

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Graduates should enjoy the next step

By John Van Nostrand
To our high school graduates:
The attention you received before, during and after your commencement ceremony left when uncle Harold was the last one to leave your reception — with the last piece of cake.
Hoped you enjoyed the time in the spotlight. Things are going to change, soon.
Those who go to college, you will probably change your major at least once. That’s OK. That will prepare you for your working years. It’s becoming common for people to change careers, at least once, before retirement.
Sometimes it takes a few tries to find out what you want to do. Remember, the best job is the one where you forget you get paid.
If you do go to college, try to enjoy it. You will probably learn more valuable information sharing a dorm room than you will in the classroom. Math majors will have a great lesson learning how much more room their roommates take up in the dorm room than they do.
Hang out in the library. There is so much to learn — and it’s not all on the shelves.

Don’t be afraid to paint your body and go to the football games on Saturday afternoons. It’ll be a stress reliever from your classes (and maybe your roommate). You may get on TV and have your 15 minutes, er, 15 seconds of fame. Just don’t do anything in college you will feel uncomfortable telling your kids, if and when you have them.
Vocational school graduates have their importance too. Those graduates are the ones who tell us, “That last string of Christmas lights you hung on your house was the one that blew the fuse,” or the plumbers who say, “You got to be careful with who you invite over to your Super Bowl party, especially at halftime.”
If you choose to join the military — thank you. You will learn some skills, maybe travel the world, and most importantly, defend the greatest place to live in the world despite our own troubles.
Those high school graduates who are still undecided about what to do among college or just jumping in the labor pool, that’s OK too. But don’t wait too long. There is something out there waiting for you.
Congratulations and good luck to all our graduates. (Don’t forget to come home every so often too.)
— *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@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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, 300 SW 10th St. Rm. 143-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com
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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John Van Nostrand - Publisher
jvannostrand@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tc Cox@nwkansas.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

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

Kristi Powell - Advertising Sales
kpowell@nwkansas.com

Emily Wederski - Advertising Sales
ewederski@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

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

Everett Robert - Circulation, Classifieds
erobert@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR’WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

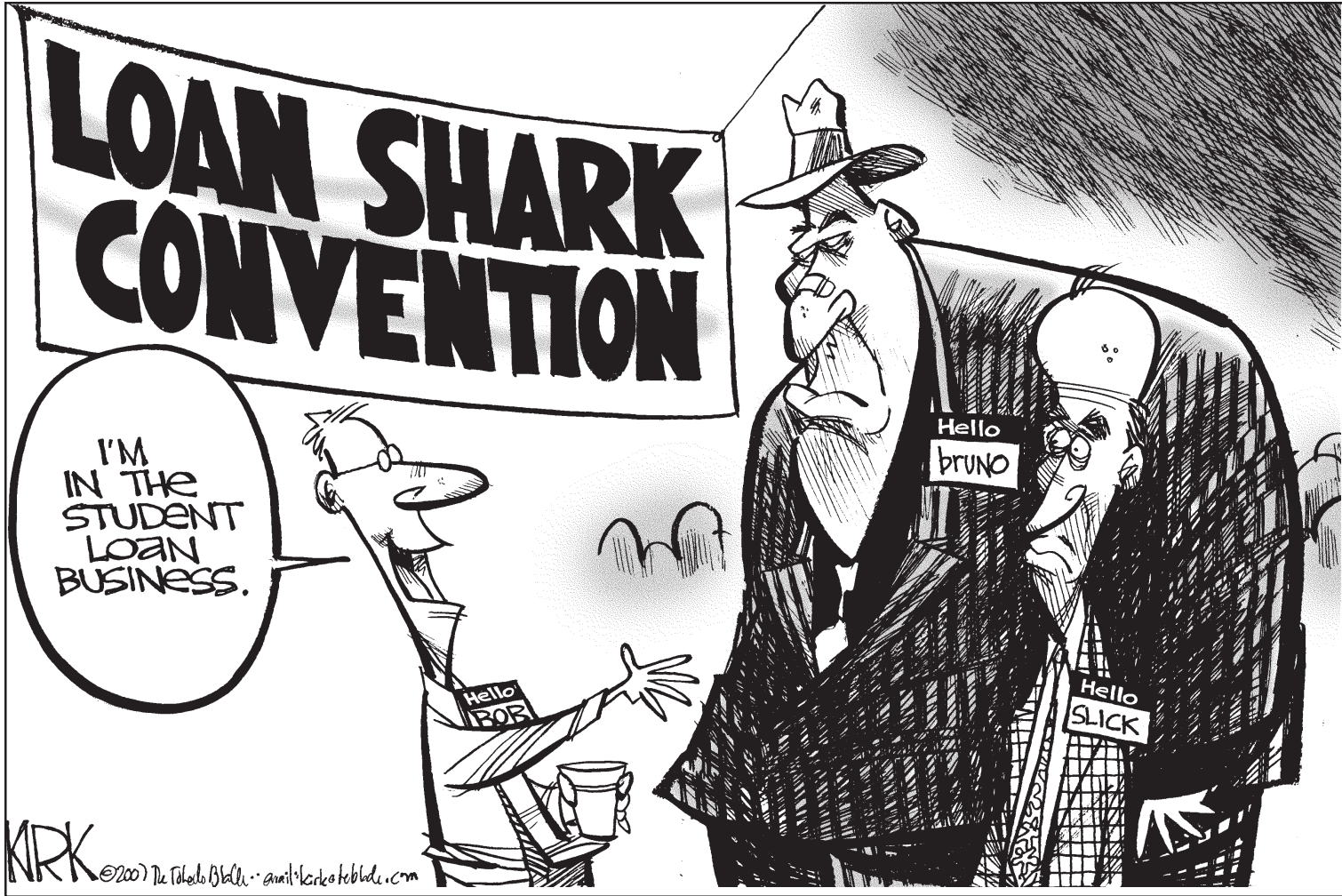
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Gratitude good for the soul

Whenever I need a lift, I think back to something a friend sent me many years ago. The gist of the article relates to the shrinking population on earth.

Whoever did the work then applied statistical data using appropriate percentages and then condensing it to 100 people in a village. The result would be what the village would look like.

Of course, this is only one statistician’s interpretation of the facts and some of the numbers may have changed somewhat over the past five years, but still it’s fascinating and certainly does put things in perspective.

Here it is:

There would be 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south and eight Africans. The number of females would be 52 with 48 being males.

Seventy people would be non-white and 30 would be white. In addition, 70 would be non-Christian and 30 would be Christian.

There would be 89 heterosexual and 11 would be homosexual. Six people would possess 59 percent of the entire world’s wealth and all six would be from the United States.

Eighty would live in substandard housing, 70 would be unable to read and 50 would suffer from malnutrition.

One would be near death; one would be near birth, one would have a college education and one would own a computer.

When we consider our world from this compressed perspective, the need for acceptance,



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

understanding and education becomes glaringly apparent, according to the research.

If nothing else, it’s food for thought. In fact, here’s another tidbit somebody might find entertaining.

Memorial Day is May 28

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is Monday, May 28, a day to remember those who have died in our nation’s service.

As we prepare for this year’s Memorial Day weekend, maybe it would be a good time to reflect on a few thoughts and remember those who died in the name of our freedom.

On a personal note, Memorial Day brings back memories of my mother and father. Memories are all I have left of them. Although I think of my parents often, May is particularly special because my mom’s birthday was May 27 and my father was a veteran of WW II and the Korean conflict. He was also awarded the Purple Heart. They both died at 56, which I think is relatively young, since I am 54.

I also feel gratitude for having never experi-

enced the danger of a battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation — which were some things my folks did endure. My father with war and my mother as a young woman dodging bombs in Latvia during WWII.

Since I am in one of my “gratitude” moods, here are a few other examples of things we all can be thankful for when compared to the rest of the world.

Here they are:

If we woke up this morning with more health than illness — we are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If we can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death — we are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

If we have food in the refrigerator, clothes on our back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep — we are richer than 75 percent of this world.

If we have money in the bank, in our wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace — we are among the top 8 percent of the world’s wealthy.

If your parents are still alive and still married — you are very rare, even in the United States and Canada.

Finally, for those able to read this column, consider yourself blessed since there are more than two billion people in the world who can not read at all.

Decker is editor of the Free Press. Her column appears on Fridays.

Your turn

Proposed ethanol plan is a positive

**Naeem Khan
Manhattan**

In April, I visited western Kansas, everywhere I went the topic was the same, high energy prices. It pleases me to see that Kansans are doing something about the alternative fuels. I also visited Goodland Energy site where construction is underway on an ethanol, biodiesel and coal-based electrical plants plus four windmill generators.

My friend Norman House of Goodland and some associates started this project which will be operational by this fall. According to Norman, global warming and dependence on fossil fuels created an incentive to develop this project. He was also inspired by a local Colby son, the late Don Smith, who gave seminars in the early 70s on alternative fuels especially ethanol derived from the corn.

Don Smith was far ahead of his times in ad-

vocating the use of ethanol. I worked for him one summer while going to Colby Community College. He was a politician, statesman, innovator and entrepreneur.

Oakley’s ethanol plant has been operational for several years and its investors get handsome returns. Ethanol plants are federally mandated and heavily subsidized. The proposed Ethanol plant by RTO Holdings INC. in Colby is a welcome sign and it will be seven times the capacity of Goodland plant. My understanding is that the proposed ethanol plant is still under consideration and nothing has been materialized.

The question is why Colby is lagging behind other cities and counties? If the Colby ethanol plant does materialize then these three plants and the feedlots in the 100 miles radius will demand substantial amounts of corn which the surrounding counties may not be able to produce and supply. Although the increased demand for the

corn will bring higher prices, which are essential for the family-owned farms to stay in business keep in mind the high cost of operation. If I may suggest the proposed Colby ethanol plant could incorporate the utilization of sugar beets and hull-less barley. Sugar beets could be crushed during the season and the extract stored and used at any time.

The larger ethanol plants do generate some air pollutants, because most of the ethanol plants use advanced hydrolysis, fermentation and distillation. According to EPA 100 ton/year of any sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and volatile organic pollutants will constitute air pollution; hopefully the proposed Colby plant will have some safeguards.

The proposed Colby ethanol plant would have a positive effect on the local economy and in the long run it is good for the state and the country. I welcome any discussion and comments.

Colby is not up to code

**George Aumiller
Colby**

I found a book about disability acts so I started reading it and I found something that was not right. I decided to let the people of the area know that Colby has been in violation of a government law since 1964 when the disabled act was passed and to be enforced in all cities.

We are not up to code here and some areas that are not up to codes is the community building was built with stairs to get to the elevator so

people can’t use it. Other areas that are in the wrong are the streets between Franklin and Range.

I am asking for people to help me take a bill that would help Northwest Kansas be able to do the things that I would like to see completed in the next five years.

Talk to Congress and the president to make a bill or an amendment to the Constitution to make other states that have more people to help the poor states get money that would set up a

board to make the jobs get done in a timely fashion and prove that it was used on the job and not in someone’s pocket.

I would also like to go for more SSI and SSDI money we are not being paid. We should get at least 2 percent more than the rest of the other states because we are one of the lowest paid states in the U.S. That is why I am asking for your help.

You can reach me by calling 785-460-1970 or at 770 Dylan Dr., Apt. 104, Colby, Kan., 67701.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce

Tinsley

