



Free Press Viewpoint

Where are we, a decade later?

Sunday, American will pause to remember the 2,973 souls who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. It's a good time to ask where America is after 10 years.

- We're a little less free. We've traded some of our freedom and our anonymity for a greater sense of security.

Remember when flying used to be fun? When you could skid up to the airport 15 minutes before departure, grab a ticket and rush down the jetway without being poked and prodded and X-rayed?

But the security state goes way beyond airline travel. Crossing the border, returning home from a foreign land, driving through any major city, even some small towns, we're being watched. Records are made. Government computers track us. Government cameras film us. We never know who is watching.

Some will say those who are doing nothing wrong have nothing to worry about. Others will say it's a fair trade, privacy and freedom for security.

- A lot poorer. We've spent billions on two wars, untold billions more on beefed-up security. The 9/11 attacks stopped the economy for three days and kicked the country into a deepening recession.

No one, that we know of, has ever added up the full cost. Without that, would we be in the kind of recession we've seen the last four years?

- Deeper in debt. One cost of having wars, tax cuts, security costs, border fences and "normal" government spending has been trillion-dollar deficits. Now the government spends about 40 percent of the budget just floating the national debt. The attacks didn't cause the deficit, but the responses certainly did help grow it.

- More secure, certainly.

You can't prove that we're secure, and certainly we face many threats. But no major terrorist act has touched U.S. soil since 9/11. We know many have been foiled, others undoubtedly discouraged by tighter security.

The cost is great. Since no one knows when terrorists might strike, the agencies must watch everywhere.

- Less feeling of security, more anxiety. How can you feel secure when everyone from the local sheriff's deputy to the county agent have been trained to watch for terrorists? It makes us all a little nervous. The guy next to us on a plane or a train could be a terrorist. Could be a sky marshal.

Worse yet, we all could be looking for the wrong thing. The world moves on. The security beast grows. But terrorists keep thinking of something new.

The next threat is out there. No one knows what or where.

That's the scary thing. No one knows just what it will look like. No one every thought of hijackers using airplanes full of people as bombs, after all.

In America, life goes on. In large measure, we have recovered and rebuilt. We will do just fine. But in many ways, nothing will ever be the same.

— Steve Haynes

Write us

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COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

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Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander @ nwkansans.com

NEWS

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor
kbottrell @ nwkansans.com

Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter
colby.sports @ nwkansans.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard @ nwkansans.com

Tomi Miller, Christina Beringer - Society Reporters
colby.society @ nwkansans.com

ADVERTISING
colby.ads @ nwkansans.com

Kathryn Ballard

Advertising Representative
kballard @ nwkansans.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter @ nwkansans.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Robin Tubbs - Office Manager
rtubbs @ nwkansans.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support @ nwkansans.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager
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Nothing like a newspaper over coffee

I just returned from a trip to Colorado.

Vacation was great. The mornings were cool and the afternoons mostly warm.

We went for walks in the woods, enjoyed picnics and visited with old friends.

We even took our dog and two of the cats, so every morning I was greeted by several pairs of eyes and noses – all of which wanted to be fed.

But, I really missed one thing – *Salina Journal*.

Does that sound strange?

I work for a newspaper. I get about a dozen weeklies and several dailies delivered to my home or office each week. I deal with more newspapers in a day than the average kennel owner.

You'd think that when I go on vacation, I'd like to get away from the paper.

But that's not what happens.

I don't miss the work of writing, editing or putting the paper together, especially since with the Internet, I usually end of doing all those things during a vacation.

What I really miss is sitting down every morning with a cup of coffee and reading the day's paper.

The *Salina Journal* is my daily paper. The carrier brings it to my door every day – rain or shine, weekdays, holidays even on Christmas.



Cynthia Haynes

- Open Season

My usual morning routine is to get up, get the paper off the doorstep, make the coffee and feed the cats.

While the cats seem to think that the routine should be turned around somewhat, it works for me.

Then I sit for about half an hour with my coffee and the paper. I peruse the front page, read a few columns and catch up on the funnies. It's a wonderfully relaxing way to start the day and I always feel like I'm ready for whatever is out there.

I don't get the *Salina Journal* in Colorado, and I really miss it.

Back in the '80s, when I lived in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, I got three daily papers – *The Denver Post*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *The Pueblo Chieftain*. I never had time to read them all, but I took a few minutes each morning to check the headlines and read the comics, my favorite part of the paper.

Stake your steak on tenderness

Recent consumer research has shown there's a segment of the U.S. population that is willing to pay more for tender and very tender cuts of beef. So how do you determine what is tender and very tender?

Some would argue, "We all know what a good, tender steak is because we've had one and enjoyed every bite." Sure you know what you like and I know what I like, right?

A tender cut of beef is easy to chew. You can almost cut it with a fork. No gristle. Now that's a tender steak.

But is there any way to tell for sure?

Visually you can't see tenderness. Sometimes even with a Grade A Prime cut of beef you may receive a less than tender piece.

Today, the discerning steak lover wants a guarantee that the particular cut of beef he/she is about to order in a restaurant or buy at the supermarket, is indeed tender or very tender.

Retailers, packers and now livestock producers have heard this reverie and are listening. They all understand the customer is right, give the people what they want and in this case, there may very well be a positive adjustment to everyone's bottom line.

To ensure the livestock producer, packer and retailer can deliver a tender, very tender cut of beef, the ASTM Subcommittee on Livestock, Meat and Poultry, Marketing Claims has nearly completed its efforts to establish a standard for beef tenderness, according to Mark Nelson, Kansas Farm Bureau Commodities Division.

"This standard will allow us to numerically define cuts of beef that are either tender or very tender," Nelson says. "This is important because consumers will then know for certain what they are buying meets these standards."

Nelson says this program isn't in place yet and may not be for up to another year. He believes it is important that livestock producers understand this is coming down the pike and they should be talking to their packer-buyer



John Schlageck

- Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

once these tenderness standards are in place.

"It's up to us as beef producers to go to our packer buyers and ask them, 'Hey are you paying a premium for tenderness?'" Nelson says. "We need to ensure we as producers are paid for stock that grades tender and very tender."

So how will tenderness be determined in beef carcasses?

There are many variables that contribute to beef tenderness, Nelson notes. To begin with you have livestock genetics and age. Then there is grade including select, choice and prime. In addition, the amount of marbling although this deals more with the taste of the cut of beef.

One measure of tenderness in the industry is the Warner-Bratzler, developed at Kansas State University and the slice shear force test. These measures are based on the amount of pressure it takes to cut a steak. It mimics the pressure it takes to push you knife through a cut of beef.

According to Warner-Bratzler, a steak that requires 3.9 kilograms of pressure to slice through the beef may be a very tender cut, Nelson says. One that requires 4.4 kilograms may be labeled tender. Anything above that will be considered a common cut of beef.

Nelson notes that while the U.S. beef industry remains the gold standard around the world, there are still roughly 17 percent of the carcasses processed in this country that will not make the cut as tender or very tender.

"Our goal with this standard is to sort out

When I moved back to Kansas, I tried keeping up my subscriptions by mail, but it didn't work out, especially after the *Rocky* folded. I finally just got the *Post* delivered to our Goodland office and shipped to me in the company mailbag every couple of days. It wasn't very satisfactory, and eventually, even that stopped when the *Post* cut its circulation area back to the core of Colorado.

The *Post* tried to sell me an on-line subscription. I turned it down for the same reason that I don't get on the computer every morning while I'm in Colorado and read the *Journal*.

It's not any fun.

There's something about turning pages and hearing the rustling of the paper. Something about the smell of ink and newsprint that is as important to me as what is written on the pages.

You can put a book or paper or magazine on a computer, but somehow, it's like eating fat-free ice cream. You can do it – but why the heck would anyone want to?

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of Nor'West Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes @ nwkansans.com

carcasses and pieces of meat based on tenderness," Nelson says. "One day in the not too distant future everyone who buys a cut of beef will be able to look at the label and see whether its tender or very tender along with the grade, weight and price."

These continuing efforts, including the proposed tenderness standards are vital as the livestock and meat industries adopt new technologies and more of us pay, or are paid for, the many and varied livestock and meat attributes delivered. And as always, beef producers will continue to listen to and produce products for the consumer.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774
roberts.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612,

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