



Other Viewpoints

Capitol a jewel, Kansas' money pit

The Kansas Capitol is the state's crown jewel. But 11 years and \$332 million into a renovation that was supposed to take eight years and \$90 million, let it be said that the building also has become an embarrassing money pit.

When taxpayers have needed state leaders who would scrutinize the renovation's cost and funding, they've had mostly yes-men.

So it was satisfying to see state Sen. Carolyn McGinn, R-Sedgwick, cast the lone "no" vote on the latest expenditure — \$17.4 million authorized Monday by the State Finance Council for the visitors center, driveways and landscaping. McGinn said she disagreed in principle with spending \$7 million of Kansas Department of Transportation money on the Capitol improvements, and thought the full Legislature should vote on such a proposal relating to the "people's building." Both were excellent points.

State government needs to stop raiding Department of Transportation whenever it needs cash. And given the way lawmakers haggle during the legislative session about six-figure expenditures, it seems unwise for the governor and the eight-member council to be making multimillion-dollar spending decisions in August.

As McGinn also observed, the action the council just took to borrow money to pay for a basement-level visitors center was rejected by lawmakers two years ago, when it was anticipated that such a center would be privately funded.

State leaders have poured more and more money into the renovation since 2001, sometimes while cutting state aid to public schools, social services and other programs. They've also called on state universities and other entities to raise more money privately and rely less on public dollars. Now, was there really no choice but to pay for the visitors center by issuing \$5.4 million in bonds?

Even outgoing House Speaker Mike O'Neal, R-Hutchinson, thought lawmakers already had approved money for a visitors center on the Capitol's north side — a reflection of the confusion surrounding the Capitol renovation's ever-changing timeline, price tag and to-do list.

Many point to the imposing 109-year-old building itself as having driven up the renovation price by requiring fidelity down to the last historical detail and involving long-deferred upgrades to infrastructure and technology. The chandelier newly hanging from the dome cost \$296,000 alone. But state officials also have used the renovation as an opportunity to add all kinds of office space as well as an underground parking facility and now the visitors center.

Many of the renovations were sorely needed. And when it's over, the whole thing promises to be as beautiful as the already upgraded House and Senate chambers. But the Capitol project long ago became a boondoggle.

— *The Wichita Eagle, via the Associated Press*



"HEY! IF ANYBODY WANTS TO BUILD A PIPELINE FROM THE FLOODED GULF COAST TO THE MIDWEST, I'M ALL FOR IT!"

Presidential play full of fun facts

We got to watch a new play about the U.S. presidents, and it was both great fun and a good education on our executive branch.

The play — appropriately named "The Presidents!" — went through every chief executive we've had since George Washington in under an hour with song, dance and interesting tidbits about each man to hold our highest office.

The play was written and produced by members of our favorite company, the Creede Repertory Theater, in Colorado.

While it's technically a children's play, the day we attended was a weekday at the end of August, and there was only one child in the mostly full theater.

The first thing we learned, or relearned, was that although we've had 44 presidents, only 43 men have held the office. Fun fact: Grover Cleveland, the first president to get married while in office, was both our 22nd and 24th president. Benjamin Harrison, grandson of No. 9 William Henry Harrison, was the 23rd president.

There are four presidents carved into Mount Rushmore — No. 1 George Washington; No. 3 Thomas Jefferson, first governor and first secretary of state to become president; No. 26 Theodore Roosevelt, first president to ride in a car, airplane and submarine; and No. 16 Abraham Lincoln, first president born outside the original 13 colonies.



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

The youngster in the audience was told that, while it's a little confusing for some people, Benjamin Franklin, one of the most prominent of our Founding Fathers, was never president.

As most of us know, the teddy bear was named after Theodore Roosevelt, a great sportsman and outdoor enthusiast. The story goes that while on a bear hunt, some of the hunting party caught an animal and tied it to a tree, then brought Teddy over to finish it off. Roosevelt refused to kill the wounded animal, saying it wasn't sporting, and instead had it tended to and released.

The story got out and a toy maker renamed his stuffed bears for the president.

Other fun facts: While Cleveland was the first president to get married in office, No. 15 James Buchanan, was the only president to never be married.

William McKinley, No. 25, was the first president of the 20th century. He was also the last one to have served in the Civil War. Dwight

Eisenhower, No. 34, was our only president to serve in both World Wars I and II.

Jimmy Carter, No. 39, was the first to be born in a hospital and also the first president to admit to a UFO sighting.

Andrew Johnson, No. 17, who followed Lincoln, was the first president to be impeached, but Richard Nixon, No. 37, was the first to resign.

Others to leave office suddenly include Lincoln, No. 16; John Kennedy, No. 25; McKinley; and No. 20, James Garfield, who were all shot, and William Henry Harrison, No. 9, who died of pneumonia just 31 days after taking office; Warren Harding, No. 29, who had a heart attack; Zachary Taylor, No. 12, who died of gastroenteritis; and Franklin Roosevelt, No. 32, who suffered a cerebral hemorrhage just after he was elected for the fourth time. Or he still might be in the White House today.

The play was fun, the songs were good and the acting — by two guys who played Secret Service agents — superb. And that little kid down in the front row and I both learned a few things.

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@nwkansan.com

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.

COLBY FREE PRESS

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

Send news to: colby.editor@nwkansan.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander@nwkansan.com

NEWS

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

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansan.com

Sam Dieter - News Reporter
colby.editor@nwkansan.com

Christina Beringer - Society Reporter
colby.society@nwkansan.com

ADVERTISING

colby.ads@nwkansan.com

Kathryn Ballard

Advertising Representative
kballard@nwkansan.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager
medmondson@nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager
Jim Jackson, Jim Bowker, Gary Meyer, Pressmen
Lana Westfahl, Judy McKnight, Kris McCool, Sheri Arroyo,
Tracy Traxel, Mailing

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.

Will your kids leave cafeteria hungry?

With the advent of the new school year, there's apprehension some youngsters may be leaving the cafeteria hungry. This may be in part due to recent changes in this country's school lunch program.

No question, some of the changes in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act are good for our kids. These include more fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, more whole grains and more water instead of sugary drinks. Also included in the new changes are reductions in saturated fat, trans fats and sodium.

These efforts are well-intentioned. There is a real concern about the growing problem of childhood obesity and diabetes. The problem arises when you try to solve childhood obesity for some and you shortchange the more active children, particularly at the higher age groups.

The new guidelines place a ceiling on the amount of proteins and overall calorie content of school lunches. While there have always been minimum requirement for calories, protein and other nutrients, the caps are new. They may be good for many, but some youngsters may leave the lunchroom hungry.

These new requirements for protein are slightly less than what the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends in its overall nutritional guidelines. It appears, however, that the real problem is there is no flexibility to provide fewer or greater calories depending on a student's age, body weight or activity level. All of these considerations are necessary to deter-



John Schlageck

• Insights
Kansas Farm Bureau

mine a youngster's nutritional needs.

Active, developing youngsters — especially those involved in athletic programs after school — require more calories. If you've ever had a daughter or son playing soccer, volleyball or practicing during summer and fall football, you know they burn these calories.

Parents I know, myself included, often pack additional food for their children that include protein, carbs and fruits. In some cases the youngsters complain about being hungry or require more fuel to keep up with their active lifestyles.

Young, developing bodies and minds need a healthy, well-balanced diet, however, every child is different and requires different amounts of fruit, vegetables, dairy products and yes, protein. This protein should include whole cuts of lean beef, pork and chicken, not processed, packaged, prepared food out of a box, but straight from the steer, hog and bird.

Beanie weenies, chicken nuggets, high-carb mac and cheese, one small slice of pizza with a "one size fits all" portion size designed to curb

obesity, may not meet the dietary needs of an athlete, an artist, an active 7-year-old or a busy farm kid. It certainly doesn't fully consider the need for adequate — even elevated — levels of protein necessary to facilitate brain development. That, by the way, is the reason we send our kids to school.

Our goal should be to feed our children while they are in school, but feed them with nutritious meals that will help them grow up to be healthy, well-adjusted adults. It's time to treat our youngsters as individuals and cater to their unique dietary needs. The Department of Agriculture has created a one-size-fits-all approach that will not accomplish this.

Our children spend seven to eight hours nine to 10 months out of every year in schools across our nation. These same schools have our children under their wing more than we as parents and grandparents do during each day school is in session.

Your children, grandchildren and mine deserve the best and healthiest foods available. Those with a more active lifestyle may also need more protein than others. Let's not send them away from the school cafeteria hungry.

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/

(202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

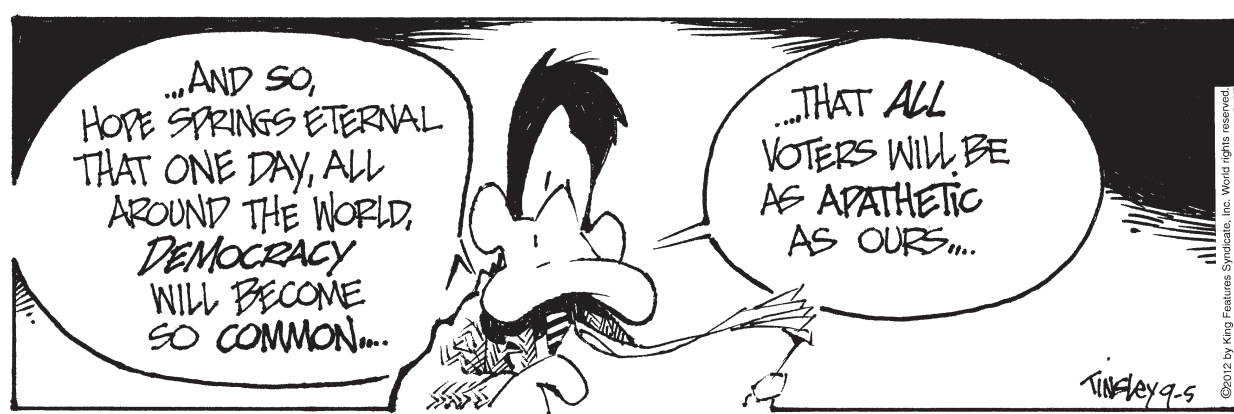
U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

(202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



"...AND SO, HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL THAT ONE DAY, ALL AROUND THE WORLD, DEMOCRACY WILL BECOME SO COMMON..."

"...THAT ALL VOTERS WILL BE AS APATHETIC AS OURS..."

Tinsley 9.5