

Opinion



Letters

They're here to help

To the Colby Free Press:
Article 5 of the Kansas Constitution defines who is eligible to be an elector in the State of Kansas. Section One of Article 5 reads: "Every citizen of the United States who has attained the age of eighteen years and who resides in the voting area in which he or she seeks to vote shall be deemed a qualified elector." Unfortunately, voting is a right that not all people with disabilities have been able to exercise.

People with disabilities comprise approximately one-fifth of the voting age population in Kansas, yet less than half of them voted in the 2000 elections. In fact, if people with disabilities voted at the same rate as those without disabilities, 4.6 million more votes would have been cast in the last presidential vote.

In Kansas, it is becoming increasingly easier for people to participate in the voting process. The recently enacted Help America Vote Act, or HAVA, requires every polling place to have at least one voting machine that is accessible to all persons with disabilities, recent changes to Kansas election laws require every polling place to be accessible to voters with disabilities and in Kansas, voters with disabilities can apply for advance voting or permanent advance voting status so that they can vote by mail from the privacy of their own home.

This election year is critical in that the entire Kansas Legislature, most of the Kansas Congressional delegation and the office of U.S. President are all open for election.

People with disabilities must get involved in the political process and exercise their right to vote. Your vote is your voice in protecting your rights and the services you need to live. The late disability rights advocate and "Father of the Americans with Disabilities Act," Justin Dart, used to tell people, "Vote as if your life depends on it. Because it does."

If you or someone you know has a disability and has questions about their voting rights, or want to register to vote, or apply for advance voting, we can help. Contact SKIL of Western Kansas at 628-8019 or 1-800-316-8019.

Lou Ann Kibbee
SKIL of Western Kansas
1011A Centennial Blvd.
Hays, Kan. 67601
(Phone numbers above)

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@nwkansans.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: jmorriso@ink.org web: <http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison>
State Sen. Ruth Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: rclark@ink.org

COLBY FREE PRESS

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

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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.

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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

THE PROBLEM WITH U.S. INTELLIGENCE...



Sally Michael is right on target

SHE is so right!

I was reading the Brewster news a few issues ago as reported by Sally Michael and I noticed a comment she made about the current political climate that needs to be mentioned again. In part she said, "It seems like it is a long time until election ...but there are some things that I really don't think I'll be able to handle. The editorial cartoons seem to be especially vicious and all the folks that seem to have such a strong hatred..."

Sally rightly points out that "it is not up to me to tell others how horrible the other person is and I don't want them telling me their opinions unless they preface their remarks with the phrase — **In My Opinion!**"

She adds, "There is a big difference between facts and opinions and I think they need clarification..." She also thinks there is no need for all this hatred.

I have been following politics for practically a life time and I must say that this year, especially, the hate and vicious attacks are unparalleled. It just seems that we are going out of our way to make those who disagree with us look just plain stupid. The words chosen to describe an opponent are best left on the barstool. Matter of fact, there are probably barstool occupants who wouldn't stoop as low as some of the people behind the hate campaigns are stooping.

I guess I grew up at a time when respect was practiced. Even if you were at odds with someone. It was just the way Americans did it. Now, sadly, that is an America that has fallen victim to loose and vulgar mouths and in some cases in the highest circles. But someone a whale of a lot smarter than I explained it this way: "We didn't, back then, have irresponsible cable networks eager to play in the political cesspool and even create some tidal waves in that filthy mess." That's a mouthful but probably a pretty good assessment.

-td-

COME on , Nov. 2...hurry and get here!

-td-

IMUST say the nearly three hours spent in the cool comfort of the Colby High School auditorium last Saturday night to hear David Phelps was time well spent. Very well spent. Very good size crowd. To those who bypassed the opportunity,



Tom Dreiling

- My Turn

I can only say, "Wish you would have been there." To those of you who were, you know what I'm saying. It's not often entertainers of this quality grace our community. To the sponsors and J&R Marketing I say, "thanks for a tremendous treat." My out-of-town guest was delighted and she commented, "Colby always comes through." And that is quite a compliment from someone who lives in "that town over there in the Mountain Time Zone."

