

# Opinion



## Monday's Salute

## Thumbs to . . .



√**Kathy Arendt** — on your “Locks of Love” donation.

√**Colby Third Graders** — on your “Electrical” performance.

√**Jim Ball** — on your demonstration that brought many oohs and ahs from youngsters and some not so young.

√**Rexford's Worthwhile Club** — on your 73 years of worthwhile deeds.

√**Colby Girl Scout Troops 162** — on the “sweet” shipment you are preparing for Colby military troops engaged in the fight against terrorism in the Middle East.

√**Dale Hawk** — on becoming one of Fairview Estates' newest residents.

√**Daniel Tibbles, Cole Garcia, Jared Flanagin** — on winning individual Northwest Kansas League championship honors in wrestling.

√**Colby United Methodist Church** — on the messages shared with the community on your sign at Franklin and Pine.

*This column is prepared early each Monday morning by the newspaper's publisher. To submit a name, names or group for consideration, simply email td@nwkansan.com, fax 462-7749, call 462-3963 or drop by the office at 155 W. 5th. And as always, I appreciate the input from you. - td*

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.

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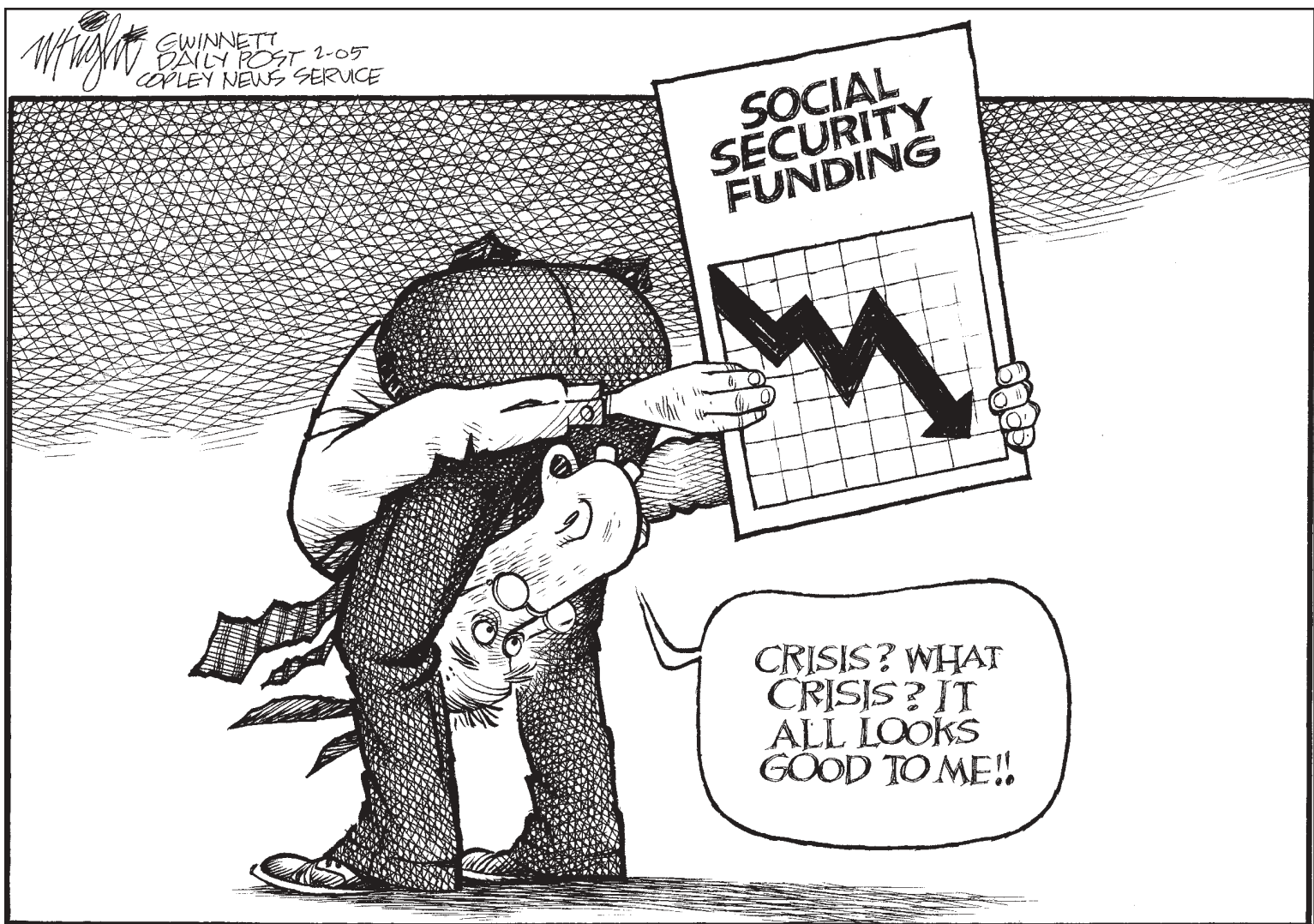
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## I'm one angry hockey fan

**Tisha Cox**

### • Off The Beaten Path



A year without hockey. That's what 2005 could shape up to be if National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman and National Hockey League Players Association executive Bob Goodenow don't get their collective act together.

