



Other Viewpoints

Several options could help fund arts

Anger lingers over Gov. Sam Brownback's one-man demolition of the Kansas Arts Commission, the resulting loss of \$1.2 million in matching funds, and statewide fallout such as the shutdown of three arts councils and two arts academies. But it's time to acknowledge that the commission is gone – at least as Kansans knew it – and to find a way out of this fiasco. Some worthy ideas are emerging.

Last month Brownback made the constructive suggestion of combining the Kansas Arts Commission and the Kansas Film Commission into a new Creative Industries Commission within the Kansas Department of Commerce.

That approach has worked in other states, including Missouri and Colorado, so it should make Kansas eligible again to receive grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Brownback's proposal also presents the welcome opportunity for the new commission to receive gaming and lottery proceeds, which the Commerce Department distributes via the \$42 million Economic Development Initiatives Fund.

In any case, the state needs to do better than the \$200,000 for the new commission in Brownback's 2013 budget blueprint. Not only is \$200,000 a long way from the \$815,000 accorded the arts in the fiscal 2011 budget, but the film commission gets \$105,000 now. Kansas should invest more than \$95,000 in its comeback as a state that supports the arts.

Under another arts option approved years ago but never implemented, Kansans will be able to pay extra for special license plates supporting the arts. And House Bill 2454, which has about 40 House sponsors, would add the arts to Meals on Wheels, breast cancer, military relief and wildlife (the "chickadee checkoff") as donation options on the Kansas individual income-tax form.

Though both programs would enable Kansans to show support for the arts, they won't satisfy the need for a steady and meaningful stream of state dollars. For example, the four existing tax-checkoff categories raised \$415,511 last year. And as new ones are added, the old ones tend to lose revenue.

"We want Kansas to become a leader, an innovator, in creativity and creative industries, and we are in a position to do so," Kansas Arts Commission member Henry Schwaller IV told The Eagle editorial board this week.

Judging from the 5,000 e-mails, letters and calls urging the 2011 Legislature to save the commission and state funding for the arts, many Kansans feel likewise.

At least Brownback finally seems to have heard the message, too – if too late to save a state agency with a 45-year tradition of enriching Kansas' artistic activity and identity.

– The Wichita Eagle, via the Associated Press

Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality.

