

OPINION

THE HUTCHINSON NEWS

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EDITORIAL

ATV issues

Closing park on Arkansas River is a good short-term answer, but ...

A decision by the South Hutchinson City Council to close the access to the all-terrain vehicle park unfortunately only makes sense. It's one of those cases of one bad apple spoiling the whole bunch.

Noise and property damage by a few ATV riders led to the council decision. Over the years, there have been numerous incidents that were brought to the council's attention. After ignoring the problem, the council finally decided to take the only action it could, even though many of the members' hearts weren't in it.

"We were all hesitant to close it," said South Hutchinson Mayor Pete Murray.

A group of ATV riders tried to work out an agreement with the council, but it didn't pan out. It relied on self-policing and the honor system. Obviously, that hasn't worked in the past, so there was no reason to believe it would in the future, the council

determined.

It's too bad, but it's true. Of course, there are other issues with the park that complicate the situation. The park itself is in Hutchinson, but the entry is in South Hutchinson, for example, and that's where the problems were occurring.

But there remains hope that a solution can be reached and the park reopened for a limited number of ATV riders. The council members indicated they'd be open to an arrangement involving an ATV club being formed that would in turn negotiate with the city of Hutchinson for use of the park.

That's the current arrangement with the Salthawk Archery Club, which also utilizes the area in the riverbed. When there are people who can be held accountable for actions in the area, it seems to work.

If the reputable ATV riders are willing to take this step, it would be an answer to a longtime problem and put at least some of the riders back in action in the park again.



COLUMNISTS

Greatest State of the Union speech ever

Imagine, if you will, that Donald Trump's popularity doesn't wane as Election Day nears. Imagine that all the talk – about building a giant wall along Mexico, cutting off the head of ISIS and requiring Muslims to wear an identification number and a crescent moon – translates into votes in November and we find ourselves with President Donald J. Trump.

That, I suspect, is when the real fun begins, because that's when the flamboyant real estate magnate and reality television personality would have to end his campaign and begin the difficult work required of any president.

Among his first tasks would be to address Congress and the American people in January 2017 for his first State of the Union address. Here's how I imagine that might sound:

"Thank you. Thank you. What a great honor it must be for you to honor me tonight.

"Usually, this address is pretty boring. These dopes who have been president before just stand up here saying, 'I'm going to do this, or that, blah, blah, blah,' and then they just go back to being losers. But I'm your president now, and that means this State of the Union address is going to be pretty good. It's going to be great. It's probably going to be the best speech ever.

"The state of our union isn't so great. It's been terrible. Horrible. It's been a disaster. But that's going to change now that I'm in charge. We will have so much winning you may get bored with winning. Believe me. We are going to start winning big league.

"I told the American people what I'd do the first day I took office. No more Muslims. No more illegal immigrants. I will build a great wall – and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me – and I'll build them very inexpensively. I will build a great,



Jason Probst

great wall on our southern border, and I will make Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words.

"I will make America great again, and believe me, no one knows great better than Donald J. Trump. I'm the greatest person that's ever lived. Probably the

have a very nice figure. I've said if Ivanka weren't my daughter, perhaps I'd be dating her."

"One of the key problems today is that politics is such a disgrace. Good people don't go into government. Now, I'm in charge, and I say 'You're fired!' I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created, I tell you that.

"Make no mistake, I have the tools, the personality, the power and the money to make America great again, and I'm a great negotiator. I'm great at making deals. Really great. Probably the best ever. Part of the beauty of me is that I'm very rich."

"Sorry, losers and haters, but my I.Q. is one of the highest, and you all know it! Please don't feel so stupid or insecure, it's not your fault. Just follow my advice on how to turn this country around, to fix it and make it great.

1. "If someone screws you, screw them back."
 2. "I believe in winning. I'm very good at winning."

3. "People who disagree with you are a bunch of major jerks."
 4. "We could say, politically correct, that look doesn't matter, but the look obviously matters."

"Oftentimes when I was sleeping with one of the top women in the world I would say to myself, thinking about me as a boy from Queens, 'Can you believe what I am getting?'"

"Now I'm president of the United States. I'm not only one of the richest people in the world, I'm one of the most powerful. Definitely the most powerful. My Twitter has become so powerful that I can actually make my enemies tell the truth."

And all I can say is stranger things have happened.

Note: All parts in italics Donald Trump actually said, wrote or tweeted.

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greatest that ever will live. I'm intelligent. Some people would say I'm very, very, very intelligent. And not just my very rich friends. I have a great relationship with the blacks. I've always had a great relationship with the blacks. Also women. I will be phenomenal to the women. I mean, I want to help women. I will be so good to women.

"For too long, this country has been run by dopes and losers. Show me someone without an ego, and I'll show you a loser. Having a healthy ego, or high opinion of yourself, is a real positive in life. I have a healthy ego. I'm a winner. I live in beautiful buildings. I travel to beautiful places. I marry the most beautiful women. My daughter is very beautiful, and she does

WESTERN FRONT

How moral is that?

When is "conservative principle" actually born of true conservatism and not of greed? When does a "tax cut" actually protect our income from governmental "confiscation?" When is that "protection" not just another ploy by mega-billionaires to commit theft-by-deception, getting total tax-amnesty while less wealthy people pay more?

