

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Here’s a message to usher in Flag Day

Monday, June 14 is Flag Day. In today’s *Free Press* you will find a U.S. flag inserted to hang in your window at home or at your business place. The flag insert, a tradition of the *Colby Free Press* in advance of Flag Day, is a joint effort of this newspaper and numerous businesses and individuals in the community. Their names are printed on the back of the flag. Please thank them for this patriotic gift.

We have received a tribute from several readers, entitled, “Hello! Remember Me?” and have decided to include it as today’s editorial. The message is powerful. Please read on. — *Tom Dreiling, publisher*

Some call me Old Glory, others call me the Stars and Stripes. I have also been referred to as the Star Spangled Banner. But, whatever they call me, I am your flag — the flag of the United States of America. There has been something that has been bothering me, so I thought that I might talk it over with you today.

I remember some time ago, (I think it was a Memorial Day, or was it Veterans Day?) that people were lined up on both sides of the street for the parade. A high school band was behind me — naturally, I was leading the parade. When your Daddy saw me coming along waving in the breeze, he immediately removed his hat and placed it so that his right hand was directly over his heart.

And you — I remember you.

Standing there as straight as a soldier, you didn’t have any hat, but you were giving me the right salute. Remember, they taught you in school to place your hand over your heart — and little sister, not to be outdone, was saluting the same as you. There were some soldiers home on leave and they were standing at your attention giving the military salute. Oh, I was very proud as I came down our street that day.

Now, I may sound as if I am a little conceited. Well, I am!

I have a right to be, because I represent you, the people of the United States of America.

But, what has happened? I’m still the same old flag. Oh, I have a couple more stars added since you were a boy. A lot more stars added since the beginning of this country, and a lot more blood shed since that patriotic day so long ago.

But now, I don’t feel as proud as I used to. When I came down your street, some people just stand there with their hand in their pocket and give me a small glance and then look away. I see children running around and shouting. They don’t seem to know who I am.

Is it a sin to be patriotic anymore? Have some people forgotten what I stand for? Have they forgotten all the battle fields where we have fought and died to keep this nation free? When you salute me, you are actually saluting them.

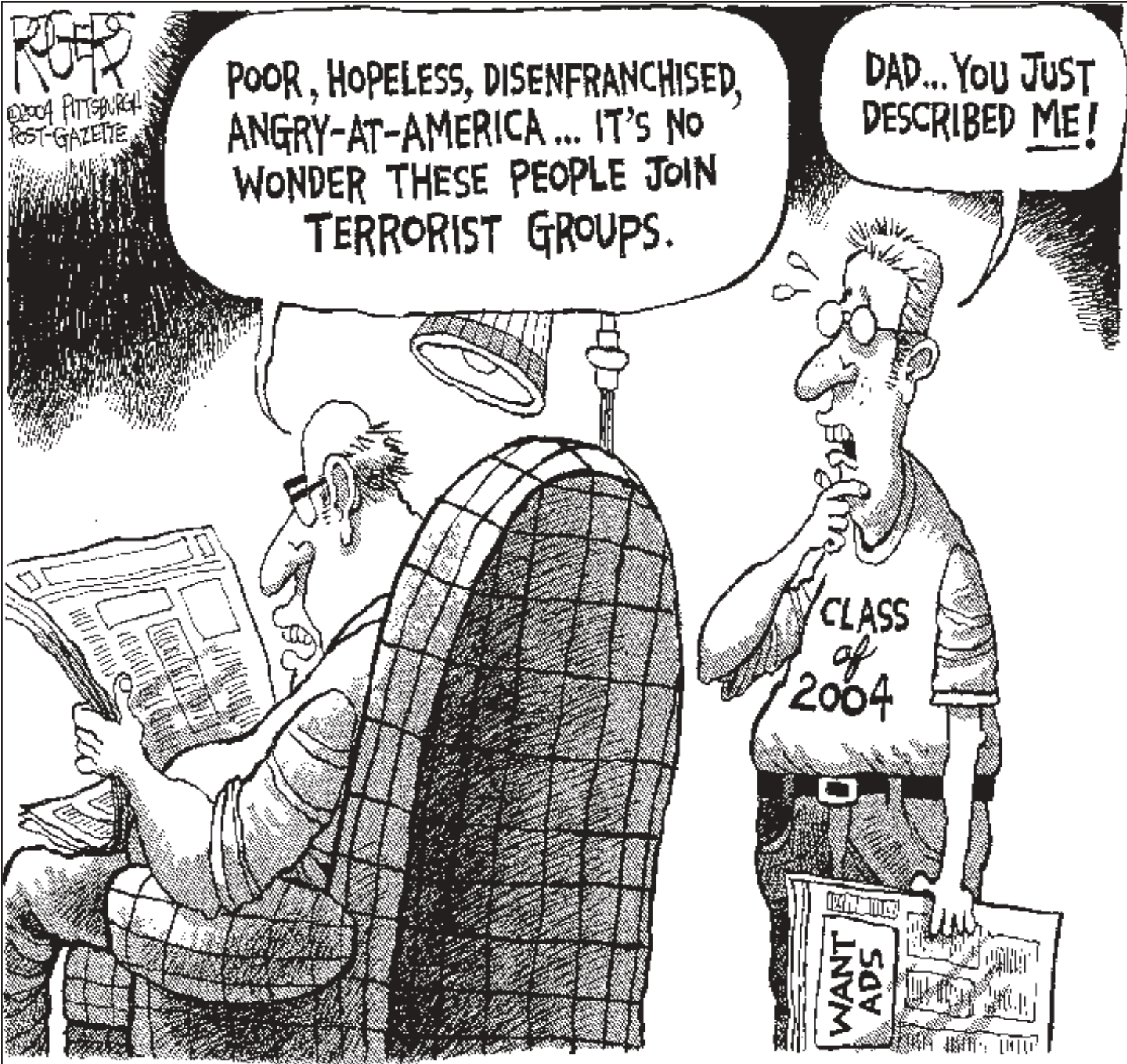
Take a good look at the Memorial Rolls some time. Look at the name of those who never came back. Some of them were friends or relatives of yours. That’s whom you are saluting. Not me.

Well, it won’t be long until I’ll be coming down you street again. So, when you see me, stand, stand straight, place your hand over your heart and you’ll see me waving back — that’s my salute to you. And then I’ll know that you remember who I am.

—author unknown

Share your thoughts. . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered



Surprises in the mountains

Every year brings a fresh surprise.

One year, the kitchen floor looked like ocean waves. Then the sewer backed up. Another year, there was a broken pipe on the hot water heater.

This year it was a broken pipe in the ceiling above the kitchen.

We love our home in Creede, high in the Colorado mountains. It’s where we raised our children. It was home while we were putting out our first paper, *The Mineral County Miner*.

When we moved, we rented the house for a while, then we turned the renters out and refurbished it with this and that. Now, we go back every time we have a chance.

Of course, you don’t just run up to the cabin for the weekend when the cabin is 480 miles and nine hours away. You don’t leave the heat on in the winter when the temperature gets to be 40 below, and that’s before the wind chill is added.

So each fall, around the end of October, we close the house. We empty the hot water tank, turn off the water, unplug the dishwasher and washing machine and the line that runs the ice maker. The electricity and phone are turned off, the shades drawn and the house sits empty and alone



Cynthia Haynes

- Open Season

until we return in the spring, around Memorial Day. That’s when we find the surprises.

Last year, we had had the water line replaced. When we arrived, we found that the new line had frozen. The sewer had also frozen, so we were in a pickle on both ends. The city got both working, and we were in business for another summer.

Several years ago, we got a leak in the water line that feeds the ice maker in the refrigerator. When we walked into the kitchen, the linoleum was in waves from where the flooring had swollen and buckled.

That was almost as much fun as the new water line.

This year, we hoped the new water line and cutoff would work like it was supposed to, and it did. Steve put the big iron key into the eight-foot hole to the water shutoff and turned.

We had water coming out of the faucets we had left open in the fall. I started turning off faucets, but there was still water running.

Then it started raining in the kitchen. Water was coming out of the top of my cabinets and through the ceiling around the light fixture.

This was not good. I yelled at Steve, who turned the water off and called the plumber.

Ron, the plumber and general fix-it man, was on our doorstep in less than 30 minutes and spent the next hour finding the broken pipe and making emergency repairs.

We mopped up the mess, just glad nothing was ruined.

But, now the water is on and the hot water tank is full. Tomorrow, I can take a shower and tonight I can wash the dishes.

Life is good.

Cynthia and husband Steve Haynes are owners of Nor’West Newspapers.

Flashlights and stumbling in the dark

Do you remember a scalawag named Joseph Stalin? He boasted that he would bury America. Not with guns but would bring about our destruction from within our own system. He didn’t quite get there. He was close. We almost bankrupted ourselves in the scramble to amass the world’s biggest and most powerful assortment of “Weapons of Mass Destruction.” Cool heads and wise restraints on the part of both major political parties and our leaders worked together to hold the line on USSR’s aggression without self destructing ourselves. Korea, the Bay of Pigs, and Vietnam came close, but we survived.

Saddam Hussein is dangerously close to accomplishing what Stalin failed to do. Our present administration is claiming victory. But, it seems to me Saddam, though totally defeated militarily and politically, is a lot closer to victory than we are. Eight hundred or more U.S. casualties and thousands of dead Arabs and the most we can say is: Saddam is in prison.

We have a monumental and formidable task of attempting to establish law and order and rebuild politically, physically and emotionally a devastated nation. The terrorists have increased in numbers and have us shaking in our boots. The most evident results of our endeavors are the horrendous loss of lives, record deficit spending and massive tax cuts. Are you ready to join in a victory dance to celebrate our success?

We are mourning the death of former President Ronald Reagan. I didn’t agree with his fiscal policies, but he was an effective communicator and diplomat. He had some questionable policies that nearly closed his political career in

Ken Poland

- Ken’s World

just one term as president. (the trickle down theory and the Iran Contra Affair). But his ability to change course and his charismatic communication skills allowed him to regain the confidence of the American people and world leaders.

I recently received an email from a friend, who just happens to be a Bush supporter and straight line Republican. It had a long list of quotes dating from 1998 through 2003. Surprisingly, they all just happened to be prominent Democratic politicians and bureaucrats. They all referred to Saddam and his refusal to cooperate with the UN. They all made references to their beliefs or fears that Iraq was engaged in developing weapons of mass destruction. They all opinioned, that if in fact he was actively amassing such weapons, he must be stopped.

When you really analyze the texts of those quotes, you find that the quoted people were voicing their opinions and fears. However, they were wise enough to know they had no evidence solid enough to warrant immediate invasion of a sovereign nation that was confined within its own borders. The truth is: the surveillance and

containment program seems to have been quite effective. To date, we have absolutely found no caches of weapons or biological agents in quantities capable of launching even limited aggression on Iraq’s next door neighbors.

We have not validated any direct connection or cooperation between Saddam and bin Laden. The Iraqi army didn’t even have the equipment or will power to make it an interesting or challenging war.

The financial costs and loss of lives, since the famous declaration, “Mission Accomplished,” has far exceeded the initial cost of overthrowing the Saddam regime. We have no credible plan to measure or evaluate how much progress we are making. I would liken our situation to stumbling through the tunnel with flashlights trying to find the end of that tunnel and sunlight.

So far we’ve been about as successful in thinning out the terrorists as my poor old dog has been at thinning out the population of cottontails in the back yard. He needs help.

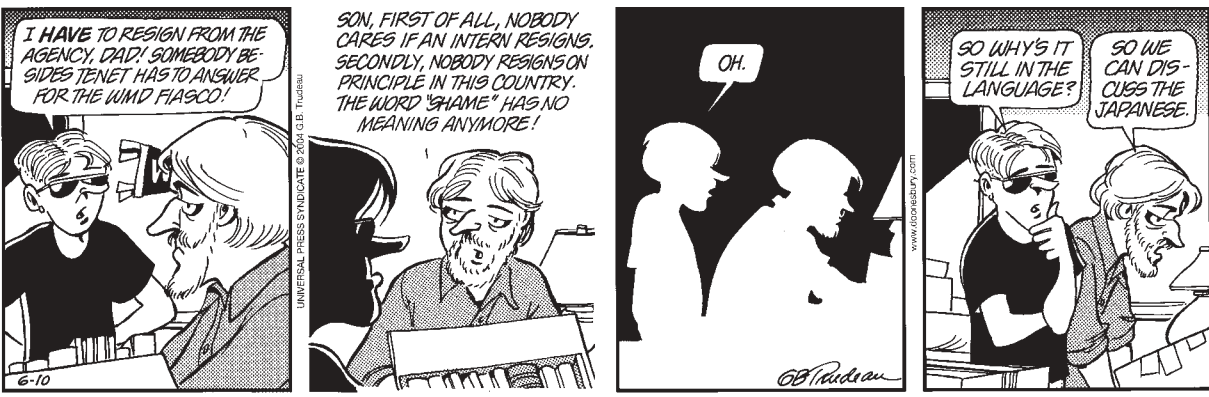
We need help from the world community if we expect to have any success in establishing democracy and eliminating terrorism here at home, the Mid East or around the world.

I’m not sure our “shoot from the lip” cowboy from Texas has the charisma, communicating skills or wisdom to regain the confidence and trust of the world leaders and common people. Do we want another four years of flashlights and stumbling in the dark?

Ken Poland is a Gem farmer and frequent contributor to this page. rcwinc@cheerful.com.

Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau



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