

Opinion



Monday's salute

Thumbs



✓to **Jeff Quenzer** — activities director/assistant principal at Colby High School, and all volunteers, for the outstanding Orange & Black Classic.

✓to **Rosalie Seemann** — for that patriotic reminder that appeared in Friday's "At Week's End" column.

✓to **Sacred Heart School** — on the annual observance of Catholic Schools Week being celebrated through Friday..

✓to **Prairie Museum of Art and History** — on your video lunches honoring Kansas. (See page 4 Thursday's Jan. 22 *Free Press* for complete details).

✓to **Pedro Gonzalez** — Colby College Trojans' new head volleyball coach.

✓to **Leigh Ann Maurath** — 9-year-old Oakley student on your television debut on "Kids-a-Cookin'." You did very well.

✓to the **Scholar's Bowl Team** — and coach **Bernadine Samson** at Colby High School, on winning the Northwest Kansas League championship in recent competition at Oberlin.

✓to **Andy Baker** — the new face at the United States Department of Agriculture Service Center in Colby.

✓to the **Troiann Dance Team** — and coach **Danielle Freeman** at Colby Community College, on your super performances and the high honors and recognition accorded.

✓to **Ray Nolan** — director of the Fitness Lab at Colby Community College.

(This weekly salute is compiled by TD, the publisher. Questions, comments or submissions can be directed to him at td@nwkansas.com, phone 785 462-3963 or fax 785 462-7749.)

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail td@nwkansas.com. Comments need signature, daytime phone number and address.

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COLBY FREE PRESS

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

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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.

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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and 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.

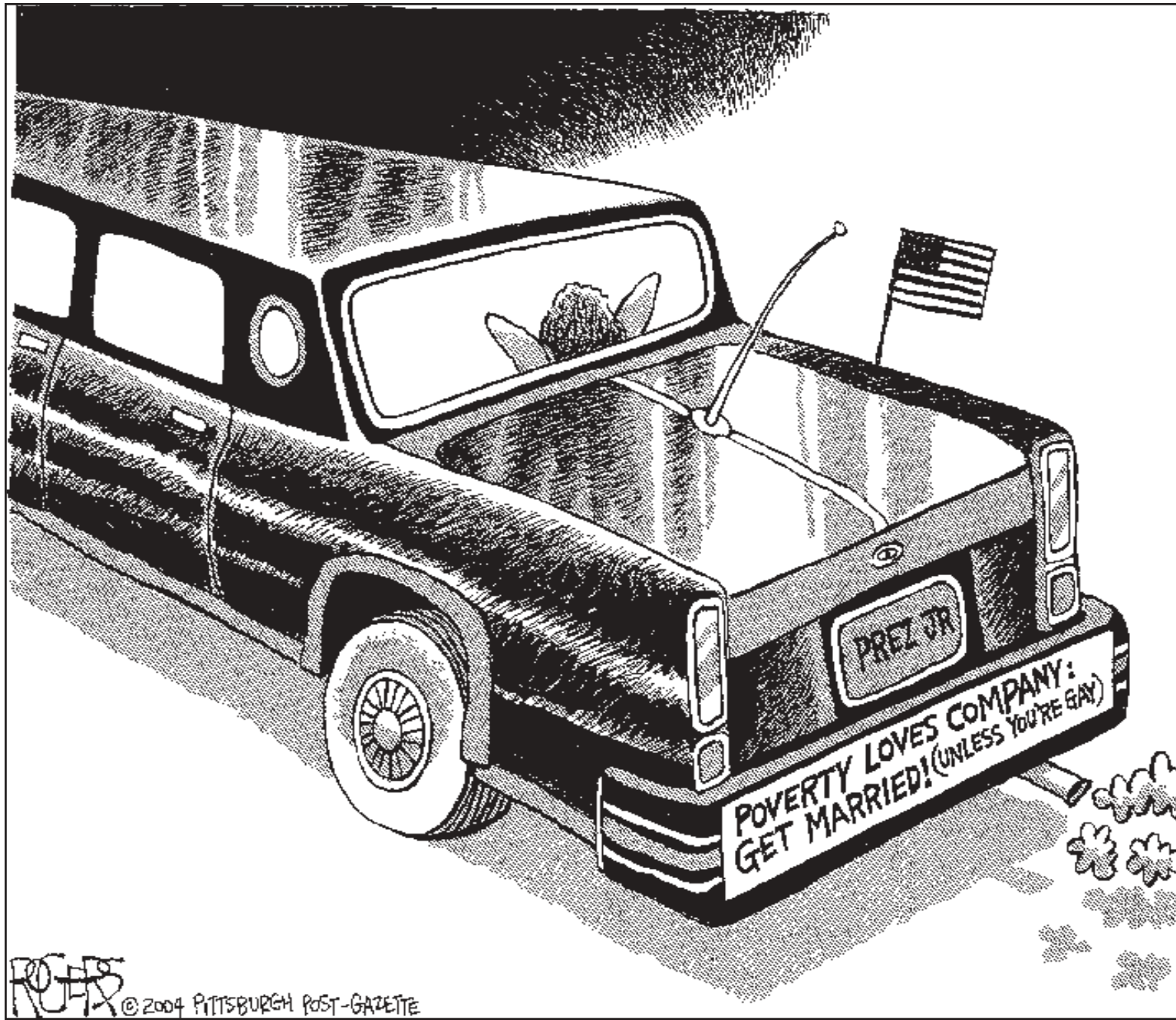
THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday.

