



## Other Viewpoints

# Enough is enough; get rid of the penny

The U.S. Mint is experimenting with new materials for making coins, hoping to reduce the cost of keeping people in change.

The Mint has tried 29 alloys on fake coins so far, ranging from aluminized steel to new mixtures of copper and nickel. One imperative is to keep the same “magnetic signature” as current coins, since many vending machines use that to validate what they take in.

The Mint says it’s tried penny, nickel and quarter-sized coins with various materials, which are then tested for color, finish resistance to wear and corrosion, hardness and magnetic properties.

The test involve “nonsense dies,” so no versions of real coins which might enrich collectors are made. Martha Washington appears on many wearing a bonnet, and the words are misspelled.

Why the bother? Seems the Mint isn’t getting its 2 cents worth. With copper and nickel prices soaring to record levels, it costs more than 2 cents to make a penny and about 7 cents to make a nickel today. Dimes and quarters are made with a copper-nickel “sandwich,” and the Mint says, just reducing the amount of nickel in the alloy could save millions.

Obviously there’s money to be saved here, as well as made, but we think the Mint is on the wrong track.

Instead of finding a cheaper way to make pennies, we should just get rid of them, as Canada is doing. Nickels, too.

A 1950 dollar is worth little more than a dime today, so it follows that our pennies are worth only about a mill today, or one one-thousandth of a cent. Most people won’t bend over to pick one up. The calories spent probably cost more than the coin.

Billions could be saved by not minting pennies and nickels, but there’s bigger game. The Treasury estimates that eliminating the \$1 bill could save \$4.4 billion over 30 years. These could be replaced by existing \$1 coins, which have not been popular, mostly because merchants don’t have a slot for them in cash-register drawers.

But dropping the mostly worthless small change would solve that problem, and eliminating \$1 notes would thin out our billfolds. Sure, it might be a sacrifice to change our habits. With the government deep in debt, though, we’ve got to start somewhere.

Coins and currency make as much sense as anything. Even though there’d be complaints, we think people would adjust pretty quickly. Unless something changes, coins are not going to get any cheaper.

So break out those dollars and let’s get with it.

— Steve Haynes

## 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.

## 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 @ nwkansas.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 @ nwkansas.com

### NEWS

**Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter**  
colby.sports @ nwkansas.com

**Marian Ballard - Copy Editor**  
mballard @ nwkansas.com

**Sam Dieter - News Reporter**  
colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

**Christina Beringer - Society Reporter**  
colby.society @ nwkansas.com

### ADVERTISING

colby.ads @ nwkansas.com

**Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative**  
kballard @ nwkansas.com

**Janene Woodall - Advertising Representative**  
jwoodall @ nwkansas.com

**Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design**  
khunter @ nwkansas.com

### BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

**Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager**  
medmondson @ nwkansas.com

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
support @ nwkansas.com

### NOR'WEST PRESS

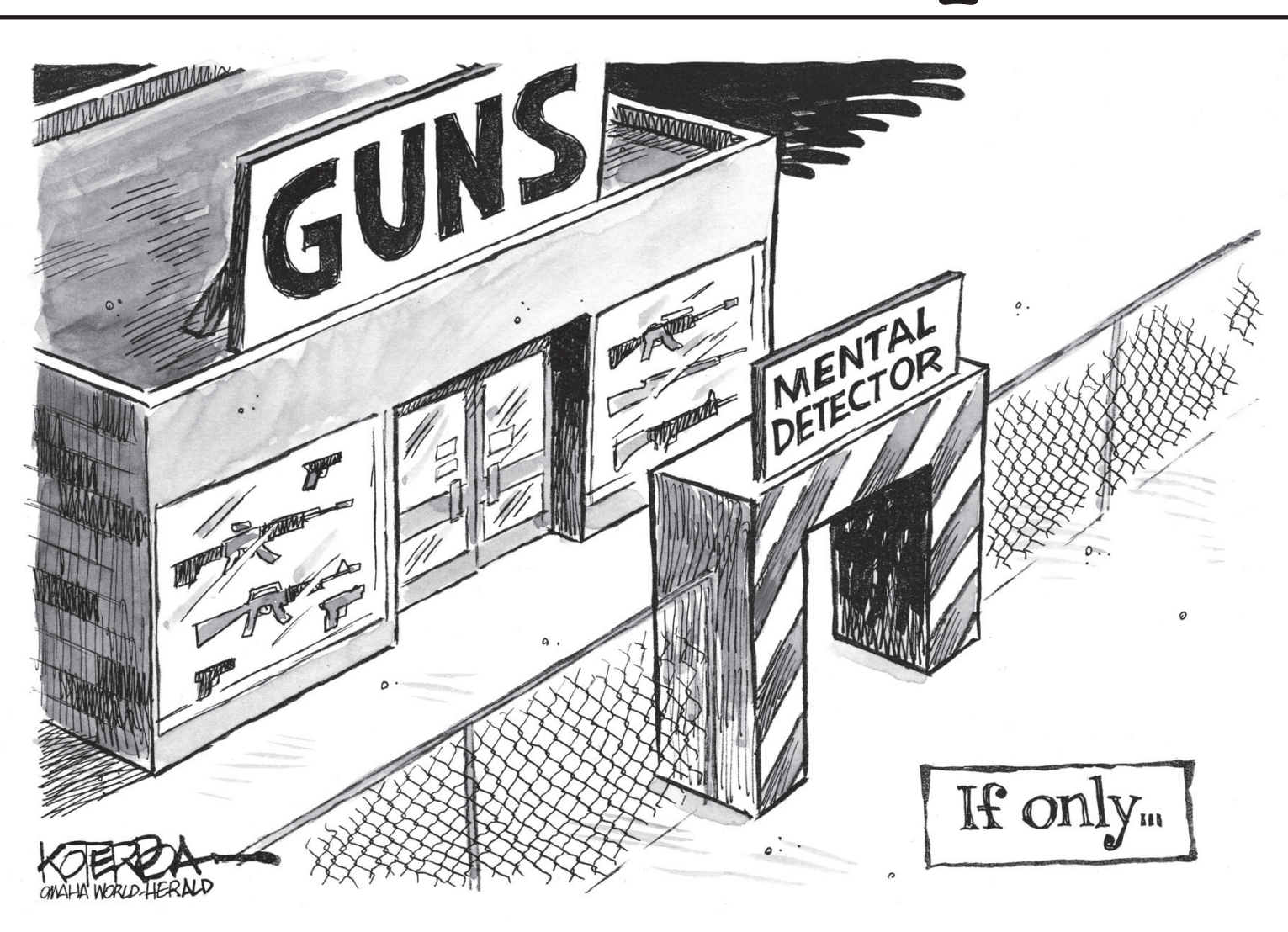
**Richard Westfahl - General Manager**  
Gary Stewart, Foreman  
Jim Jackson, Jim Bowker, Pressmen  
Kris McCool, Judy McKnight, Tracy Traxel,  
Sheri Arroyo, Mailing

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. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



# The best-laid gifts can go astray

I’m calling it “The Gift of the Magi.”

No, I’m not talking about the wise men from the east. I’m talking about the O’Henry short story about a young couple with no money and a desire to give each other a wonderful Christmas present.

Each gets rid of their most prized possession to buy a gift. She cuts and sells her long hair to purchase a watch fob for him and he pawns his watch to purchase fancy combs for her hair.

Well, I wanted to get something special for Christmas for our oldest daughter and her husband. We had already gotten presents for the youngest daughter and our son, but the oldest was a problem.

I finally hit on the idea of giving them money. But, not just any money – this would be something that would say “we love you and want you to have a great time.”

For several years, they have talked of visiting Ireland, and when his sister married and moved to England a year ago, they said they were going to go visit her – and maybe see a bit more of the British Isles while they were there.

This fall, they said, they were definitely going to England next spring or summer. So, I decided to get them foreign currency. England



**Cynthia Haynes**

• Open Season

is part of the European Common Market, so I went to the bank and ordered \$200 in euros.

It would have been cheaper to just give them the check, but I thought this would be more fun. We would be blessing their trip and encouraging them to have a good time. I also viewed it as shopping at home, since the bank here gets a small commission on this type of transaction.

The day the money was to come in, Steve said he woke up in the middle of the night and remembered that they don’t use euros in England. While they joined the Common Market, he explained, they kept their own currency.

Well great, now it was too late to get English money, and I had a whole fistful of money good in places my children weren’t planning to visit. Except, I discovered, Ireland. They use euros in Ireland.

I told my story to some friends and one offered me a couple of pound coins. They were very pretty, he said. He and his wife had brought them back from Egypt as small presents for friends.

OK, I got the coins. They are pretty. They are also worthless unless you are shopping in Egypt, but they ARE pound coins. I added them to my collection and mailed the whole mess off to Georgia.

I’m not sure what the kids are going to do with an envelope of “funny money,” especially since daughter called the other day to say she wasn’t sure if they would get to go to England this year.

Her sister-in-law and husband are coming to the U.S. in the spring, our younger daughter is having a baby then and the upstairs bathroom leak turned into a huge, expensive project.

I wonder if their plumber would take euros?

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

# Wise thought for the day: listen

Today, information bombards us like a meteor shower. It’s everywhere.

Each day our eyes see thousands of images on television and computer screens. Our ears hear thousands of words. Many people read thousands of words on the printed page.

People text and talk. They Facebook and walk. They Twitter and tweet. They blog and beep. They Bluetooth – I didn’t know that was even a word until a few years ago. One thing I do know, it shouldn’t be a verb.

Folks who can’t speak or write our English language are making up their own version daily, but that’s a whole ’nother story.

Does anyone listen anymore?

Listening and reading. Wise men and women throughout history have told us we ought to be doing more of this. Give your eyes a rest from the video world every now and then.

Guess what?

Every day, I scan about a half dozen newspapers online. I even pick up a copy of the *Kansas City Star* and hold the “real thing” in my mitts nearly every Sunday.

And books, both in paper, hardback and my Nook. I can’t begin to think of how many I’ve read during the last 50 years. I read every day, and sometimes I have two or three books going at the same time.

One of my favorite authors, Leo Tolstoy (“War and Peace” and “Anna Karenina”) used to choose a theme and offer a wise thought



**John Schlageck**

• Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

for each day of the year. He coupled this with quotes from some of the greatest philosophers of all times.

Here are a few of the thoughts on which Tolstoy reflected. Most have to do with listening.

• After a long conversation, stop and try to remember what you have just discussed. Don’t be surprised if many things, sometimes all things you discuss, are meaningless, empty and trivial.

• A stupid person should keep silent. But if he knew this, he would not be a stupid person. – Saadi.

• If you want to be a clever person, you have to learn how to ask cleverly, how to listen attentively, how to respond quietly and how to stop talking when there is nothing more to say.

• People whose only motivation is to say something original utter many stupid things. – Voltaire.

• If you have time to think before you start talking, think.

Will what I have to say harm anyone?

Is it necessary to speak?

Nothing can support idleness better than empty chatter. People would do better to keep silent rather than speak the boring, empty things they routinely say to entertain themselves.

• First think, then speak. Stop when told, “enough.” – Saadi.

• Those people speak most who do not have much to say.

• People are taught to speak, but their major concern should be how to keep silent.

• I have spent all my life amongst wise people, and I have found nothing better than silence in this world. If a word costs one coin, then silence costs two. – Talmud.

• Keep silent. Rest your tongue more often than you do your hands. You will never regret that you have kept silent, but you will often regret that you spoke too much.

• Do not say words you do not feel, lest your soul be blackened with darkness. – The Book of Divine Thoughts.

• Silence is golden. Listen.

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**, ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

**State Rep. Ward Cassidy**, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7659 ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov.

## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

