

Opinion



Free Press
Viewpoint

Our little survey is really taking off

We've got this little *unscientific* survey going on amongst our readers and it is picking up steam. It started a week ago when we asked the question on this page, "Should we invade Iraq?" We then solicited your response — YES or NO, and allowed you to add a comment if you so desired.

We also said you can take part in this survey as an anonymous respondent, or if you wanted us to use your name we would do so. No strings attached. People apparently like the "no strings attached" idea.

We are doing this to ascertain how we folks out here in *real* Rural America feel about this hot-button topic. We didn't know what to expect. But as of this morning, 17 readers have responded — by telephone, email or regular mail. Some also gave comments and permission to use their name, a couple of others added comments and asked that we didn't use their name, a few others were the total anonymous route — and that's fine.

You can call us at 462-3963 during business hours (8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday), 462-7882 after hours, email td@nwkanas.com, or reply by regular mail to Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th, Colby, Kan. 67701.

The national polls were heavily in favor of invading Iraq and overthrowing Saddam Hussein at the outset. However, this week, the favorable percent dropped from 65 to 53 percent as the public and Congress became more involved in the debate.

President Bush said he will go before the people to explain his proposed action and will also go before Congress to seek approval, although there is a *side debate* being waged on whether he needs the approval of Congress or not. Some say he does need that approval, others say he does not.

At the outset of our own little poll we would have guessed majority support for the president's planned action. How surprised and wrong we were. The results to date will appear in Friday's "My Turn" column. There is no cutoff date for this ongoing poll and we would encourage all of you to make your opinions known on this vital issue by contacting our two senators and congressman. They need to hear from you.

Please take part in our survey. And remember if you share your name with us and ask that we not use it, **it won't be used.**

Thanks to those of you who have taken part, and thanks in advance to those of you who will. — *Tom (TD) Dreiling, Publisher*

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U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715.
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Collectors live an interesting life

Whenever I visit our local museum, whether it's to research material for an article or to let readers know what new exhibit has opened, inevitably it turns into a trip down memory lane.

Where else can people go these days and reacquaint themselves with so many treasures from the past?

In fact, there aren't very many places where we can rekindle some of the happiest times in our lives. It can be great therapy in slowing down this fast-paced world of ours.

Sometimes it amazes me what types of things people collect. Things that range from being odd and unique to downright ugly.

For example, why would anyone want to save a giant hairball from a cow? There was an interest, though, and now this priceless gem is at the Finney County Historical Society. As the story goes, an employee in a processing plant discovered the hairball in the early 1990s, which measured 37 inches in diameter and weighed 55 pounds and thanks to national publicity has been attracting travelers ever since.

When asked why the hairball was kept, the answer seemed to be that people have a fascination with oddities.

Personally, I prefer the more traditional types of collectibles, such as dolls, glass, ceramics, crystal, clothing, toys, and such.

While exploring the subject of collections, I read with interest that many people find it to be like an addiction.

For one man, he said he loved ugly things and the uglier the items the better. Of course, he considered sock monkeys to be ugly and I think they are kind of adorable. Although some of his other collections



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

included genie lamps, flamingo and panther paintings — and with those I would agree, they are ugly.

Sadly, I've never been much of a collector myself, so I find it personally enjoyable to visit places like the museum, antique shops or touring homes where others have put forth a lot of effort and pride in their collections.

Both of my brothers have been avid collectors of various things, so it sure isn't a flaw in my upbringing that I am not a collector of sorts. Of course, I'm sure it's never too late to get started on something.

My oldest brother loves collecting antique furniture, books, games and more, which makes it fun to shop for Christmas gifts, birthday presents, etc.

My other brother loves collecting old movies, photographs, books and toys from his childhood era and his wife likes the little "Toby" mugs. She must have more than 100 of them and each is placed lovingly in a curio cabinet for guests to see the minute they walk into her living room.

While some collectors use stores and catalogues to find their collectibles, there are still others that literally go out and find their collections for the betterment of a specific topic.

Here in Kansas, a self-trained naturalist, Nathaniel Stickney Goss, would escape from his urban life and

seek out birds from around the world. According to the information I found, he would then document and collect these birds for later use by the public.

Collecting can also develop friendships. There are so many times that I have visited with my brothers or friends and they talk about their relationships with other people in antique shops and collector's shows.

And for those who might be skeptics, collections are a wonderful thing to pass down to our children or places like the Prairie Museum of Art and History, which was exactly what happened when the Kuska family donated thousands and thousands of pieces years ago.

Collections are something that can preserve time. I admire those who enjoy exploring new places in the name of collecting and I believe they are happier for those types of exploits.

Maybe someday, I will try it myself. I doubt it will be this week, but at least I am thinking about what might be a fun object or item to start with. Any suggestions?

It sure won't be freaky relics or other weird things like the hairball collector, though. It also won't be potato chips, which was something I remember seeing many years ago on Johnny Carson. If memory serves, one of Carson's guests worked in a potato chip factory and was in charge of inspecting the faulty chips. Unbelievably, the man had started collecting chips that looked like famous people. No joke! He had hundreds of these potato chips that looked like various movie stars, presidents, etc.

Now that's an odd collection, but I'm sure there are even stranger ones than that.

Decker is editor of the Free Press. Her column appears on Thursdays.

Time to end this lottery game

Brenda Walker

• Another Viewpoint

There is surely no more ill-conceived program in all of Washington than the Visa Lottery. The State Department recently announced details for the 2004 drawing which will welcome 50,000 lucky winners to America. Presumably based on the highly questionable idea that all cultures are equal, the policy opens our national door to "underrepresented" nations to increase America's diversity still more. Not only has the Lottery imported criminal behavior considered normal in the home society, but it has also eased the entry of several recent terror suspects.

Politicians and other exponents of politically correct diversity preach an idealized multicultural paradise, but few leaders care to notice the dark side of cultures that are brutally different from our own. The Visa Lottery welcomes groups for whom the societal norms include slavery, female genital mutilation, forcibly arranged marriage, honor killing and other horrors. In short, the normal behavior of some cultures is criminal or deeply offensive to us. Such unacceptable practices are as much a part of the multicultural package as popular ethnic cuisine.

Of course, if multiculturalism were an easy fit to human nature, the constant media propaganda about its desirability would not be necessary. Our crowded little planet is awash in wars and conflict that are based on just those differences we are urged to celebrate — culture, religion and ethnicity.

The dubious message that diversity is altogether positive and part of our national character was highlighted when California Governor Gray Davis re-

marked that July 4 is "the day on which we honor what America stands for — liberty, security and diversity." The occasion of the rather astonishing quote was the shooting at Los Angeles Airport of several people at the Israeli El Al ticket counter.

Interestingly, shooter Hashem Mohamed Hadayet was an Egyptian immigrant who overstayed his 1992 six-month visitor's visa and became a permanent resident in 1997 when his wife won a Diversity Visa. Mr. Hadayet killed two and wounded several others before he was killed by El Al security personnel. Two other recent terrorism-connected beneficiaries of the Lottery were reportedly two Detroit men arrested in late August for being part of a terror cell.

Culture matters very much. Would the reader care to live in Pakistan or raise a daughter in Saudi Arabia? Few Americans would, but why then do we invite millions from similarly brutal cultures into our communities? Because of diversity-based immigration, it was necessary in 1996 for Congress to pass a law against female genital mutilation in the United States.

Isn't that fact alone a ringing condemnation of multiculturalism?

Furthermore, the social climate is not like a century ago when adapting to American ways was expected: today's immigrants are told by ethnic organizations and academics that assimilation is racist. Newcomers are encouraged to recreate their home societies in ethnic enclaves without becoming a part of the American mainstream.

For example, the "cultural defense" has become a predictable strategy in some immigrant criminal cases. In Berkeley, California, the sexual enslavement of two teenage girls purchased in the Indian defendant's hometown was excused by the defense counsel as normal behavior according to the traditional culture of India. One girl's asphyxiation death from a faulty heater exposed numerous crimes.

The Diversity Visa program is a wrong-headed idea based on a delusional philosophy and should be ended immediately by Congress. The SAFER Act of 2002 would end this insanity and should be supported by all Americans.

It's time to shake free from diversity's deceptions and renew faith in our own hard-won institutions of individual liberty, gender equality and the rule of law.

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Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

