



## Free Press Viewpoint

# We vote principles, even when we take

We've seen a wave of articles chastising Kansans for taking federal money while voting for politicians, like our Rep. Tim Huelskamp, who rail against federal spending.

This goes back to the book "What's the Matter With Kansas," by Thomas Frank, who argued that Kansans hew to the conservative social outlook of the Republican party while they benefit from the liberal-left spending of the Democrats.

In effect, he says, we vote against our own economic interests. We've abandoned the populist notions of a century ago — regulation of robber barons, bans on corporate farming, strict limits on banking — for social issues such as abortion and, yes, big government.

"Not long ago," Mr. Frank writes, "Kansas would have responded to the current situation by making the bastards pay. This would have been a political certainty, as predictable as what happens when you touch a match to a puddle of gasoline...."

"Not these days. Out here, the gravity of discontent pulls in only one direction: to the right, to the right, further to the right. Strip today's Kansans of their job security, and they head out to become registered Republicans. Push them off their land, and next thing you know they're protesting in front of abortion clinics."

He's right, of course.

An article in *The Kansas City Star* last week shows that in one rural Kansas county, at least, federal spending exceeds the federal taxes people pay by at least 2-1, yet that county and dozens of others continue to vote for Mr. Huelskamp.

Liberal editorial writers at Kansas newspapers expound on the fact that we are all "takers" even as we opposed federal spending in principle. The hypocrisy of it!

Guilty as charged, I suppose.

It's true, rural people, and not just in Kansas, tend to vote their conscience rather than their pocketbook. People who don't believe in abortion vote for candidates who don't believe in abortion. Those who think big government dangerous and expensive tend to vote for candidates who push for smaller government.

And if their hometown or county takes in more than it sends out to the federal government, well, they probably haven't ever added it up, but they'd probably vote for the same guy for Congress as they did last year. Because the principle would still be more important to them than the money.

There is a certain amount of hypocrisy involved here, yes. People tend to see the federal benefits they get as "earned" or "deserved," while those going to others seem like "waste." Candidates who want to get elected cater to those tastes and try to balance the good and the bad.

Federal farm payments may be wasteful, for instance, and they may not work too well in preserving the "family farm" — just look at our plunging population curve in spite of all those billions spent — but the entire economy out here is built on them. How would we get disentangled?

And Social Security? We all paid into that.

We suppose it's old-fashioned for people to vote their principles rather than their pocketbooks, but that's what we are: old-fashioned.

Some would say that's not such a bad thing. — *Steve Haynes*

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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)

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**Sharon Friedlander - Publisher**  
[sfriedlander@nwkansas.com](mailto:sfriedlander@nwkansas.com)

### NEWS

**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)

**Heather Alwin - Society Editor**  
[colby.society@nwkansas.com](mailto:colby.society@nwkansas.com)

### ADVERTISING

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

**Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative**  
[kballard@nwkansas.com](mailto:kballard@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)

