

Opinion



Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

Apology necessary

To the Free Press:

Good for you Tom Jones! Maxine Nelson owes some people an apology.

Mrs. Nelson, you should know if you can't build people, don't tear them down with your opinions.

Law enforcement and school personnel have done a great job in handling a bad situation. Shame on you, Maxine.

Judy Headley

Brewster

(Letter #154)

Praises, criticism

To the Free Press:

I wanted to commend your group for the hunting supplement. Hunting can have a very positive impact on our community.

What I do not understand is why it was so hard to get the news release announcing the last Hunter Education Class in Colby this year in the paper. I brought the release to the paper's office almost two weeks ago. I brought it early so the students can pre-register, and have some time to go over their manual and the materials before the class.

We only have ten hours to pass on a lot of information to the students. With the class starting Oct. 22, it is too late for your help in getting this information to possible students.

Do I have your permission to give your name to the kids and parents when they call me and ask why they did not see the class advertised in the paper and missed this class because they were waiting to see it in the newspaper? This is not the first time hunter education has been forgotten by the Free Press, and probably not the last.

I just wanted to let you know how disappointed I am, not only me but the many volunteers, and kids that may miss this opportunity. Like with so many other things in small rural communities you are the only one in town, so we will just have to accept that, and keep hoping for something better in the future.

**Benny Young
Colby
(Letter #155)**

Addresses of elected officials:

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 302 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521

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

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmmorriso@ink.org web:http://www.idir.net/~jmmorriso/

State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: sclark@ink.org

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701

freepress@nwkans.com
State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkans.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor

pdecker@nwkans.com

Darrel Pattillo, Sports Editor

colbysports@nwkans.com

Michelle L. Hawkins, Family and Religion

mhawkins@nwkans.com

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Manager

crystalr@nwkans.com

Derek Bell - Advertising Account Manager

dbell@nwkans.com

Flo Rodriguez - Ad Composition, Legals

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager

Pattie Stevens - Office Manager, Want Ads

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator

support@nwkans.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published daily, every Monday through Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday.

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$32, 8 months \$47, 12 months \$64. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$44, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$72. Other Kansas counties and surrounding states: 4 months \$51, 8 months \$61, 12 months \$75. All other states, \$75, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers
Haynes Publishing Company



Observations around the homeplace

Maxine Nelson

- Random Thoughts



Punkin is a sandbur magnet. I understand why show cats never go outside. If they did, they would forever be having big chunks of their coat cut out to get rid of the sandburs, and judges don't give high points for cats with ragged coats. Trying to get Punkin to sit still for sandbur removal is like trying to get the Kansas wind to stay still. He is either trying to look to see what is going on with his nose right in the field of operation, or he is trying to get away. Neither is conducive to a neat haircut.

And then, of course, he removes some of them himself, wherever he happens to be. Usually I find them with my stockinged feet. Fortunately, he usually pulls a bunch of hair out with the sandbur, so it is somewhat cushioned. Oh, well, what we will endure to have our favorite pets.

-mn-

I finally saw something eating the corn on the 'squirrel go round' I bought for my husband last Christmas. It hangs on the tree, like a cross with an ear of corn on each of the four ends. The idea is that

the squirrels have to work for their treat. It sat undisturbed all winter, spring and summer. All of a sudden, the corn started disappearing.

We finally saw who was eating it. Around dusk each day, the blue jays gather round, squawk at each other, and gobble it down. Four ears were denuded in about as many days.

The squirrel finally noticed there was something edible there, and I saw him working on it, too, but I think we will have to put up new corn ears before anyone else gets anything.

But the squirrel is not starving. We didn't have walnuts this year. We have four trees, but ours seem to have nuts every other year. We store the unused nuts in the patio. My husband packed the hulled nuts neatly into cardboard boxes, and put them up high in the patio. We noticed the squirrel had eaten some, so he repacked the nuts. A couple days later, we saw the squirrel had gnawed into one of those boxes, too. He went through the cardboard like a knife through hot butter, and had taken about half of a boot-box sized cardboard box. You can tell where a squirrel has been eating nuts, he leaves a fine black residue.

My husband repacked the nuts in plastic gallon ice cream buckets. We'll watch and see if the squirrels gnaw into them. What the squirrels don't eat, they bury. Bet the neighbors will have lots of volunteer walnut trees coming up next summer. I know we will.

-mn-

Maxine Nelson is a retired editor/reporter for the Free Press.

Little nuts become big trees

Jay Kelley

- Speaking My Mind



As I listen to the outcry over our willingness to take unilateral action when in our best interests, not only by those who should also have the same goals as do we, but many times by those among us who seek political advantage, I'm reminded of a not-so-old adage that goes like this:

The mightiest oak tree was once a little nut that stood its ground.

While it is a general truth that the best decisions are usually undertaken with some good counsel, it is equally true that the majority opinion is not always the right one.

