

# Opinion



## Free Press Viewpoint

### Election will show what's important

Of all the comments, accusations and conversations held since the Colby Community College Board of Trustees announced its proposal to build a new gymnasiums and wellness center one item has risen to the top.

The topic has showed how much we care about our community. Granted, the tone behind some of those comments has not been the most pleasant, but thinking what is best for Thomas County is still in there somewhere.

One side of the debate said the college needs this facility. The Colby Community Building has served its purpose, but it is odd for Colby Community College to constantly use a facility that is not on its own campus. Basketball players are one step from a good concussion with the distance between the end of the court and the wall.

And it's not just the college use of the center either. An additional venue will make Colby an attractive place for a variety of events utilizing our abundant hotel rooms and restaurants.

College officials want those potential students who live in the shadows of the other Kansas colleges to honestly consider attending Colby.

On the other side, are the people who think the proposal will be a gigantic step backward for the economic vitality of Thomas County.

With agriculture still the strongest part of our economy, years of drought and limited crop production this is not a good time, or reason, to increase our property taxes.

Jobs, and high-paying jobs, are very limited in Thomas County. Select people have enough flexibility in their budget to afford such an increase. Others have said the college bring in those additional jobs first, then ask for a new facility.

The state of Kansas must review the economic structure of community colleges. The community college may get more support and interest if its tax-base was spread out among counties in the region it serves.

It's been an engaging two-months plus hearing all sides of this story.

Tuesday, we will see whose wants and needs mean more. Please, remember to vote.

— John Van Nostrand is publisher of 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 [jvannostrand@nwkskansas.com](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkskansas.com) or [pdecker@nwkskansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkskansas.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

#### Where to write, call

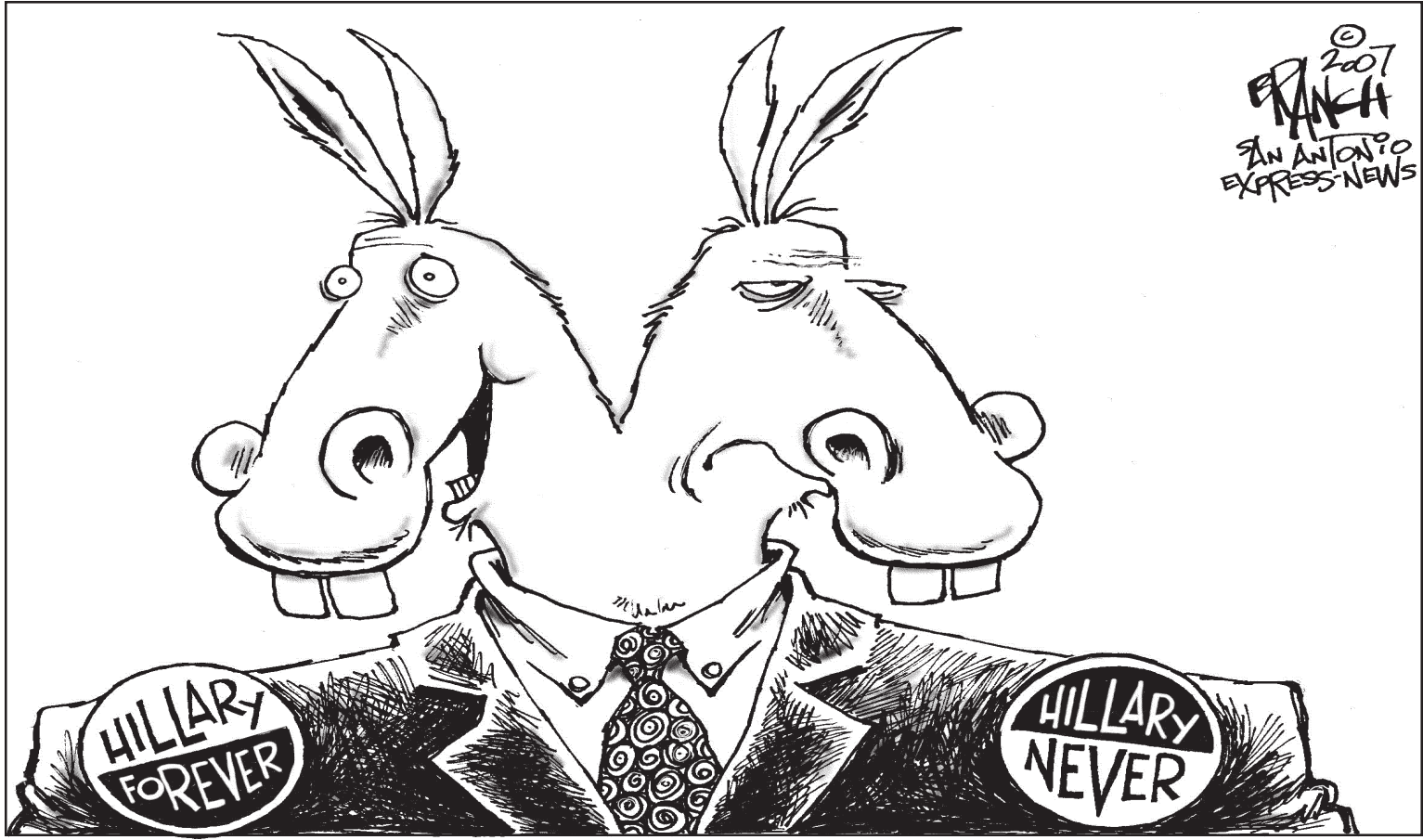
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### Every business has a 'bad apple'

My first inclination was to talk about April Fool's Day on Sunday and the silly pranks that people do.

But, then I remembered something I read last week that might interest more readers — particularly employers.

The article dealt with "bad apples" and how managers sometimes find it difficult to throw them out. Now, I would like to preface this by saying that I am the perfect employee and cannot imagine why anyone would consider me a "bad apple" — maybe I am writing an April Fool's article after all. Seriously, nobody is a perfect employee, but as the article noted "every organization has at least one — the employee for whatever reason — who behaves as though coming to work is a fate worse than death."

The study was done by William Felps, a doctoral student at the University of Washington and Terrence Mitchell, a professor of management and organization at the University of Washington Business School explored just how much damage one bad apple can wreak. Joanne G. Sujansky, PhD, cited the study, saying "this study takes an interesting look at a problem that is all too prevalent in corporate America."

#### So what are managers to do?

As part of the study, seven problems and solutions were offered in helping managers deal with this. Due to space limitations, I condensed the information.

#### Problem No. 1

Some company cultures tolerate managers' passing bad apples from department to department.

#### Solution No. 1

Quite simply, she suggests, the employer must create a culture that doesn't allow people to pawn problems off on others. However, if the employer fosters an environment where every employee



#### Patty Decker

#### • Deep Thoughts

innovates constantly, executes relentlessly, and works with a sense of passion, bad apples simply won't be able to survive.

#### Problem No. 2

Managers expect team members to deal with the bad apple, but they can't — or won't. People have a great deal of difficulty giving feedback to their peers.

#### Solution No. 2

The study showed that confrontation by team members can occasionally be successful. The problem comes when team members don't feel like they have enough power in the situation.

#### Problem No. 3

Bad apples can be master manipulators. After all, they've stayed around this long for a reason. When you confront them, bad apples aren't afraid to pull out all of the stops to redirect your attention from poor behavior to their more positive traits or to some other employee.

#### Solution No. 3

Regardless of what an employer's bad apple is telling them in order to distract them, stay focused on addressing the issues at hand.

#### Problem No. 4

Bad apples aren't always poor performers. Some can be great producers for the company, but simply have a negative attitude or a tendency to bully other employees.

