

# Opinion



## Letters

### Let's do our part

To the Colby Free Press:

Most areas in northwest Kansas are struggling to maintain population. Thomas County is the second largest of the 20 counties in northwest Kansas, and our citizens can help fight the battle of shrinking population.

The spirit which made us a growing, caring community can continue if we will do our part!

Thomas County and the City of Colby are sponsoring a cleanup effort to improve the visual image we project throughout our county. Our image conveys a powerful message to prospective new residents and businesses, and reflects the type of people we are.

We are asking you to *Clean Up Thomas County* during the week of May 3-8 by giving the area a needed spring cleaning and by planting trees, shrubs, and flowers to enhance the first impression of visitors to the area.

In Colby, service organizations are being asked to make an extra commitment to help *Celebrate Colby*. Please call the City Office at 462-4410 and tell them which park or area you will "spring clean."

All individuals can help our city by making an effort to clean and dispose of those unsightly items cluttering your yards, removing vehicles which no longer have a purpose, and pulling those weeds which detract from the beauty of our city. Whenever possible, help neighbors who can't manage the entire cleanup for themselves.

Business owners can help by cleaning the alleyways behind your buildings as well as the areas easily visible to everyone.

**Carolyn Armstrong**  
**Colby City Manager**

**Gerry Bieker**  
**Colby Public Utilities Director**  
(Letter #28)

### Road complaint

To the Colby Free Press:

I am writing to voice protest on that north mile and a half of Highway #391 from the Rawlins-Thomas County line to Chad Briney's corner. This road connects Brewster and McDonald, I-70 and #36 and is a well traveled road but that mile and a half is a disgrace!

Rawlins County put a good hard rock all weather base from McDonald to the Rawlins-Thomas County line. It does look like Thomas County could do the same. In the first place there was no reason to tear up the oil on that anyway. That was a foolish move.

I work in Thomas County and put a lot of money back there. Others are saying the same thing and we feel that working people who have jobs to get to, shouldn't have to fight a stretch of road like that, especially when something can be done to fix it right. By this we don't mean dragging a bunch of soft dirt out of the ditches. Every time there's any moisture it is a mess. This is not progress.

**Rosalind Bundy**  
**Brewster**  
(Letter #29)



## Right now I don't like Bush or Kerry



### Tom Dreiling

#### • My Turn

the terrorists we're battling in other places around the globe.

I hope those knucklehead television talk show fools wake up soon and realize they are fanning the flames of discontent by continuing to pit one side against the other about some Vietnam War medals and how one served or didn't serve in the National Guard. WHO CARES!

I care about those in uniform now and I care about your kids, who just may be plucked from their cozy surroundings and shipped "over there."

If you care maybe you ought to get a message off to Senators Roberts and Brownback and Congressman Moran and tell them to get hold of their party leaders and demand they get this thing back on track. If a Democrat, contact Rep. Dennis Moore and tell him the same thing. They have enough influence to get things done. Keep the pressure on.

I can stand issues, but I can't stand nit-picking stupidity.

There, I guess that's enough respect to show the man and the wannebe man for today.

**WHY** is it that our children can't read a Bible in school, but they can in prison?

**NEW** definition for stress: that's when you wake up screaming and then you realize you haven't fallen asleep yet.

**ONE** woman to another: My husband says I never listen to him. At least I think that's what he said.

**IN JUST** a couple of days, we will enter the final month of the school year. That's right, the final month of the school year. I know you are thinking, "Where has the time gone?" You know where its gone. And when the school bells ring to usher in another school year in late August you will ask, "Where has the time gone?" You know where its gone. We all know where time is going but we don't want to admit it. Time, as you well know, races according to the stages of life you are in. For me it travels so fast that I have trouble hanging on. But I do. The Good Book says something about our time on earth being no longer than a snap of the finger (those aren't the actual words, but you get the drift). Live it fully, dressed in positives. It's easier that way. The sun is brighter that way. The challenges are less difficult that way. We get out of life what we put into it. Invest well!

**HERE** are a few home remedies you might want to consider:

- A mouse trap, placed on top of your alarm clock, will prevent you from rolling over and going back to sleep when you hit the snooze button.

- If you have a bad cough, take a large dose of laxatives; then you will be afraid to cough.

- High blood pressure sufferers: simply cut yourself and bleed for awhile, thus reducing the pressure in your veins.

- Clumsy? Avoid cutting yourself while slicing vegetables by getting someone else to hold them while you chop away.

**EVER** give any thought to this?: If raising children was going to be easy, it never would have started with something called labor!

**HAVE** a good evening!  
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*Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. E-mail: dreiling@nwkansas.com.*

## Iraq sort of resembles Vietnam

The war in Iraq is now a year old; almost as old as President Bush's "mission accomplished" performance. You have to wonder what mission he was talking about. This, basically, is what we were promised by this administration on the eve of the war:

- √Weapons of Mass Destruction — chemical, biological and perhaps even nuclear weapons — in the hands of Saddam, ready for use.

- √Evidence that Saddam was a kingpin in the international terrorist movement, colluding with Osama bin Laden to do us ill.

- √A welcoming Iraqi population that would greet us as liberators, sort of like Paris after World War II but with turbans.

- √A quick resumption of order after which we would install a user-friendly government and start building a prosperous, democratic society that would serve as a beacon of enlightenment to all of the Middle East.

Which one of those promises has been redeemed? We have yet to find a Weapon of Mass Destruction much more lethal than a rifle grenade; evidence points to the fact that Saddam and Osama were rivals, rather than allies; only part of the population welcomed us warmly and many of them have since turned against us; and instead of order, chaos has reigned in much of the country and is getting worse.

And that's not all of it. Just before the war, Gen. Eric K Shinseki, the army's chief of staff, told Congress that he expected the occupation of Iraq would take "something on the order of several hundred thousand troops."

### Donald Kaul

#### • Guest Commentary

His bosses went ballistic. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, one of the chief architects of the invasion, called the estimate "wildly off the mark." He said the population would be friendly. He said that many nations that didn't back us on the war would sign up to help us.

"I would expect that countries like France will have a strong interest in assisting Iraq in reconstruction," he said. He forgot to tell the French.

Nor was it just Wolfowitz by any means. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also scoffed at Shinseki's estimates and when the Secretary of the Army sided with the general, Rumsfeld fired him.

When experts estimated that the war would cost us \$95 billion in the first year, Wolfowitz said it wouldn't. Those experts ignored the fact that Iraq was a wealthy country, he said. "To assume we're going to pay for it all is just wrong."

In other words, this administration has been wrong at every turn and continues to be wrong.

During the past two weeks a bad situation has become dramatically worse, with signs that even

those who rejoiced when Saddam was deposed are now turning against us. When militia of a militant Shiite cleric ambushed and killed four U.S. mercenaries in Falluja, the larger population turned out to burn their bodies and hang two of the corpses from a bridge.

As the week went on the attacks against our troops increased in intensity and began to spread until Iraqis who were neither followers of Saddam nor the militant cleric were joining in against us.

And still we cling to the fiction that we will "turn over control" of the country to an Iraqi authority on June 30, the deadline set by the president. I suppose we'll turn something on June 30, but control won't be it. Not only do we not have any control to turn over, there is no legitimate Iraqi authority to turn it over to.

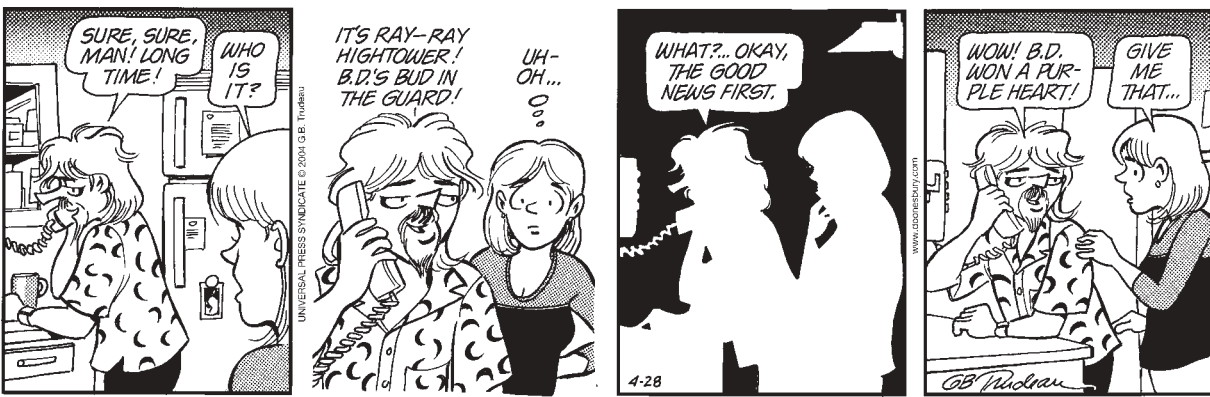
The gang who got us into this mess — Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Perle and the rest — remains as clueless today as it was the day before the war. After a week of vicious attacks on our troops, Paul Bremer, the top American official in Iraq, said: "Basically Iraq is on track to realize the kind of Iraq that Iraqis want and Americans want, which is a democratic Iraq."

That sounds suspiciously like the "light at the end of the tunnel" we followed in Vietnam, to our bitter regret.

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*Donald Kaul (donald.kaul2@verizon.net), recently retired as Washington columnist for the Des Moines Register. He has covered the nation's capital for 29 years, winning a number of awards along the way.*

### Doonesbury

#### • Gary Trudeau



### COLBY FREE PRESS

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

freepress@nwkansas.com

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Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

**Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher**  
td@nwkansas.com

#### NEWS

**Patty Decker - Editor**  
pdecker@nwkansas.com

**Tisha Cox - General Assignment**  
tcox@nwkansas.com

#### ADVERTISING

**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative**

crystal@nwkansas.com

**Kathy Brooks - Advertising Representative**

kbrook@nwkansas.com

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager**

**Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building**  
japplegate@nwkansas.com

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**

support@nwkansas.com

#### NOR'WEST PRESS

**Jim Bowker - General Manager**

**Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight**

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