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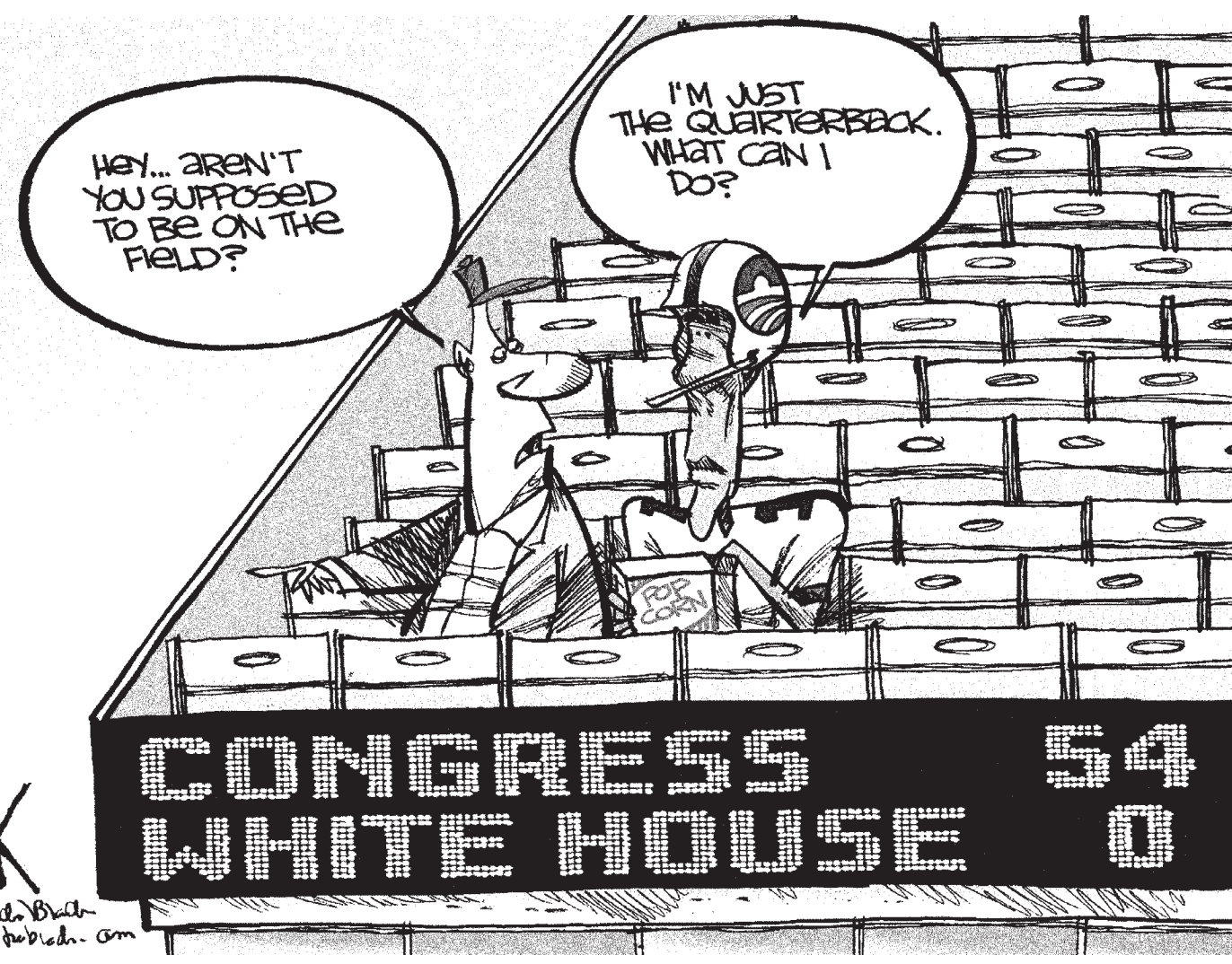
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# Invented holiday takes on new meaning

Until I became a mother, I didn't fully appreciate the importance of Mother's Day. Though I love and value my mom, it always seemed like a "Hallmark holiday" invented by greeting card manufacturers and florists.



**Heather Alwin**

- Frankly Frugal

But, now that I've walked the floors with my own screaming baby, worried about his future and kissed his boo-boos, I recognize what a nice thing it is to have a day to honor that role.

This holiday is one of the few that is specifically designed to celebrate a relationship rather than an event like a birthday or Thanksgiving. Because of this, my family has decided to celebrate Mother's Day with a day of rest and relaxation as a family. No cooking and cleaning for me that day! We also decided to skip the gifts and just enjoy the day together rather than spending money on flowers or presents.

If you aren't a mother but want to get a little

taste of what it feels like, try this: get up at least twice every night for at least 45 minutes each time, listening to the most annoying music you can find. Do this for about three months and I suspect you'll have a good idea of what your mom went through during those first weeks when she brought you home from the hospital.

