

# Opinion



## Your Views Count

### • Letters

## Hurricane victims need us

To the Colby Free Press:

It is heart wrenching to see and hear about the devastation from Hurricane Katrina. As a National Disaster Volunteer for the American Red Cross and the Thomas County Red Cross Chapter's disaster chair, I express my pleas for all of us to first keep the victims of this disaster and the volunteers that are serving in our prayers and thoughts.

I then want to ask each of you to think how you can help and support those in need from Katrina's hit of furry.

Two of our trained DSHR volunteers from our own chapter (Jim Oliver and Frank Powers) are already there serving and helping those who have had their lives destroyed and turned upside down. I have seen the pain and fear in the eyes of those who have lost everything and have no where to go. Those victims/clients that the American Red Cross serve are so appreciative of a warm blanket, a cup of coffee, a meal and most importantly — a supportive smile and listening ear; someone to give them a hug when all seems so dark and hopeless. I want to request that each of us think of how we can help be supportive to the relief efforts that will take weeks and months. There is something each and every one of us can do; nothing is too small or insignificant. I ask you to step to the plate and give financially to the relief efforts that will cost so much. It doesn't matter if it is a dollar or thousands of dollars.

You could also give of your time and talents. If you want to become a trained volunteer to go to the Gulf states and help, give our chapter or me a call today. The Thomas County chapter telephone number is 462-7161 or Molly Oliver, 462-6133.

Another way you can help is to be ready to donate blood.

The reward in giving is what you will receive in return. There are vivid images in my mind of all the faces that I have seen in volunteering and serving others — the small child's smile as he clings to the story book I handed to him, the elderly man who waited daily for his cool lemonade and hot meal, and the pregnant young woman who appreciated a simple clean up kit to begin the mopping of flood waters from her home.

Please help. We in Thomas County can make a difference. The first step is in choosing to do so.

Sincerely,

**Molly Oliver, disaster chair  
Thomas County American Red Cross  
(Letter #67)**

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](mailto:td@nwkansas.com) or [pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com).

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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](mailto:jmorriso@ink.org) web: [www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso](http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso)

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## Reunion talk prompts touching story

The topic of class reunions came up the other day and I was asked how many reunions my graduating class has had. I said, "One, our 10th."

"We didn't like each other in those days, and I doubt if we'd like each other now," I added.

Well, the lady I was talking with is tracking down her classmates to advise them about an upcoming 45th class reunion which will take place in two years. But she won't have to look too far for one of her classmates, because she's known his residence for quite some time. It took her years to learn his address, and she wasn't even looking for it when she found it.

Let me explain.

This guy and gal dated for almost 1 1/2 years, and when it came around time for the junior-senior prom they planned to go together. Oh yes, he picked her up for their intended date, and he even gave her the traditional corsage and off they went to the banquet, but they ended up going to the dance separately.

As with many schools, the parents and janitors at this gal's school turned the lunch room into a dance hall while the teens left for a short while. She said she and her date left the school for what was to have been about an hour, and they fully intended on returning for the dance.

But, somewhere between leaving the banquet and returning for the dance a disagreement took place.

I tried to pry out of her what the disagreement was about, and the only reply I got was, "Ask him."

Well, I went to him and asked, but he too was closed lipped.

I quickly figured out not even 20 questions was going to pry the answer from either of them.

Oh, if you haven't guessed, each of them went their separate ways, married other people, and a series of circumstances brought these two members of the Class of 1962 back together.



**Jan Katz Ackerman**

### • From Where I stand

Now they are married and living happily ever after!

-jka-

This same lady told me she's having a ball tracking down fellow classmates.

She said it's neat that the 'then-basketball-jock' is communicating with her via E-mail.

"Who'd a thought back in 1962 we'd be talking to each other over computers," she said.

I've been told some of the wildest stories about the escapades she's having talking to the Uncle Joe of Betty Lou, who is the third cousin, twice removed of the person she's actually trying to track down.

"Oh yes, I remember him, but I think he's divorced and living in Seattle," a distant relative has told her about one guy.

And, "We are thinking about selling everything and moving," said another of someone she's trying to find a correct address for.

Well, about that one-time-only class reunion my class had, it was a classmate and myself who did the tracking down and organizing of it. That's one thing in my life I can actually be self-assured I will NEVER do again.

Been there, done that, ended up with a 4.0 in that class!

-jka-

While we are chatting about days gone by, here are some tips on how to stay young. I don't know their author, but they make me giggle

when they crossed my desk.

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay the doctors.

2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop," and the devil's name is Alzheimer's.

4. Enjoy the simple things.

5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is yourself, so be ALIVE while you are alive.

7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies,

whatever. Your home is your refuge.

8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.

10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

And always remember this: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

And if you don't send this to at least 10 people — who cares? But do share this with someone. We all need to live life to its fullest each day.

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## Microcredit revolution catching on

### Nicole French

#### • Guest Commentary

prepare their own marketable goods.

In areas all over the world, entrepreneurs in developing towns are being given the opportunity to start small businesses to support themselves, their families, and their communities. Modest community investment loans are called micro-loans due to the tiny amount of money that it takes to get these businesses. In many cases, \$16 is enough to purchase the goods or equipment needed to start making a profit immediately. At below-market interest rates for borrowers, microcredit offers much needed cash for start-up costs like purchasing equipment, gaining workspace, or buying materials to make marketable goods. The United Nations declared 2005 the Year of Microcredit because there has been a rapid increase in quality of life in areas where these loans have been made.

This large success has shown that achieving the United Nations' millennium development goals, which include eradicating hunger and poverty, improving health care, securing primary education for all children, and creating environmental sustainability, can be made pos-

sible with the help of microcredit.

The Abdul Latif Jameel Community Investment Bank is a small arm of the Grameen Bank, which gave the first modern-day microcredit loan to a woman in Bangladesh.

The loan, for just \$2, was given to a woman otherwise considered unbankable by traditional banks. Very soon after she received the loan, she paid it back in full. She was lifting herself out of poverty by her own skill and ambition. After that, the Grameen Bank grew rapidly.

The success of the Grameen Bank has inspired many other microcredit ventures around the world that support businesses in the areas of community building, green energy, environmental preservation, and entrepreneurship. Individuals and businesses worldwide are making these loans possible by investing in these institutions. In the United States, interest in microcredit is increasing, as more and more investors are realizing that their lending can have a tremendous impact on individuals and communities across the globe.

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Nicole French is a public education and media intern at Co-op America, a national non-profit organization, providing the economic strategies for businesses/individuals to address problems. [www.coopamerica.org](http://www.coopamerica.org) The preceding column was distributed by Minuteman-Media.org.

## Doonesbury

### • Gary Trudeau

