

Other Viewpoints

'Anti-immigrant' visits diverse town

A Kansas politician who's built a career around an anti-immigrant crusade took time to visit one of the state's more diverse communities.

Secretary of State Kris Kobach was in Garden City last week, and participated in a panel addressing immigration and diversity.

During the session at Garden City High School, the secretary of state who's pushed anti-immigrant policies in Kansas and beyond rightly was schooled on reality surrounding the issue.

As usual, Kobach threw out questionable statistics surrounding immigrants' drain on society, employers' supposed failures to properly screen workers, meatpacking plant wages and more.

In trying to make his case, the lawyer relied on figures from a disputed Heritage Foundation study that criticized a plan in the U.S. Senate to overhaul the nation's immigration laws.

The study from the conservative think tank cited high economic costs in the Senate plan for comprehensive immigration reform.

The problem is that one of two authors of the Heritage Foundation study recently resigned amid a racial scandal.

Senior policy analyst Jason Richwine stepped down in the wake of reports of his claim in a graduate school dissertation that Hispanic immigrants were less intelligent than white Americans.

Sadly, Kobach still would cite numbers from a study based on work from someone who embraced racist theories. It's no wonder panelists in Garden City who know the reality in communities with significant immigrant populations easily poked holes in his case.

For example, Allie Devine, former Kansas Secretary of Agriculture who now leads the Kansas Business Coalition, an advocacy group of business organizations and the state's Chamber, said Kobach's statistics were wrong, and pointed to a recent and more objective study as evidence.

Kobach, however, apparently hasn't been interested in the study from universities in Kansas and Missouri on the true economic impact of immigrants, and how southwest Kansas agribusiness in particular depends on immigrant labor.

The exchange was more proof of Kobach ignoring the truth in his tired quest to pander to the anti-immigrant crowd.

His fear-mongering and blatant attempts to mislead are indeed growing old, especially when reality matters most when it comes to reforming the nation's immigration system.

— The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press



Front porch swing a guilty pleasure

Am I the only one who finds it hard to slow down at the end of the day? Is it hard to enjoy something as simple as a gentle breeze or the song of a bird without thinking that I should be busy with some task not yet completed?

I found myself sitting on the swing on the front porch the other evening and felt guilty for being there. I know there are a lot of things unfinished inside the house, but the breeze and the birds' song were calling my name.

So there I sat. Sat! The dogger had gone out with me and he was out exploring the yard, looking for new scents to follow. Finding none, he joins me on the porch and settles near the railing and puts his snout through the spindles resting his head on the bottom rail.

Now I ask you, "who has more sense here? The woman feeling guilty for enjoying the swing or the dog who knows how to kick back?" I am voting for the dogger. He looks perfectly relaxed and comfy surveying the driveway and street from his railing viewpoint. He has now closed his eyes and seems to be sleeping.

The closed eyes are really not what they seem. The slightest movement will bring his head up and depending on what disturbed him maybe even his whole body. It could be



Sharon Friedlander

• Musings

anything large or small that draws his attention. The rabbit in the driveway hardly gets the second look while the floating trash bag skimming the drive gets his undivided attention. That one made him get up and go to the fence to get a closer look.

Satisfied that it was nothing that could disturb his world he resumes his railing perch. I, on the other hand, have now begun to notice how black the sky is toward Oakley. Now the light show has started. Huge bolts of lightning flash from the clouds to the ground. After a short while the horizon lights up with cloud to cloud flashes. Impressive, but not to be outdone the cloud to ground action heats up too.

The show is far enough away that the thunder is just soft background noise. Still swinging I now notice a touch of color off the left and sure enough a rainbow begins to ap-

pear. Short at first, it creeps across the horizon and settles back to ground forming a complete rainbow. Why is my camera not here beside me? But, that would disturb the whole feeling of wonder that I am watching unfold. I almost feel like a voyeur at Mother Nature's show.

