

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

What 'war' will vote figure in on Nov. 2?

Larry Thurlow of Bogue, deeply involved in the controversy surrounding the medals and hero status pinned on Sen. John Kerry resulting from his service to the nation during the Vietnam war, continues to call the Democratic presidential candidate a liar.

There's that word again!

The descriptions of what happened in that war-torn country 30 some years ago when Mr. Thurlow and Officer Kerry served in the same enemy waters but in different boats are miles apart.

Military documents seem to side in with Kerry. But that hasn't silenced Mr. Thurlow, despite the fact the documents contradict what Thurlow is saying.

Thurlow is a member of a group called "Swift Boat Veterans for Truth," a GOP-leaning group of Vietnam veterans who say Kerry exaggerated his actions to win war medals.

Again we ask, "Who cares?" And why is this alleged Kerry exaggeration, or as Thurlow would say "lie," just now surfacing and did not play a role in any of Kerry's many successful prior elections?

Steve Schmidt, a spokesman for President Bush's re-election campaign, said, "The Bush campaign has never and will never question John Kerry's service in Vietnam." Laughable.

Of course the ongoing controversy is good for the Bush campaign. Why would the president ask the "Swift Boat Veterans for Truth" to tape their traps shut? They're doing him a big favor. And the polls are beginning to reflect that.

The more the electorate talks about the Kerry Vietnam war controversy, the less they talk about the Bush war in Iraq.

War? We all knew that war would figure into the decision made on election day, but now we are faced with the question, "Which war?"

*Tom A. Dreiling
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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.

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My 'Hurricane Charley' has departed

MY Hurricane Charley (grandson Caleb, 26 months) and his family departed Thursday for Colorado, Idaho and finally Washington state where they will make their home at Fairchild AFB, Spokane, after spending some quality time with me.

What Caleb — his dad is son Lance, mother is Tobie and sister is Alyssa — liked best about his visit to Colby was the little car at Colby Bowl. He told me it was "cool." He said some other things about it, too, but a 2-year-old's vocabulary and mine just don't quite seem to match. But that's okay.

He also saw a man at Kansas Quick Lube out on South Range, seated in the waiting area while work was being performed on his car, and struck up a conversation with him. He looked like he could be in his early 50s so Caleb thought he must be a grandpa, which is the reason he called him that. Ironically, the man said he was. So, Caleb picked up another friend in Colby. He's that kind of kid, just like his dad, who never knew a stranger.

He also told me about a man that has a great big closet — full of clothes. Yep, a visit with Dave Jennings.

And all of the stuff that he shouldn't touch — but it was so tempting — at Palace Drug Store.

He wondered why our 'mall' is different.

Then I got to thinking. That child was brought up in the mall environment at Wichita Falls, Texas. He only knows about stores that are inside a big store.

Guess individual shops next to the street are a novelty to him.

My house is quiet now. I found the front room couch, managed to reset my television to channels I am more familiar with, found a pair of lost Nikes, and discovered the pathway from one end of the house to the other was just a matter of picking up a few things...one, two, three, four...98, 99, 100...

Hated to see them leave, but that's the way life is. Driving from here to Spokane is out of the question, so my mode of travel to see that four-some from here on in will be by air from Denver. Already I miss them.

-td-

WITH school now in session for another nine months, I would urge all of you to be especially careful when motoring in school zones. They are clearly marked and signs and flashing lights serve



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

as attention-grabbers. Let's all do our part to make "2004 safer than any before."

-td-

READERS of this column always keep an eye out for stories designed to bring a chuckle or two. Maybe a quiet smile. Some of the more recent include:

The Lamaze Class

The room was full of pregnant women and their partners. The Lamaze class was in full swing. The instructor was teaching the women how to breathe properly, and informing the men how to give the necessary assurances at this stage of the plan. "Ladies, exercise is good for you," announced the teacher. "Walking is especially beneficial. And, gentlemen, it wouldn't hurt you to take the time to go walking with your partner!" The room was very quiet. Finally, a man in the middle of the group raised his hand. "Yes?" asked the instructor. To which the man asked, "Is it all right if she carries a golf bag while we walk?"

Farm Pond and Wisdom

An old farmer in Florida had owned a large farm for several years. He had a large pond in the back, fixed up nice with picnic tables, horse-shoe courts, basketball court, etc. The pond was properly shaped and fixed up for swimming when it was built. One evening the old farmer decided to go down to the pond, as he hadn't been there for a while, and look it over. As he neared the pond, he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee. As he came closer he saw it was a bunch of young women skinny-dipping in his pond. He made the women aware of his presence and they all went to the deep end of the pond. One of the women shouted to him, "We're not coming out until you leave!" The old man replied, "I didn't come down here to watch you ladies swim naked or make you get out of the pond naked. I'm simply here to feed the alligator." Moral: Old age and cunning will triumph

over youth and enthusiasm every time.

Travel Funnies

Truce stories from travel agents:

• I had someone ask for an aisle seat so that her hair wouldn't get messed up by being near the window.

• A client called in inquiring about a package to Hawaii. After going over all the cost information, she asked, "Would it be cheaper to fly to California and then take the train to Hawaii?"

• I got a telephone call from a woman who wanted to go to Capetown. I started to explain the length of the flight and the passport information when she interrupted me with, "I'm not trying to make you look stupid, but Cape Town is in Massachusetts." Without trying to make her look like the stupid one, I calmly explained, "Cape Cod is in Massachusetts, Capetown is in Africa." Her response was "click."

• A man called, furious about a Florida package we did. I asked what was wrong with the vacation in Orlando. He said he was expecting an ocean-view room. I tried to explain that is not possible, since Orlando is in the middle of the state. He replied, "Don't lie to me. I looked on the map and Florida is a very thin state."

• got a call from a man who asked, "Is it possible to see England from Canada?"

I said, "No."

He said, "But they look so close on the map."

• A nice lady called. She needed to know how it was possible that her flight from Detroit left at 8:20 a.m. and got into Chicago at 8:33 a.m. I tried to explain that Michigan was an hour ahead of Illinois, but she could not understand the concept of time zones. Finally I told her the plane went very fast, and she bought that!

-td-

WE seem to be getting our share of medals at the Olympics. And that's a thumbs up! Watching the drama unfold night after night on television certainly beats watching the talking heads make fools of themselves 24/7. If you haven't been tuning in, do.

-td-

HAVE a good evening and a good weekend. And pencil in an hour or so at the church of your choice.

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkansas.com.

Time to say 'good-bye'

Rosie Stockton

• Rosie's Route

moved. Since this is the seventh move in 12 years, we made a radical decision, no more moving from house to house. We purchased a 36.5 foot 5th-wheel RV with 3 slide-outs to be our home. This way, when and if another move presents itself we just pull in the slides, load up what's in storage and head down the road.

Getting to this point however, has taken a major amount of downsizing. Some of our furniture went to our daughters in Branson, Mo., and three stock trailer loads of furniture and stuff went to TNT Auction.

We spent weeks going through boxes and drawers and closets trying to decide what was necessary and what had great sentimental value. We ended up with a storage unit pretty full of things. This includes things the girls want to

keep, garage type stuff, my craft/art stuff and then most of my books. Talk about decision overload.

The day finally came when we got everything out of the house and garage and we are in our new location and once again we are starting another phase of life — new community, new friends, new church, new opportunities.

So as we leave Colby and northwestern Kansas, and the friends and memories it isn't truly good-bye, but just, so long until we stop in to say hello again. My parting words would be a plea to challenge yourself and those around you to step outside your comfort zones and be different, but yet do what is right for the betterment of you as a person and the community, even if that means accepting non-native outsiders, even for just a few years.

I would love to hear from you, please let me know if my words in any way have challenged, inspired or if nothing else made you stop and think just a little. Thank you for this opportunity and the best to all.

Rosie Stockton was a frequent contributor to this page. She now lives in Cambridge, Neb. Her e-mail address is rosiestockton@hotmail.com.