

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Journey to Mars in our best interest

On to Mars!
It's about time.
The exploration of space has moved hardly at all in the three and a half decades since Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon.
Now President Bush says it's time to push forward, to talk about a manned mission to Mars.
Yes, it'll cost billions.
Yes, the budget is already in the red.
And, yes, we've got to go.
Why, some will ask?
As much as anything, to advance the cause of knowledge.
Research to advance the space program brought us calculators and digital devices of all sorts, mini-computers and electronic cameras, all manner of advances which make everyday life so much richer.
These created whole new industries in manufacturing and services which help drive the world economy.
The knowledge necessary to get to the moon brought advances in medicine, engineering, psychology and business. The money may have been spent to boost a few men to that nearby neighbor, but it bought a lot more than a short vacation for a few guys.
Big projects often pay big dividends.
So far, there's no gold or treasure to show from moon exploration, of course. No diamonds, not secret formulas, no oil or energy.
But the benefits of going, the knowledge obtained along the way, those make the effort worthwhile.
And if man is going to press on into space, it'll have to be the United States that leads the way. We are the only power with the wealth and manpower to mount this effort.
We can, and should, include the rest of the world in our plans. The days of the space race are long gone. There is no one left to compete with.
So why not join hands with our friends, tap the brain power of the world's leading thinkers and mount one human effort for space exploration.
There's no doubt we'll be able to reach Mars, stopping first to build a base on our moon. The goal is attainable, if difficult.
Beyond that?
Who knows? The only thing that's certain is that we'll go.
That's the central truth. Humans are explorers. We always have pushed the envelope of knowledge, sailing off into the uncharted sea, pushing into the interior wilderness, studying the unknown stars.
To stay earthbound would be to deny our heritage.
We can't.
We have to explore.
The effort will be rewarded with knowledge and riches beyond belief.
And now we are taking the next logical step.
On to Mars!

Steve Haynes
Nor'West Newspapers

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.

COLBY FREE PRESS

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

freepress@nwkansas.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 A. Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcox@nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative
crystalr@nwkansas.com

Shelby Bain - Advertising Representative
smoses@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.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 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.

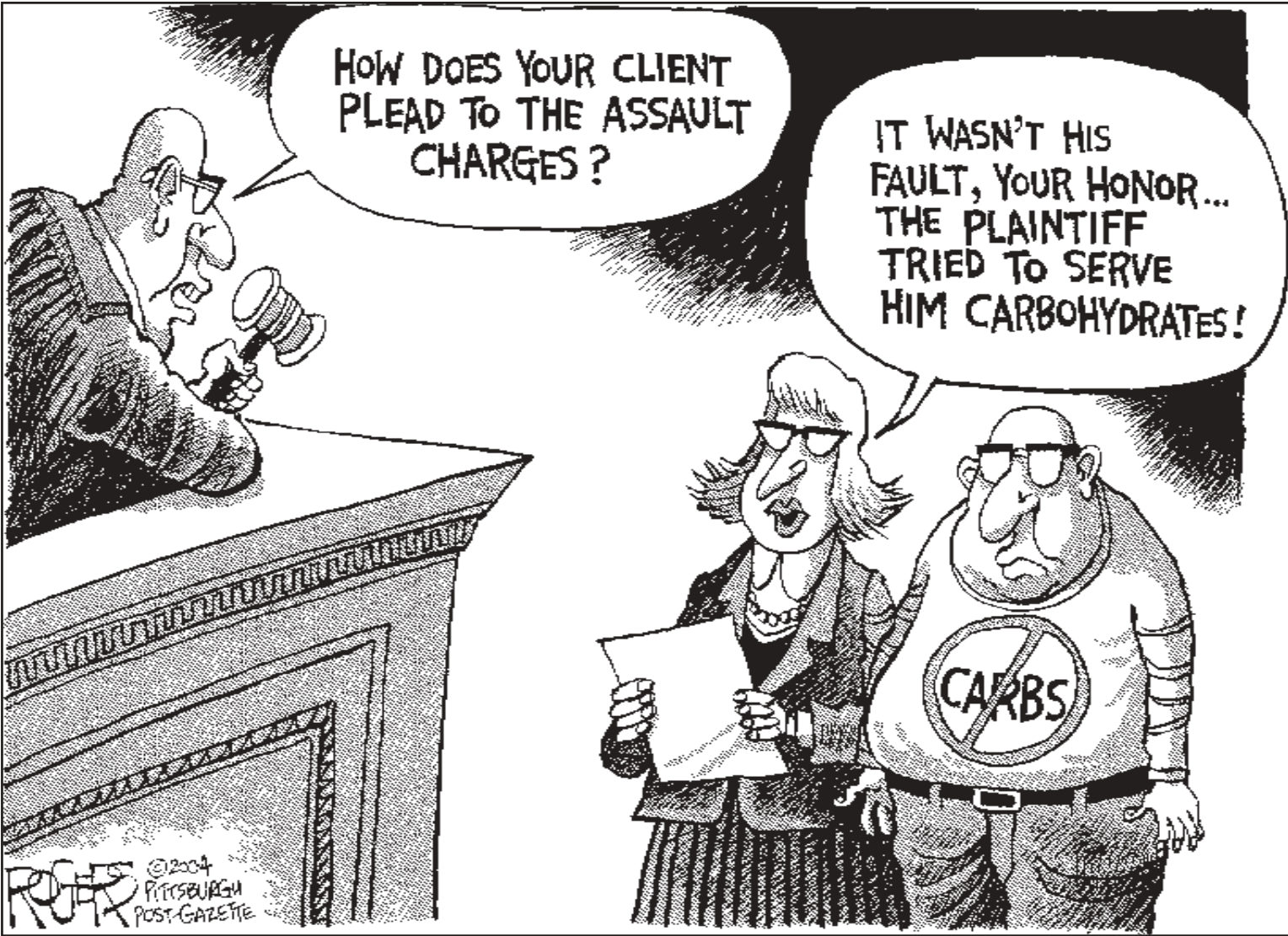
THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday.

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



Billboards just aren't outside things

BILLBOARDS. You see them all over the landscape. Various shapes and sizes. And colors. Too many billboards, unfortunately, carry messages that are too wordy. Those who lease these outdoor advertising venues should keep in mind that those who read them are racing along at 70-75 miles per hour and see them for only a split second or two. If you can't say what you want to say in a couple of words, then you've defeated your purpose. I've seen billboards with type size way too small and unless you stopped to read it you wouldn't have the slightest idea what it says. I've seen billboards promoting various communities that practically tell the entire history of those places. And the names of those towns are often lost in the message. Fewer words grab attention. And that is the purpose of billboards.

THERE'S another kind of 'billboard' that utilizes the same approach, but allows for a few more words, and illustrations. These 'billboards' are seen in newspapers, magazines and the like. We call them advertising. And they appear in your *Colby Free Press*. Unlike highway billboards, ours are seen for long periods of time. They are read while people aren't in motion. Seated. Relaxed. They are attractively designed to catch your eye. Not overly wordy, mind you, but containing enough words to engage you in the message. And illustrations seal the deal. People are known to remove some of the 'billboards' out of the paper to take with them when they shop. So, next time you are settling in with your *Free Press*, take special notice of our 'billboards,' courtesy the businessmen and businesswomen doing their level best to provide you with the goods and services you expect. Tell 'em you saw their 'billboard' in the *Free Press*.

I THINK President Bush is right on target with



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

his plan to put people on Mars. After all, our moon landing of many years ago proved that cheese played no part in its makeup. And if the Mars trip is successful, we will know for sure if the seventh largest planet is really a giant candy bar.

A FRIEND said the other day, "Boy, I'll be glad when those people in New Hampshire finally vote. I'm so tired of all this politics stuff." Got news for him. That's the first primary election in more primaries than you can count. And, even before New Hampshire voted Tuesday, the candidates in the Democratic race for the White House, were already fanning out to at least half dozen other states that have primaries next week. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

This will go on and on and on until Nov. 2 when we finally decide whether to keep President Bush or move someone else into the White House.

And it's not just on the national scene that political buzz will be the order of the day, but on the state and local level, too.
This is an election year and there's no place to hide. They — the candidates — will find you, and if they don't they have thousands of volunteers whose job is to shake every bush and turn every stone in search of a potential voter.
Last week it was the Iowa caucuses. This week

it's the New Hampshire primary. Next week it's a multi-state primary.
But look at it this way: when you sit down to Thanksgiving dinner 2004 you'll have something else to be thankful for.

THIS has to rank as history's worst typo: A new, young monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to help the other monks in copying the old canons and laws of the church by hand. He soon notices that all of the brothers are copying from copies; not from the original manuscript. So, the new monk goes to the abbot to question this, pointing out that if someone made even a small error in the first copy, it would never be picked up. In fact, that error would be continued in all of the subsequent copies.
The abbot says, "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son." So, he goes down into the dark caves underneath the monastery where the original manuscript is held as archives in a locked vault that hasn't been opened for hundreds of years. Hours go by and nobody sees the old abbot. The young monk gets worried and goes downstairs to look for him.
He finds the old abbot banging his head against the wall, and wailing, "We forgot the 'R'! We forgot the 'R'!" His forehead is bruised and bloody and he is crying uncontrollably.
The young monk asks the old abbot, "What's wrong, father?" With a choking voice, the old abbot replies, "The word is celebrate!"

HAVE a good evening!

Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkansas.com, (785) 462-3963 or fax (785) 462-7749.

Never quit learning



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

fering a tuition grant which pays a large portion of the costs of an education. You don't have to be a full-time student, either. Six hours are all they require for the grant so adults with full-time jobs and other responsibilities can take advantage as well as high school graduates.

Taking advantage of opportunity also means being willing to take responsibility. In school, it may mean doing extra work or spending extra time being tutored in areas where there are deficiencies.

In business, it may mean learning more about those things in which one is not as interested or proficient. A contractor may be great at his craft, but understanding business principles, which don't seem to have anything to do with how to build a house, will go a long way toward making his work more efficient and profitable.

Keeping up on current events also takes some hard work, but it is worth it as well.
There is much more to staying informed than

listening to the local gossip at the coffee shop.
If one wants to stay informed, he or she must take the time to read or attend some meetings. There are many groups even in a community as small as ours who make decisions which affect all of us.
For one thing, those decisions affect our taxes and that hits most of us where we live. I rented my home for most of my life. In fact, I bought my first home late last year. I used to think since I rented I didn't pay taxes. I thought that until someone asked me if my landlord paid taxes.
One of the other contributors to this page told me he couldn't understand anyone who didn't read at least the local paper. I had to agree.
By the way, I also read his column regularly because we do not always agree and because he takes the time to inform himself when he writes.
The point to that is not to read only that with which you agree. It's amazing what I learn from those with whom I disagree.
Also, take the time to read a book. Good literature, fiction included, expands the mind.
Finally, read the Bible. Patrick Henry said, "The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed."
I would have to agree.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelley@nwkansas.com.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

