

## Other Viewpoints

# Voter fraud issue a 'silly power play'

The Kansas Legislature this session is expected to grant Secretary of State Kris Kobach the power to prosecute those suspected of voter fraud.

According to the Associated Press, Republican Kobach has sought the power since he took office in January 2011 but has been thwarted by Democrats and moderate Republicans. Kobach has said he needs to be able to prosecute because county prosecutors and the Kansas Attorney General's Office are too busy to deal with voter fraud.

So, how pressing a problem is voter fraud? For a ground-level view, we asked Saline County Clerk Don Merriman – who said he's not aware of any voter fraud going on in the county – not now, not ever.

As Merriman, a Democrat, noted, if you think about it, someone here illegally is unlikely to try to vote, because to do so would require them to enter their name, address, driver's license number and other information into the state's database. Why would anyone want to draw attention to themselves like that?

Other voting problems can include people trying to vote in more than one state. But Kansas is part of a multistate group that allows those states to check names against each other, so that's not likely to be a problem.

Problems also can occur when people have the same names and birthdates (but not the same years), and it's "surprising" how often that can happen, Merriman said.

"You have to be darn careful when you start looking at these things," he said.

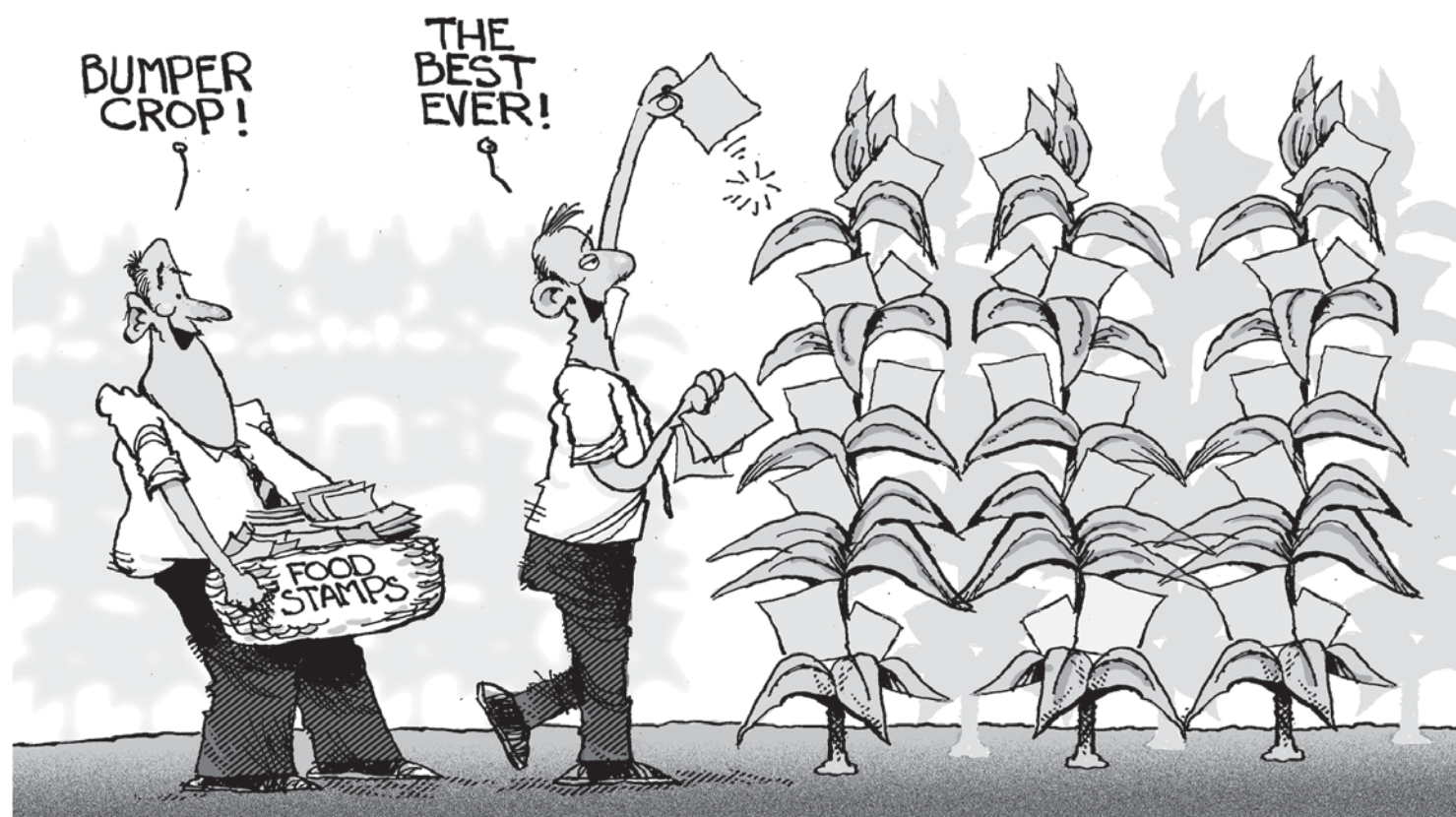
The key word here is "power." Kobach wants it, and now that the conservative wing of the GOP controls the Legislature, he'll likely get it, even though that doesn't appear to be necessary.