#### Solution No. 4

It's important to provide balanced feedback

to all employees, including the bad apples, Sujansky said. Acknowledge the positive contributions your bad apple is making, but don't be afraid to confront the behaviors that negatively affect others. Besides, after the confrontation, the bad apple may realize that his annoying behaviors will limit his progress and promotability in the organization.

#### Problem No. 5

Rather than model and recognize the behavior they want, expect, and demand, managers focus too much attention on poor behavior. One reason this happens is because the positive behavior that does occur in the office can't cancel out the negative.

#### Solution No. 5

While employers shouldn't ignore the negative behavior in the office, they should deliberately place much more emphasis on showcasing the positive. Reward employees who go out of their way to help their teammates on projects.

#### Problem No. 6

Some managers are afraid to fire bad apples for fear of legal retribution. Bad apples, by definition, are troublemakers.

#### Solution No. 6

Legal retribution shouldn't be a worry for an employer if they follow the sound human resource practices required of a leader, she said.

#### Problem No. 7

Firing employees, no matter how bad their behavior or poor their performance, is never easy. If bad apples refuse to change their behavior, the time will come to let them go.

#### Solution No. 7

Make sure to discuss the situation and intended actions with a human resource professional and/or legal counsel. Let him know his being fired is the consequence for the lack of turnaround in his performance.

### Your turn

## Colby college proposal not worth it

#### Ed Collins Colby

On April 3, I will vote no to both of the questions concerning the Colby Community College Project.

People have asked me why I am so opposed to this project. If it passes, it will cost me in excess of \$10,000 over the next 20 years. After having a conversation with a supporter of the project, I am even more opposed to the project.

The following is how I had it explained to me: I was told that Colby needed this sports facility to help recruit athletes. I was told that northwest Kansas has seen a decline in population, so we need to have athletic facilities to be able to compete with other junior colleges for outstanding athletes.

This person went on to say that if we cannot recruit these students our enrollment at the college will continue to decline. With a declining enrollment the college does not receive as much state aid money and the college has a harder time meeting their projected budgets.

This conversation opened a few questions in my mind. Does the college not recruit enough student athletes right now to fill their rosters? If so, how are we going to increase the number of students? Add more programs? Doesn't add-

ing programs cost more money?

It is difficult for me to understand how spending \$20,000,000 for a sports complex is going to help the problem at Colby Community College. This is not the solution to the problem. The problem is declining population in Thomas County. We will continue to have that problem and building basketball courts is not going to fix it. We are not going to increase the number of students needed to maintain the enrollment.

The real answer to the problem is to figure out how to make people that live in Thomas County want to stay here and outside people want to move here and bring their families to Thomas County. Until we do this, our population will continue to decline. As our county's population continues to decline, the college is going to continue asking for more money from all of us. Do you think the college is going to cut programs or salaries?

Do you think if we vote yes to higher property taxes now, the college is not going to ask for more money in the future? If the taxpayers say yes now, there is no guarantee the college will not ask for more tax increases from you and me in the future. If the enrollment continues to decline, the College is going to be asking us for more tax dollars so they can maintain their cur-

rent needs with or without this proposed project.

This clearly indicates the tax burden will continue for the people who continue to live here.

Our real need is for each of us to seriously consider what is needed to make Colby more attractive to people and their families, so they will want to move here, live here and retire here. When Thomas County population starts to increase, then the college will not have to devise a scheme to attract students or athletes and certainly not be increasing our tax burden.

Yes, it would be great to have this facility at the college. However, I do not want to be the one paying for it. The college needs to devise a better way to pay for it, and not raise the tax burden for everyone. Taxes need to go down, not up. I think people are fed up with paying more taxes and simply can't afford more money taxed from their fixed inadequate incomes. I know I am and I hope you are too.

If this passes, I will be considering a move away from Colby. I cannot afford to live in Thomas County anymore. It just costs too much to live here and it is only going to get worse. Colby has been my home for 30 years. I hope I am not forced to move out of my home.

### More letters on page 8, 9

#### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce  
Tinsley



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