

Opinion



Monday's Salute

Thumbs



✓to **Thomas County Farm Bureau** — those free loaves of bread on “Check- Out Day” drove home a powerful message.

✓to **Chad and Bret Bourquin** — formerly of Colby, sounds like Lipriddle, your band, has an awful lot of good things going for it right now. Continued success.

✓to **Dr. Jan Kraybill** — the community is looking forward to your return home for a weekend of music on Feb. 21-22. She is the daughter of Gerry Anschutz of Colby and the late Dick Anschutz. (Details page 4 of the Feb. 5 *Colby Free Press*.)

✓to **Shanda Draper and Brian Coon** — Colby Community College students named to the All-Kansas Academic Team. Impressive!

✓to **Matt Ellicott** — coach of the livestock judging team at Colby Community College, on the fine showing of your team in recent in-state and out-of-state competition.

✓to **Julie Ostermann** — your Little Cagers got spirit, too!

✓to **our Tourism Committee** — the Colby Information Center is really looking good!

✓to **Edward Ramey** — your Thursday Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series presentation at Colby College should draw a nice size crowd. (Topic details page 1, Feb. 6 *Colby Free Press*.)

✓to **High Plains Kansas After 5 Club** — your “Teen’s Night Out” program at the Shepherd’s Staff Conference Center in Rexford on Tuesday (7-8:30 p.m.) should be a good draw.

This weekly salute is compiled by Tom A. Dreiling, publisher. Questions, comments, submissions to td@nwkansas.com, fax (785) 462-7749, attn. TD, phone (785) 462-3963.

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Being single isn't so bad

Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path



With Valentine's Day coming up soon, I can't help but be reminded it's one of the most vile, despicable "holidays" on the face of the planet.

It only serves to remind single people of how much coupled-up people look down upon and scorn those who are alone. However, I did recently run across some vindication of sorts.

On a recent Friday night, I didn't have much of anything to do.

So, while cooking dinner, I left the TV on CNN for a laugh or two.

"360 with Anderson Cooper" was on. Now, while Mr. Cooper is an able talking head, he's no Tom Brokaw or Keith Olbermann.

Which is what I think he was trying to be like.

Anyway, his little show covers a variety of topics. Some of it was interesting, some of it wasn't but there was one piece at the end that caught my attention.

Cooper was grilling an author about her book, and being quite sarcastic while doing it.

It was called "Quirkyalone."

The author, Sasha Cagan, explained it's about people who would rather be alone and wait for the right person to come along instead of just chain dating or people who just prefer being alone, period.

Cooper said he didn't get it.

Now, being single myself, I got it pretty quick. What's so hard to understand?

Sometimes being single isn't great. But sometimes it's pretty cool.

I have freedom. If I want to pack up and go home for a weekend if I don't have anything going with work, I can do it.

Or road trip, even though that's harder in Kansas than Colorado.

And given some of the males I've met in the

past, I think it's better to be alone than be stuck with someone I don't really like just in order to say I'm with somebody.

I'd like to think that there's someone out there for me but I haven't even come close to finding them yet. It's not for lack of trying.

Being single doesn't mean being alone, or more importantly, unfulfilled or incomplete, although I do tend to be solitary sometimes.

I can be gregarious under the right circumstances but do sometimes prefer my lone wolf status. I have my family, and my friends, who I stay in contact with when I can. Thanks to the Internet, that's easier than ever.

Then there are all these Internet dating sites.

What gives? Is it really so hard these days for people to find a mate they have to resort to the Internet?

I pretty much think at this point, if it happens, it'll happen.

But I can't sit around and worry about it. I sometimes wonder what it would be like to have someone in my life, but at the same time, I consider right now is my time. Time to do what I want, if I can.

Not everyone gets the chance to fully know themselves before they ever commit to someone.

Luckily, I've had that chance. It hasn't been the easiest adjustment to make, but as they say, anything worth having always comes with a little pain.

One of my friends, before I moved to Denver in 2000, told me that being alone in the city would be hard.

Well, he was right, but at the same time, I learned that going out and enjoying yourself by yourself isn't a bad thing.

Hockey night at Woody's. It wasn't very often but sometimes I'd go into Golden for dinner and watch the Avs play instead of sitting at home, alone. At least I was in the company of other people, even if I was sitting by myself.

In spite of accepting and learning to embrace my lone wolf status, I still get a little jealous twinge when I see seemingly "happy" couples but I remind myself that at that moment, I have something they don't — my freedom.

If I want to watch a marathon of "Mail Call" on the History Channel, I can, or take off on a weekend.

It's not like being single is a bad thing, although some people can't deal with the stigma.

It's only a stigma to people who don't understand or who look down on someone because they aren't attached.

I am not defined by my status.

It's not who I am, only a part of the overall person, a status I would like to someday change, if possible.

Until then, I'll keep doing my own thing and enjoying the single life.

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

Different approach to chairing committee

What is the most important issue for you to stay alive? What might be the second and the third? You won't live long without your health or without shelter or food and water. You might live about 45 days without food, maybe 4 or 5 without water, a few hours to a few days without shelter but maybe only minutes without health. Health drives everything. Without it you will not be able to work, build shelter or find food.

I chair the Health and Human Services Committee in the Legislature. Our issues define your access to, affordability of and availability to health and the maintenance of it. My committee is, in my view, the single most important legislative committee of any other committee in the Legislature. We deal with the most important but not necessarily the most immediate concerns of your life.

Every legislative committee of which I am aware gives the chair total control over the agenda, what is discussed, when issues are discussed and when a vote is made. After it gets to the chamber the discussion can be controlled to a large extent by the committee chairman. The opposite chamber has an equivalent committee that reviews legislation following passage in the other chamber. If I want to block an issue it never gets out of committee. If I really want to press an issue for passage I can hold legislation desired from the other chamber that they desire until they



Rep. Jim Morrison

• Your Man in Topeka

pass my legislation. That is one explanation for closing times of the session being "lengthy and hostile."

That is the "norm" for most Legislative action today in Kansas, other states and in the U.S. Legislature. The "you pass my legislation or I will not pass your legislation" mindset is why so much "pork" and deals not necessarily beneficial to the community as a whole is placed into law.

If this Health Committee project and a counterpart to it in the Senate Utilities are successful the entire legislative process will begin a change to greater openness, easier constituent interaction and input on issues and a great deal more oversight on what our elected officials are up to. The pilot project is attracting great interest from media, watchdog organizations and other legislators throughout the country. Tune to my Legislative web page at <http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison>

[/www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison](http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison) for a link to the committee homepage which will allow you to receive live video and audio from the committee room (526-S).

You also can follow along on our agenda and obtain a copy of the testimony while it is being presented and listen to the questions we ask of the conferees as we ask them.

Also, unlike other committees, I believe that it is helpful to have other members have opportunity to chair the meetings so you will see the chairmanship passed to other committee members. That includes Democrats as well as republicans. I have never known of any other committee chairman to had over control of a committee to another legislator unless the regular chairman was absent then the vice-chair would normally take over the committee. I just happen to believe that sometimes it is better for issues to be managed by others that have greater interest or knowledge of the subject being heard.

So, you will not always see me chairing my own committee. National interest in this project is likely to increase.

For more information or to ask my help on any state issue please contact me at jmorrison@ink.org or (785) 296-7676 or mail to State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St., Room 171-W, Topeka, Kan.. 66612.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