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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



Dare to be stupid

Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path



Boredom's a great thing. It can spur you to new heights of stupidity.

However, there is a fine line between downright stupidity and cautious spontaneity.

Boredom usually leads me to contemplate things I normally wouldn't. That's what's so great about the Internet. Instant gratification at your fingertips.

Except sometimes it's not good to indulge. Too much information can result.

Over the past eight years, I've gotten pretty good at wasting time using the Internet. It's a good cure for boredom, sometimes.

Or, better yet, going out and seeing if something looks fun is another remedy.

Inspiration comes from the strangest places, sometimes it usually strikes somewhere on the road after a few rounds of Pepsi and sugar.

It's almost a MacGuyver kind of thing. Take the elements at hand and throw them into something you can use for a good time.

Like a kinder, gentler version of "Jackass."

What's wrong with a little good, clean fun if nobody gets hurt?

Or not getting caught.

I've had a couple of those episodes. It is, of course, classified information to protect the innocent.

The thing is, if you're going to do something stupid, it's best to realize that there is no one responsible for the consequences but yourself and if you get hurt, you better be ready to suck it up and get yourself taken care of.

Accountability is the biggest thing. If I'm riding my mountain bike and I do something stupid and get hurt, should I sue the person who built

the trail or the parking lot where I'm riding?

I don't think so. Why should I blame somebody else for my stupidity or lack of skill?

Starting small is the key and then working your way up to bigger things.

It's also important to remember that it takes a little bit of imagination.

Also, if inspiration hits, go with it. You never know what might happen if you just go with the flow.

No matter what happens, it should be a memorable experience. Or at least something that'll build solidarity with your friends.

Sometimes such actions result in a really good story to tell or one that you'll keep to yourself the rest of your life. The kind that when you look at your friends they look back and it's a shared moment that nobody will ever find out about.

Now, that could be the case — one of those things you don't want your parents to hear about, or the neighbors, or your kids. It could be embarrassing or an instant where you actually decided to go out on a limb (literally).

Either way, it'll be a moment of personal glory or infamy for all involved.

Another key is to remember that "stupid,"

besides meaning lacking intelligence, also means "irrational."

You don't have to do something insanely stupid. It can be something as small as putting Nerd candy in your Pepsi and drinking it.

So see, things don't have to be elaborate or bone-breaking.

Yes, it does sound disgusting but there are some things out there I find despicable, like liver and onions, so things do even out.

Doing something at home is an option, as long as you don't burn down the house or cause property or personal damage and most importantly, **don't do anything illegal.**

Stupid doesn't have to mean illegal. It can be irreverent and naughty without breaking the law.

Even a small act of defiance, as long as you think it's defiant and daring for yourself can be as exhilarating as hoping the breaks on your bike don't give out on that big hill or the cops don't stop you for having the stereo up almost too loud and you're going under the speed limit or daring your parents to catch you when you've got that wallpaper on the computer you know your mom will hate. It's all just a matter of personal choice.

So is the decision to do something "stupid."

The choice still is up to the individual.