The NHL is on its way to becoming the first professional sport in North America to have an entire season canceled.

That does not sit well with me at all.

All year there's been no debating who will tank, who will win, who will get traded and who will make it to the playoffs.

Rumor has it, an agreement has to be in place by now or there will be no season at all.

Who cares?

I do.

Hockey fans care.

I know there probably aren't that many around here, but if the tables were turned, there would be more people interested if it was the NBA or the NFL.

Imagine no Super Bowl or World Series or NBA championship.

No Stanley Cup championship in June is the happy thought I get to think about as it looks less likely each day there will be no hockey season.

The owners, headed up by commissioner Bettman, say they're losing money. I don't see how they could be losing money when you take into consideration ticket prices and how much it costs to go to a game.

They claim most of THEIR revenue goes to the players. Well, duh. They're what people come to see. If the owners can't understand that, maybe they need to get into another line of business.

The NHL is supposed to be a not-for-profit entity but the owners are making plenty of profit off everyone else's hard work. They gripe about

having to pay high salaries but if you want to bring people into your building, that's what it's going to take.

Granted, a team that's doing well will pack an arena and only die-hard fans will stick around when a team is in the tank, but many people will shell out big bucks just to say they were at a game.

There's only one person responsible for the mess that is the NHL lockout.

I blame Bettman. I think he should be replaced.

Maybe Wayne Gretzky should be commissioner. At least he understands the game. He should, considering he's been called the greatest player. Ever.

Maybe then the league would be in better shape and it would earn a little more respect.

I'm sick of the politics, squabbling and refusal on both sides to budge. Money and pride are the stumbling blocks to a new hockey season.

I can see the owners' side but they don't need Bettman serving as their mouthpiece. He shouldn't be taking sides. Without the owners, there are no teams. No teams, no hockey.

I can also see the players' side too. They don't want to have to give up any of the breaks they've gotten over the past 10 years, if they could be

considered that.

Top-end salaries have had a trickle down effect and even rookies are making more money than entry-level players were a decade ago.

Even though I'm a fan, I'm angry over the prospect of no season and I'd like to see heads roll on both sides. I can also recognize the fact maybe it's going to take a year without a season to make both factions realize it's time for a change.

Owners have to be fiscally responsible and players need to grow up and face the facts. The economy has changed and times have changed.

Players are going to have to go back on being paid based on their merit. Score 50 goals a season and they'll get paid like it. The same needs to go for someone who scores three goals in a year but gets a few hundred penalty minutes.

Right now there are young players who think they deserve a multi-million contract when they're drafted. Ten and even five years ago that wasn't how it worked.

Players had to earn that distinction but that's fallen by the wayside as more and more want to be paid based on their potential instead their actual skill.

If only every other worker in North America had the same problem.

At this point, I don't care which side gets what it wants. They can both roast as far as I'm concerned.

I don't think we're going to get a miracle.

So, we can just write the 2004-2005 hockey season off as a big, fat loss.

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

## When in doubt use rip rap

**Ken Poland**

### • Ken's World

advisors concerning your investments for retirement? Don't they tell you **to risk only that portion of your savings that you can get along without, just in case the investment goes south?**

Those same folks who seem to be ignoring the headlong rush of our national finance system to ever greater deficits are ignoring their fiscal responsibility for government priorities and spending. We will reduce the deficits next year. They cover up the actual deficit by dipping into the surplus Social Security funds and don't include the requests for additional funds for the war in Iraq. They appear to be laying down a little rip rap in the form of hyping the soundness of our social security system and hiding the real dollar costs of the war and tax cuts. We reduced the regulations for companies that were holding 'in trust' the retirement funds of their employees. Supposedly there was a surplus. The result was the disappearance of those trust funds. The surplus Social Security Trust Funds have been sorely compromised by the rip rap laid down by those we trusted to hold those funds in trust.

The homosexual issues have been blown up

We hear an awful lot of rhetoric about the impending bankruptcy of the Social Security program. Meanwhile, both our state and our national legislative branches are devoting hours of valuable time debating the homosexual issues in society. The majority party rages on about the partisan obstructions of the minority party. The CEOs of industry and the top officials in our national administration blame the failures of their policies on a few malcontents. Those of you that embraced the early Microsoft Windows program on your computers faced a message that said you had made an illegal move and would have to start over. (There wasn't or isn't anything illegal about your moves. The program has glitches and just simply gets lost or confused.) The economists blamed the ambitious youngsters in agriculture for the woes of agriculture in the early and mid '80s.

Rip rap!

What is rip rap? Isn't that the material we scatter to protect an unstable surface from destruction or erosion? Is there a little rip rap in the above examples? It's cheaper to build a dam out of dirt and haul in rip rap than to pour concrete. It's easier to fix all our social problems by hauling in the rip rap than it is to face the responsibility of taking care of the underlying problems.

Take the social security program, for instance. We are proposing to allow the diversion of funds away from government securities and this will prevent the bankruptcy of our retirement system. Supposedly the most secure investments you can make are government bonds and securities. What is the standard advice from your financial

### Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

