

Opinion



Your Views Count

- Letters

About those gas prices

To the Colby Free Press:

I think it is time for the gasoline retailers here in Colby to explain why they feel it necessary to gouge their friends, neighbors and customers!

As of Friday, Aug 19, the average price for a gallon of gas in Goodland was \$2.56, while in Colby it was \$2.69, a difference of 13 cents per gallon. Add in the extra 3- to 5-cents a gallon for the extra transportation costs to get the gas to Goodland, our retailers are charging us 16 to 18 cents more for every gallon we buy! I will add that it's been this way all summer.

I think we all know there is really no reason for gas to be as high as it is. And at this time the major oil companies are making windfall profits!

It's not a surprise that the oil companies are trying to take advantage of us, but it is alarming when it happens in your own hometown!

Sincerely,

Charles Cook
Cook Trucking
Colby
(Letter #65)

Letter policy

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

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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/jmorrison
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Getting hit in the pocket book, again

With the fair and the Colby All-School Reunion, I spent two weeks constantly on the go. I hardly had time to notice the gas prices until I finally had to go fuel up.

Anyway, I have come away with sticker shock at the gas pump.

I wasn't happy. I know others aren't either. And I hear that oil companies are blaming the American public for the spike in prices instead of putting where it really belongs.

Instead, I lay blame on George W. Bush and his Saudi buddies.

The American public is paying out the nose while Middle Eastern coffers fill up and oil companies get richer.

Other solutions exist. Why should we pollute our environment and destroy untouched wild habitat for the sake of an outdated energy source?

Frankly, I think the inflated gas prices are obscene.

The United States has the chance to emerge as a leader in the development of alternative energy sources. By setting an example others can follow, everyone can benefit.

Let the Saudis keep their oil. We need to send the message that we will no longer be dependent on them for our energy needs. They have us right where they want us.

So do other foreign investors. We're just a fat calf waiting for everyone else to slaughter.

In an article on Yahoo! news, engineers are tinkering with the idea of plug-in cars, vehicles you plug into a normal wall outlet. Several people who've done it are getting up to 250 mpg out of hybrid gas/electric cars they modified themselves.

The example used was a Toyota Prius, but other cars have been used. It said producing such cars



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

on the assembly line would add about \$6,000 to the price of the car because of production costs but its' worth it.

People already pay up to \$50,000 for an SUV that gets 15 miles per gallon.

There is no shortage of oil. The problem is the people in charge control supply and demand. They can pump out as much or as little as they want, and the problem is how much is available for refinement.

Maybe we should just give them the deed to the country and be done with it.

Foreign investors practically own the country anyway, and with so many jobs outsourced, we're no longer our own sovereign state.

Used to we had no one to answer to but ourselves but that's not true anymore.

We have a president who sold us out to foreign interests and his own personal agenda.

He gets off scott free while everyone else is paying the price with American blood and American money.

I complain about the price of gas, but whether I like it or no, along with everyone else, I'm still going to have to pay

Talking about what can be done and actually doing something about it are two different things

The government keeps talking about devel-

oping hydrogen fuel cells. The way I understand it, the process to get those fuel cells will be as pollutive as the fossil fuels we use now.

It's a lose-lose situation.

Petroleum isn't going to last forever, but its' not going to run dry tomorrow. But maybe we need to set a time limit and act like that's how much time we have to develop alternative energy sources.

And sending a message to OPEC that we're not they're slaves anymore.

In this, I do say as Americans, we don't have to take this. We also don't have to sit back and listen to the rest of the world say "I told you so" and revel with glee that we're finally having to put up with what they've been putting up with for years.

They said that after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. I still don't see them doing anything to help stop terrorism but that's a subject for another column. Nor do I see them doing much to help curb the cost of transportation.

Why should anyone accept anything that isn't fair or right?

In the past four years, Americans have had to give up some of their freedoms in the name of paranoia and alleged safety.

Things might not change today or tomorrow, but we can get things started. The first step is denying the world we live in now and choosing to try to make it the place it could be.

Naive? Stupid? Maybe.

But as a certain author once wrote, small steps are first steps to take to get there.

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Democracy: To be or not to be

Most Americans follow our political leaders as they chant their lead line in our international relations "creating democracies all over the world." Under this noble banner we send our sons and daughters to war and spend our treasurer down to dangerously low levels. But, are we really ready to accept the majority of the world's peoples living under Democracy? What do the political insiders know that they haven't told us about a world "safe for Democracy?" Is it possible that none of us really want Democracy worldwide?"

In 1970 Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile in an overwhelming landslide. President Nixon used our CIA and spent millions of dollars, working with the military to overthrow Allende. Mr. Allende's weakness? He was a Socialist. With our approval, on September 11, 1973 Augusto Pinochet was made president by the army and set out to murder 135,000 of the poor who had backed the elected president.

In 1990 Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide became the first democratically elected president of Haiti with 87 percent of the popular vote. Within eighteen months the rich and powerful used the army to put him out of office. President Bush (I) turned his back and blessed the event. Three years later, under pressure from the OAS, President Clinton returned Aristide to office. In true democratic order at the end of his term in 1995 he stepped

Dr. Britt Minshall

• Guest Commentary

down. After the required stand down (five years) Aristide ran again and won in 2000. Our response? The president cut aid to Haiti, diverting the \$33 million for water projects to the International Republican Institute to destroy Aristide's presidency. Finally, Bush sent 200-armed thugs into the country to rip it apart and subsequently we kidnapped the president and his wife on February 29, 2004. His crime? He represented the poor, raised the minimum from 86¢ a DAY to \$1.56 a day, disbanded the army that had preyed on the poor for decades, ended the moonshine trade and opened a medical school to train doctors and nurses. Do we really want democracy? Are we willing to accept the government others select?

Two-thirds of the world's population is poor. Only in the west is there a significant middle class. When democracy comes to these nations they will ALWAYS elect a government famil-

iar to them. These governments may often be Islamic or Socialist in character; both scare American government and business types to death. Why? Because governments elected by the poor will raise the standard of living for the poor and there goes our cheap labor. The American people are just as afraid because governments elected by the poor will raise the standard of living for the poor and there goes our cheap goods.

So there it is, the dilemma. And it's not only on the shoulders of the big guys but on all of our shoulders. Are we the most powerful people on earth willing to share this planet equally with others? Will we be willing to pay more, thus have less, to ensure all have those "inalienable rights" of which we speak. Or, will we continue to bully the rest of our world into submitting to our over-seeing?

If we are willing to allow the rest of the world to live under Democracy we must begin to act like it. If not, we must stop talking about it. Democracy: To Be or Not To Be, that IS The Question, and we all must answer it.

Dr. Britt Minshall is the author of "Ring of Angels," a book that covers the political and social climate in Haiti. He is a former INTERPOL officer. He may be reached at repress@juno.com.

Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau

