

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

They are back... and we are glad

They're back...and we thank God for everyone of them. Who? The students attending Colby Community College. The college makes a massive impact on our community. When the students depart at the close of the school year each May, their absence is profound. They become a part of our 'community family' at the first sound of the bell. They get involved in so many different ways. Not always is their involvement high profiled. They spend many of their dollars in the various businesses in this community. Many participate in church activities. They look for interests here that they left behind. When asked, regardless of the request, they respond. And more times than not, they respond without being asked. That's just the way of a Colby Community College student spending more time in his or her 'adopted' community than at home.

The students in Trojanland have something else going for them: one of the most talented and dynamic group of instructors to be found anywhere. This professionalism allows for a quick and lasting bond between teacher/student.

The positives that go with being home to a college are so many space does not permit a detailed accounting. But the people of Colby, of Thomas County, know that this institution — soon to observe its 40th anniversary — is one of the major reasons this community is what it is.

Yes, welcome back — all of you. Take advantage of the opportunities. Open the doors. Open the windows. Breathe in education as only Colby Community College can provide.

Tom A. 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@nwkansan.com, fax 462-7749 or call 462-3963.

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The value of education

Rosie Stockton

• Rosie's Route

With school now in session and budget meetings happening a person's mind wonders to the question, "What is the value of education?" In many ways I think it has become too cheap. I know when you read that statement most people will say, myself included, "What, is she crazy? We are paying too much for public education the way it is!" The point I am trying to make is not how much we are paying for public education but what is the value that is put on getting an education.

When parents send their kids to school as a means of "baby-sitting" or because the kids have to attend and all the kids care about is what will be on the test, then the value of getting an education has become too cheap.

I guess my reasoning behind this comes from my own personal love of learning and how I have tried to impart this to my children and then reading about Irish children several hundred years ago when they were forbidden to attend an organized school during various occupations by the British. The children would attend school at night along the hedgerows just to be able to learn. The penalty for discovery was most times death, at least for the teacher and many times the student or parents.

Then there are the stories of black slaves risking beatings and/or death upon discovery if they

knew how to read or write.

I grew up hearing stories about my great-grandparents giving up one room of their two-room house to host German school so that the local German Mennonite children could learn the German language. To these people getting an education had very high value.

The point in my opinion is that education has become so commonplace in our society that we no longer place a very high value on getting one. It isn't just having access to an education and sitting at a desk every day that gives you an education. It is wanting to learn. It is having a desire, a hunger to learn and to know more. This is something that has to come from within. It is not something that a "school" can give you.

Teachers and parents can inspire, challenge, and encourage or they can bore, destroy and discourage. I think it is so important, so impera-

tive, so vital, so critical that all people, not just children have someone or something that does challenge them, motivates them to push themselves, to learn, to be focused, dedicated. It is also important that we be that to someone else. Whether it is our children, our grandchildren, a friend, ourselves, but we need to keep passing that drive on.

Are we willing to step outside the box and let people see us reading a book, reading a newspaper, or watching an educational program on TV? When your children see you model these activities, this drive and hunger to learn and to better yourself no matter the circumstances, making it a natural part of your daily life, then they will want to model it also. It is so exciting to watch those that you have challenged blossom and take ownership of their life and education whether they are in an organized school or not.

I just hope that each of you will look within yourselves and say, would we have the drive and desire to learn that we would be willing to risk our lives or give up a part of our home in order to learn?

Rosie Stockton is a frequent contributor to this page. She can be contacted at her e-mail address: rstockton@direcway.com.

Bringing hope to the hungry

John Schlageck

• Weekly Insight

Food for Peace celebrated its 50th birthday July 10. Food for Peace or PL 480 was an outgrowth of this country's foreign-aid policy and had its origin in northwestern Kansas.

A few years after the conclusion of World War II, the United States implemented plans to help countries devastated by the war. The Marshall Plan in Western Europe became the cornerstone of this newly emerging program.

While some of the funding was used for reconstruction, most was used to help feed starving people left homeless and unemployed by the war. During this same period, the United States enjoyed bumper crops and began stockpiling huge commodity surpluses.

In September 1953, Cheyenne County Farm Bureau held a countywide policy development meeting. In that meeting, Peter O'Brien, a young farmer and rancher, suggested that it would make more sense to give aid in the form of food items rather than in the form of money.

Cheyenne County Farm Bureau drafted a foreign-aid resolution that called for exporting grain to other countries. The northwestern Kansas farm leaders believed that if underdeveloped countries were able to secure food — once they became more prosperous — they would become major buyers of U.S. commodities. The Kansas farmers also saw this as a "sure-fire" method to help reduce grain inventories and realized that increased shipments of U.S. agricultural products could generate more business for American processors, packers, shippers, railroads and ocean vessels.

The county Farm Bureau resolution became a state resolution at the Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting and later part of the official policy of the American Farm Bureau Federation at the national level. In '54, Kansas Sen. Andy Schoepel sponsored legislation known as "Food for Peace" that passed both Houses of Congress and was signed into law by a Kansan,

President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Since its early beginning in Cheyenne County, Kan., PL 480 has gone through many changes. Today it remains a key ingredient in our overseas plan to aid countries with food rather than money.

While there have been many new laws and farm bills introduced during this period, not many have been as significant to agriculture and feeding the world's hungry people as Food for Peace. Without this humanitarian vehicle and the output of Kansas producers and their counterparts across the United States, millions of people will continue to go hungry.

In 2003, the U.S. Food for Peace program delivered food to 133 million people around the globe whose lives were threatened by malnutrition or even starvation due to war, natural disaster or poverty. Last year, Food for Peace responded to an extraordinary emergency operation in Iraq, averting a humanitarian crisis and ensuring food deliveries to Iraq's 26 million citizens.

Under Saddam Hussein's regime, the Iraqi population became almost entirely dependent on food aid rations. Keeping the ration system operating after the conflict began in March was essential to prevent food lines and keep Iraqis from going hungry. Food for Peace, working with WFP, was at the forefront of this humanitarian response. By November 2003, WFP had delivered 2.1 million tons of U.S. and other do-

nors' food for Iraq, by far the largest amount of food aid ever delivered during such a short period of time.

The number of countries in this program has varied from 47 to 106. The number of those assisted has varied from 17.3 million to last years 133 million.

In 1958, Food for Peace shipped nearly 5 million metric tons, the largest single-year donation to the world's hungry. Commodities that Food for Peace sends around the world come from virtually every state. One hundred thirty-five countries have received PL 480 assistance since 1954.

In spite of the generous contributions by American farmers — nearly 60 percent of international emergency food aid comes as a gift of the people of the United States — are making in the fight against world hunger, still global food needs far outweigh the food being shipped abroad. More is needed. Today more than 800 million people in the world need food.

Using food for humanitarian relief programs helps everyone. PL 480 helps feed hungry people around the world while helping American farmers reduce surpluses. Increasing the amount of America's food aid allocated through PL 480 for the world's hungry will also help our farmers by strengthening today's markets and setting the table for additional future growth.

As former President Eisenhower said more than 50 years ago, "Food can be a powerful instrument for all the free world in building a durable peace." Kansas farmers, ranchers and its citizens remain committed to bringing hope to the hungry through Food for Peace.

John Schlageck has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

