

Other Viewpoints

Spending message: Legislature for sale

Apparently, the cost of winning an election in Kansas is suffering from a bad case of inflation. With an outspoken desire to rid Topeka of legislators who didn't march in lockstep with Gov. Sam Brownback's aggressive economic and social experiment for Kansas, outside groups answered the governor's call with buckets of cash. That, in turn, brought out additional money from groups who sought to keep moderates in office. The result was that the 2012 primary election resembled something more like a shopping spree than a free election. A Kansas Governmental Ethics report found that political action committee spending on Kansas elections increased exponentially this year from 2008. Since the beginning of 2012, PAC spending in Kansas reached \$2,135,220. Last minute spending by PACs, which came after the official reporting deadline, surged to \$798,000 – a nearly six-fold increase over the \$134,162 spent during the same period in 2008.

The leader in PAC spending was the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, with \$675,709 spent since Jan. 1. In addition to PAC money, candidates for the House and Senate collectively raised \$3.9 million during the campaign season. While that is a staggering amount of money for groups to spend on what should be public service, it doesn't include the untold – and unknowable – amount of money spent by non-profit issue groups such as Americans For Prosperity.

Such groups aren't required to report their involvement in political races and insist they use their money to inform voters about issues rather than to alter elections. Yet such groups frequently point out which candidates align with their policy positions and encourage voters to "thank" or support them. Kansans should be concerned that special interest groups hold such interest in who wins a part-time legislative job in Topeka. The message from PACs and non-profit groups is that with enough money, the Legislature can be purchased and remit payment in the way of favorable legislation. To think these groups would make such a large investment for the wellbeing of Kansans is simultaneously foolish, naive and dangerous.

In the future, legitimate political candidates likely will find it difficult to stand against the blitzkrieg of even a weak opponent who has the backing of a well-financed non-profit group or PAC willing to spend countless dollars on its financiers' behalf.

– Hutchinson News, via the Associated Press

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- 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, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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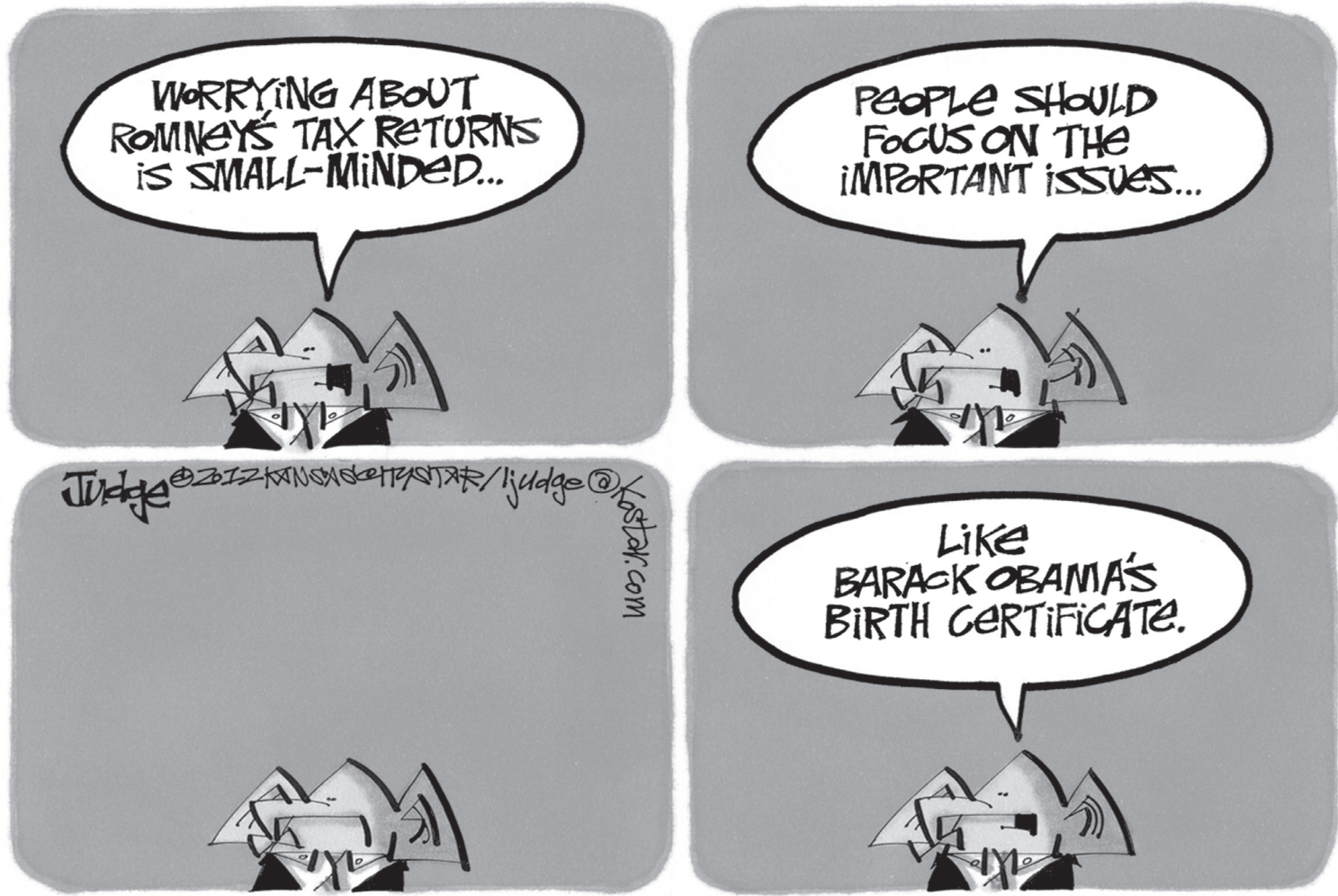
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Will new phone postpone aging?

All the articles on aging that I read say you should try to keep learning.

Keep your mind and body active so that neither realizes it's getting old and they won't stagnate.

I remember that after my mother retired, she spent hours and hours every day doing crossword puzzles and fancy work like crocheting and cross stitch. It was only after her strokes that she gave up trying to do these things and refused to go to physical therapy.

She never walked again and, although her mind was clear, I could see her slipping a little more each time I visited.

I'm sure it's the old "use it or lose it" adage at work.

So far, I've been able to keep my mind busy, and I'm trying to learn new things. But, like learning to walk again after a stroke, it's not always easy.

My latest foray into the unknown is the purchase of an iPhone.

I've had an Android "smart" phone for a couple of years, but we've never gotten along. Frankly, I've had a hard time just dialing phone numbers. The tiny virtual keypad and I didn't get along. I would try to hit the 7 and the phone would come up with a 4. I'd try to hit an S and a W would appear. It was not a happy



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

relationship.

My daughters said I needed an iPhone. It would be a better fit. We were made for each other.

However, my contract with the cell company was for two years. And after my last relationship with a "smart" phone, I wasn't sure it wouldn't be just another two-year long blind date.

But when the time came, I got the iPhone, and I have been learning how to use it ever since. I've even gotten some apps for it after oldest daughter helped me set up an account with iTunes. I'm still not texting, but when I dial someone, the right numbers show up on the screen, and I'm learning how to put in "Favorites" and "Contacts."

I've got several games on my new phone, but haven't learned to play any of them yet. I'm not a big game player, but do want to learn

how to run Angry Birds and maybe some sort of Scrabble game. I like to throw things, and I've got a pretty good vocabulary.

I was feeling pretty good about my newfound expertise with a telephone when a friend, who is about five years younger than I, burst my bubble.

I hadn't seen her in several years and asked if she was still running marathons.

She said that she had decided that she needed a new challenge, so she had decided to enter a triathlon.

He husband thought it was a great idea, but reminded her that that meant running, biking and swimming. She was born and reared in a town without a pool. She was almost 60 and couldn't swim a stroke.

So, she said, she's taking lessons. It's kinda tough, since all the other students are about 50 years younger, but she is determined to learn.

There, I thought, goes a woman who will never grow old.

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@nwkansas.com

Legion Riders help traveling 'neighbor'

To the Editor:

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

On the first day of our vacation, July 28, our 2010 Harley Davidson motorcycle broke down eight miles south of Colby on our way to an anniversary party in Deadwood, S.D. We limped it on to town, found out that we had lost a front wheel bearing and started making phone calls to part stores, cycle shops, the U-Haul dealer and anyone else we could think of – all to no avail. I called HOGG and was told they would haul our bike to the nearest dealer, which wouldn't be open until the following Tuesday.

I was so depressed, all I wanted to do was go home to Parkerfield, 50 miles south of Wichita, and cancel the rest of the vacation. Then I had an idea. As a member of the American Legion and Legion Riders, perhaps Colby had an American Legion and someone there could help us. Boy did they ever.

We entered the American Legion and were greeted with smiling faces and invitations to take part in the "steak night" going on. My husband started asking the bartender about local cycle shops, auto/trailer rentals, etc., and why we were asking.

Right away another guy sitting close by grabbed his cell phone and started making phone calls. In less than 20 minutes we were introduced to guys that could possibly help us.

A plan was made and as soon as dinner was over, our group was presented with a challenge coin and tag from the local American Legion and Legion Rider group, then sent on our way to get the real work going.

In less than three hours, Terry was back with a fixed bike and we were able to continue our two-week, 3,620-mile vacation run.

We are soooooo thankful for the help and hospitality of your Colby American Legion and Legion Rider group. We give special thanks to Jim Vap, Monte Lewis and Larry Ummel and



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

want everyone in your area to know what great people they are. If you'd like to join a group, this is the one to get involved with. They are special and really represent what a welcoming community is all about.

Terry and Teresa Stalnaker
Parkerfield

Doctor helped others

To the Editor:

Coach John Wooden from UCLA once stated that success is best measured in terms of how much we are able to help others. By that definition, Dr. Vic Hildyard was indeed successful.

I began premedical training as Dr. Hildyard arrived in Colby to begin his practice. He became a dear friend and a mentor. I visited Dr. Hildyard whenever visiting Colby and returned during medical school to do externship training with him.

He was a remarkable physician and a master at evaluating and communicating with patients. Entering the exam room the patient would observe his joking smile and the twinkle in his eyes. I quickly realized that while putting the patient at ease with his relaxed manner he was actually keenly perceptive and was absorbing information the entire time. He had the uncanny ability to make multiple observations and read the patient's signs and symptoms like a book.

He practiced medicine at a very high level. I

have never met a better diagnostician. Whenever I have had complex patients here who were difficult for my local colleagues to diagnose I could always call Dr. Hildyard for an additional opinion and those telephone consultations were invaluable. He was truly an exceptional and brilliant physician.

He taught me that the learning curve in medicine never ends and he made a point to stay current with new medications and technology. Patient care always came first and he passionately championed for his patients.

When I think of all the lives he touched, lives he saved and many others that he improved quality of life for – it was a remarkable body of work and positive benefit for the region. If success is best measured in terms of how much we are able to help others, then Dr. Vic Hildyard was indeed very, very successful.

Darrell P. "Pete" Williams, M.D.
Minot, N.D.

Baby missed scholarship

To the Editor:

I am very disappointed in the Colby community. In 1995, my son was the first baby born in Thomas County. He received absolutely nothing from the community.

This year, Colby Community College offered a scholarship to the first baby born. It would have been so nice to have something from the community.

To this day, I do not know the reason why we never received anything. My son is a senior in high school this year, and wants to be an engineer. Do you know what a scholarship to the college would have meant to him?

Howard D. Owens
Moscow, Kan.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