Further, when are so-called "conservative principles" actually based upon morality, as claimed by those positing such a stance? Since when is modern "conservative" politics actually synonymous with conservative Christianity? When is it moral to allow one principle that gets absolutely no direct reference in standard Christian Scripture, to trump other principles that are covered over 1,500 times in the same scriptures?

What I am about to say is many-faceted and cannot be stated fully in 500 words or less, but let me directly state those moral principles. I speak of abortion and social welfare.

I'll say unequivocally that I refuse to accept abortion. But by the same morality I refuse to cast my lot with those who claim restriction of social welfare to be moral.

I won't call names on any side, but I will stand hard with my understanding of scriptural, holistic morality. I will not cast my lot with "pro-lifers" because most of them vote alongside a political position that seeks to restrict social welfare, a position that actually kills the lives of those (born and unborn) in poverty, disability and repression.

very earliest, currently known Christian document (using far fewer words than one newspaper page), does speak directly to the issue of abortion in two quick sentences. However, in even more words in one of those two sentences, people who for any reason turn their backs on poor and disabled people are inexorably bound to those who "murder" (sic) children, born or unborn.

If you believe I am overstating my point, Google Didache on the Internet. It's not obscure.

To the point, here in Kansas (a would-be exemplar of the national mood) major income tax "cuts" were enacted in 2012. Supposedly Kansans were getting much needed relief and "moral principles" were being restored.

In reality very wealthy Kansans received total Kansas income tax exemption while many who never paid in before had to "fork it over."

My wife and I, middle-income retirees, stand at the intersection of that dichotomy. When Brownback's "tax cut" took effect, we paid more Kansas income tax than ever before, while friends, husband-and-wife with double our income, actually saw their taxes cut. Virtually everyone above us got a cut, and everyone below paid even more than we did. We are OK. We can afford it, but what does this say of those both above and below us? How moral is that?

Now, under the leadership of our governor – if it be that – with declining state revenue, Kansas is returning \$15 million in federal aid intended to help disabled people return to the workforce.

I repeat, how moral is that?

**JACK MACE
Hutchinson**



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Collateral Damage



Burdett Loomis

"Collateral damage" is a term simultaneously freighted with emotion and devoid of it. Coined during the Vietnam War and often applied to recent conflicts, from Kosovo to Syria, "collateral damage" is a commonplace euphemism that deadens us to the war-time carnage of innocent victims, even as their numbers mount into the millions.

So, to consider the impact of various Kansas policies as "collateral damage" may seem over the top. I disagree.

Sam Brownback and the Legislature seeking to place the state's income tax rates on a "glide-path to zero," these tax receipts fell from \$2,931 million in 2013 to just \$2,218 in 2014 and \$2,277 million in 2015.

Despite cheery reassurances from the Brownback administration, the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, and the Kansas Policy Institute, this precipitous revenue drop – in the face of increasing needs – means that many Kansans have suffered actual harm. And the collateral damage will only increase as the state becomes less capable of funding essential services.

After the state received \$25 million in rebates from the federal Children's Health Insurance Program and a Medicaid prescription drug program, budget director Sean Sullivan was asked whether these funds might reduce lengthy waiting lists. He replied, "When you have savings, you can either choose to use that for the state general fund or you can re-appropriate to something else....In our case we're helping

with the state general fund shortfall."

The needy, untreated individuals thus represent collateral damage of the state's disastrous budget situation. The glide path to zero, which has enriched many wealthy Kansans, continues to take a toll on faceless individuals, waiting for months to get adequate care.

In the same vein, searching high and low for cash, the Brownback administration recently "swept" \$9 million in Children's Initiatives Fund grants into the general fund, affecting both current and future programs. That's simple theft.

Collateral damage is sometimes subtle. When Kansas universities recruit top-flight researchers or candidates for major administrative positions, one of their first questions is whether the state is truly committed to providing high-quality education, for both K-12 and higher ed. Indeed, many potential candidates simply write Kansas off as a state that has demonstrated its willingness to sacrifice education at the altar of lower taxes.

Nor is injury limited to individuals. The Kansas highway fund has been raided as never before over the past few years, all

in the service of filling budget holes, as opposed to potholes. Although many governors have used the "Bank of KDOT" to an extent, the level and cynicism of the current exploitation is breath-taking. First, the state borrows hundreds of millions to pay for a ten-year transportation plan. Then, since the 2010 inception of the plan, the state sweeps \$1.4 billion into the state general fund, leaving nothing for new projects and very little for crucial maintenance.

The collateral damage victims here are legion: (1) the highways and all those who ultimately drive on them over the years to come; (2) the state's credit rating, which has steadily declined as funds are shifted away from their intended purpose; (3) tens of thousands of construction workers, who will lose their jobs as projects and maintenance dry up; and finally, (4) the rule of law in Kansas. The state constitution prohibits deficits, but by moving huge piles of borrowed funds, intended to pay for a long-term transportation plan, into the current accounts budget, Governor Brownback and his allies have violated the spirit, if not the technical meaning, of our balanced budget requirement.

In the end, the sharp reduction in income-tax revenues has failed to produce explosive growth. Rather, these cuts have inflicted collateral damage on almost all Kansans in myriad and increasing ways.

Burdett Loomis is a professor of political science at the University of Kansas.