

## Other Viewpoints

# Dropping pounds just makes sense

Gov. Sam Brownback is in no danger of ever being mistaken for New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. If the two governors were to do a Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy skit, everyone knows who would be cast as the heavysset Hardy.

Although he doesn't carry a lot of extra weight on his frame, Brownback is well aware too many Kansans are packing around more fat than is good for them. To his credit, Brownback has taken a leading role in encouraging Kansans to get active and shed the extra pounds, which are, or will one day, lead to additional health problems.

The truth is, Kansans shouldn't need encouragement to do something that would be so personally rewarding and beneficial in terms of better health and longer, more active lives.

During the Kansas Governor's Council of Fitness' second annual Kansas Obesity Summit, the governor repeated the keys to fighting obesity – eating less, and better, and exercising more.

Finding the willpower to take those steps may be the most difficult aspect of starting a weight-loss program, but if the willpower is there the rest of the formula is relatively easy and something any overweight Kansan can do.

It doesn't cost more to eat well. In fact, it can cost less, much less for those who are purchasing their calories ready-to-eat instead of buying the right groceries and cooking at home.

As far as exercise, there is an abundance of opportunities just outside our front doors. Walking is one of the best ways to begin an exercise program. Walkers can begin with short distances at a moderate pace (if you're just loitering along you aren't exercising) and work up to longer distances at a faster pace. The combination of a proper diet and a regular walking regimen is certain to shed excess pounds....

Most cities of any size across Kansas offer some type of hiking and biking trail.

At last report, about two-thirds of adult Kansans are overweight or obese. For health reasons, physical or mental, some people aren't going to be able to take off as much weight as they should to shed the obese label. Most Kansans who are overweight, however, are in that condition because they choose to be so through their eating habits or lack of exercise, or both.

They should take the advice of their physicians and their governor and determine to lose some weight.

– *The Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press*

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**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

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## A SLIGHT SOFTENING OF SHUTDOWN RHETORIC



# Intervention not always good – or bad

The prospect of a U.S. war with Syria has caused the formation of an unusual coalition between the anti-war left and Tea Party Republicans.

These two groups, which have vociferously opposed each other on issues like gun control, the Affordable Care Act and the size of government, have finally found something they can both agree on. Although both sides agree that U.S. intervention in Syria would be a bad idea, they have reached their conclusions via different roads.

The Tea Party thinks both sides of the civil war are equally bad, so the U.S. would be foolish to stick its nose into a situation where its national interests are not threatened in any way. The anti-war left's central argument against a U.S. role in Syria is that any U.S. involvement in Syria's civil war would only make things worse for the Syrians.

"How are the Syrian people going to be helped by having more missiles injected into an already horrendously violent situation?" these liberals ask with a straight face.

I always cringe when the right – and some Democrats as well – rhapsodize about how America is the indispensable nation and the enforcer of the civilized world. The selective or intentional ignorance it takes to make these vainglorious statements after the destruction wreaked by U.S. actions over the years in countries like Indonesia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile, Vietnam, East Timor,



**Andy Heintz**

• Wildcat Ramblings

Indonesia, Somalia, Iraq, Laos and Cambodia has always shocked and annoyed me.

It's like these super patriots had trained their brains to repress or disavow any information that casts the United States in an unfavorable light. This "America can do no wrong" worldview has legitimized a "love it or leave it" type of patriotism that has annoyed the rest of the world and obscured the ugly aspects of our foreign policy.

Unfortunately, many liberals, perhaps so disenchanted with hyper-patriotism or maybe too enthralled with their self-proclaimed role as righteous dissenters, have taken the exact opposite view, concluding that U.S. foreign intervention of any kind would automatically be evil or destined for disaster. Much like their Republican adversaries, their views are high on ideology and low on facts.

The West, sometimes with the help of the U.S., has successfully intervened to avert atrocities in countries like Bosnia, Mali and Sierra Leone. Intervention by the West in the 1994 Rwandan genocide could have prevented

that heartbreaking nightmare there. There also have been non-Western interventions – India invading East Pakistan (Bangladesh today) in 1971 and Vietnam driving out the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1978 (the U.S. was on the wrong side of both these conflicts) – that prevented continued atrocities by some of the ghastliest regimes in modern history.

The fact remains that the Syrian civil war has killed more than 110,000 people and most of the atrocities have been committed by President Bashar Assad's government. In addition, Assad's regime has proven itself to be capable of the most hideous crimes, including gassing children.

While I don't support putting U.S. troops on the ground, I have no problem with launching missile strikes on Syrian military targets that are as far away from civilian populations as possible. Moderate rebels should be armed not just to fight against Assad's forces, but also to battle the Islamist militias if Assad's regime is ever overthrown.

For all its faults and hypocrisies, the U.S. could play a constructive and moral role in this conflict if it goes about it the right way.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate and former Colby Free Press sports editor now living in Ottumwa, Iowa, loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing. You can find his blog at [www.orble.com/just-one-mans-vision](http://www.orble.com/just-one-mans-vision), or find him at [twitter.com/heintz23](https://twitter.com/heintz23).

# Weather signs stem from experience

For the first time last week a touch of fall filled the early morning air. With the coming of fall and approach of winter, it's fun to recall some time-tested weather sayings.

Many of the following weather signs were collected from farmers and ranchers across the state. It seems there is very little people would rather talk about than the weather.

So let's talk weather. During the winter season, strong northerly winds indicate snow and sometimes a blizzard within 24 hours. Southerly winds are a sign of dry, warmer weather.

When cattle stand in a line with their backs toward the northwest, you can figure on a heavy, driving snow.

Dense fog at dawn is a sign of clearing skies by mid-morning.

The absence of birds around water denotes an approaching storm.

White, fluffy, small clouds are a sign of fair weather ahead.

Odors become easier to detect just before rain. High pressure usually traps odors like a lid due to air density, while lowering pressure releases odors.



**John Schlageck**

• Insights  
Kansas Farm Bureau

When you see lightning in the north, rain is likely within 24 hours.

When distant sounds appear louder, rain is usually on the way.

Rising smoke is a fair-weather sign. When you see smoke going downward or showing very little rise, rain is likely.

Birds perch more before a storm because the low barometric pressure makes it more difficult for them to fly. When you see hawks circling high in the sky, this is a fair weather sign.

When frogs begin to croak, look out for rain.

Hens and other barnyard fowl pick at themselves – oiling their feathers – just before a rain.

Lots of dead skunks on the road mean plenty of moisture is on the way. Another good sign

of approaching wet weather is the aggravation of corns, bunions or arthritis pains.

These signs are surprisingly accurate because they are based on generations of farmers, ranchers and other people who have observed cyclical changes in the weather.

There is plenty to be said for the folk wisdom of our ancestors. They watched and charted weather patterns for generations rather than just a few hours or days. It's fun to hear their conclusions handed down from one generation to the next, and anyway, what would we have to talk about if not for the weather?

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.

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## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