It doesn't take a lot of money to honor the mother or mom-like figure in your life. A bouquet of hand-picked wildflowers, a card, a

homemade cake or even a phone call may be just the thing your mom needs. Whatever way you choose, don't let the day pass by without a thanks to your mom. She went to your school programs, made sure you had something to fill your hungry tummy, hugged you when you needed it—and spanked you when you needed that, too.

And, as my mom used to joke, she brought you into this world and she can take you out of it.

*Heather Alwin is the society editor for the Colby Free Press and blogs at [kansaslife.wordpress.com](http://kansaslife.wordpress.com). Before moving to Kansas, she was a lawyer with the U.S. Air Force. Alwin lives in Brewster with her husband and son.*

# Do animals have future in Kansas?

"Meat Processing" is the latest issue of the *Kansas School Naturalist*, available free upon request. This issue follows livestock from unloading through the meat processing plant to final packaging for your grocery store.



**John Richard Schrock**

- Education Frontlines

Co-authored with Professor Temple Grandin of Colorado State University, a recognized expert in the humane handling of animals, this issue fully illustrates all stages: from avoiding stressing animals in unloading to stunning to final packaging.

There are two responses to the copies that have been distributed so far. The older generations of Kansans flip through the booklet and matter-of-factly state: "Yep. That is where our meat comes from." Some remember butcher knives at home and how their grandparents processed meat in the winter.

The second response from many — but not all — younger Kansans is quite different. Except for farm kids who show their livestock at the county fair (and sign "intent to sell" statements), many younger Kansans do not know where meat comes from.

Animals are a big part of Kansas. Most people know that agriculture and aviation are two big drivers of the Kansas economy. But many do not realize that the area from Manhattan to Kansas City is a major animal research corridor. Animal testing in pharmaceutical research and for FDA and environmental safety protocols is conducted at facilities that few passers-by notice.

This research is done in Kansas and not on the East or West Coasts. Folks in California and Florida simply do not know where their food comes from. They are easy targets for

organizations that would stop all biomedical animal research and have everyone become vegetarian.

But Kansas is a fortress for this research that protects the environment from dangerous chemicals and develops drugs that help humans and animals alike. The animal industry is here because many Kansans are only a relative or two away from the beef industry. Most know where their meat comes from.

But unless things change, this will not be true for long.

I have nothing good to say about lawyers for several major meat processing companies. The big processing plants are essentially locked down with no opportunity for students to see their operation. The older generation of Kansans understood meat processing by observing it — indeed, by doing it. No booklet, pictures or video can provide the full understanding gained by direct experience.

Unfortunately, in most cases, the suits at the big processors have chosen to seal up their plants. This makes it difficult to counter the charges made by animal extremists. Such secrecy makes kids think that conditions must be really bad.

As Temple Grandin puts it: "We've got to

show what we do. We've got to get over being bashful. Professionals in the meat-packing industry need to show stuff done right. If you don't show kids interesting stuff, they won't get interested in interesting stuff."

If the big meat packers can overcome their shyness, our science teachers face a second hurdle. Field trips for science experiences have been dramatically curtailed. Cost is a small part of the reason. The teach-to-the-test curriculum is the big reason. It keeps good teachers from taking our students to an important learning experience. Our school boards can solve this problem.

The third problem is also educational. The current Kansas science education standards have very few references to animals or anatomy. But if the state Board of Education adopts the Next Generation Science Standards, there will be absolutely no secondary school science standards related to animals or anatomy. Teachers trying to justify a field trip will have nothing to back them up.

Thirty years from now, Kansas can remain a beef state and the center of animal research. Or we can be buying our meat from Asia, where our animal research will also be conducted. The choice is in the hands of our meat-processing industry and our educational policy makers.

*John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.*

## Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 136-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 [Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov](mailto:Ralph.Ostmeyer@senate.ks.gov)

**State Rep. Ward Cassidy**, (120th District) State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 151-S, Topeka, Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7616 [ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov](mailto:ward.cassidy@house.ks.gov)

**State Rep. Don Hineman**, (118th District) State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 50-S, Topeka, Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7636 [don.hineman@house.ks.gov](mailto:don.hineman@house.ks.gov)

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Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

## Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

