ceiling.

Recovery begins with recognizing how futile it is to inject government money into the economy as a way to achieve growth, and it ends with a firm commitment to spending only as much as the government takes in. I and others in Congress are not willing to allow the government to extend its spending unless structural changes – including cutting the deficit, capping spending and passing a balanced budget amendment – are enacted which will prevent us from going down this path again.

Congressman Tim Huelskamp

Tim Huelskamp is the congressman from Kansas’ 1st District, serving his first term.

Write us

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Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