-td-

ELSEWHERE in today's paper you will find a small advertisement asking Democrats to help send Colby's two delegates to the party's national convention in Boston later this month. The deadline for contributions is July 19. The two are Cathy and Chris Gordon. This may be the first time a mother and son were elected as voting delegates to a Democratic National Convention. They were picked at the Colby 40th Senatorial District caucus and then elected delegates at the First District Democratic Convention in Ellsworth. It is not often that Colby has sent delegates to either major party's conventions, but then to have two and a mother/son combo — that's big news. You don't have to be a Democrat to help the two. Mailing address: Thomas County Democratic Party, 426 Hale, Levant, Kan. 67743.

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ANYBODY, they used to say, can become President of the United States. I studied the presidential field for 2004 and found that these guys (there are no women) aren't just anybody. They are **all millionaires**. That's right, they are **all millionaires**. Someone said, "But Kerry is richer than Bush." They are **all millionaires**, get it? Somebody else added, "But Cheney is richer than the other three combined." They are **all**

millionaires, understand? And sometimes it is hard for **millionaires** to understand the plight of the poor, and I guess the poor in the eyes of a **millionaire** is anybody that doesn't rise to that level.

So, can anybody become President of the United States? The answer lies somewhere in the above message.

-td-

ISEE where Lynn Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, is at odds with her husband over the proposed constitutional amendment restricting marriage to a man and a woman. Mrs. Cheney sees that as a state's matter. She's a strong-willed woman, witness her performances as co-host of "Crossfire" several years ago. Bet that's a lively household when the cameras are turned off and they are alone. Mrs. Cheney is probably right, if you weigh the issue for what the issue is and forget the in-your-face crowd who seems to have an answer for every problem — except their own.

-td-

AND what is stranger than fiction? Having a Reagan address the Democratic National Convention. You read right. Ron Reagan, the son of Nancy Reagan and the late President Ronald Reagan will get some primetime at the Democratic convention to discuss stem cell research. Chances are his topic will allow him to apply pressure on President Bush to ease up on the issue. It is not known whether Nancy Reagan will speak at the Republican convention, or if she has even been invited to do so. She is a strong advocate for stem cell research.

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SPEAKING of music, sometime in the fall of 2004 the Western Plains Arts Association and the Colby Free Press will hook up to again bring another military band to the community. This one will be what is known as, "The President's Own — the United States Marine Band." We'll be passing along additional information as the time gets closer, but let this serve as a reminder.

-td-

HAVE a good evening!

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays.

Leave the bridges intact



Jay Kelley

- Speaking MyMind

think the visit to the daughter and son-in-law was secondary) and decided to stop on the way through.

Some have asked me how I know so many people and I must confess I don't really know. I know I can become as preoccupied as anyone else with work and personal time. There is an old proverb that says to have friends a man must show himself to be friendly.

Maybe there is something to that. In our society of air conditioning and privacy fences, can we really get to know our neighbors?

You see, the secret to knowing people doesn't lie in being involved in everything. As a matter of fact, it doesn't rely in being involved in anything. The secret to knowing people has to do with being involved with them.

How many of us know our neighbors? I was fortunate when I moved into my house that I knew most of my neighbors (all of those immediately next to me) already and have gradually come to know some farther out.

But, with our busy schedules and multi-tasking, do we take the time for that today. One of my neighbors, who would probably be embarrassed if I told her name, was over to my home not long after I got here with some fresh bread and always stops to chat when we are out working in the yard.

Those are the people you remember. There is more to being remembered well than just not being disliked. Someone in the community has to like you and remember you for what you did.

That means getting active in people's lives. It means more than just club meetings, it means helping older folks, teaching younger folks and generally taking the time to get to know your neighbors.

It doesn't mean everyone has to like you, either. Those who are so agreeable as to have no strong views on anything are usually quickly forgotten and while those who are so disagreeable as to be generally disliked by everyone are usually remembered, it is those whose strong views led them to do good who are respected and remembered.

I don't plan to leave Colby, but if I did, I would hope there are some who would remember me. I know there are many I would remember.

Who would remember you?

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