So if you're bored, want to try something stupid and feel up to accepting the possible consequences, go ahead.

Dare to be stupid.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcx@nwkansas.com.

Here are some things to ponder

Ken Poland

• Ken's World

What's happening in Ken's World? Whether it be the winter doldrums, banalities of the political arena or just plain laziness, I'm having a hard time finding motivation or inspiration to share my observations. However, I'll try coming up with a few perceptions for you all to ponder.

How many remember back in the early '60s and all the promises that if we could just get the price of wheat down to \$1.25 from the \$2.50 level, we would enjoy prosperity? I'm not sure who prospered; I sure didn't. Wheat was \$2.50 when I planted my wheat crop and \$1.10 when I harvested it. Did it work for you? We learned to produce more per acre and that kept us in business, barely. Then the "Russian Trade" thing came along and the prices came up. Embargoes followed to keep domestic prices in line.

Then a little later we heard that the market was there if we would just produce more. We planted fence row to row. A few prospered quite well for a short period and then we had such a glut on the market that the prices collapsed and we couldn't raise enough bushels to pay the rent.

Every now and then someone gets on the bandwagon and goes on an evangelistic campaign to enlist the farmers support for "free markets;" get the government out of agriculture; we'll take on the world producers and beat them all. One of our farm organizations promoted holding actions to try competing with the grain giants. The cry went out that this action was immoral and unethical.

Hmm. I guess most folks have forgotten Joseph, that young man whose brothers sold him into slavery. Joseph had his chance a few years later. It seems he had instituted a holding action in Egypt and held surplus grain. It worked! His brothers came along and were willing to pay whatever the price was to get some grain. I'm not sure if our holding actions had held fast until the buyers came begging that we'd have had

the compassion that compelled Joseph to share with his hungry brethren at reasonable prices. Well... that little foray into ancient history isn't going to solve today's problems. So, let's get back to the reality of today's situation.

The truth is; we should eventually learn that ideology and promises just don't cut it. Reality has to be reckoned with sooner or later.

Reality? What is reality? Is there a difference between reality and ideology?

Ideology says we can increase military spending by 7- or 8-percent, expend 10 percent more for domestic security, fund a few "pork barrel projects," pay for a little military excursion that has already cost billions of dollars and balance the federal budget with whopping big tax cuts and tax refunds.

Reality says, "Who is kidding whom?" Four years ago we had a balanced budget and we were even reducing the federal debt. Today we are accumulating record deficits and listening to promises that tomorrow we'll cut those deficits in half. Reality should tell us that even cutting the deficits in half (which I'll believe when I see it, if the present administration stays in) will still be like trying to stay in business with \$1.10 prices and \$2.50 costs. As I recall, my land taxes doubled that year, in the early '60s, and the oil company canceled their lease. I don't recall that any of the production inputs came down in price. Nationally, we increase our spending and reduce our taxes. All the ideology in the world, not even

faith in God, is going to make those scenarios work.

Speaking of faith in God, maybe we need to consider some reality and ideology on that subject.

Ideology says we can put God back in the classrooms by posting the Ten Commandments and re-instituting general assembly prayer. Oh? Who says God left the classroom? Who says man can "put" God anywhere?

Reality tells me that God never left the classrooms... unless... those kids and teachers that claim to be Christians expelled him from their hearts at the school door. Most all Christian faith groups maintain or contend that the true believers have Christ in their hearts. I've always been under the impression that most all Christian faith groups say that God is where Christ is. My interpretation of the scriptures tells me that if Christ is in my heart he will never leave me.

Now, if I'm in the classroom then Christ must surely be there too. According to my Bible, Romans 8:38-39 tells me there ain't nuthin can separate me from God. Go read it and see if your Bible doesn't say that, too. Now, let me tell you that "nothing" includes the ACLU, Liberal Courts, Bleeding Heart Democrats and even the Compassionate Conservative Republicans.

Ideology of the Republican Party is that they are fiscally conservative and the Democrats are irresponsible tax and spend maniacs.

Reality is that the Reagan years and Bush II years (both Republicans) have been the wildest administrations ever at spending beyond their means.

My goodness, I'll have to hold any more of my inspirations and motivations to share them for another day. I don't want to overload your capacity to ponder.

Ken Poland is a Gem farmer and frequent contributor to this page. rcwinc@cheerful.com.