

Opinion



Monday's Salute

Thumbs to...

- ✓**Miles Ladenburger** — on your selection as golf coach at Colby Community College.
- ✓**Wellness Fair Organizers** — on another super result, as shared with *Free Press* readers in Friday's edition.
- ✓**Dr. Mark Hansen** — on your selection as this year's first speaker (March 17) for the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College. Your old home town is very proud.
- ✓**Mrs. Sheila Johnson** — and your Triplains High School scholar's bowl team on earning top honors at the 10-school competition at Bird City...from Jean Lowe, Winona correspondent for the *Free Press*.
- ✓**Stacy Wolf and Lisa Varney** — founders of the Northwest Kansas Military Family Support Group.
- ✓**John Patterson** — on your position as certified registered nurse anesthetist at Citizens Medical Center.
- ✓**Lori Ziegelmeier and Beth Zillinger** — on being named to the 2005 All-Kansas Academic team. Both are students at Colby Community College.
- ✓**Hazel Duffey** — on the promotion of your grandson Doug Smith to the rank of major in the United States Air Force.

This column is prepared early each Monday morning by the newspaper's publisher. You can submit a name, names or group for consideration by simply e-mailing td@nwkansas.com, calling 462-3963, fax 462-7749 or drop by the office at 155 W. 5th. Thanks in advance for your help. - td

Reminder: Free concert tonight at the Colby Community Building, featuring the Army Ground Forces Band. No ticket needed. Time: 7:30 p.m. Sponsors: Western Plains Arts Association and the *Colby Free Press*.

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, fax 462-7749 or call 462-3963,

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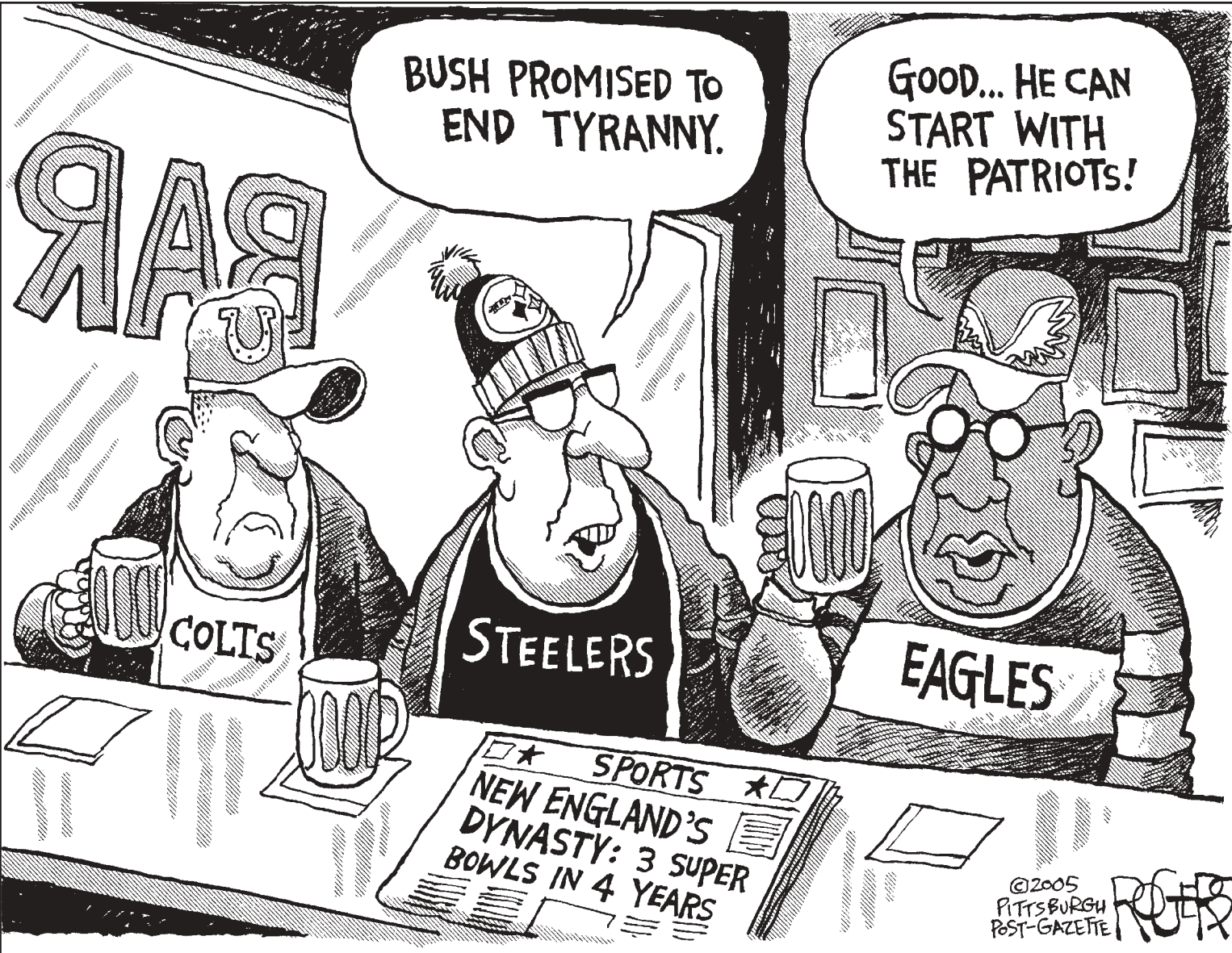
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Valentine's Day: big deal!

