

# Opinion



## Monday's Salute

### Thumbs to...

✓**Colby Lady Eagles** — on winning the 4A sub-state championship at Ulysses on Saturday, and good luck at state later this week in Salina!

✓**Colby Trojan Ladies** — on your big Region VI Tournament win Saturday night at Salina, and good luck against Dodge City tonight.

✓**Trooper Terry Kummer** — for sharing with the kiddies at Puddle Duck Preschool.

✓**Sheila Frahm** — on your latest board of consultants appointment.

✓**Dr. Brewster Kellogg** — for choosing Colby.

✓**Scott Snyder** — on your appointment to the Thomas County Fair Board.

✓**Florence Strange** — on your 92nd birthday on Feb. 29, even though it was only the 23rd time you were able to celebrate your birthday, thanks to Leap Year. Florence, now of WaKeeney, is formerly of Winona.

✓**Butch's Body Shop** — looks like you guys out-sniffed the dog sniffers. A cool discovery, indeed!

✓**Deel Olson** — on your appointment as Summers Township Clerk.

*This column is compiled each Monday by TD, the newspaper's publisher. Submissions, comments or questions can be directed to him at [td@nwkansas.com](mailto:td@nwkansas.com), (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](mailto:td@nwkansas.com).

### Addresses of elected officials:

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- 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
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: [jmorriso@ink.org](mailto:jmorriso@ink.org) web:<http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison>
- State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: [sclark@ink.org](mailto:sclark@ink.org)



## Sad state of affairs

**Tisha Cox**  
• Off The Beaten Path



The New York Rangers fire sale started Tuesday, March 2. For me, it's the beginning of the end again. They sent winger Alexei Kovalev to Montreal and Petr Nedved to the Edmonton Oilers.

The Rangers have the highest payroll in the National Hockey League. They have a lineup, that for hockey, is comparable to that of baseball's New York Yankees. However, unlike George Steinbrenner's roster moves, the Rangers' changes haven't been a success.

How does a \$95 million payroll sound with no playoff appearance since 1997?

At least Glen Sather, the general manager, had the good sense to fire himself as coach a few weeks ago. Too bad it was too late in the season to make much of a difference.

The playoffs start at the end of April and it would take miracle from God for the team to turn around another dismal season.

It's got me wondering who's next? Eric Lindros? The last time I looked, he was out with a concussion but the Vancouver Canucks are supposed to be at the top of the list when it comes to interest in Lindros.

Then I guess I shouldn't be surprised if he ends up somewhere else before the Tuesday, March 9 trade deadline.

Mark Messier is more than likely to retire after the season ends and thanks to abysmal play, the Rangers' season is going to end early again for the seventh straight year. So much for getting to see the Rangers in NYC.

I've skipped out on so much hockey this year because there aren't a lot of really inspiring reasons to watch.

My team's in the tank, the Avs aren't the team they should be with a bunch of no-names on the

roster and there's the looming shadow of a potential lockout next season.

So tell me why I should watch. Love of the game? I haven't been to a game in two years because tickets prices keep going up because the league is bleeding money while the teams are bleeding fans for cash.

Teams like the Avs have their star player sitting out hurt (allegedly), the guys teams are paying through the nose for aren't producing and coverage of hockey in this country isn't what it should be.

Plus ESPN has a nasty habit of only showing teams like New Jersey, Detroit and Dallas. If you're a fan of any other team in the league, those are the big three most fans don't like. But I guess the non-hockey watching rest of the country knows more about those three teams because they're "big" winners so the network's just going to pander to those people.

Take a look—it's behind professional baseball, football, basketball and college football and hoops.

Why? People say they don't understand.

At this point, there isn't anything hard to understand about where this hockey season is heading.

It has been a dismal year with few high points

and with the regular season winding down in less than six weeks, there's not much time left for too many last-minute heroics.

Mario Lemieux's been out most of the season with a hip injury and the Penguins have won barely more than a dozen games. Last time I looked, they had 45 losses. Forty-five losses in an 82-game regular season and Lemieux still wants a new arena for the city?

Colorado's Peter Forsberg is out with a groin injury. The conventional wisdom in Denver is that Mr. Forsberg hasn't got much of an injury but is instead being a prima donna. If there's one time general manager Pierre Lacroix needs to give a player a wake-up call, it would be now to give Forsberg a reality check.

Goalie Dominic Hasek unretires and rejoins Detroit. He then gets hurt and announces he's not playing the rest of the season. So they call up Curtis Joseph, who's looking forward to going elsewhere after Hasek comes back and make him the starting goalie.

Players getting their chains yanked, fans getting cheated. Neither side is happy about the possibility of a lockout.

There will be no winners in the event of a lockout. The biggest losers will be the fans. Ultimately, they will bear the burden of helping pay higher player salaries and bigger and better arenas with more luxury boxes through increased ticket prices.

If this is the best the NHL has to offer right now, maybe it is time for a change. Just don't expect me to feel sorry if there is a lockout. The league has no one to blame but itself.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press.*

## Beware of drug discount cards

**Jim Morrison**  
• Capitol Review



Medicare-approved drug discount cards will be available in 2004 to help you save on prescription drugs. Medicare will contract with private companies to offer new drug discount cards until a Medicare prescription drug benefit starts in 2006. A discount card with Medicare's seal of approval can help you save 10-25% on prescription drugs.

Please beware that you may be approached by what seems to be a reputable company representing Medicare to purchase a prescription plan or card. Please watch carefully that any card you accept or purchase has the Medicare seal of approval printed on it. The bogus cards which will be available for purchase may offer only very limited purchasing power or very limited access. Are they legal? Yes, because they do offer some sort of a benefit even if it is presented in a very vague or misleading way.

After prescription drug benefits are added to Medicare in 2006, all people with Medicare will be able to enroll in plans that cover prescription drugs. Plans might vary, but in general, this is how they will work:

- You will choose prescription drug plan and pay a premium of about \$35 a month
- You will pay the first \$250 (called a "deductible.")
- Medicare then will pay 75% of costs between \$250 and \$2,250 in drug spending. You will pay only 25% of these costs.
- You will pay 100% of the drug costs above \$2,250 until you reach \$3,600 in out-of-pocket spending.
- Medicare will pay about 95% of the costs after you have spent \$3,600.

Some prescription drug plans may have additional options to help you pay the out-of-pocket costs.

### Destination Sales Tax Debate

HB 2599 repeals sales tax statutes concerning destination sourcing and restores sourcing laws that were in place prior to the passage of HB 2005 last year. That legislation required that Kansas adopt only destination-based sourcing for retail and compensating use taxes. Except for utility, telecommunication, and contracts over \$10,000, the sales tax would be charged based on the retailer's location until the U.S. Congress enacts legislation authorizing states that have adopted

the Streamlined Sales Tax Uniformity provisions to require remote retailers to collect use tax on remote sales. Retailers who are sourcing sales based on destination would be allowed to continue and still be compliant with this bill.

The bill also prohibits enactment of any legislation that would provide compensation to out-of-state retailers unless compensation is provided also for in-state retailers. Technical changes related to tax rates are included.

HB 2599, if passed, will reduce State General Fund revenues after FY 2005. This proposal would take Kansas out of compliance with the Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement, which could cause the state to lose the voluntary compensating use tax remittances from those remote retailers who are collecting now (Wal-Mart, Target, etc.) or will in the future (Amazon.com). The loss would result because Kansas is one of the states that adopted the Streamlined Sales Tax uniformity requirements, including destination-based sourcing. These voluntary remittances are expected to grow substantially in the future.

I would like to have the Legislature keep our current destination tax legislation but place various exemptions to the regulations such as businesses grossing less than five million dollars a year would be allowed to stay with the earlier sales tax system. Hopefully that amendment is successful. Otherwise I am not so sure it is a good idea to place Kansas in an "out of compliance" situation with Federal Law. The ramifications of being out of compliance and potential loss of funding may cost more than most Kansans are willing to pay.

A few controversial issues yet to be debated include licensing of abortion providers (not likely to become law), changes in school finance (I don't expect a new law — only discussion and debate), HCR 5034 is a constitutional amend-

ment which Beginning in FY 2006 (July 1, 2005), the state must have prior to voter approval for any of the following:

- A new state tax;
- A tax rate increase;
- An extension of any expiring tax;
- Any tax policy change which would directly cause a net tax revenue gain; or
- Any new bonds issued, except for refinancing existing bonds.

Limitation would also be placed on State revenues, State spending, and the emergency reserve fund. (I do not expect this to pass the legislature)

So, the main issue(s) truly before us are the budget, new funding for schools and many "people" programs involving problems that any of us at anytime could find ourselves needing state assistance. Most of the debate regarding spending will just have to be delayed until we know something from the Supreme Court regarding education and from state income estimates which we will not have until April.

### Political posturing

Prior to that expect to see a start of the 2004 campaign session with many Legislators starting their campaigns with amendments, debate and sometimes just plain "argumentative behavior" that are only posturing for their reelection. In other words as you hear about actions in the Kansas Legislature from here on be careful in what you accept as "actual" activity directed toward helping the citizens of Kansas. We are entering the time I most dislike — **political posturing** for the sake of appearance and less attention to the real problems of the State of Kansas (this is already been going on at the Federal level for several months).

### Thanks...

Thanks for the honor of being your representative to Topeka. I work hard to help you with whatever you may need and will continue to do so. I will not participate in this crazy political "posturing" process. What you see is what you get with me and I do all I can to make sure you get a fair voice to all policy makers in the state.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Rep. Jim Morrison (R-Colby) represents the 121st House District. [jmorriso@ink.org](mailto:jmorriso@ink.org), (785) 296-7676.*

### COLBY FREE PRESS

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

[freepress@nwkansas.com](mailto: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 (TD) Dreiling - Publisher**  
[td@nwkansas.com](mailto:td@nwkansas.com)

### NEWS

**Patty Decker - Editor**  
[pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com)

**Tisha Cox - General Assignment**

### ADVERTISING

**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative**  
[crystalr@nwkansas.com](mailto:crystalr@nwkansas.com)

**Shelby Bain - Advertising Representative**  
[smoses@nwkansas.com](mailto:smoses@nwkansas.com)

### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager**  
**Jeanette Applegate- Bookkeeping & Ad Building**  
**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
[support@nwkansas.com](mailto: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**