

from another viewpoint...

First impression makes a difference

We would encourage the gas station at Hays that was called down for gouging at the pumps to continue the practice. It helps our cause up here.

Anyway that's what a traveler told the Hays paper in a letter appearing last week.

The writer said he paid \$2.19 a gallon at a station right off I-70 at Hays. The price wasn't posted anywhere.

He had put gas in his vehicle earlier in the day at Emporia for \$1.73. He couldn't believe his eyes that the Hays station was that far out of line. He later learned that another service station not far from the site of the gas hog was asking only \$1.89.

So, there is a lesson to be learned here, that being: *first impressions count*. And the first place most motorists connect with in a town are either a gas station or fast food joint. They can learn a lot about a place from the treatment get at those stops.

At the outset of this comment, we mentioned the gouger at Hays helped the pumps farther west. The writer said he made it a point to stop at Colby to fill up on his way back from a trip to Colorado. His description of his stop there was glowing.

Needless to say, he roared right on by Hays and selected Russell at his next gas stop.

Word of mouth can sometimes spell trouble for a town. We're sure this traveler from Kansas City will inform his friends to bypass Hays and aim west as they travel to the High Country.

Funny how an innocent-looking gas pump can become a community's friend—or foe. —*Tom A. Dreiling, Colby Free Press*

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and 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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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 address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: <star-news@nwkansas.com>.

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South Carolina is a ‘different’ country

Youngest daughter is leaving the country.

OK, Steve said she isn't leaving the country; she's just moving to South Carolina.

I say South Carolina is a different country. If you don't believe me, go visit there.

I know that she has been planning this move for some time, but she didn't tell her parents. She knew we would be a pain. Not exactly upset, but full of reasons for her to stay in Kansas.

Not that being in Kansas is that great. Since she moved to Lawrence nine years ago, she hasn't been home for more than a few days at a time. First she was in college, then she had a job. In the summers, she worked either in Lawrence or in Colorado. Home was an apartment, and when she returned to western Kansas, it was as a visitor in her parents' home.

It wasn't until she had finished her third year of teaching junior high science and had been offered her fourth contract, the one that would make her a tenured teacher, that she revealed her plans.

She called us and said that she had quit her job and planned to return to graduate school and get a master's degree in library science. She said she was looking at going to Emporia State University or the University of South Carolina.

We pounced on Emporia State. It's in Kan-



cynthia haynes

• open season

sas. She has family there. Steve's brother Doug has a home in town and his sister Barbara lives in the country nearby.

She visited the campus there, but she really hoped to get accepted at South Carolina. In fact, she got into both graduate schools.

The next call told us that she had let her apartment go, turned down the tenure contract and was visiting the campus at Columbia, S.C., the next week.

She returned with a map of the city, a contract for an apartment and a schedule of her fall classes. Now she's packing and thinking about what kind of job she can get.

Since she has a teacher's certificate and three years' experience, she thinks she can get work as a substitute teacher. However, if that doesn't pan out, she's planning to check out the area newspapers. She worked making up newspaper ads and pages most of her high school and college career. I'd hire her—in fact I tried. She

said, "NO".

As a last resort, she could wait tables. She's a good waitress and has made good money working at a restaurant in Colorado in the summers.

We went to Lawrence to see her and her brother Friday. It was a wonderful weekend, but a bit sad.

She had hoped that we could come and help her move. However, both she and her brother have to vacate their apartments on July 31, and we are slated to be at a wedding in Colorado Springs on July 30.

Both children are in the middle of packing, with boxes stacked everywhere. It's really sad to miss the moving.

Daughter has hired a large U-Haul truck. She will pick it up a couple of days early and pack it with the help of brother and many friends. Then she will clean the apartment and retire to a friend's home for several days.

Steve will get to Lawrence as soon as he can, and the two of them will head for South Carolina—a two-day trip with a truck full of furnishings, a bunch of plants and three cats.

We'll miss her, but it'll be a good excuse to get out my passport and go visit South Carolina, in the heart of the Old Confederacy.

I admit I am addicted to shopping

Some people are addicted to smoking or drinking, but my biggest vice is shopping.

I spend money on new cleaning products, clothes and anything they sell me in flashy commercials on television. Something about spending money makes me happy, and plastic peddlers have my number.

Within the past few years, banks and retailers have been making it easier for me to feed this addiction and spend my money through the power of cards.

I carry around at least 10, ranging from my check card, directly connected to my checking account, to credit cards that come with pitfalls like high interest and debt. The ones I use the most are the ones that make my life easier with just one quick slide.

I recently saw a television commercial for McDonald's where a woman slid her card in a reader to clean the living room, buy new clothes and fix all of the problems in her life. At the end of the ad, she slid her card at the restaurant's new credit card reader to pay for her Big Mac in the drive through. This spot cleverly highlighted the convenience plastic gives consumers.

The problem is that even if we wish they didn't, our cards helps us to handle major and minor problems. If our car breaks down on the highway, the tow truck will take Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Even hospitals take check and credit cards in payment for treatment.

And it's not just something as little as your \$3 burger at McDonald's on this convenience bandwagon, I've heard rumors that pop machines will soon take plastic. One slide of your card will give you as many caffeinated, carbonated, sugary beverages as your heart desires.

To entice you to use your cards more often, companies even put different designs on the



kathryn gurfinkel

• commentary

front. Dolphins, your favorite sports team, or even a picture of a family member can be placed on the card in an effort to convince you that spending money is fun. My green-colored check card came with the slogan "It's the only 'green' you'll ever need."

So what is the fate of the dollar bill and the check? In tomorrow's movies, will we see bank robbers rolling around in a pile of brightly colored plastic instead of green bills?

I could get by without touching actual money if I had my paychecks directly deposited into my account and used my cards to pay for everything. I could even pay bills online or give the phone, gas, electric and cable companies access to my account.

where to write

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