

Opinion



Monday's Salute

Thumbs to...

✓**Thomas County Sheriff Tom Jones, Deputy Rod Taylor, Logan County Sheriff Pat Parsons, Undersheriff Jason Moses and Kansas Highway Patrol members Lt. Greg Jirak and Trooper Mitch Nolette** — for earning the Gold Award, the state's highest honor for law enforcement personnel.

✓**Chautauqua Organizers** — for all your hard work in getting the attraction in place.

✓**Lon Sowers** — for sharing your photo of the dirt storm with the *Free Press* readership.

✓**The City of Colby** — on receiving the top water award.

✓**The McLemore Family** — for kicking off the "Picnic in the Park" series last Thursday noon in the tradition that has made your name a household word throughout the territory.

✓**The Garvey Family** — for the generous contribution to Colby Community College. It will help bring the proposed wellness center closer to reality.

✓**Eldon Van Campen** — Fairview's newest resident. Enjoy!

✓**Menlo Alumni** — on your very successful 2004 Reunion, and particularly to these who organized the affair.

✓**Charlie Norton** — on the awesome bronze at Oakley depicting "Buffalo Bill Cody" hunting down a buffalo.

✓**Daniel Cormier** — former Colby Community College wrestling standout, on qualifying for the Olympics.

This column is prepared each Monday morning by the newspaper's publisher. Questions, comments, submissions can be sent to him via e-mail to td@nwkansas.com, fax (785) 462-7749, phone 462-3963 or mail to 155 W. 5th, Colby 67701.

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.

Where to write

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

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 (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

Nikki Smith - Advertising Representative
nsmith@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

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



It's called 'self-expression'

There's a certain type of hypocrisy when it comes to things like tattoos or piercings.

A guy who has tattoos from his shoulders to wrists and a pierced lip or eyebrow will probably be given wide berth on the sidewalk but a girl with a pierced eyebrow or tongue or butterfly tattoo is "cute."

There's nothing cute about a tattoo or piercing. They are a form of self-expression for many people, or a rite of passage.

They aren't just something for bikers or preps.

For example, there's Pickles, the tattoo artist and piercing specialist who runs a parlor in Colorado.

His tattoos are some of the prettiest skin art I've ever seen.

I did a two-part story on Pickles and his parlor, and on why and how people get tattoos and piercings.

Some of the people I talked to got them for no particular reason other than they could. That was the deal with most of the piercings, with the exception of the family who all had their tongues pierced.

Tattoos were something more personal, in more ways than one.

Sean, a guy who helped his granddad run the print shop in the back of the building that housed the *Brush News-Tribune*, had several tattoos.

He was always sarcastic and constantly kidding around. That was until I asked him about his tattoos.

A couple he wouldn't tell me about but two he did — the bracelet of skulls around his left wrist, usually covered by his watch, and an unusual design of feathers and Chinese characters on the inside of his right arm.

Sean said the skulls were a reminder of his parents, who died in a car accident when he was very young. He didn't elaborate further.

The one on his right arm, he was happy to describe further. It was in honor of the birth of his



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

daughter, one of the happiest days of his life. The design of the tattoo, with its colors, shows that and the Chinese characters are his daughter's name and date of birth. (Incidentally, it was Pickles' ink, and trust me, he does fine work.)

Others I talked to had tattoos that were a reflection of their faith, or lack thereof, a memory, a name, or something that reflected their own personality.

Most had a meaning of some sort, personal or otherwise.

Looking back, my own piercing was my own personal rebellion, something I got done because I wanted it.

It's only my ear, but I have no other piercings. Only the small hoop in my left ear that has meaning to me and no one else.

In some countries and cultures, scarification and tattoos are considered a rite of passage, a symbol of belonging.

Traditional Maori tattoos in New Zealand are making a resurgence as those people reaffirm their heritage.

People in less developed countries than our own use scarification as a means to show that they are all one group, one family. To refuse is to be cast out because to them, the needs of one individual are less important than the health and well-being of the collective.

Tattoos, piercings, scarification and branding are considered self-mutilation by some.

But is anyone with pierced ears who thinks

tattoos are wrong any better than the guy with the pierced eyebrow?

To go under the needle is a commitment.

These days, a good tattoo artist or piercing technician won't put needle to skin unless the person they're dealing with is over 18, sober and fully cognizant of the act they're about to commit.

They will give someone under 18 a piercing or tattoo only with written permission from a parent.

Anyone else is just a scratcher, someone who doesn't work under health regulations or care about the safety of the person they're working on.

My own piercing, while small, is a piercing nonetheless, a non-conventional form of self-expression. Going under the needle hurts and there's blood.

My own felt and sounded like a hammer being used to push a staple through my ear.

It bled. It hurt. To me, the pain was an affirmation of life.

You can't have something good without first paying the price.

Everything has its cost, or is just pain or pleasure, depending on where you're at.

Tattoos and piercings are works of art.

They don't call them tattoo artists for nothing. Their canvas is skin, their paint ink.

Some are as simple as a single character in Chinese Kanji, poetic in its black, Oriental simplicity or as ornate and intricate as a bold-colored design spanning a person's entire back.

I've seen home-made tattoos and tats done by master tattoo artists.

They all have one thing in common — they're as unique as the people who have them.

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

The church and politics

Ken Poland

• Ken's World

Oh my goodness! The mixing of religion and politics gets more frightening each day. It seems as how the "church" is bound and determined to do with political power and civil law what it hasn't been able to do in the heart.

One of our major denominations has essentially declared ex-communication of any candidate that doesn't adhere to the church's position on abortion. It is even indicated that if you vote for those particular candidates you are in grave danger of missing the train headed for heaven. Some of our religious leaders have declared God's judgment on anyone who doesn't follow their interpretation of the ranking of sin. For all practical purposes, they have thumbed through the Bible and selected specific scripture to promote their standards of morality. They seem to ignore those scriptures that don't validate their particular lifestyle.

We compromise the very basis of Christian theology when we pick and choose the sins that we will accept and those that we will not accept. By default, we have accepted heterosexual bed hopping (adultery and divorce). But, we draw the line at homosexual activities. By default, we accept the sin of gluttony. We overlook the sins of lust, greed, laziness, cheating, etc. We abhor the sin of abortion (that's murder). But, we accept the killing of thousands of innocents and call it unavoidable collateral damage in war. We pick and choose those evil governments that we will destroy, based on perceived benefits for ourselves.

Does God differentiate between these sins? I

think not. It seems to me, if you break the law you have broken the law and are under judgment of the law. The scriptures, the same Holy Scriptures being used to condemn certain segments of our society, clearly indicate, that under the law, man is condemned by any infraction regardless of its ranking by man. Basic Christian Theology states: By the Grace of God, we are pardoned by the sacrifice of Christ's blood. Pardon means full exemption from punishment or guilt. Has God abdicated his responsibility and turned over to man the authority to determine who is and who isn't pardoned?

Civil society must and does differentiate the seriousness of some actions by man. Society must be regulated by laws to protect itself. Those laws may or may not be based on specific laws recorded in the Judeo/Christian Bible, Koran, or other religious documents. Punishment for infractions of the law are legitimately based on the perceived damage to individual and corporate groups in society. We, as a free society, are responsible to govern ourselves in a way that protects all of society. We, as a free society, are

not responsible to enact laws that protect us from condemnation by any religious creed or order.

When government declares the basis for governmental regulations on the authority of religious doctrine, that government is destined to become corrupt. When government validates its laws and regulations on the basis of what is good for society, regardless of that society's religious tenets, that government stands a chance of being fair and just.

Just a little side note on political campaigning.

We keep talking about the "flip flopping" of one of the major presidential candidates. I have to agree that he has switched sides on many issues in his political career. But, is that all bad? If you are unable or too stubborn to admit you was wrong, then you are no better than a Rip Van Winkle that has been sleeping and are unaware of present conditions and circumstances.

I know quite a few farmers who fifteen years ago declared they would never embrace no-till farming practices. And, by golly, I see them planting corn in wheat stubble and wheat in corn stalks now. Using the same argument we hear in the political campaigning, you landlords had better steer clear of those guys. They just can't be trusted and don't seem to know what they want to do.

Ken Poland is a Gem farmer and frequent contributor to this page. His e-mail is: rcwinc@cheerful.com.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