Valentine's Day is upon us again. Like many other single people, it's a day I really don't like. I consider it nothing more than crass commercialism so close after Christmas and before tax season to bring guilt to the masses yet again. I still don't understand why males need to be forced into dropping so much cash on a plant that's just going to die anyway. To borrow, it entails "flowers, chocolates, promises you don't intend to keep." (Cogsworth, "Beauty and the Beast") Women expect to get expensive gifts, including jewelry. What do men get? Gripped out if they don't drop a lot of cash on the goods. It's an unfair double standard. I would think an unexpected gesture during the rest of the year would mean more than something on or around Valentine's Day when it's expected. Am I anti-romance or sentimental? No. Just anti-Valentine's. It's like the second Christmas season. I imagine many people will be using their tax returns on Valentine's presents. An expensive gift isn't an expression of love. It's a cliché, but money can't buy happiness or love. Like Jennifer Lopez sang, love don't cost a thing. Of course there is the emotional toll it can take but it shouldn't be in the form of a hit to the pocketbook. Consider the rose. Given in bunches on Valentine's, they soon die. Roses, I take it, are the ultimate floral expres-



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

sion of love, the perfect bloom. Love isn't perfect. Love is patient, love is kind, but it isn't perfect. Or at least how people express it isn't perfect. People aren't perfect. We're all "normal" to varying degrees but that's a matter of relativity. I know sometimes people are in love with being in love and when they finally find someone to pin their hopes on, they spend all their time trying to make the other person fit their vision of perfection instead of taking them as they are. That's what makes me crazy about Valentine's Day. The expectations. So, in celebration of Valentine's Day, I will spare people my cynicism and instead share some quotes that reflect what I think about love: We come to love not by finding a perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly. No one is perfect until you fall in love with them. The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return.

Love is like oxygen, love is a many splendored thing, love lifts us up where we belong, all you need is love! — from "Moulin Rouge" "It is better to be hated for what one is than loved for what one is not." -Andre Gide "It is with true love as it is with ghosts; everyone talks about it, but few have seen it." —La Rochefoucauld Expect nothing, live frugally on surprise.— Alice Walker Truly loving another means letting go of all expectations. It means full acceptance, even celebration of another's personhood. Somewhere there's someone who dreams of your smile, and finds in your presence that life is worth while, so when you are lonely, remember this is true: Somebody, somewhere is thinking of you. Love is being stupid together.—Paul Velery Take away love and our world becomes a tomb.—Robert Browning. Love is not love which alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove, William Shakespeare. "Love is like a friendship caught on fire: In the beginning a flame, very pretty, often hot and fierce, but still only light and flickering. As love grows older, our hearts mature and our love becomes as coals, deep-burning and unquenchable." ***** *Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Colby Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. Email tc Cox@nwkansas.com.*

And now a report from Germany

My Sister Granddaughter Becky Boyd sent the following e-mail on Tuesday Feb. 8. (Becky is serving a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, now stationed in Stuttgart, Germany. Female missionaries are referred to as 'sister'.) Since I told you about my sea-going fisherman grandson, I will also report on a different kind of adventure. Liebe Familie und Freunde (Dear Family and Friends): Yesterday was the Karnevalzug — the parade for the celebration of Karneval. Karneval started on Thursday so as we came home from ZOKO in Duesseldorf, we saw many people in the Hauptbahnhof with their costumes getting ready to celebrate. (Here, that means lots of drinking). The celebration has gone on until today, with people partying every night. We saw on Thursday and Friday nights a small group of people walking on the street at night in a small parade, banging the drums and singing. As they would come by our house, they would gather more and more people each time they went. We live on a major street not too far from the center of the city, so we see and hear some things. Last night was the big party night, and we could hear and feel the beat of the Technomusic from the bar across the street from us and also from Innenstadt. We also heard all of the people laughing and screaming. It was quite infectious, the festive, celebratory spirit here. We took our Preparation Day for the most part yesterday and went to watch the Zug with the



Maxine Nelson

• Random Thoughts

Familie Siebke. They dressed up as Tigers with face paint, Tiger slippers over their shoes, and tails pinned onto their pants. It was Bruder Siebke (27) who served a mission in England (Leeds, I think), Sister Siebke (25), and their little girl, Anna Lea (almost 2, birthday in March). They are such a sweet family and are expecting their second baby. It was so much fun to watch the parade with them and to see everyone else's costumes. It's like Halloween, only four days long and with a lot more beer! At the parade, everyone scrambled over each other to catch what the people threw out. It was the most random thing. There were floats like we have and people riding on them dressed in costumes, but really no themes and I couldn't tell who was from what organization. But it was so much fun. And they throw out the most random things, too; it's not like at home where you pick up some cheap lollipops and tootsie rolls. Oh no: they were throwing kleenexes, whole chocolate bars, the typical cheap candy, waffles, popcorn, po-

tato chips, stuffed animals, other toys. They handed out little airline bottles of alcohol to the adults, fresh flowers to the women and girls, CDs, records...and Elder Robinson caught a bottle of wine. We ended up with two grocery bags full of stuff. It was unbelievable. But the work here is going really well, too. We have an Austausch tomorrow, and as it is planned right now, I will go to Duesseldorf and work with Sister Skinner, and Sister Kymalainen will stay here and the Sister Jones will come. It will be really great. Transfer calls are coming and I don't know what will happen; I have my own desires, but will go where the Lord wants me to. I do love this work. It is the greatest and hardest work I have ever done. I know everyone says that, but it is so true. -mn- I'm happy to welcome Jan Katz Ackerman to the *Colby Free Press*. I have long enjoyed her writings in *The Hays Daily News*, and that was one of the reasons I have continued to subscribe. Another reason is that we used to live in Hays and it still has feelings of 'home.' I also used to enjoy the writings of Janella Mildrexler who is now coordinator of student activities at the University of Connecticut according to her father, Joe. (Maybe I will have to reconsider that subscription.) ***** *Maxine Nelson is a retired editor/reporter for the Free Press. She writes as the mood strikes. Email mnelson@nwkansas.com.*

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

