

## Other Viewpoints

# Officials leery of rural programs

A couple of initiatives championed by Gov. Sam Brownback are getting mixed reviews in the rural counties they were intended to benefit.

Only about half of the eligible counties have signed on to a program to help people who move to their counties pay their student loans, and a number of local officials are questioning whether an income tax break for new residents will do much to raise their populations or boost their local economies.

The state approved a plan earlier this year that would allow counties to partner with the state to repay 20 percent or up to \$3,000 of students loans for college graduates who move to one of 50 rural Kansas counties designated as "rural opportunity zones." Counties must contribute half the money to pay for the loan program and, according to recent news reports, only 23 counties have agreed to participate.

Some county officials simply think that if the college graduates are working, they should pay off their own loans, while other are hesitant to commit to an untested program. Their concern seems justified. The program might be a good incentive to help counties attract someone to fill an essential job, such as a teacher. However, because college graduates don't have to move from out of state to get the benefit, it seems likely that it would attract students who simply move back in with their parents and perhaps work at a low-paying job while they search for better employment after graduation.

State officials point out that counties wouldn't get caught "holding the bag," as one commissioner put it, if the scholarship payment program is discontinued in the state. That lack of commitment may be good news for counties, but it's not such good news for college grads considering moving to one of the rural communities at least in part to take advantage of the loan repayment program.

Concerning the income tax program, only people who move to Kansas from other states would be eligible for the five-year break. Kansans pay an average of \$1,800 a year in income taxes, so it could be an attractive benefit. However, the costs of moving would be a factor, along with the availability of jobs that would allow new residents to earn a reasonable income on which they would pay taxes.

In both incentives, jobs are the key. Without the jobs, it's unlikely that either the income tax or student loan programs will have a significant impact on declining population in rural Kansas counties. In at least one Kansas county, the incentives don't address the most urgent problem. An official in Washington County said jobs are available, but the county doesn't have affordable housing for the people who would fill those jobs. More incentives for people to build middle-income housing might be more to the point in that county.

Time will tell how beneficial the new programs will be. The income-tax program doesn't go into effect until Jan. 1, and perhaps more rural counties will be convinced of the benefits of the loan-repayment program. The state deserves credit for recognizing the problems associated with declining population in rural parts of the state, but these initial efforts may miss the mark for addressing those problems.

—Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

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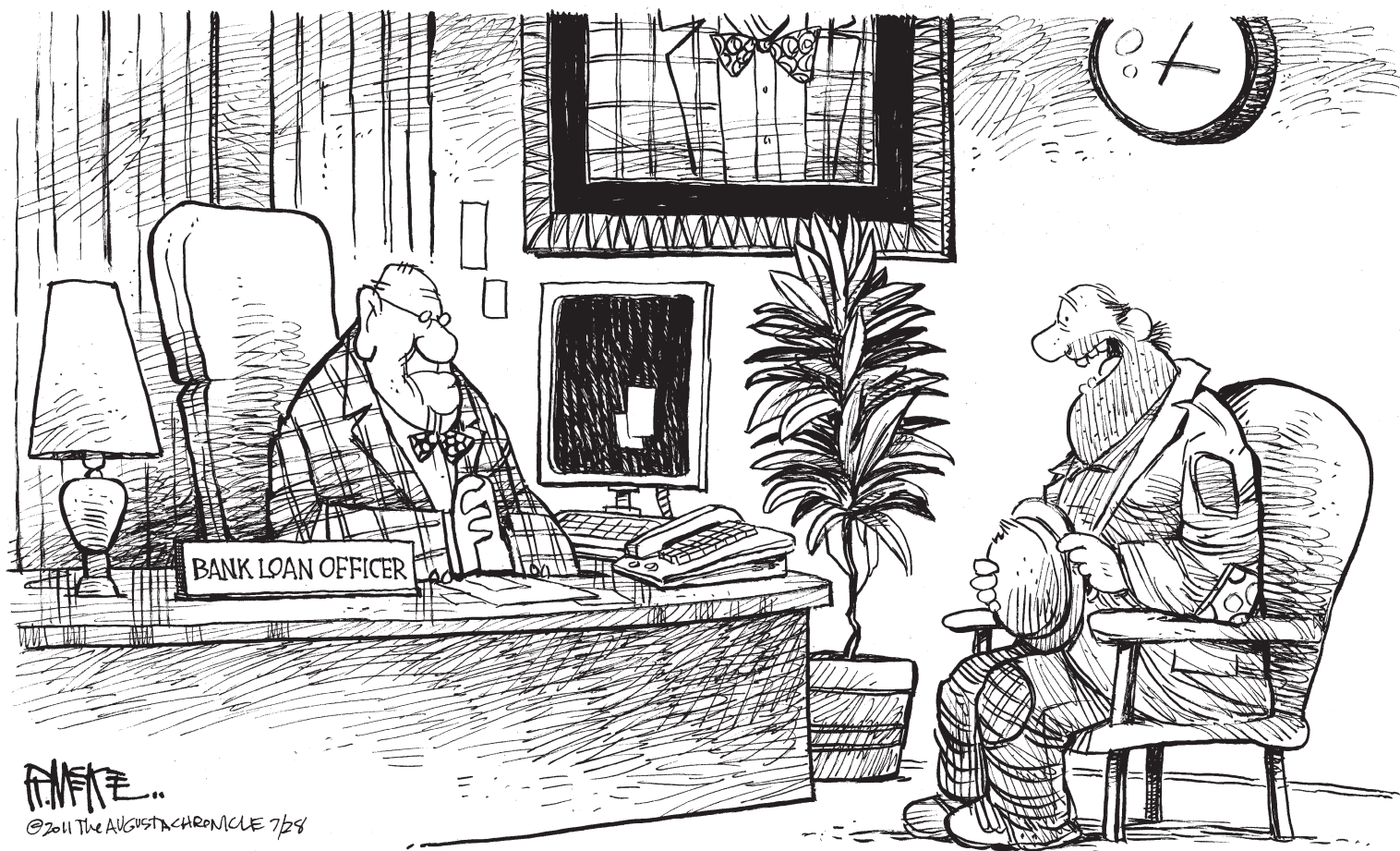
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AMER...  
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"GOOD NEWS! YOU CAN LOAN ME SOME MONEY NOW 'CAUSE I'VE RAISED MY DEBT CEILING BY A TRILLION DOLLARS!"

# Climb the mountain – because it's there

I just saw a press release that triggered one of my pet aggravations. (These are smaller and more easily trained than pet peeves.)

It seems the lieutenant governor plans to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in support of humanitarian relief efforts.

Understand, I think it's great to support relief efforts – labeling them "humanitarian" seems redundant, but perhaps the Nefarious Evil Meanies can think of a way to make legitimate relief efforts unhumanitarian. Maybe by giving only peanut butter sandwiches out to those with peanut allergies?

I also see nothing wrong with climbing mountains – it's not been too many weeks since I wrote about climbing buttes in my native Nebraska. The difference between buttes and mountains, to the climber, is mainly one of degree. Mountains are bigger and more likely to take specialized tools and skills to scale.

No, the problem I have with Lt. Governor Colyer's expedition is that there is no obvious connection between the two. Maybe he expects to find starving refugees on top of Kilimanjaro, though I doubt it. Indeed, his climb is planned to follow a stint in medical work at an undisclosed African location, which sounds like a worthwhile trip for a doctor. But going mountain climbing afterwards sounds more



**Marian Ballard**

## Collection Connections

like – well, just going mountain climbing.

Demonstrations of this sort have become increasingly popular over the years. I'm not totally immune; I remember walking 12 miles one year for CROP which, among other things, raises money to dig village wells so people won't have to walk 12 miles to get water. That made sense to me – doing as an act of solidarity what others do out of necessity.

But no one climbs a mountain because they have no food or water. No one rides a bicycle 5,000 miles to get to a hospital for cancer treatment. There is a distinction between staging a public event to draw attention to an issue and staging an event to draw attention to oneself.

I'd go one step further. If a 5,000 mile bike ride helps you deal with your grief and rage over cancer and helps give you hope, go for it. But don't try to convince the rest of the world it's a critical fund raiser.

I'm not even thrilled about the ploy of using meals as fund raisers – you know, all those pancake breakfasts, soup suppers, and such. I understand the logic, though. People will go and stand in line to get a meal they haven't had to cook. While there they will give a few dollars they ordinarily would not have given because those asking weren't right there in front of them. While it would be good to be able to just announce, "The Smith family has a sick mother and an unemployed father and need your help," without a tangible payback – a meal, a donut, a garage sale find – it is likely to generate much sympathy and little cash.

But, come on. Mountain climbing has no connection – no emotional tie, no financial benefit, not even much in the way of geographical proximity – with humanitarian relief. It would be more to the point to negotiate an agreement with some warlord to allow the suffering tribes in his area to receive the humanitarian relief sitting in a warehouse someplace.

Now, that's a mountain worth conquering.

*Marian Ballard has collected careers as counselor, librarian, pastor, and now copy editor for the Colby Free Press. She collects ideas, which are more portable than other stuff.*

# Liberty requires a moral base

How I miss William F. Buckley, Jr. He was the guardian at the gates. He kept the barbarians at bay.

He published Whittaker Chambers's famous rejection of writer Ayn Rand's so-called philosophy of "Objectivism." "Big Sister is Watching You," wrote Chambers in 1957. It was a play on "Big Brother is Watching You," a line from the famous anti-utopian novel by George Orwell, "1984." Chambers was the heroic "witness" who had faced down death threats from Communists and every effort of the Left to destroy him personally and professionally for daring to tell the truth about Alger Hiss's betrayals. That top level State Department official had for years been giving Top Secret files to the Soviet Union.

Even the *London Times* acknowledged Buckley's crucial role for the conservative movement in eschewing the fanaticism of Rand and the Randians: "In ferocious clashes he separated National Review conservatism from two, at that time influential, factions – [the anti-Communist zealotry of the John Birch Society and] the 'objectivists,' led by Rand who preached a doctrine of atheistic selfishness.... Rand would never afterwards stay in a room with Buckley...."

Ordered liberty has ever required a moral and religious base. From its earliest days, this nation has been blessed by its Christian heritage, blessed to be a beacon for Jews fleeing Old World persecution.

Rand fled the grim, gray Soviet Union, seeking freedom in America. She got that part right, at least. But her series of novels poured scorn on religion, on altruism, on Christian concepts of charity. Her "philosophy" rightly rejected statism and its tendency to put us all on the road to serfdom, but in sneering at people of faith, she helped to undermine the very institutions that make it possible for people to resist the claims of an overreaching government – the family and the church.

Conservatives agree with Rand that it really

## Other Opinions

- Robert Morrison  
Family Research Council

isn't compassion to crush future generations under a burden of debt, while claiming to care about the poor. Jesus never said: "Tell Pilate to come with his soldiers and seize the cloak of that rich young ruler – and tear it up to distribute it to the poor."

Liberals are wrong, however, to call Rand a hypocrite for taking Social Security and Medicare payments, especially when she was diagnosed with lung cancer. She opposed those programs, true – but she had been taxed for forty years to pay for them. No hypocrisy there. Still, she is no model for conservatives.

George Washington thought free government could not survive without the "indispensable supports" of morality and religion. Rand denied it.

Abraham Lincoln thought the Bible was "the greatest gift God had given to man." Rand disputed it. Do some of our political leaders prefer Rand to Washington and Lincoln? Theodore Roosevelt was the first president to identify and name "the lunatic fringe." He never allowed himself to be ruled by it.

Leaders and thinkers like William F. Buckley Jr., and Whittaker Chambers protected the infant conservative political movement from the fatal attraction of Rand's views. They sensed how utterly alien and dangerous this Russian emigre's doctrines were. They knew well the importance of subordinating temporal politics to the mercy and justice of God. If we seek wisdom from Russian writers, and we should, then let us look to Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn.

It was Ronald Reagan who went to the Brandenburg Gate in 1987 and called upon a godless tyranny to "tear down this wall." He pointed to a radio tower on the Communist side and noted that it had a great defect which the East German puppet government had sought to eradicate. Those Marxist despots tried acid, sandblasting, and paint. But when the sun shone on the globe of that radio tower, it reflected the sign of the cross. No president before or after Reagan had publicly invoked the sign of the cross.

We should appeal to all our political leaders to read the Bible. Even if they do not accept the Savior whose words and deeds are found there, it would improve their public address marvelously. As well, they should read the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Federalist Papers, Washington's Farewell Address, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. They will find in these enduring documents no syllable to support the morbid maudering of Rand.

*Robert Morrison is senior fellow for policy studies at the Family Research Council. He has degrees in government and foreign affairs from the University of Virginia and has taught and served at the U.S. Department of Education.*

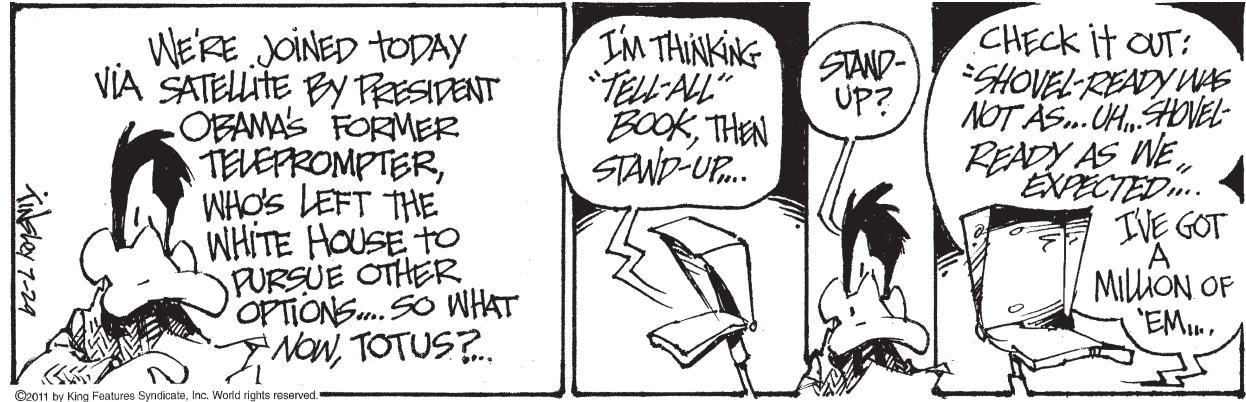
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## Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley



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