

commentary

from other pens...

Tobacco money new political football

The Garden City Telegram on tobacco settlement:
Lawmakers are turning the windfall from the national tobacco settlement into a political football, and misdirecting the funds away from their intended purpose...

The first \$20.3 million went to the state's general fund. Gov. Bill Graves said it was to repay the fund for financing children's programs... The governor's budget calls for some of the money to be used for early-childhood education...

Graves...said he is befuddled by a proposal by House Speaker Kent Glasscock to allocate nearly \$30 million in tobacco funds for elementary education programs. After all, he said, the Children's Cabinet was created when legislative leaders said its creation was necessary for them to remain committed to the governor's transportation plan.

Secondly, he said, the diversion of funds to Glasscock's proposal, aimed at kindergarten through fourth-grade students, bucks the governor's own education plan.

Graves was clearly irritated at the proposal.

Kansans too should be irritated. Not because the plan bucks the governor's education proposal. The irritating part is that lawmakers are misusing tobacco settlement funds.

It's hypocritical to divert settlement funds away from prevention and health-treatment programs, especially given the blistering rhetoric atorneys general lobbied at the tobacco industry in arguing for a settlement.

The Topeka Capital-Journal on small town life:

As Norman Rockwell's paintings sit on the walls of the Kansas Museum of History, the source of many of his subjects — small town life in America — risks being relegated to history as well...

This is nothing new. Rural areas have been losing population for about a century. But the 2000 census is another reminder. And it's coming to a head in many communities, such as in Morland, which will see its high school close in a couple months.

What a terrible shame. Like the Rockwells it inspired, small town life in America is among the best on Earth. Where else does everyone know everyone? Where else does a kid have 250 parents watching over him or her? Where else can a marginal athlete be a school letterman — or even a star? Where else are youth still brought up to respect their elders?

Of course, small towns don't have the market cornered on all this. They just hold the patent.

But what's to hold onto once the schools close and the young ones move on?

Maybe this is just a consolidation. As cities grow ever more congested in the coming years, more and more people will most likely turn to the country for space, for peace — and for a new sense of community and connectedness.

Consolidation is such an antiseptic word. But it stings. And it opens up wounds and wipes away whole histories, generations of family tradition — a sense of identity.

Our children need to know what an incredible life they might someday be missing.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten if possible, and should include a telephone number and, most importantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: <daily@nwkansas.com>.

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Today's teens face increased pressure

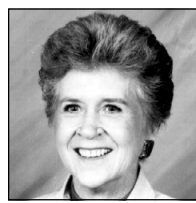
I don't know about you, but I'm glad I'm not a teenager today. ("Though thirty would be nice!" TV commercial)

The teen years are an influential, precious time in everyone's life, but today most teens are too busy, and thus too tired, to enjoy them.

My teen years were carefree and wonderful; that is certainly not true of today's teens. There is pressure beyond belief in their world. What a shame! Too many activities; too many late nights; not enough sleep.

Virtue seems to be in short supply and is too often ridiculed by peers. It is unbelievably sad to me that stress has replaced happy-go-lucky, worldliness has replaced innocence, information has replaced inexperience and bad manners are exceeded by disrespect. What a disservice we have done to our young people by allowing these attitudes to become the norm.

Many youth are torn between the world of their peers and the guidance of their parents. Somehow



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they survive, sometimes with grace and great insight. But my heart is still sad for their feelings of conflict, the pull of inconsistency, and the clash of cultural values.

Being of a different generation, it is difficult for me to offer much advice that will be heeded. However, I've never been one to escape from many "foot-in-mouth" situations, so I will risk again. Here are some quotes that I think might help at least the parents of our hectic, pulled-every-way youth:

1) "Remember when growing up meant getting all your questions answered instead of getting all of your answers questioned?" 2) "The high chair,

not the electric chair, is the place where crime is prevented." 3) "Teenagers were put on earth to keep adults from wasting time on the telephone." 4) Mother to small daughter: "All right, I'll tell you about sex...it leads to housework." Chon Day in The Sign as quoted in Reader's Digest. 5) "You are only young once, but you can stay immature indefinitely." 6) Teenager to father hidden behind newspaper: "I know you're listening. Your knuckles are white!" Lansky, Chicago tribune-New York News Syndicate, quoted in Reader's Digest.

A few words of encouragement for the teen reader are important. Here are some thoughts from an unknown author: "God is crazy about you. If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If he had a wallet, your photo would be in it. God sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, God will listen. God can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart." Try to find a few quiet minutes every day to listen for the love God has for you!!!!

Bush budget trims research to give tax cuts

President Bush is keeping his promise to help double the federal government's medical research budget, but he's facing criticism for low-balling other research vital to U.S. productivity.

Democrats, scientists, corporate groups — and former Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga. — have protested net cuts after inflation in the budgets of the National Science Foundation, NASA and energy research.

Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee last month, Gingrich said it is important for our national security that Congress increase Bush's science budget request.

Gingrich represented a blue-ribbon commission on national security headed by former Sens. Warren Rudman, R-N.H., and Gary Hart, D-Colo., which concluded that, next to terrorist attacks within our borders, flagging science investment and science education are the greatest foreseeable threats to the United States.

In an interview earlier, Gingrich told me that the budget for the NSF, which supports non-medical university research and trains scientists, "should be \$11 billion," not the \$4.5 billion that Bush requested. The president's mere \$56 million boost for NSF was "a tragic mistake," he said.

Bush's budget calls for a 13-percent increase for the National Institutes of Health, but only a 2.5-percent increase for other civilian science, space and technology programs — a cut after inflation is taken into account.

The Defense Science Board also has protested that defense research other than missile defense is not receiving adequate funding.

Gingrich and other critics argued that failure to support basic scientific research will stifle innovation and productivity that fuel economic growth.

Specific areas needing funds, they said, include development of "post-silicon" computer chips, climate change and alternative energy sources, such as fusion, earthquake detection and advanced



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imaging.

Bush met with a group of high-tech executives last week and extolled their past performance. "This administration has great confidence in the future of the high-technology industry," he said, despite recent drops in technology stocks.

"You've changed the way we work and communicate, and you've changed the way we learn," he said. "You've done for American economic leadership in the 21st century what heavy industry did in the 20th century.

"You've done so much for your country, it's time for your country to do something for you," he added. In other words, cut their income taxes and extend the tax credit for corporate research-and-development expenses.

However, Bush's critics, particularly Democrats, say his tax cuts are actually crowding out investments in research and endangering the long-term growth of the economy.

Democrats on the House Budget Committee proposed scientific spending 50 percent higher than that approved by House Republicans following Bush's request.

In an interview, Bush budget director Mitch Daniels said, "We did what we felt we could afford" in science funding.

Daniels added that "we'll listen" if Congress wants to find more money for science by cutting other programs to stay within spending limits.

He acknowledged that the proposed increase for NSF is "very small," but said the agency had received 7 percent more in funding last year. More-

over, he noted that some energy research amounts to subsidies for corporations, which should be investing more themselves.

The Bush budget contains a \$2.8 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health. Daniels said Bush plans a \$4.1 billion increase next year to complete the task of doubling NIH's budget over five years.

After that, he said, it may be "appropriate" to shift funds to other scientific research. But critics, including the former head of NIH, Nobel Prize winner Harold Varmus, argue that medical research is being held back by underfunding in other areas, such as imaging and computing. Gingrich said, for instance, that it's theoretically possible for surgeons to use images and computers to perform "virtual surgery" on patients as practice for actual operations, thereby limiting mistakes.

The critics' strongest case, however, is economic. A group of industry executives and scientific organizations headed by the National Association of Manufacturers wrote Bush in February that "if we cut federal investment in science today, it will be at the cost of lower productivity increases tomorrow."

Groups protesting Bush's budget often quote Alan Bromley, his father's White House science adviser, who declared in a New York Times op-ed piece in early March that "the proposed cuts in scientific research are a self-defeating policy" for an administration that wants to encourage growth and budget surpluses.

"No science, no surplus. It's that simple," Bromley concluded.

Morton Kondracke is executive editor of Roll Call, the newspaper of Capitol Hill.

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