It isn't long before the show closes, as good shows do, and the sky turns an appealing shade of gold. That was just the finale. Broadway can't hold a candle to Mother Nature's shows.

I guess my time on the swing has been well spent since I have once again gained an appreciation for just sitting and letting the wonder of it all take over. Not a bad way to spend time and guess what? The guilty pleasure of it all was wonderful.

The dogger rouses slowly as if he could hear my thoughts of going back inside and the comes over to me, drops his head between my knees and waits to be petted and admired. Easy tasks and with a smile I bid the porch goodbye with a promise to return to enjoy more of the shows. See you on the porch!

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Is it time to spend \$8 million?

To the Editor:

Is this the right time to spend \$8 million on a new courthouse-jail? I think not.

I am so weary of my public officials spending my taxes foolishly. I am so weary of getting my taxes raised every time somebody in any position wants a new toy or a building they can get credit for or can't figure out how to manage their finances on the budget they've been allocated.

I am weary of wastefulness.

What a pitiful waste to tear down the courthouse and/or jail instead of putting some of your magical \$8 million (that appears from



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

thin air!) into upkeep and repair. Why not figure out how to manage your existing budget and saving money over the course of years to have a building fund in the future that will pay

for a new courthouse and jail when it is actually necessary to build a new one? Why do you keep turning to taxpayers to dig deeper and deeper to fund your elaborate ideas?

Please take a step back and remember that you are not spending your own money. There is not a bottomless pit of finances available just for you.

Sorry. If I could, I'd treat you like a silly, spoiled child that spent all of his allowance on candy and now wants an umbrella. I'd cut you off and make you suffer through until you learn how to save for a rainy day in the future.

Mary Juenemann, Colby

Dilemma: needed education means debt

Every American must have the opportunity to pursue college or vocational training. We are living in an era during which even previously trained persons need to sharpen their skills or retool for the future.

Too many people are completing their education facing a massive dilemma of debt. Their next dilemma is trying to break into the job market saddled with backbreaking debt.

We must make education within reach of all American citizens. The following will help make college possible for all:

- Colleges and all institutions of higher education must work as all businesses to guard against escalating costs.

- The government should provide low interest college or vocational loans to students who must borrow money for their education.

- Graduates should be given a three-year grace period before the payback begins.

- The government should forgive up to 20 percent of the loan if paid back in 10 years.

- Colleges should be encouraged to develop three-year college programs which could cut as much as 25 percent of the cost of education. Everyone who has attended a four-year college knows they had four or five courses along

Other Opinions

• Glenn Mollette
American Issues

the way they did not need for their degree program. This would also save tremendously on housing, food and fuel costs.

Colleges are throwing extra courses at their students and keeping them longer to make more money. This means the students borrow more and end up financially crippled. Schools, like all businesses, must be financially competitive and non-traditional in their programs in order to survive this new era. The number of struggling colleges is growing.

Already I hear someone screaming, "How are we going to compete with the Chinese, Japan and other foreign countries if we are cutting classes from education?" Most college programs have required approximately 30 four-hour classes or 40 three-hour classes.

Everyone's degree program will vary as they add additional courses. I like education as well as the next person. Hurrah for anyone who has the luxury of spending the time obtaining a 150-hour degree! This means a much greater expense, but if you can afford it, then so what? School can be fun and with that many additional classes you are surely learning a lot.

My beef is that most American families cannot afford the luxury of a four-year degree being crammed into five, six or more years. We must keep the general college experience to four years to complete. If the college can help students complete the degree in three or three and a half years it saves students, the families and even the government a lot of money.

College trustees, administrators and faculty you are being served notice. Start doing your part to be part of America's solution and not a central part of our problem. The people in America do not need another dilemma.

Glenn Mollette, the author of "American Issues, Every American Has An Opinion," grew up in Martin County, Ky. Contact him at Glenn Mollette, Box 1238, 8922 Ruffian Lane, Newburgh, Ind., 47629 or (812) 858-3920.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