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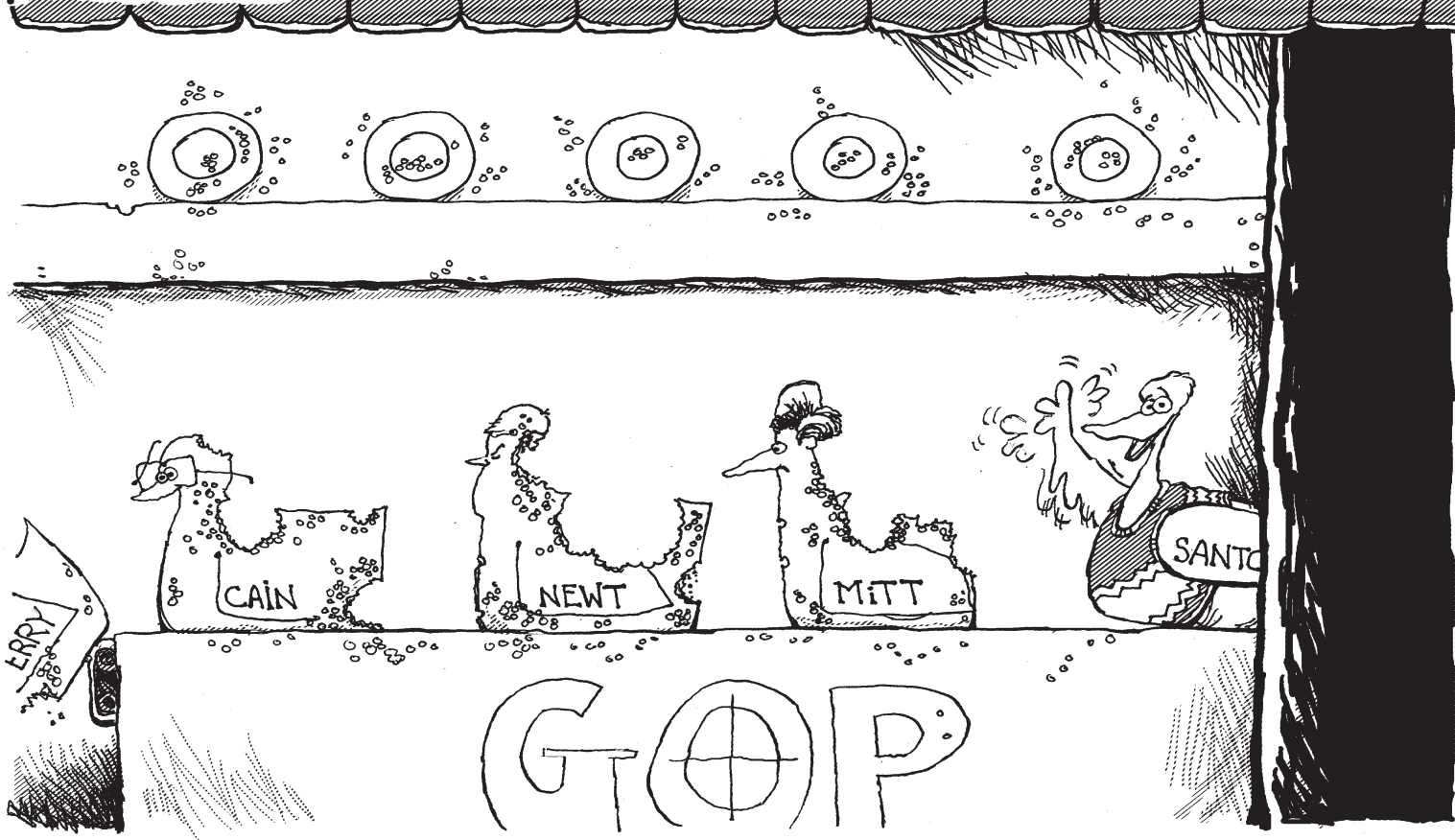
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THE DAY RICK SANTORUM DISCOVERED SWEATER VESTS AREN'T BULLETPROOF.

Buy fresh to stretch grocery dollar

As many Americans continue to face economic hard times, there is no reason to compromise the welfare of your family's diet. The cost of eating healthy hasn't changed as much as some less-healthy alternatives. It does require strategic shopping however.

Helping Americans learn how to stretch their grocery dollars with healthy, nutritious food is the theme of Farm Bureau's Food Check-Out Week, Feb. 19-25. America's farmers and ranchers are committed to producing safe, healthy and abundant food. And they share a common concern with consumers when it comes to putting nutritious meals on the table while sticking to a tight budget.

Recent U.S. Department of Agriculture food price data show that prices for unprepared, readily available fresh fruits and vegetables have remained stable relative to dessert and snack foods, such as chips, ice cream and cola. Translation – the price of a healthier diet has not changed compared to an unhealthy diet.

Farm Bureau's Food Check-Out Week is aimed at helping American consumers learn how to shop wisely while putting nutritious meals on the table with fewer dollars.

Learning to use your grocery dollars wisely



John Schlageck

• Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

helps ensure nutrition isn't neglected. Fruits and vegetables – along with whole grains, low-fat dairy products, lean meats, fish, beans, eggs and nuts – are an important part of a healthy diet.

Buying fresh produce when it's in season and costs less, while buying frozen fruits and vegetables when they're not in season, is a smart way to stretch that dollar.

Consumers in Kansas and across this country share in this wealth of food products every time they step foot in their favorite supermarket. Yes, today's shopper is fortunate to reap the benefits provided by America's farmers and ranchers.

Crop and livestock producers are proud of their profession. Nowhere is this more visible than the Midwest and our home state of Kan-

sas in particular.

Members of this profession take great pride in producing the cleanest, most abundant crops including wheat, corn, milo and soybeans. In addition, Kansas ranchers produce some of the best cattle, hogs and sheep.

Kansans are also proud that Food Check-out Week is an idea that originated with Kansas Farm Bureau in 1997 and has since gone national. Neosho County Farm Bureau member Linda Reinhart, former chair of the Kansas committee of Farm Bureau Women and the American Farm Bureau Women's committee, thought the concept was important and saw it through to completion.

