

## Other Viewpoints

# Brownback needs a positive agenda

Gov. Sam Brownback is counting on the 2013 legislative session that begins Monday to stamp his agenda more firmly onto the map of Kansas.

Elections last year placed conservatives firmly in charge of the Legislature. They are eager to promote an agenda that could include more tax cuts and pushing the envelope on social issues.

However, because of ill-advised income tax cuts that Brownback imprudently signed last year, Kansas is without sufficient revenues to pay for schools and services at current levels. Budget writers must make up a gap of \$267 million, and that's assuming they spend all of a \$470 million surplus from last year.

Still, a new start always brews optimism. Here are five things Brownback and the Legislature could do to move the state forward:

- Close tax loopholes.
- Kansas' income tax and sales tax codes are rife with loopholes and omissions.

Brownback's original income-tax reduction plan proposed eliminating about two dozen tax breaks, including the one for home mortgages, to offset the income lost to the state through tax cuts.

The bill he signed, however, only penalized the poor, withdrawing tax breaks for child-and-dependent care and taxes low-income people pay on food taxes. If the Legislature sticks with its draconian income tax cuts, it should seek a much fairer way of balancing them.

- Expand Medicaid eligibility.
- Raising the income threshold to qualify for Medicaid, as called for in the federal Affordable Care Act, would help about 127,000 currently uninsured Kansans gain the stability of a health insurance policy. The federal government would pay the full costs of the expansion for three years, and never less than 90 percent. That money would result in expanded health networks, jobs and a healthier population.
- Watch KanCare.

The Legislature must establish formal oversight of Brownback's ambitious KanCare program, which hands off the medical care of poor, disabled and indigent elderly Kansans to private managed-care companies.

- Help school districts.
- A district court panel last Friday ruled that Kansas' budget for schools is unconstitutionally low. Instead of protesting, lawmakers should find a way to increase school funding and also expand the ability of school boards to raise additional revenues locally, within reasonable limits.
- Improve dental care.

Kansas has a serious shortage of dentists. This should be the year the Legislature authorizes a new level of practitioner to fill some of the gaps.

— *The Kansas City Star, 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.

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:sfriedlander@nwkansas.com)

#### NEWS

**Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter**

[colby.sports@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.sports@nwkansas.com)

**Marian Ballard - Copy Editor**

[mballard@nwkansas.com](mailto:mballard@nwkansas.com)

**Sam Dieter - News Reporter**

[colby.editor@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.editor@nwkansas.com)

#### ADVERTISING

[colby.ads@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.ads@nwkansas.com)

**Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative**

[kb Ballard@nwkansas.com](mailto:kb Ballard@nwkansas.com)

**Janene Woodall - Advertising Representative**

[jwoodall@nwkansas.com](mailto:jwoodall@nwkansas.com)

**Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design**

[khunter@nwkansas.com](mailto:khunter@nwkansas.com)

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

**Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager**

[medmondson@nwkansas.com](mailto:medmondson@nwkansas.com)

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**

[support@nwkansas.com](mailto: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.



# Aching back gets lots of sympathy

"Here's my sock. There's my foot..."

So began a conversation Monday morning about the fact I was moaning around about my back, injured mysteriously the day before.

The response came instantly from at least two co-workers: "How am I going to get them together?"

That, apparently, is a throw-away question in the game of "Backache Jeopardy."

If there is one physical complaint that a lot of people can sympathize with, it's a backache. The sources of pain are many, the outcomes are various, but most adults at some time come up against a nagging – or grabbing – sore back. It may last a day, it may last a lifetime, but if you've got it, the person next to you probably knows what it feels like.

That's not the case with lots of other aches and pains. The effects of surgery, broken bones, a car accident or major illness are unknown to lots of people. While we hear a lot about the



**Marian Ballard**

• Collection Connections

cost of health care, the fact is that most of us are pretty healthy most of the time. But who hasn't had a backache? Everyone has a story about the time they tried to lift too much, the time they helped three college kids move into or out of the dorm in a single day, about the time their car got rear-ended and you couldn't even see the dent but boy, it still hurt.