As with Kobach's voter ID law, we imagine not much will come of this, because there's little to no voter fraud in Kansas. But if Kobach is going to move up politically, he's got to keep stirring the pot to draw attention.

That's not easy when you're secretary of state, typically not a cauldron of controversy. So, you have to create controversies.

This appears to be, as Merriman notes, another example of a solution in search of a problem.

– *The Salina Journal, via the Associated Press*



The OFARMA Bill

# Some baseball fans have more at stake

You could call them the Girls of Summer, I guess.

We were watching Class A baseball, "low A," really, the South Atlantic League. The kids have a season-ticket package, which is both cheap entertainment and a pretty good time when they get a chance to go.

It's not "the Show," but A ball has its own charms. The infield play actually is pretty good, and if you like to watch kids turn double plays, or make the long throw from third, there's plenty of that. Plus, Class A has drama of its own. Some of these kids will make it to the bigs, and a few might have real careers.

Others won't ever see triple-A ball, but all of them will have memories of life in the bus leagues that'll last a lifetime. These girls might be one.

Nik and Felicia usually sit behind the visitors' dugout. We joined them in the second inning, and the girls showed up sometime after that, taking seats right in front of us. Apparently, the tickets they'd bought weren't close enough to "their" dugout, so they'd gone and traded them in.

Class A ballparks have their own amenities, too. No sky boxes here, but the box seats down front do have waitresses to go get your food and drinks. The girls weren't worried about food, however. Their interest was strictly on the field, with the boys of the Rome Braves.

If you've seen my favorite baseball movie, "Bull Durham," I'd put them somewhere between the classy Annie, the college English instructor, and teenage Millie. I never did get their names, though.



Steve Haynes

## • Along the Sappa

The girls knew all the players, of course, and cheered each one by name. Twenty-something, enthusiastic, cute if not exactly beautiful, they were fun to talk to. One explained that she was "dating" the guy who would be on the mound tomorrow night. Voluptuous and well displayed, she used a little Spanish now and then.

It seems all three were dating Dominican players who spoke mostly Spanish. The girl on the left, the pretty one with dark chocolate skin, kept correcting the first girl's pronunciation. Her Spanish accent was pretty good, in fact, better than her college-Spanish background.

The girls talked excitedly about their guys, their team. They make all the home games, one said, and the closer road games. They were in Augusta for a three-night series, then planned to go home.

"One fan down there said something rude to my guy by the dugout," the buxom one said. "He don't know how close he was to getting jumped."

The game was not going well for Rome. Augusta had a 2-1 lead when we got there and scored four more runs in the next couple of innings. As the night dragged by, hope for a rally

faded away.

"Well," one said, "three more outs and we can go to dinner."

"We'll just have to listen to them complain," the one in the middle moaned.

"Aw, it's all in Spanish," the first one replied. "Who cares?"

Rome did score a couple of runs late, but by the top of the ninth, the score remained 6-3. Augusta. Levi, the second baseman, grounded out, second to first. Then Elander, an outfielder, knocked one up the middle for a single. The girls cheered. Maybe there was hope.

Kalenkosky, the designated hitter, flied out to right, though, and that left things to the catcher, Chase. He worked a walk, which put runners at first and second with two out.

That brought third baseman Carlos Franco up to bat, representing the tying run at home. He fanned at two pitches, then the Augusta reliever threw a curve ball in the dirt. It scooted by the catcher and back to the screen, and the runners moved to second and third on the wild pitch.

That left the girls on the edge of their seats, but not for long. Franco hit a grounder to the shortstop, who threw him out, 6-3, to end the game.

We went back to our daughter's home and the girls went off to practice their Spanish.

*Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.*

## Where to write, call

**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/

**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

**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

**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

## 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**  
friedlander@nwkansas.com

### NEWS

**Sports Reporter**  
colby.sports@nwkansas.com

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

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

**Heather Alwin - Society Editor**  
colby.society@nwkansas.com

### ADVERTISING

colby.ads@nwkansas.com

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

## Other Opinions

### • Life's Outtakes Daris Howard

As Memorial Day rolls around, I am reminded of a story that I heard. Though the exactness of it I can not confirm, I am assured its basis is quite factual, and its message definitely deserves to be retold.

The story is of a man, Andrew, who was known all his life for selfless sacrifice and good works. He always stood in defense of the defenseless, and toiled without tiring, standing up for the downtrodden and underprivileged. As he grew old, and people tried to honor him for his well-lived life of service, he was reluctant to accept the praise and attention that his community desired to heap upon him. It was then, for the first time, that he told a story that had burned deep in his heart and was hard for him to relate.

Andrew was a young man, 13 years old and living in Austria, when the Germans invaded. The Austrians, brave and proud, decided to fight back. In the town where Andrew lived, the men and teenage boys organized and destroyed a power plant that the Germans relied on to continue their war effort. The men and boys all knew this would cause great hardship on themselves as well, for they also relied on the power from the plant. But the thing they had not counted on was the swift and severe retribution that would come from the Nazi invaders.

The next morning, before the sun was even up, trucks rolled into town. Soon, the sound of marching soldiers was heard in the streets. The men and boys of the town, 12 years old and older, were ordered to the town square. Andrew found himself standing in a line with the other men and boys, still trying to wipe the sleep from his eyes.

The commanding officer berated them, and told them they were fools to think they could stand against the might of the German army. He told them they were nothing, and their minuscule efforts would not slow down the German war effort, but it would hurt them because a price was going to be paid for their rebellion. He then said that every 20th man in the line would be shot.

As each 20th man was pulled from the line and marched away, Andrew looked down the line and started counting. With horror, he realized that he stood in a 20th position. He trembled with fear as the soldiers moved closer and closer to him, and the shots started to ring out at the edge of town where the unfortunate men were being taken.

As the Germans continued to move down the line, Andrew could see others counting and their eyes turning to him with a look of pity and concern. Andrew found himself wanting to flee, but too frightened to move. Even if he tried to run, the soldiers on the trucks, with the mounted machine guns, would cut him down before he could get ten yards.

But then, in the instant that the last man before Andrew was pulled from the line, the Germans turned their eyes away, and Andrew

felt a hand on his shoulder. The hand tightened quickly, and before he knew what had happened, he was jerked forcibly over one spot, and the old man who had been standing next to him moved swiftly to switch him positions.

Andrew looked up at the silver haired man and the man smiled. Just before he was taken from the line and led away, the old man spoke quietly to Andrew. "Your life is no longer just your own. Live it for both of us."

Andrew watched silently as the old man disappeared from view toward the edge of the village. His heart jumped as the shots sounded, shots that Andrew knew should have been his own. In that instant, tears flowing down his face, he determined he would indeed live his life for both of them. From that day he had tried to live so that the unknown old man would have felt his sacrifice was well repaid.

Each time I consider the flags flying by the many graves in the cemetery, thinking back on Andrew's story, I realized that no one's life belongs just to them. Each of us owes a debt to many who have paid prices through hardship, hard work, and even the sacrifice of their lives, from which we have benefitted.

With the wind gently whipping the flags in the breeze, I, too, renewed my own dedication in how I live my life.

*Daris Howard, syndicated columnist, playwright and author, can be contacted at daris@darishoward.com; or go to his website at www.darishoward.com.*

## Mallard Fillmore

### • Bruce Tinsley