The story of the American farmer and rancher is truly a success story. Our producers are the most productive in the world. Remember to help celebrate this story and the healthiest, safest food anywhere on the planet Feb. 19-25.

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.

Bowling brings more memories

To the Editor:

I love Marj Brown's stories, and I might say that my brother was one of the pinsetters (at the old bowling alley), and it was a hard job. He would talk in his sleep about how certain men bowlers sure threw the ball hard.

As far as the bowling alley, it was in operation while the skating rink was still there. The rink was just north of the bowling alley a few feet. We had to use the bathrooms at the bowling alley because the skating rink did not have any. There was a bowling alley where the American Legion is now.

The Desbian family was great, and then came along the Schwanke family, and they have been great for Colby.

Jean Oren, Colby

Colby High class of '62

Humility not worthy goal

To the Editor:

In Andy Heintz' recent opinion article, Wildcat Ramblings, it does not surprise me that he is still in favor of President Barack Obama, even after the last four years of devastation.

I do respect that each citizen of these great United States bears the right to share his or her opinion. However, I feel that seeing if one candidate gets a "healthy dose of humility" or not is why we are in the turmoil we are now in as a nation.

Republican and Democrat terminology is so far gone that I don't believe either party stands for the rights in which they were created. Our founding fathers created a Constitution that should have kept our government in check. Unfortunately, we are human, and humans are well known for taking advantage of one another.

Therefore our government has failed us, and we have failed each other by allowing the government to have the power it does. So I pray that we as a country begin to think about each and every candidate who wants the responsibility of rebuilding the United States to a responsible and moral country as we were



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

founded.

The question to me is which candidate will actually follow through on his "vote for me" promises. The future of this country is very dismal, and it will take more than four years to straighten out this economic catastrophe.

I ask you, Mr. Heintz, do we really need four more years of overspending, overtaxing and lack of accountability?

Andy Lee, Colby

College pool needs work

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter to tell everyone that I went to the college pool and couldn't use it, due to the fact that the cement all around the pool is filthy, along with the entry way, hallway and bathrooms.

I was told the remodeling wasn't done yet at the pool and they didn't know when the crew was coming back. Why the remodeling company didn't clean up their mess before they left is beyond me. I have been in business for 21 years, and I was taught to always leave it better than you found it.

I talked to four guys in the athletic department and from the college president to maintenance. None of them was willing to clean up the cement.

I need to use the pool for medical purposes. I was also told there is no cleaning person, so that explains the filth. I asked some college students if they would be willing to sweep and mop and they asked when. They were ready.

In my opinion, there is no excuse for this. Our taxes pay for this, and it should be clean.

I was told that the new furnace we purchased with our tax money isn't even hooked up, so there is no heat in to the swimming area. That plywood over the windows is really saving us taxpayers money! Also, handicap parking needs to be kept free of snow so those who need it can use it.

I was told they could close the pool until the repairs are done, but I told them no, it needs to remain open. People depend on the pool for many reasons.

Just clean it and that will solve the problem. I got no where with anyone, so I'm asking for your help. Call my cell number at (785) 443-2465.

Diane Karlin, Colby

Church supports tax credit

To the Editor:

At its Jan. 21, 2012, meeting at the First Presbyterian Church of Abilene, the Presbytery of Northern Kansas adopted the following statement:

The Presbytery ..., of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), representing 67 churches in 33 counties, stands in opposition to the proposal put forth by Gov. Sam Brownback in his annual State of the State address on Jan. 11, 2012, to eliminate the Earned Income Tax Credit for the citizens of the State of Kansas.

I have been directed to distribute this statement to all the newspapers in the state of Kansas as well as to Gov. Brownback and to the representatives and senators serving the districts within the bounds of the Presbytery.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this action.

Edward J. Thompson
General Presbyter/Stated Clerk



Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



from: President OBAMA
to: Joe Biden

You've become an object of Derision....

...and quite often, a source of Division...
Just for the CAMPAIGN...
Let's put you on A PLANE....
To someplace WITHOUT television.

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