

Opinion



Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

Food for thought

To the Colby Free Press:

I have read several times lately that our White House spokesman has stated that we know with absolute certainty that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction and intends to use them. We plan to invade whether the UN inspectors find them or not! Hmmmmm?

We knew where Osama was and told the world he was ours! Hmmmmm?

I recall we did a little retaliating under another administration and bombed a couple places that didn't seem to be what we thought they were. Hmmmmm?

We still have, for practical purposes, the same intelligence system that was gathering all the information then. Hmmmmm?

As I look back on my own history, I recall having determined, "Come hell or high water," I'm going where I want to go or doing what I want to do. Oh my!

Sometimes, I got there all right, but the cost of that "hell or high water" was sometimes a debt that was carried for a longgggggg time.

Ken Poland
Gem
(Letter #2)

Let us hear from you

To Our Readers:

Thank you for your letters during the year 2002. This morning we checked through our back copies and found that during the year a total of 174 letters were published, far outstripping 2001's total which was 127.

Ironically, the last letter printed in 2002 was on Dec. 18 from Ken Poland of Gem. Mr. Poland was the first guy at bat in 2003 with letters #1 (in Monday's *Free Press*) and #2 in today's paper.

We continue to urge you to share your thoughts with letters on topics that concern you.

Rarely do we place conditions on letters, but this past year we found that necessary when one controversy in particular ignited a bunch of mail and as the situation continued the messages being imparted by the letter writers were all the same. There was nothing new, except the signatures. We, therefore, called a halt. We were criticized by some and commended by others.

We thank those who have written in the past and encourage them to continue, and we ask that you who haven't picked up your pen to do so and share your thoughts with those who read this newspaper.

Needless to say, letters to the newspaper are the best read inclusion. Climb aboard.

Thanks — in advance.

Tom (TD) Dreiling
Publisher
(Letter #3)

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Saving our schools

I will be a 39-year-old college freshman when the new semester starts, although my classes will not start until next week.

One of my classes will cover American history and the other government. It will be interesting, to say the least, studying events that occurred in my lifetime with young people who were not even born when they occurred.

I'm fairly certain that my view of events such as Watergate, the hostage crisis in Iran and Beirut are different than many incoming freshmen simply because I remember them when they were current events.

Don't worry, I'm not about to go off on some tangent about truth not existing or some other existentialist drivel. I'm just saying that our perceptions can differ because of experience and we need to take that into account.

Education is an important part of our society and has been so for as long as we have had an America. During most of our history, churches and schools were built as soon as there were enough people to do so.

One of the interesting turns of events in our history was that preachers were often the most educated people in a frontier community and were able to support themselves by establishing a school.

It says a lot, in my view, that education has become a right in our modern age. A proper education should be the right of all children and it is incumbent upon any moral and decent society to



Jay Kelley

• Speaking My Mind

fund the schools necessary for such an education, including the concepts of right and wrong behavior within that society.

Without a concrete and immovable concept of right and wrong, civilization itself cannot exist. Certain things are wrong and we know them to be wrong. Lying, cheating and stealing are wrong.

When these things become justifiable, as with the teacher in Piper who ended up quitting because she could not enforce rules against plagiarism (which, by the way, is stealing,) the moral authority that binds a society together is lost.

If it is acceptable to steal someone else's literary work, why is it not acceptable to steal their car? Some might argue that a car is different; after all, it is a mode of transportation and is costly to replace.

That means that we base the morality of stealing on a cost basis; something that is happening with alarming frequency. Small theft is seen as acceptable because no one got hurt, but larger

theft is wrong because someone gets hurt.

The problem is the relativity of small and large. With that viewpoint, one could steal a lot from Donald Trump before it was wrong.

It's no different with lying or cheating, by the way. Without a clear and recognizable standard of right and wrong, our schools are left with both arms tied behind their back.

Some point to God being removed from schools as the point at which we lost our objectivity concerning right and wrong. I see that as a symptom of a larger problem.

Before God was removed from schools, he was removed from many of our homes. I'm not talking about church and state here. This is about God and his word. When we remove the Bible from our sphere of knowledge, we remove the only objective anchor we have for determining right and wrong.

No, religion shouldn't be taught in public schools. Most of us are smart enough to know we can't all agree on how to worship God and we shouldn't be forced to violate our conscience in that regard.

The Bible, however, should be taught in both public school and at home, if for no other reason than given by Andrew Jackson, "That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests."

A. Jay Kelley, Colby, speaks his mind on a variety of things from time to time. His e-mail is jkelley@nwkansas.com.

Observations of a morning walker

When you're curled up in bed in those early morning hours and it is dark and cold you think the world is quiet and peaceful since you are still in bed. How wrong you are.

Whatever the reason you crawl or bounce out of bed at an early hour and head out the door, it is interesting if you are but observant.

Every morning I pull on my layers of clothes to face the cold to walk for 30 minutes and in that time it is fascinating to watch the community come to life. There is a routine, a rhythm to life, to a town, to a community.

If I go out at 6 a.m. there is less traffic and you tend to see the same cars going by everyday. I see the shift changes going on at the hospital and the nursing homes, I know when the athletic teams are having early morning practices and the route salesmen, such as chips and drinks are headed out to their appointed rounds.

If it is 6:30 to 7 a.m. when I get out, there is definitely more traffic and the speed has picked up and there are more lights on in houses as you go by.

If I take a deep breath, maybe I can smell whether or not you are having a hot cooked breakfast or what fragrance of fabric softener you are using in the load of clothes you did last night and

Rosie Stockton

• Rosie's Route

threw in the dryer this morning.

There are the early morning bible studies/prayer meetings that meet on a regular basis at different churches, or the dog needing relief dragging his owner, dressed in their pajamas out. But sometimes there are things that break the routine and rhythm.

When you see an early morning arrest at an apartment complex, or a car goes flying by at a high rate of speed and you wonder why. Then you see that car turn into the emergency services drive and the driver jumps out and runs to a waiting ambulance and you watch it take off with flashing lights.

You wonder whether it's a bad accident on the highway or has someone called with a medical emergency from a home.

Oh "Good Morning" there are the ladies I see everyday at this time and then I wave to a friend that drives an elderly lady to her early morning job. There are the four cars at the racquetball courts. I wonder have they noticed anything on their drive down this morning or are they awake yet? Do they see the stars in crystal clarity or feel the bite of the wind where yesterday the temperature was balmy and the wind smelled of spring.

When you are curled up in bed or driving your car or truck, do you notice that it is getting lighter a little earlier each day now that we have passed the winter equinox, or do you even notice the street lights going off and on at irregular intervals, or do you notice the small rattle in the pickup that is pulling up to the stop sign and comment to yourself, "he has a rock in one of his hub caps."

If you are a part of that early morning or evening walking crowd take the time to look at what is happening around you and know that there is a routine and rhythm to a town, to a community, to life, and we could all benefit from slowing down to a walk and noticing it.

Rosie Stockton is a Colby resident and just might be submitting material for future columns in the Colby Free Press.

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. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. 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. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the *Free Press* allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of *Colby Free Press* readers. Thank you.

Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau

