

Opinion



Your Views Count

- Letters

A really great weekend

To the Colby Free Press:

Well, the 10th annual “Pickin’ on the Plains” Bluegrass festival is over, and it was a huge success! One of the reasons is because of the tremendous support we had from the people of Colby and the surrounding area.

We appreciate the generosity of the many businesses and individuals whose contributions allowed us to bring to Colby top quality Bluegrass performers. People came from at least 15 states, with 90 camping spots being filled.

It took a lot of volunteers to keep things running smoothly, and we are so grateful for the many people who helped in that capacity — and for the nice selection of vendors.

The entertainment committee has already started on next year’s lineup, so be watching for the new schedule. It promises to be another fantastic time!

We are proud of Colby and proud of our festival!

Thank you,

The Colby Bluegrass Committee
Susan and Bob McLemore
Gene Criss
Bill Summers
Keith Reavis
J. D. and Donna Bennett
Jo and Larry Booth
Merry Lee Lewis
Chuck and Leilani Thomas
Machelle and Rick Haskins
Marcie Magley
Pat Wolf
Jo and Sam Wolf
(Letter #58)

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Ore-mail td@nwkansas.com, fax 462-7749 or drop your letter off at the office. Remember to include your signature, daytime telephone numb er and address. The latter two are for verification of the writer only. Questions to the publisher.

Where to write, call

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, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso
State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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freepress@nwkansas.com

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Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcox@nwkansas.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkansas.com

Jasmine Crottinger - Advertising Sales
jasminec@nwkansas.com

Cindy Davis - Advertising Sales
c.davis@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwkansas.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

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Remember Mark's concert

The vibes I get lead me to believe the ticket sales for the Mark Schultz concert on Aug. 11 are moving along at a good pace. Dave Jennings at the His Shop here in Colby told me this morning that there's a lot of excitement about this concert and his advice is not to wait until the last minute because there might not be any tickets left. Mark takes the stage in the Colby Community Building at 8 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 11, which, by the way, is the first day of the Colby High School Reunion, an event held every five years. Mark is a Colby product and is charted way up there in the field of Christian music. He's good, very good. Probably outstanding would better describe this artist's talent. He is being brought to town by J&R Marketing, the Judy and Rich Epp duo, responsible for some mighty big names appearing locally in the past few years. Let's welcome Mark Schultz home with a roaring ovation when his concert opens at 8 p.m. on Aug. 11!

The political cartoon we carried on the Opinion Page in the Friday, July 15 issue would have been funny if it wasn't so true. If you remember it showed two characters in the two panels wearing T-shirts. The writing on the top of the first panel said, "What the world cares about..." and showed an Africa-American woman in a T-shirt that read, "Save Africa from Aids & Famine." Atop the other panel was the wording, "What America Cares About..." and showed a white man wearing a T-shirt that said, "Save Katie Holmes from Tom Cruise."

Sad, isn't it.

The major media in this country seem to think



Tom Dreiling

- My Turn

celebrity is news. And quite frankly I am getting sick of it! And I'm also getting sick of watching the celebs in their latest fashions — which is wearing next to nothing — and claiming this is the American way of life. It's not. It's corporate America's perverted perception of how the American way of life should be.

The shining city on top of the hill no longer exists, as it did in the years of Ronald Reagan's presidency, or the hope held out in the brief presidency of John F. Kennedy.

The more I looked at that editorial cartoon and the more I studied it, the more the anger built up within me. It is so true. The rest of the world looks at the situations in other countries with despair. We turn our heads and look the other way.

If those who are spoon feeding us all this stupid stuff they call news, would get out in the country and look at REAL America they just might change their stripes.

There is no shining city on the hill. There are druggies, boozers, dopers, perverted and twisted minds roaming the streets, sidewalks and alleyways. There are hungry people digging into trash

Getting old is something to crow about

Here we are again, at week's end and time to share with you what readers are sharing with me. Send me some of your stuff and it just might find its way into this column. E-mail td@nwkansas.com, fax 462-7749 or drop by the office at 155 W. 5th. Thanks for your help. - td

About being old

The other day a young person asked me how I felt about being old. I was taken aback, for I do not think of myself as old. Upon seeing my reaction, she was immediately embarrassed, but I explained that it was an interesting question, and I would ponder it, and let her know.

Old age, I decided, is a gift. I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body? I sometime despair over my body — the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, skin spots and bumps, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror, but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my loving family, for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avant garde on my patio. I am entitled to overeat, to be messy, to be extravagant. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read until 4 in the morning, and sleep until noon? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 50's, and if I at the same time wish to weep over a lost love, I will. I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body,

TD

- At Week's End

and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the bikini set. They, too if they are lucky, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten — and I eventually remember the important things. Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or when a beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, or to have my hair disappear, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver. I can say "no," and mean it. I can say "yes," and mean it. As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

cans for survival. There are people sick and forced to stay that way because they don't have the means to seek medical help. There are the homeless. It's an endless litany.

Yes, our ills are many. But those in charge of what we see, hear and breath, for most part, see a different America. An America concerned with the lifestyles of the rich, the famous, the powerful.

Pardon me, big guys, your America and mine don't jell.

I might put in another plug for the membership drive underway by the **Western Plains Arts Association**. They have a super program lined up for the 2005-06 season for northwest Kansas. Contact any of the following for more information: **Joan Albers** 460-6448, **Vicky Waldschmidt** 460-6620, **Carol Rahn** 462-6342, **Carol Barnes** 462-2641, **Pat Ziegelmeier** 462-7808 or **Kevin Juenemann**, 460-2525 (home), 462-3063 (work). If you've been a member in the past please renew your commitment, if not consider joining. What the Western Plains Arts Association does is compliment the already fine quality of life in this part of our great state.

Have a good evening and a good weekend! And remember to include your house or worship in your weekend plans.

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

And I shall eat dessert every single day.

The Preacher's Son

An old country preacher had a teenage son. The preacher felt it was getting time the boy should give some thought to choosing a profession. Like many young men, then and now, the boy didn't really know what he wanted to do — and he didn't seem overly concerned about it.

One day, while the boy was away at school, his father decided to try an experiment. What he did was this: he went into the boy's room and placed on his study table these three objects — a Bible, a silver dollar, and a bottle of whiskey...

"Now then," the old preacher said to himself, "I'll just hide behind the door here, and when my son comes home from school this afternoon, I'll see which of these three objects he picks up. If he picks up the Bible, he's going to be a preacher like me, and what a blessing that would be! If he picks up the dollar, he's going to be a businessman, and that would be OK too. But if he picks up the bottle, he's going to be a drunkard — a no-good drunkard and Lord, what a shame that would be."

The old man was anxious as he waited, and soon he heard his son's footsteps as he came in the house whistling and headed back to his room. He deposited his books on the bed, as a matter of routine, and as he turned around to leave the room he spotted the objects on the table.

With a curious set in his eye, he walked over to inspect them. What he finally did was pick up the Bible and place it under his arm. He then picked up the silver dollar and dropped it into his pocket. He uncorked the bottle and took a big drink....

"Lord have mercy!" the old man whispered, "he's gonna be a politician!"

That's it for this week. - td

Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau

