

## Other Viewpoints

# Voter ID fraud not a burning issue

Kansas legislators have returned to Topeka for the 2012 session and are ready to conduct the state's business. As far as we know, not one of those 125 representatives and 40 senators earned his or her seat by way of voter fraud.

We like to think they and their supporters are honest Kansans.

Certainly, we haven't heard any of the candidates they defeated cry foul by way of voter fraud.

The same holds true for county, city and school district elections across the state. We can't think of one election determined on ballots cast by illegal voters.

For that reason, legislators shouldn't waste any time on Secretary of State Kris Kobach's request that lawmakers amend the effective date of a voter registration law passed just last year that will require people registering to vote for the first time to provide proof of citizenship.

The law, as passed, requires proof of citizenship for first-time registrants on Jan. 1, 2013, and thereafter. That's soon enough.

Kansans this year, for the first time, must show a photo identification when they go to the polls to vote. That law is on the books and we aren't going to quibble with it now, even though we aren't sure a majority of Kansans without a driver's license know how to go about getting photo ID before election day.

Kobach says he wants the effective date of the proof-of-citizenship moved up so the law will be in place when voter registration begins to surge before the presidential election in November.

Why this presidential election is different than any other, Kobach isn't saying. But there's no reason to think Kansas' presidential electoral college votes are any more susceptible to voter fraud than are our state officeholders, legislators and local government officials.

It's also worth noting that after the votes were counted for the 2010 election, Republicans held every seat in the state's congressional delegation and all the state offices. Republicans also have commanding majorities in both legislative chambers.

In Kansas, that wasn't surprising. What is surprising is that Kobach, a Republican and a former leader of the Kansas Republican Party, feels some urgent need to bring proof of citizenship into play before the November election.

There's no evidence to show our election process is, or ever was, in danger of being corrupted by voter fraud. But Kobach ran on a platform that promised to make our elections safe from illegal voters and, by golly, he's going to do it.

The secretary of state managed to get the voter ID and proof of citizenship through a compliant Legislature last year. Regardless of whether the changes were necessary, they're on the books now and should be enforced.

But legislators have enough serious issues to deal with during the current session. They should focus on the real work rather than waste time with the voter-fraud boogeyman.

January is soon enough to implement proof of citizenship for voter registration.

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

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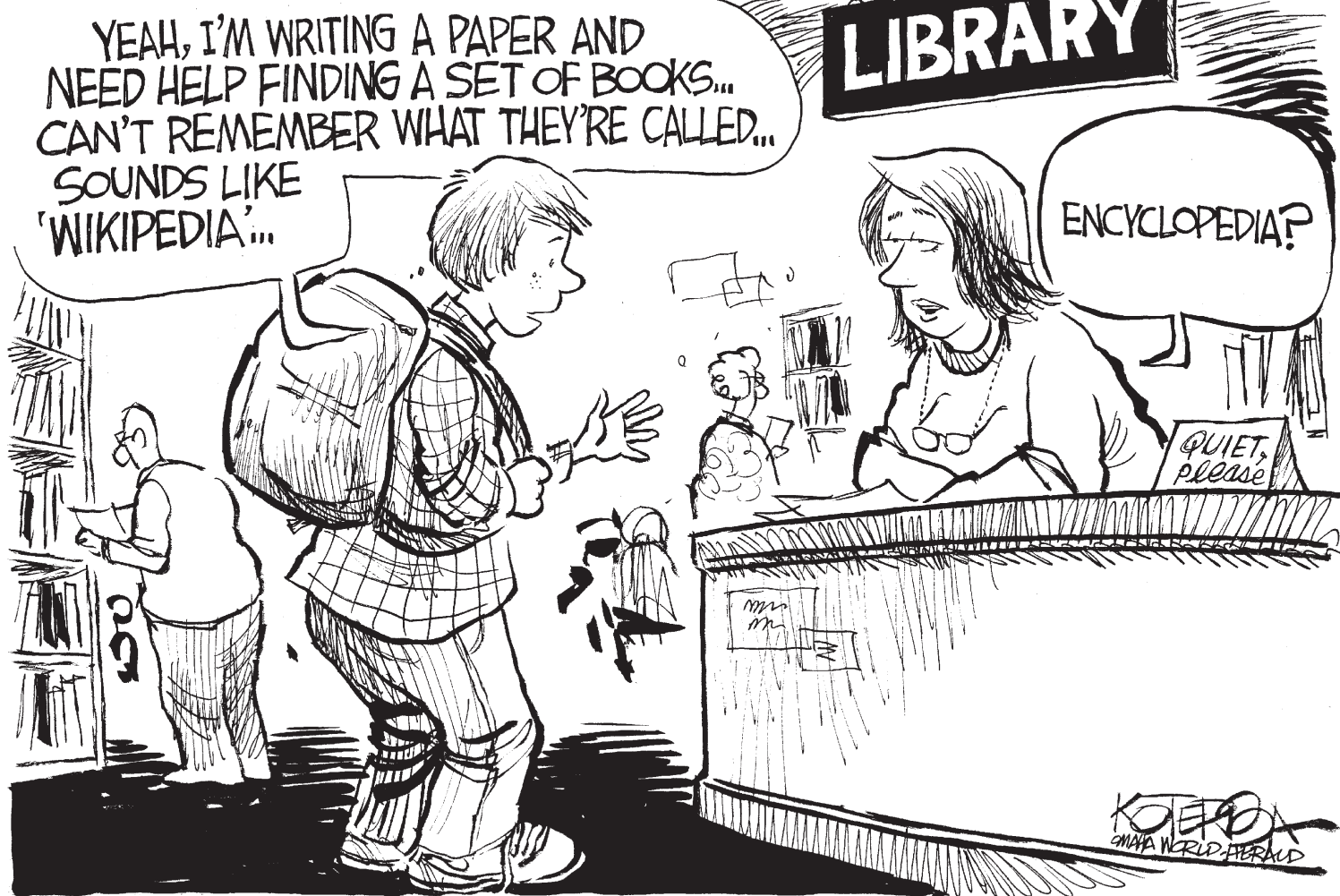
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# No, she's not stranded in London

Jim and I have discovered who is our most devoted and reliable friend.

I won't mention his name because I don't want to embarrass him, but we now know for certain he is someone we can depend on to come to our rescue the minute he finds that we are in trouble. Also, if he hears we need money, he will send it right away.

We made this discovery a few days ago when someone hacked into my e-mail account and sent out a bogus e-mail to everyone whose name appeared in my address book.

The e-mail stated that while we were on vacation in London we were mugged. I was supposedly hit in the back of the head with a pistol and all of our money and credit cards were stolen. The hacker asked the recipients of this bogus e-mail to send \$1,650 to an address in London so we could get back home and that we would pay them back when we returned.

One of my relatives returned that e-mail to me as soon as she received it so I could see what it said. She had a similar thing happen to her some time back and after turning it in to their Attorney General's office, it was discovered that the hacker was right there in the town where they live.

After I received that e-mail, I instantly clicked on my address book so I could send out a warning to everyone and tell them the e-



## Marj Brown

### • Marj's Snippets

mail was a hoax and I was safe here in Colby. The problem was, the minute I tried to get into my address book, all of the addresses disappeared.

Right away our telephone started ringing and I ended up answering the phone almost constantly for two days, so I had a lot of friends and relatives send out e-mails for me to other friends. At least I got to talk to people I hadn't heard from in a while.

As far as I know, only that one very good friend I mentioned earlier was actually going to send the money. The minute he read the e-mail, without even thinking, he ran down to the F&M Bank window in Dillons to draw out money to send us a money order. Luckily, the lady working at the bank warned him that it sounded like a hoax to her and he should first check it out before sending any money. I certainly hope no one actually did send money to that thief.

When Judie Withers received the message, she called the police to see what a person should do when someone hacks their e-mail account. They told her I should go to the FBI website, [ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov), and make out a report. After she called me, I did that. I also had my computer taken to the repair shop and completely cleaned of viruses. I also changed my e-mail account.

What the thief who hacked into my account didn't realize is that most of the people with addresses in my address book couldn't afford to send me \$1,650 without first making damn sure I was going to pay it back when I got home. They would have most certainly contacted one of our children to see how to get in touch with us by phone before sending such a large amount of money.

In fact, my younger sister, Ann, didn't even call to check on me, she just called my brother in Arkansas and told him, "Don't send Marj any money."

I like to think that my older sister, Shirley, who did call me, phoned her to warn her that it was a hoax and not that Ann just thought it would be best to just leave us in London.

*Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.*

# Senator wants to protect kids' farm jobs

During the holiday season, I was reminded of how blessed I am to live in a rural state where family values and community traditions run deep. No tradition runs deeper from generation to generation than the tradition of working on a family farm.

However, these rural traditions are under attack in Washington, D.C. In September, the U.S. Department of Labor proposed a new rule that would ban youth under the age of 16 from participating in many common farm-related tasks, like rounding up cattle on horseback, operating a tractor or cleaning out stalls with a shovel and wheelbarrow. To most young Kansans growing up on a farm, these jobs are just part of their daily routine.

According to the American Farm Bureau Federation, about 98 percent of our country's two million farms are family owned. By working alongside their parents, grandparents and neighbors, young people learn skills and values like hard work, personal responsibility and perseverance. They learn how to problem solve and work as a team to get things done. Agriculture is a way of life; but now the federal government wants to change that way of life.

Until recently, farms jointly owned and operated by multiple family members had discretion over the responsibilities they gave children on the farm. But this rule would do away with that freedom. The government is proposing to tell farmers and ranchers: "We know what's best for your children, and what they should and should not be doing."

The Department of Labor is also trying to do away with successful farm safety training and certification programs. Organizations like cooperative extension, 4-H, and FFA play a critical role in training and certifying young people to safely carry out farm activities. But the Department has ignored research that shows such programs improve safety habits of young people and instead criticizes these train-



## U.S. Senator Jerry Moran

### • Moran's Memo

ing programs for being too locally driven and lacking federal direction.

One would assume that before making such drastic changes, the Department would identify reliable data that shows a need for these changes. But quite the opposite is true. In fact, the Department of Labor admits it lacks the data to justify many of its suggested changes. Furthermore, according to the National Farm Medicine Center, youth-related injuries from farm accidents have declined by nearly 60 percent from 1998 to 2009.

If you ask any farmer or rancher about the importance of safety, they would tell you safety is one of their top concerns. But they would also tell you that critical to the rural way of life is being able to train the next generation to safely and successfully begin a career in agriculture. If today's young people are not given the chance to learn at a young age what it takes to operate a farm, we put the future of agriculture at risk.

If these changes go into effect, not only will the shrinking rural workforce be further reduced, and our nation's youth be deprived of valuable career training opportunities, but a way of life will begin to disappear.

I recently met a student named Audrey Green from Stockton who is the president of her school's FFA chapter. She recently participated in a district-wide FFA speech contest and said this about the new regulations: "If the proposed rules do go into effect, the amount of kids involved in agriculture would decrease. I know that our one stoplight, two-convenience-

store town would become even more obsolete without the youth who are the future of agriculture."

Our country cannot afford to lose the next generation of farmers and ranchers. Parents and communities should be allowed to look after the best interests of their families and citizens. And local experts should be the ones conducting safety training programs. The future of agriculture depends on stopping this vast overreach of executive authority and protecting individual rights. I have shared the concerns of Kansas farmers and ranchers with the Secretary of Labor now on two separate occasions.

We know rural America's values are not Washington's values. In the weeks ahead, I will continue to work with my colleagues to make certain this destructive rule does not move forward, so we can protect and preserve our values for the next generation of American farmers and ranchers.

*Jerry Moran of Hays is a member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and related agencies.*

## Where to write, call

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## Mallard Fillmore

### • Bruce Tinsley