The real questions we need to be asking are not about who will go with us, or even what is in our best interests in the short run.

The real issue when making a decision on a course of action is what is right. Regardless of what wrong has been done in the past, we will not solve the situation by ignoring the right thing to do simply because some claim we have no moral authority.

When something is right, the moral authority to do it exists, regardless of past actions. None of our leaders has ever been perfect; there are skeletons in the closet of even our most revered historical figures.

Yet they also did the right thing and should be remembered for those things, many times when they were that little nut, standing their ground.

Yes, there are consequences for doing wrong. Sometimes they are immediate and sometimes the consequences are visited upon later generations, but they should never stop us from doing the right thing. Neither does it matter what the popular thinking

of the day happens to be. If what is popular is wrong, it is still wrong.

Ultimately, I believe our legacy will be left in the things we did when we are placed in a position to do right in spite of what is popular or our own past wrongs.

Some will argue that there is no real right or wrong, but instead the situation dictates the right or wrong thing to do. Situational ethics was a popular buzzword a couple of decades ago and is still the belief in many quarters, although it probably has a different name by now.

The problem with situational ethics is we are left with no basis on which to make a decision. One can moralize themselves out of the right thing quite easily if it happens to be too hard or inconvenient.

Some might also argue that doing right in some cases will make the situation worse than doing nothing, but that is only true in the short run.

Doing the right thing is, at times, infinitely harder because of that very thing. It is much easier to do right when there is support than to take a stand against the

popular thinking of the day.

It is also easier to do wrong when the popular thinking of the day calls for it than to go against the grain and do right anyway.

It's called peer pressure and it has been with us since Adam watched the serpent tempt his wife and said nothing because it was the easier course of action.

The debate in our current course of action, whether we are talking about war with Iraq, the new revelations about North Korea's nuclear weapons, which really are only confirmations of what we already guessed, or homeland security needs to be based on what is right.

We need to get off the debate about what our so-called allies and friends want and even what is convenient for us and concentrate on what is right.

If it is right to remove Saddam Hussein by force, then we need to do so, regardless of what others might think or say. If it is not, then we need to say no, again regardless of pressures to go ahead.

The same goes for North Korea and any other nation that threatens the security of their own people and the world.

No, war is not always the right thing to do. In fact, it should be the very last resort, but in either event, we shouldn't be worried about what everyone else thinks.

A. Jay Kelley is the evangelist for the church of Christ in Colby, and a former newspaper reporter. His e-mail is jkelley@nwkans.com.

Could be called 'sinful'

Holly Sklar

- Another Viewpoint

at \$706 million — nearly \$2 million a day. Wilson would have had to work for 160 years to match Ellison's \$706 million.

The average CEO of a major corporation made \$11 million in 2001, including salary, bonus and other compensation such as exercised stock options. That's more than \$33,000 seven days a week, in a year when the economy tanked.

CEOs made about 565 times as much as security guards, 445 times as much as emergency medical technicians and paramedics, 442 times as much as secretaries, 312 times as much as firefighters and 271 times as much as police officers.

Back in 1960, CEOs made an average 38 times more than school teachers, according to "Business Week." By 1990, CEOs made 63 times as much. In 2001, CEOs made 264 times as much as public school teachers.

The Census Bureau recently analyzed what people could expect to earn, on average (adjusted to 1999 dollars), during a hypothetical 40-year working life at full-time jobs. College graduates could expect \$2.1 million and high school graduates, \$1.2 million.

Workers with professional degrees, such as doctors

and lawyers, could expect to earn \$4.4 million each during their working life — not even half what CEOs make in just a year.

While CEO pay spiraled out of control, worker pay was largely stagnant for decades. Average hourly earnings for production workers in 2001 were nine percent lower than their 1973 peak, adjusting for inflation. If workers' wages had kept pace with productivity gains since 1979, average hourly earnings would have been \$21.71 last year, not \$14.33.

This Labor Day, workers needed rescue. Congress should start by raising the minimum wage, which would help boost the stagnant pay of average workers as well. It takes more than three jobs at the minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour — \$10,712 a year — to support a family. The real value of the minimum wage peaked in 1968 at \$8.28 per hour (in 2002 dollars). Today's minimum wage wor

Members of Congress made nine times as much as minimum wage workers in 1968 and 14 times as much today. In 1997, when the minimum wage was last raised to \$5.15 an hour, members of Congress earned \$133,600.

Since then, they've increased their pay by \$16,400 — much more than minimum wage workers earn in a year. Unless the Senate blocks it, congressional pay will rise from \$150,000 now to \$155,000 in January 2003.

Holly Sklar is coauthor of "Raise the Floor: Wages and Policies That Work for All Of Us." For more information, visit: www.raisethefloor.org <<http://www.raisethefloor.org>>, or email: hsklar@aol.com.