

## Other Viewpoints

### Stage still set for change at KU

The timing of Ron Olin's departure from Kansas Athletics Inc. is interesting and could be an indication of things to come in the department.

Athletic Director Sheahon Zenger, who is seven months into the job, was asked by the *Journal-World* about the responsibilities of some of the department's top administrators. When it came to Olin, director of security and internal controls, Zenger said, "That's a position that's somewhat unique to an athletic department. He and I are talking about what that role can or may be."

Later, Olin — who was Lawrence's chief of police from 1987 until he joined KU last September — resigned. Olin said, "Since day one I've been trying to work myself out of a job."

Kansas Athletics has no plans to fill the position. This is likely an indication that Zenger is looking closely at department operations and making changes where appropriate for the department's overall health.

Zenger says he wants to get to know the programs, from the perennial national champion contender men's basketball team to the women's rowing squad. He says he wants to make sure each program has the resources and opportunities to be successful. Then, when he is sure he has all the information he needs, he can take any appropriate action.

His hands are somewhat tied because his predecessor Lew Perkins signed several coaches of under-performing teams to new deals or contract extensions just before or after he announced he would leave his post on June 10, 2010, according to a *Journal-World* investigation.

This followed Perkins' decision to fire head football coach Mark Mangino, costing the program \$3 million in severance pay. The department also was stuck with Perkins' own \$2 million golden parachute when he left KU while under fire for a ticket scandal and ethical questions.

Coaching changes are likely to occur unless KU greatly improves on its last-place finish last year in the Big 12 all-sport Director's Cup standings. Zenger has called that result "unacceptable."

Olin's departure and the fact that he won't be replaced indicate that Zenger is willing to make decisions about whom he wants with him as KU works to become more competitive in the Big 12 and on the national stage.

— Lawrence *Journal-World*, via the *Associated Press*

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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



## So, what were you trying to say?

I've been puzzled more than once today, as I race against the clock and the sheer quantity of things to be read.

Don't get me wrong, I love to read. I've been a voracious reader since I first discovered all those squiggles on the page held stories. Though I have obvious preferences, which have changed some over time, I'll read warning labels on cleansers and ingredients labels on packaged mixes — for entertainment — if nothing else is available. But those are already edited into a standard format.

My job, as a copy editor, involves reading pretty much everything that goes into the newspaper, as well as a fair sampling of things that don't. Almost all of it was written by someone else. A number of someone elses. From all over.

Well, today must have been my lucky day, because I kept coming across odd turns of phrase. Some were in stories on topics I see every day. Some were dealing with subjects I know very little about. And all required a decision — do I leave what I see or do I change it?

Editing by definition involves making corrections and in other ways improving the flow and clarity of what is written. Fixing a typo is editing. So is turning three pages of elegant prose into one page that will actually fit in the paper.

There's a fine balance to the process — polishing without decimating. I'll be the first to admit I learned by doing while polishing the writing and language skills I've developed



**Marian Ballard**

### • Collection Connections

over a lifetime of writing, reading and studying an eclectic array of fields as my curiosity led me here, there and everywhere.

What I try to avoid is what was evident to me years ago in the condensed books I found at my grandmother's house. They were condensed, all right, but to the extent that the voice of the storyteller — the writer — was almost completely erased. In a volume of four or five books, they all sounded the same. That's sad; the storyteller and the story cannot really be separated and to try is to ignore the value of both.

When I find a word or a phrase that doesn't fit, though, I'm stuck. Why doesn't it fit? Is it a simple typing error? (You'd be surprised the kinds of mistakes that come out on the page from these. There are days I can't spell Colby to save my life, and days when half my capital letters come out lower case.)

Is this anomaly a grammatical error? I try not to judge because not everyone grows up with an English teacher for a mother, but it seems the language slips a little farther every year. I'm as guilty as anyone, but I read some-

thing — somewhere, sometime — about the rule against dangling participles being archaic and ill-informed and inappropriate to the English language. It may be right or wrong, but I love it.

Is this anomaly a spelling error? In creating this column, I've had to stop at least three times to change "write" to "right" so it will be right. That's one I can't let slide, because homonym misuse in print is one of the editing errors that drives me up the wall. It's also one of the big clues, by the way, that the e-mail promising a big windfall is spam.

Is this anomaly a creative turn of phrase that is part of the voice of the writer? As I work around people of different ages and backgrounds I hear a number of variations on common expressions. Time and distance tend to change a word here and there. For example, it's just as common to hear "I could care less" as "I couldn't care less." Think about it. They actually mean opposites, though both are used to indicate indifference.

And finally, when I find that word or phrase that stops me, the practical question comes down to, "How mad will they be if I change it? Or will they even notice?"

The voice of the storyteller is important. But the voice of the editor plays back up.

*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.*

## Debt deal leaves much work to be done

Over the last few months, the American people have endured the many ups and downs of an ever-changing debate in Congress over whether we should raise the debt ceiling for the eleventh time in the last decade. I, along with many of my colleagues, hoped we could use this moment in history to bring about significant change to the way business is conducted in Washington, D.C.

In fact, on March 22 of this year, I informed President Obama that I would not vote to raise the debt ceiling in the absence of substantial reductions in spending and structural changes to the way Washington spends taxpayer dollars. In my view, the plan that passed Congress this week failed on both accounts. This legislation might be considered a good 'deal' in Washington — but it is not good for the future of America.

The reality is the legislation did not offer a solution to the underlying problem of our financial crisis today: our government's out-of-control spending. Even if fully enacted, the bill only slows the growth of spending — but just barely. Next year, this plan will reduce spending by \$21 billion, and \$21 billion may sound like a lot of money, because it is. But given the fact Washington spends \$4 billion more than it takes in each day — those savings will disappear in less than a week.

This deal also ignores the stark warnings from credit rating agencies, which said a \$4 trillion deficit reduction plan would be necessary to prevent a downgrade in the U.S. credit rating. Even if everything in this legislation is accomplished, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates it will only achieve \$2.1 trillion in deficit reduction, so the threat of a downgrade to our credit rating is still very real.



**U.S. Senator Jerry Moran**

### • Moran's Memo

The one positive result of the debt debate is that Washington is now talking about how much it should cut instead of how much it can spend. Even though significant cuts did not occur, the debate informed the American people of the magnitude of our spending problem — but that's no reason to pat ourselves on the back. Can you imagine a family congratulating themselves for talking about their spending habits without ever changing the way they spend money? When Kansas families are in serious financial trouble, they don't just slow down how quickly they spend borrowed money — they cut up their credit cards.

Our national debt now stands at more than \$14 trillion, but under this plan, our debt will continue to grow and will reach \$22 trillion in 10 years. Over the next three decades, our debt will become more than three times the size of our entire economy. This reality served as a wake-up call to Americans last November — and they called on Washington to come up with a responsible solution to this growing problem. Unfortunately, business as usual continued this week in our nation's capital, and solving our fiscal problems was pushed off for yet another day.

Although members of the Kansas delegation ultimately came to different conclusions on the final deal, we remain unified in our commitment to rein in our staggering national debt

and grow the economy. There is much work to be done in the months ahead, and I will redouble my efforts to bring common sense to Washington and put Kansans back to work. The revenues we need to balance our books are not tax increases, but revenues that come from a growing economy where Americans and Kansans are working. When our economy is strong, the federal government can pay down its debt, Americans can provide for their families, and we will all have the opportunity to see our children and grandchildren pursue the American dream.

*Jerry Moran of Hays is the junior U.S. senator from Kansas. His committee appointments include Appropriations; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Veterans' Affairs; Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and the Special Committee on Aging.*

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Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



A NEW STUDY PREDICTS THAT BY THE NEXT CENTURY, AMERICANS' LIFE EXPECTANCY COULD BE OVER 100...

WHICH, BY THEN, WILL ALSO BE THE AGE AT WHICH THEY'LL BE GETTING THEIR FIRST SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS...