

# Opinion



## Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

### They need prayers, not scorn

To The Free Press:

Over five years ago we moved to Colby from Goodland. My wife and I have never regretted coming here and we think the community has always demonstrated a positive, progressive attitude. We have a crisis in our health care delivery system and we need to find that positive spirit again. We all need to reach down in our hearts and find the human compassion for Dr. (Victor) Hildyard, Mr. (Michael) Boyles and the hospital board members. Each of them needs our prayers and not our scorn.

When I came to Colby, I had to resign from the hospital board in Goodland because I no longer resided in Sherman County (a requirement to serve on that board). The Goodland hospital is partially supported by county funds. The responsibilities and goals of a private, not-for-profit hospital (Citizens Medical Center) are the same as for a public-supported county hospital. You try to provide the best health care for the people you serve. Your patients and your employees are your primary responsibility. Physicians and other health care providers are individuals who own their own business and contract with the hospital to provide services. It is a team effort that requires everyone to work together to provide the best in health care.

When a doctor signs an agreement to use hospital facilities, he or she agrees to the policies and procedures of the hospital. Many of these rules are developed because of state and federal laws. These regs are in place to protect the patients and the employees who care for them. When anyone violates any of these rules, the CEO and the board are obligated to react to those violations. They have no choice. If they look the other way and ignore their responsibilities, then they are liable for legal action, which could result in the hospital being sued or closed.

Do people really believe that the CEO and the hospital board are out to get Dr. Hildyard? They are not out to get him! They are out to get Dr. Hildyard to change his behavior. I have not heard anyone criticize his medical abilities. Not having Dr. Hildyard at the hospital is just a devastating for the hospital as it is for his patients who need to go there for treatment. But the CEO and the board can no longer ignore behavior that violates the rights of patients and employees. Things have changed in 35 years. Individual behaviors that were overlooked and tolerated in the past can no longer be ignored. The CEO and the hospital board are in a no-win situation. If you pardon the expression, they are damned if they do and damned if they don't.

What all of us need to do is stop throwing stones and figure out a way to resolve the problem. Maybe it is time for the supporters of Dr. Hildyard to step forward and appeal to him to take a step toward resolving the dilemma. I have heard many of them say what a great doctor he is, but they also say that they are not surprised at anything he might have said or done. Remember, he is a MAN, not a GOD. He can make mistakes in his behavior as a man. That does not diminish his ability as a doctor. Agreeing to counseling or therapy does not make him weak. It can have just the opposite effect and make him a stronger man. If you are one of his patients, tell how much you will respect him for doing the right thing for himself and everyone in the community.

Since I have the forum, let me express my disappointment in people who say they are good Christians and then attack people and their businesses because of the volunteer service they give to the community. The two women who wrote in Thursday night's paper about the bowling alley in Goodland should be ashamed of that cheap shot.

Skip Sharp  
Colby  
(Letter #139)

#### About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous.

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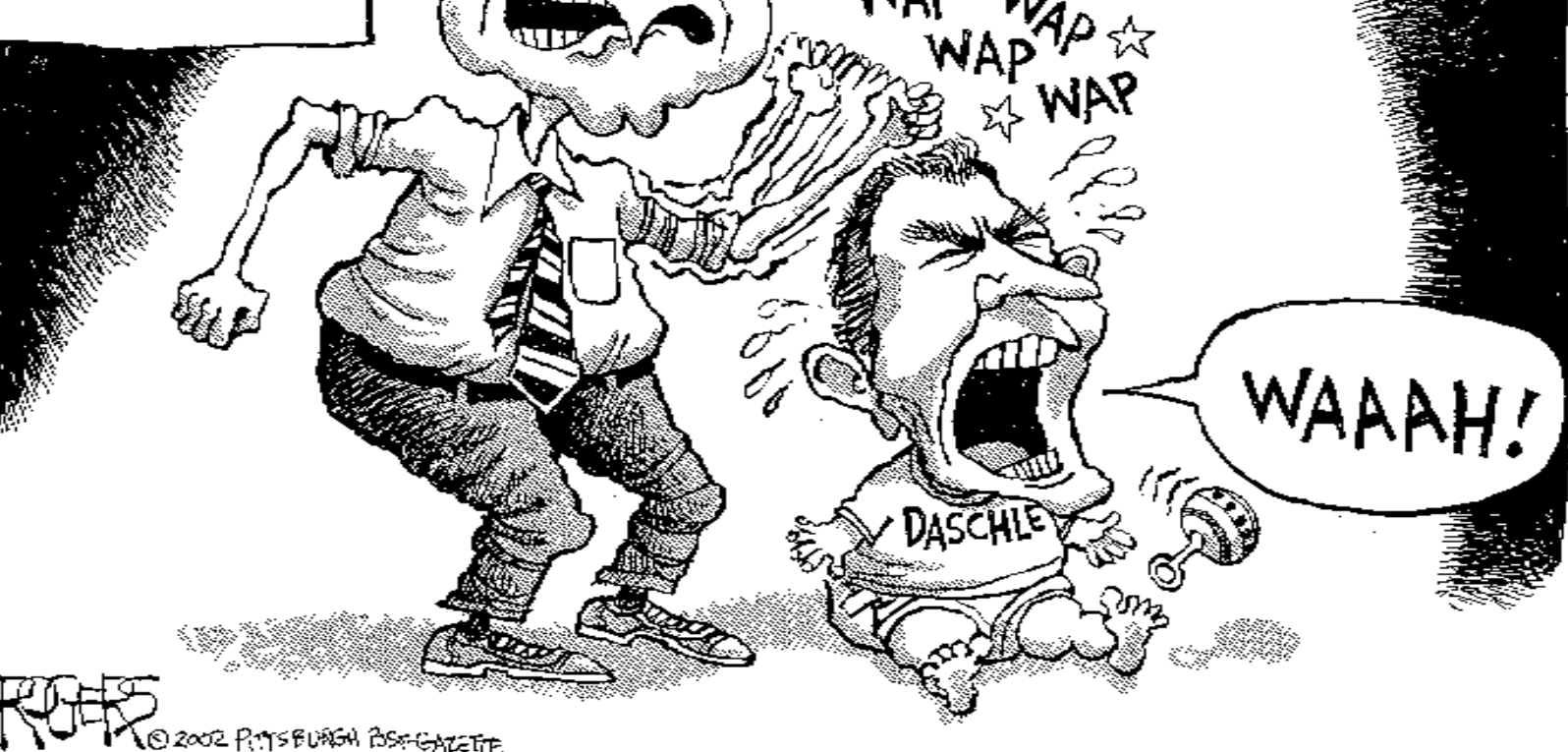
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SPEAKING OF  
DISTURBING  
BEATINGS  
CAUGHT ON  
VIDEOTAPE ...



## Speaking of traveling. . .

Maxine Nelson

- Random Thoughts



I enjoyed reading about Michelle Hawkins' trip to Mt. Rushmore, but want to assure here there are some tourist attractions in Nebraska.

The limousine she saw south of Valentine probably belonged to Ted Turner, who is the largest landowner in Nebraska. I've been reading about him in the Omaha World Herald. He owns most of Cherry County, and parts of surrounding counties, an area larger than some states. Turner, an avid conservationist, is buying and importing prairie dogs (which he apparently thinks are an endangered species) onto his ranch lands. His holdings are so large he promises if the rodents get within a mile of the neighbors' lands, he will trap them and relocate them.

Had they trapped in North Platte, they could have visited Scout's Rest, the home of Buffalo Bill Cody where he lived and which was the headquarters of his world-famous Wild West show.

They could also have visited Union Pacific's Bailey Yard, the world's largest rail classification yard (this is where they sort out the boxcars.) In a few years, they will be able to visit the Golden Spike Tower which will stretch 15 stories above the Bailey Yard, with exhibits and films about the glory days of railroading, and learn about the workings of the yard.

Near Valentine is the Niobrara River, Nebraska's most (only?) scenic river. If I remember correctly it has been so designated by the powers-that-be that make such designations. The Boy Scouts like to go canoeing there.

If Michelle and friend had decided to go east on I-80, they could have visited the Great Platte River Road Archway Monument at Kearney, I-80 Exit 272, which spans the interstate and offers history as never

shown before. Ads say "Stunning audio/visual effects enhance immersive exhibits that come alive for young and old. Hear stories of the Oregon, Mormon and California Trails as you stroll along the trail. Ride with the Pony Express, hear the rumble of the Iron Horse and watch a drive-in movie as you trace the history of transportation and communication right up to the fiber optic age. Food court and gift shop. Call for hours. 1-877-511-ARCH. Handicapped Accessible."

Opened two years ago, the arch is changing direction from a tourist attraction to an educational attraction. From the pictures I've seen and the reports from my children and others who have visited it, I would say it is well worth a trip. Perhaps our schools will make a day trip there.

Or if they had gone east instead of north at Arapahoe, they could have visited the Nebraska Prairie Museum, one mile north of Holdrege on Hwy. 183. It features an exhibit which displays a scale replica of the original WWII German POW Camp Atlanta which was five miles southwest of Holdrege.

Also exhibited are items donated by former military personnel who worked there, POWs who were interned there, and local families and businesses who hired the POWs during the war. Extensive collections

of prairie history are on display. Outbuildings include a Lutheran Church, one room school house, early farm house, POW guard tower, and windmill. Call 308-995-5015 or (308) 995-4944 for information.

Continuing east from Holdrege, they could have stopped a little south of Kearney, and visited Pioneer Village in Minden. More than 50,000 historic items are on display. The 26 buildings include a sod house, one room school, pony-express station, depot, general store and an 1884 church.

The home of the oldest existing Buick and 350 other antique autos, 20 historic aircraft, 100 vintage tractors, guns, motorcycles, snowmobiles, boats, buggies, trains and trolleys. The historic crafts of spinning, weaving and broom-making are year-round activities. An 1800's steam carousel operates in the summer.

A motel, campground, restaurant and lounge complete the complex. Call 800-445-4447.

Or if they wanted to, they could visit the Nebraska Wild Horse and Burro Facility, four miles north of Elm Creek on I-80. The 40-acre facility houses up to 500 wild horses and burros before being adopted by owners nationwide. Operated by the Federal Bureau of Land Management. Free admission. Call 308-856-4498. Doesn't that sound exciting?

However, I will admit Mt. Rushmore sounds more impressive. Perhaps Michelle and her friend will make another trip and visit some of these attractions or more they could discover on the Internet.

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Maxine Nelson is a retired reporter/editor of the Colby Free Press. She writes an occasional column and is developing "Peek at the Past" history columns.

## Call it 'The Name Game'

Jay Kelley

- Speaking My Mind



There has been a lot of rhetoric about the coming war with Iraq, lately. I think it's safe to say we're at least as divided as we were the last time a President named Bush decided to take on Saddam Hussein.

Most of us probably don't remember that. It is hard to remember opposition to a relatively bloodless war that turned out to be a pretty lopsided victory as well. There was, before the decision was made, some strong debate on both sides of the issue.

Debate is as important now as it was then, if not more so. In 1991, we had a clear case of aggression by one state against the other. However one might understand world politics, it was most definitely bad form for Iraq to invade and conquer Kuwait.

There was also a precedent for American troops to intervene. Dwight Eisenhower sent Marines to Lebanon in 1958 partially because Iraq (under Hussein's predecessors) had threatened to annex Kuwait.

Even then, there was opposition to American involvement to the point that then-president Bush decided to go to Congress.

That's what bothers me about what passes for a debate on the issue today. It seems that our debaters are, for the most part, long on emotionalism and short on substance.

Folks, waging war is serious business and it should not be undertaken, or decided against, on the basis of some emotional, knee-jerk reaction.

We have opposition leaders like Sen. Tom Daschle accusing the vice-president of saying things in the Washington Post that he not only didn't say, but the Post didn't say he did!

Then we have the President of the United States

talking about the need to remove Saddam because he tried to kill his father.

The good Senator needs to learn to check his ammunition before he shoots off his mouth and the President needs to remember the American Armed Forces are not his personal revenge squad.

Of course, it is purely coincidence that all this emotional debate is occurring just a little over a month prior to the elections (that's irony, folks.)

I agreed with one commentator who thought the debate should be brought up at election time. After all, who better to decide the direction we should go in something this important than the people.

I disagreed with the obvious plays on our heartstrings by both sides in hopes of gaining an advantage at the polls. I am also offended by both sides, attempts to cry foul when they bring up a point and the other side gains an advantage.

Finally, I'm offended that neither side is listening to the people that will have to fight the war and enforce the peace. Make no mistake; the Democrats aren't listening to Colin Powell or the joint chiefs any more than the Republicans.

They can't be listening; if they were, they would

be asking different questions. No one, even those who are the most loquacious on the need for a coalition, is asking what happens if our troops get over there and our allies desert us.

No one is asking about Israel, who is also locked into a struggle for their own survival. What happens to our alliance with the Israelis if they must suddenly deal with an attack from without while dealing with Arafat's thugs from within?

No one is asking these questions, not because they aren't relevant to the situation, but because they aren't relevant to power.

That's the Washington game. The Republicans have the power and want more. The Democrats had it and want it again. Both sides are making promises they can't keep and threatening consequences they can't prove.

I have been impressed by George W. Bush's leadership during some serious crises. In fact, he has been surprisingly effective, in my opinion.

I have also been impressed by the bipartisan cooperation shown by Congress during a time of emergency. Their ability to put personal agendas aside and concentrate on the good of the country has shown the world at least a glimpse of the attitude that made America great.

Both the White House and Congress need to remain focused and objective if we are to weather the storm. They're focused, but I don't think it's on the right objective.

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## Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau

