

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Our grain bin center is unique showcase

Now that it's done, for all practical purposes, the new Colby Visitor's Center, located across the street from Arby's and Taco John's, is a unique structure unlike any other in the territory. Anyway we haven't seen anything that comes close to resembling it.

We like it.

Many folks from around the county and area are talking about it — favorably, and otherwise. But that's why it's built the way it is, to draw attention and chatter.

Hats off to those whose visionary goggles saw what perhaps most of us didn't. Those palm trees you see coming off I-70, the visitor's center — those are the unusual so designed to grab the attention of those we try to lure into this community as they make their way east and west on Interstate-70.

The visitor's center is a small grain bin, that's why it looks like it looks. Kansas is known for its grain bins. We could have erected just another one of those run-of-the-mill structures and called it a visitor's center, but it wouldn't do what this thing does.

"What's that?" is surely the question asked time and again by those not familiar with this state's agricultural inventory. They stop. They go inside. They get a feel for this community, for this area and for the state in general. They leave a bit more educated about this place called Kansas.

The center, we might add, is not just for the curious cruisers from out yonder, but also a place for you to visit. Go see it.

You might also be surprised.

*Tom (TD) Dreiling
Free Press Publisher*

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@nwkans.com, fax (785) 462-7749 or drop them of at the office. Include the writer's signature, address, and a daytime phone number.

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 web:<http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso>

State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: sclark@ink.org

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Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkans.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkans.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcx@nwkans.com

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative
crystalr@nwkans.com

Kathy Brooks - Advertising Representative
kbrook@nwkans.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkans.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkans.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

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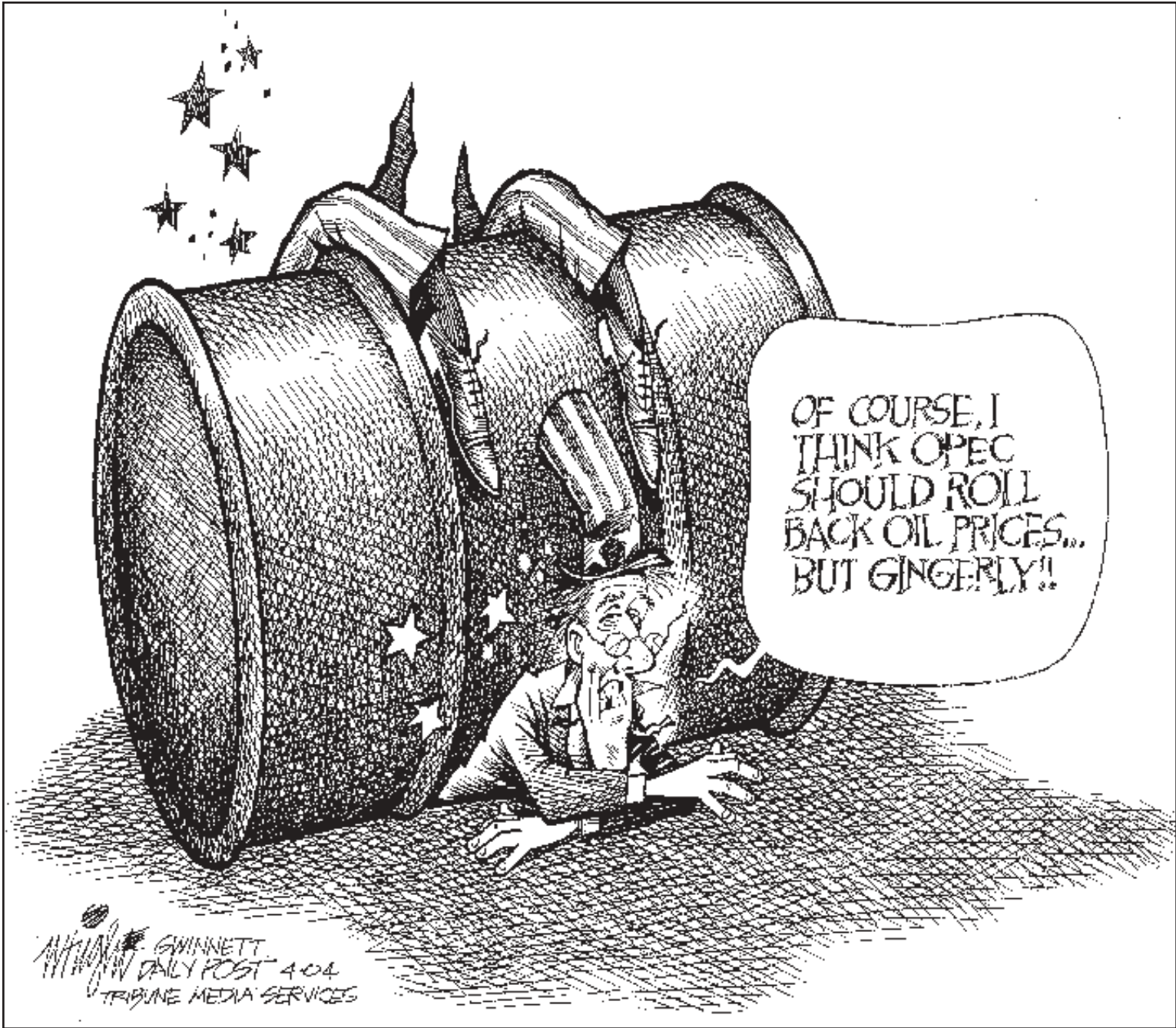
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Maybe you belong on this family tree

CAN you help with this person's search?

The following came to me in the mail (regular, not 'e').

It reads:

The pioneer Indian missionary who brought the first printing press to Kansas ins 1833 was the Rev. Jotham Meeker. He set the press up at Shawnee Mission and published the first book and first newspaper in what is now Kansas.

He and his wife, Eleanor Richardson Meeker, moved to the Ottawa area in 1837 and lived with and served the Ottawa Indians until their deaths in the 1850's.

I have reason to believe there may be Meeker descendants living in the Colby or Menlo areas. Three grandchildren were Thomas Cromwell Simpson, Stella Simpson Wood, and H. Clay Simpson. The first had children Roy, Lucille, James and Charles Simpson. The latter Simpson had seven children: Barry Fulton, Raymond Earl, Grace, Blanche, Rosalia, Matthew Treemole and Lois Ione.

On April 23, 24 and 25 there will be a reunion of descendants of Jotham and Eleanor Richardson Meeker at Ottawa, Kan. It will feature a banquet, a program about the Meekers' amazing work among the Ottawa, a bus tour of sites related to them, an Indian powwow, and a church service on the site of the log mission church.

I would be happy to hear from any descendants, and would encourage them to attend. I may be reached at 816 325-7577.

Thank you!

John Mark Lambertson
National Frontier Trails Museum
318 W. Pacific St.
Independence, Mo. 64050

THINGS are picking up on the local political scene. Undersheriff Mike Baughn (Republican) is the only sheriff wannabe to have filed. His boss, Sheriff Tom Jones (Democrat), is hanging up his pistol after a lot of years of service. The District 3 county commission seat has attracted three candidates so far, Bill Miller Jr., Bert Stramel and



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

Ken Christiansen. All are Republicans so they'll be duking it out in the Aug. 3 primary. The seat is held by Duane Dawes, a Democrat, who hasn't said whether he'll run again. The other commission seat — District 2 — is also up for grabs and is currently in the possession of Republican Glen Kersenbrock. He hasn't said what he's going to do and nobody has shown an interest in that seat so far. Other seats on the ballot are county attorney (Allan Taylor, Democrat); county treasurer (Doneta Applebury, Democrat); register of deeds (Maybelle Moore, Republican); and county clerk (Tracey Perkins, Democrat). Township trustees and precinct committeemen and committeewomen are also ballot fillers. Republican Rep. Jim Morrison, 121st District and Republican Sen. Stan Clark, 40th District, are also up for voter reconfirmation. We'll be doing a more complete and detailed report on the filing activity later this week or early next. The deadline to file is noon on June 10. Thanks to those who are actively involved in the system and those climbing on board.

GUESS what brought a loud round of applause in our office Tuesday afternoon? The thunder and the rain! If that didn't sound good and look nice (meaning, of course, the thunder and the rain). Man, bring it on — oops, because it's Mother Nature who does these things, I guess I should have said, "Woman, bring it on!"

TALK about learning how it works...The Pope, the Rev. Billy Graham, and the Rev. Oral Roberts were in a three-way plane crash over the Pacific Ocean. They all died and of course they

all went to heaven together.

"Oh, this is terrible!" exclaims St. Peter. "I know you guys think we summoned you here, but really and truthfully this is just one of those unexpected coincidences. Since we weren't expecting you, your quarters just aren't ready. We can't take you in, and we can't send you back, so we'll have to pursue other options."

Then he got an idea. He picked up the phone: "Lucifer, this is St. Peter. I have these three guys up here. They're ours, but we weren't expecting them, and we gotta fix the place up for 'em. I was hoping you could put them up for a while. It'll only be a for a few days. What d'ya say?"

Reluctantly, the devil agreed. However, two days later St. Peter got a call. "Peter, this is Lucifer. Hey, you gotta come get these guys. They're about to wreck the place! This Pope fellow is forgiving everybody, the Graham guy is saving everybody, and that Roberts fellow has raised enough money to buy air conditioning!"

Yep, that's how it works!

I RECEIVED an e-mail with photos earlier in the week that showed the 6 homes of Sen. John Kerry spread all over the globe, so to say. As I add up the figures, I see the 6 homes cost \$37.2 million. I assume some of the homes are his and some belong to his wife, who is the heir to the Heinz fortune, as in ketchup. And what do I have to say about all that? "I'm jealous!"

TWO aging guys are talking over a cup of coffee. One says, "Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me — I want people to know why I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved."

HAVE a good evening!

Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkans.com.

The death of common sense

It has been said that one of the greatest drawbacks to common sense is that it isn't. If it was — common, that is — many of the things going on in our world should stop.

I read that the parents of a young American college student killed during a protest against the Israeli wall by an Israeli bulldozer protested at a Caterpillar stockholders meeting because of the death of their daughter.

Of course Caterpillar denied any responsibility, but maybe we should have a cooling off period before one buys any heavy machinery just in case.

There are a couple of problems with this scenario. If she really believed the Israelis were as heartless as they are made out to be, why, then, did she get in front of that bulldozer? And why are her parents harassing Caterpillar instead of Israel?

The answer to the first question was that she probably didn't really believe she would get run over. There is no answer to the second question unless it is just money and I don't see Caterpillar shelling out bucks over this.

The real answer to both is lack of common sense. Common sense should tell us to do those things most likely to achieve the desired result from the people with which we are interacting. Most often, however, we do that which we think would cause us to react in a certain way.

If the other guy doesn't think like we do we're



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

in trouble. Along that line, has anyone wondered why the anti-gun lobby isn't screaming to disarm Iraq? If gun control works in America, why won't it work in Iraq?

All we have to do is talk to the ruling council to pass stricter gun laws and the guns will go away, right? Of course the guns won't go away. For one thing, those with the guns aren't really what you'd call law-abiding types.

Wait a minute! Neither are the ones we want disarmed here in America! Could it be that gun control really doesn't work for common sense reasons?

Could it be that it isn't Caterpillar's fault an Israeli soldier ran over a young lady during a protest? Could it be that isn't Smith & Wesson's fault when someone shoots himself because he didn't follow common sense rules?

Could it be we are responsible for our own actions? It would solve a lot of problems if we would just admit it.

We've got people suing McDonald's because they got fat on cheeseburgers, French fries and chocolate shakes. I have a weakness for such fare myself and my physique shows it, but I'm not suing anybody because common sense tells me if I don't eat as much I won't be so fat!

The big problem with having common sense is responsibility. You see, if you have some common sense and a little intelligence you become responsible for your own actions.

None of us wants to admit we're dumb, so we just claim we didn't think about the consequences. I don't know about you, but I'd rather be thought of as a person who uses limited intelligence to its fullest than as someone who is squandering a perfectly good mind.

Actually, it doesn't take a lot of intelligence to get ahead. It does, however, take a lot of common sense and the willingness to use it.

Maybe it is the folks without common sense who have made it, though. Remember the lady who made a mint by getting scalded by hot (imagine that) coffee from McDonnell's.

Maybe I should sue someone for my own stupidity and get rich.

One problem — I don't think I could get enough to buy back my self-respect.

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