

Opinion



Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

Give the truckers a break

To the Colby Free Press:

I have noticed some new additions to the many signs already displayed around the Wal-Mart Plaza. The most recent additions are in regard to semi truck parking in the area.

It may be a somewhat jaded point of view that I have since I am an owner/operator myself, but what are these people thinking when they ban truck parking. Do they not realize that if it wasn't for trucks, they would have nothing to sell in their stores. Not to mention the money that truck drivers and their families spend in those stores.

Even if it is a city government official that came up with the idea to stop truck parking on that lot, those business owners need to stand up and let it be known what kind of financial impact it would make on their respective businesses if all truckers and their families stopped shopping there.

It may never happen in this area, but I have seen what devastation is caused by truckers boycotts in other parts of the country. It is not pleasant for anyone. No food, no fuel, no clothing or building materials for just a week will bring a community to its knees.

Use some common sense and be courteous to the truckers. Your lives depend on us.

Lindle Harold Colby
(Letter #176)

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.

Mail your letter to: Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th, Colby, Kan. 67701. Or e-mail td@nwkansas.com. You can also fax us at (785) 462-7749.

Addresses of elected officials:

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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
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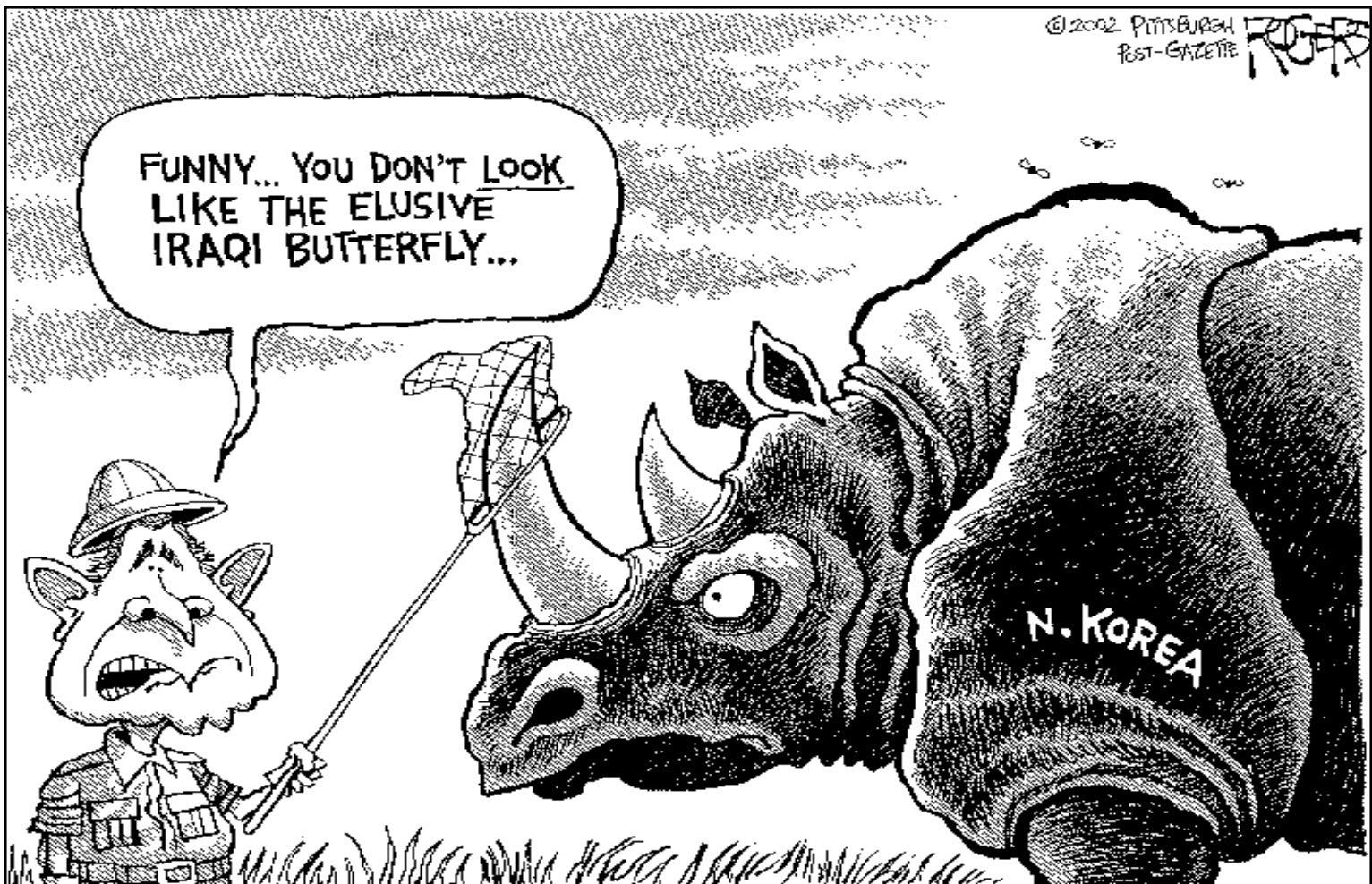
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Looking on the positive side

I'VE got two items to share with you, both very positive. One speaks well of our community and the other of this newspaper.

The first is in the form of a concert telecast Tuesday and Wednesday of this week from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and carried over Smoky Hills Public Television (ch. 3 on cable). One of the featured performers was Sam Ramey, a Colby High School grad who has climbed the mountain to its very top in the world of classical music. He sang two numbers, "Some Enchanted Evening" from *South Pacific* and a shared part of "Oklahoma!" from *Oklahoma!* What a voice, what a disciplined stage presence. Applause would lead me to believe he was the favorite. The concert was a salute to the music of Richard Rodgers, with various performers doing songs from *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Oklahoma!*, and *The Sound of Music*. Additionally, the symphony performed Mr. Rodgers' only film score, "Victory at Sea." What an enjoyable hour. I toy around with Smoky Hills Public TV quite a lot and never come away disappointed.

THE other item is a sentence from a Christmas letter from Marietta Ramsey of Wichita to Colby friends, and the one I am privy to was received by Thurman Cox of our town. In the letter, Marietta talks about all the good things that have happened in the year 2002 and ended the letter with this, "A final blessing to me is 'my' Colby Paper — I don't mind making that long trip to the mailbox when it's Colby Paper Day!"

It is not all that common that we in newspapering receive that kind of endorsement from readers.

So, to Marietta, a tip-of-the-hat, and you're one of our favorites, too. God bless!

THIS is one of those columns where birthday/anniversary greetings will cover what would generally appear in three columns. I will be away from my desk for the entire week next week, so the greetings will include those for today through Jan. 14.

HAPPY Birthday to...

✓Jan. 3 — Mike Larmer, Sharon Redmond, Carol Barnes, Leanne Juenemann
✓Jan. 4 — Robert Palmer, Dale R. Farmer
✓Jan. 5 — (nobody listed)
✓Jan. 6 — Dave Wessel, Elizabeth Ashbaugh,



Tom Dreiling

- My Turn

Phillip Heinrich

✓Jan. 7 — Brielle McKee, Lisa Stithem, Ron Kaus, Susan Blazek

✓Jan. 8 — Christopher Barnum, Glenn Weber, Lonn Trail

✓Jan. 9 — Marie McVay, Tom Stephens, Richard Mather, Greg Griffin

✓Jan. 10 — Nick Larmer, Melanie Fortin, Carol Otter, Kathie Blazek

✓Jan. 11 — Caroline Tubbs, David Kruse

✓Jan. 12 — Melissa Williams, Don Schaeffer

✓Jan. 13 — Rachel Parker

✓Jan. 14 — (nobody listed)

HAPPY Anniversary to...

✓Jan. 9 — Robert & Caroline Tubbs

✓Jan. 13 — Norman & Edna Hansen

✓Jan. 14 — Rob & Shirley Burroughs
Congratulations!

If your special day did not appear, let me know and I can put it in the computer and also wish you a belated happy birthday or anniversary in my next column on Jan. 15. Send your dates to us at 462-3963 or email td@nwkansas.com. And please keep us advised of any updates. Many thanks!

HERE IS one I just cannot pass up. It came to my by way of Sen. Stan Clark. It's priceless (author unknown). It begins with this introduction: Over the years you may have noticed that most 2-year-olds are trim. It came to me one day over a cup of grapefruit juice and a carrot that perhaps their diet is the reason. After consultation with pediatricians, X-ray technicians, and distraught mothers, I was able to formulate this new diet. It is inexpensive and offers great variety and sufficient quantity. Enjoy!

Day 1: Breakfast — One scrambled egg, one piece of toast with grape jelly. Eat 2 bites of egg using your fingers; dump the rest on the floor. Take 1 bite of toast, then smear the jelly over your

face and clothes. **Lunch** — Four crayons (any color), a handful of potato chips, and a glass of milk — 3 sips, then spill the rest. **Dinner** — A dry toast off the floor from breakfast, 2 pennies, 4 sips of flat diet pop. **Bedtime snack** — Rest of toast, a piece of bread, butter it, and toss it face down on the floor.

Day 2: Breakfast — Pick up stale bread from the floor and eat it. Drink 1/2 bottle of vanilla extract or one vial of vegetable dye. **Lunch** — Half tube of lipstick and one ice cube, if desired. **Afternoon snack** — Lick an all day sucker until sticky, take it outside and drop in dirt. Retrieve and continue slurping until clean again, then bring inside and drop on living room carpet. **Dinner** — A rock or an uncooked bean, which should be thrust up your left nostril. Pour iced tea over mashed potatoes, eat with spoon.

Day 3: Breakfast — 2 pancakes with plenty of syrup, eat with fingers, rub fingers in hair to clean. Glass of milk, drink half, stuff excess pancakes in glass. After breakfast, pick up yesterday's sucker from carpet, lick off fuzz until sticky again, then leave on cushion of your best chair. **Lunch** — Peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Spit several well-chewed bites onto the floor. Pour glass of milk onto table, then slurp up, soak paper napkin in what's left and devour about half the wet paper. **Dinner** — Dish of ice cream, handful of potato chips, 1 sip of cold coffee.

Final Day: Breakfast — 1/4 tube of toothpaste (any flavor), bite of soap, one olive. Pour glass of milk over bowl of cornflakes, add 1/2 cup of sugar. Wait until cereal is soggy, drink milk and feed cereal to dog with your spoon. **Lunch** — Eat crumbs off the kitchen floor and dining room carpet. Find that sucker and finish eating it. **Dinner** — A plate of spaghetti and chocolate milk. Leave meatball on plate. Handful of cheese snacks, eat 2 and place the rest in bowling ball holes or any other convenient hiding place.

You now have the general idea of the diet. Just be sure every meal is different and be creative. You will be amazed at what you can eat that won't kill you.

HAVE a good evening and a good weekend!

Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkansas.com.

Sebelius ready for the challenge

Among Kathleen Sebelius' priorities are schmoozing, private chats and meet-and-greet sessions.

Sebelius is a Democratic governor-elect in a state with large Republican legislative majorities, something that will require her to build coalitions with GOP lawmakers to get her initiatives approved. In a recent interview, she said building relationships with legislators in both parties is crucial.

Sebelius is confident she is ready for the challenge and said she has the right blend of experience as insurance commissioner and a former Kansas House member. She's had a quarter century of dealings with the Legislature.

"I've always been a kind of legislative groupie," Sebelius said. "I've been around this process for years in Topeka, and this is where the action will be for 90 days, and I intend to be there and be a large part of it."

Sebelius, 54, will be inaugurated as the state's 44th governor on Jan. 13, in the midst of the state's worst financial crisis since perhaps the Great Depression.

Outgoing Gov. Bill Graves, a Republican, ordered cuts in current spending and aid to cities and counties to help prevent the \$312 million budget deficit projected for June 30. The gap between spending commitments for the \$4.1 billion state general fund and its expected revenues could reach more than \$1 billion over the next 18 months.

Sebelius will come into office having made campaign promises that Republican legislative leaders see as unrealistic, chief among them is a pledge not to cut aid to public schools.

When the Legislature convenes for its 90 scheduled days in session, the GOP will have

John Hanna

- Guest Commentary

majorities of 80-45 in the House and 30-10 in the Senate.

But Sebelius believes she starts her four-year term in a good position.

"I've known a lot of the key players for a long time, personally and professionally," she said. "The Legislature is about relationships. It's about getting to know people, putting groups together. It's about some level of trust, and you can't do that, I think, from a distance."

Sebelius, the daughter of former Ohio Gov. John Gilligan, also a Democrat, came to Kansas in the 1970s.

She was executive director of the Kansas Trial Lawyers Association for eight years. In 1986, she won a seat in the Kansas House, representing a district that included Potwin, her Topeka neighborhood of brick streets and Victorian homes.

In 1990, Democrats won a 63-62 House majority — only their third in the past century — and Sebelius served both as a committee chairwoman and majority caucus chairwoman. In 1994, she unseated Insurance Commissioner Ron Todd, a Republican.

She said her legislative experience allows her to understand how lawmakers operate — and why their session deadlines need to be respected, for example.

"There are all kinds of little issues that make for bad feelings for years to come," she said. "I'm going to try to be as sensitive to timetable issues to open communications."

Sebelius said her election shows voters value public schools highly and don't want state aid cut, even though keeping that promise makes solving budget problems tougher. Aid to public schools consumes 52 percent of general fund revenues.

She also said Republicans will hurt themselves politically if Kansans think they aren't doing much to help.

"I think Kansans want some things to happen," she said. "The House and the Senate are all up for election in two years, and what I heard from people across this state is that they want people to listen to them. They want this government to be responsive and move forward."

She added: "Kansans elected me and elected them and are sending us both here to do a job."

But first, Sebelius conceded, she must build good working relationships with legislators. That means, she said, getting to know new lawmakers, regular discussions with legislative leaders and inviting lawmakers to Cedar Crest, the governor's residence.

She said: "If I can pick up the phone, if I know these people personally, if I'm out and about, if I have open hours in the office and invite people in to chat about things, if I go into their home territory and take them with me, that does go a long way to building a dialogue that will be very helpful."

John Hanna has been covering politics and state government for The Associated Press for many years.