The effect of a sore back, among other things, is to make you slow down, think about what they are doing, and act carefully when they stand, sit, walk, lift and just go about all

the things of daily life.

That's a good thing, I suppose. We are too ready to go zipping through life without a thought. When thought is demanded by that "ouch" every time we move wrong, though, we make more careful choices. I'm not sure that adds up to making better choices overall, but it certainly adds up to doing fewer things to make it hurt.

If only that would carry over – if a mental "backache" would help us make better decisions overall. Just think. We could have fewer "ouches" from hurt feelings, from careless spending, from poorly done work.

Guess for today, though, I'll just have to be careful how I get in my car.

*Marian Ballard has collected careers as counselor, librarian, pastor, and now copy editor for the Colby Free Press. She collects ideas, which are more portable than other stuff.*

# Control guns the constitutional way

Forget Democrats! Forget Republicans and liberals and conservatives!

These are labels to cause someone else to do your thinking for you. This is about the Constitution that all elected officials swore to uphold. This is not even about guns, but about following the Constitution until it's authentically changed by amendment.

This issue is so serious that it is a certain litmus test to political parties and individuals differentiating those who respect this document from those who do not.

The Second Amendment could not be made clearer: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Militia in that day consistently referred to the people. I have read every version of this sentence as it was formulated, principally by James Madison, as the second most important freedom next to the freedom of thought, belief and speech guarded by the First Amendment. The Bill of Rights was arranged in order of preference with the exception of Amendments 9 and 10, as they dealt with the concept of general powers retained by the people and those reserved to the states, not specific freedoms as in Amendments 1 to 8. Those are important because they protect the First Amendment.

I, too, weep for the children at Newtown, Columbine, Virginia Tech and now my own city of Taft, Calif., where I was "locked down" while police resolved the issue of a 16-year-old student with a shotgun in a classroom. Last summer, I had a 2-year-old grandson die from an accidental gunshot to the head, but these losses cannot, and need not, be resolved by

## Other Opinions

• Dr. Harold Pease Liberty Under Fire

violating the Constitution. Mr. President, neither Congress, nor you, has any authority to do anything on "the right to bear arms" outside of changing the Constitution by an amendment. It is well to remember that the Second Amendment exists because the states would not support the new Constitution without a guarantee that you would never deprive their citizens of their right to bear arms.

What is it that you do not understand about "shall not be infringed?" Congress, you may not legislate the Second Amendment away by giving authorization to some types of weapons over others or approving some types of ammunition and denying others. Nor may the president go into the Oval Office and unilaterally make an executive order limiting or denying these things, as Congress alone is constitutionally empowered to make laws (Art. I, Sec. I).

I know of the bogus argument that the Second Amendment applies only to the National Guard, but anyone reading anything on the subject by the Founding Fathers knows otherwise. The militia was defined in the Second Continental Congress as every able-bodied male 17 and older – the citizens.

So times have changed, one might argue, and we now need federal involvement. If so,

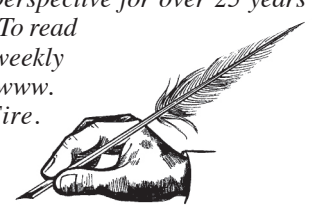
why not do it as required by the Constitution? Don't just twist the Constitution to mean something never meant, which George Washington warned us not to do, "Let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed" (Farewell Address).

Instructions for change in the Constitution are provided in Article V and can be proposed by either Congress or "on the application of the legislatures of two thirds of several states." Once an amendment is proposed, the federal government is removed from the picture altogether – it cannot empower itself.

Notice that there exists zero power of the office of the president to make change. Veto power does not apply. Let Congress or the states initiate a proposed amendment to empower the federal government, as we have 17 times before when the nation enacted a change.

The biggest fatality in this gun debate will be irreparable damage to the Constitution, and to freedom, if we do not insist on change the only way it's authorized.

*Dr. Harold Pease, an expert on the United States Constitution, has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying that knowledge to current events. He has taught history and political science from this perspective for over 25 years at Tuft College. To read more of his weekly articles, go to [www.LibertyUnderFire.org](http://www.LibertyUnderFire.org).*



## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

