Jpinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Help wanted

Publisher's Note: This editorial originally ran Dec. 19, 2007. We are running it again because we are experiencing the same problem and need to remind our readers of the situation. Thank you for your cooperation.

By John Van Nostrand

OK, so we've hit the panic button.

Well, it's not exactly a panic situation, but something we really didn't want to do, but had to.

After weeks turned into months and still have not found a carrier for all our newspaper routes, some routes will be converted to mail this week. That means, rather than see your paper on the front porch in the late afternoon, you will receive it in your mail the following day. More routes will be converted by the end of the

We can also make arrangements for you to pick up your paper

Keeping carriers has been a struggle for nearly a year. After the New Year's Day weekend blizzard a year ago, carriers starting leaving. Some didn't want to do it in the snow and ice. Parents didn't want their kids walking through that either. That's totally understandable. We had a gut feeling carriers would return come spring, which they did, but it's been a carousel since then for some

Unfortunately, for some routes no one ever asked about them. In an attempt to keep our service, Free Press employees have helped fill the void, but it's becoming too much of a stress and shift in workload. Schedules have been changed. Some work has been put off longer than it should because of the routes. Too much is at risk. So we decided to convert those routes to mail until we find a carrier who will stay. (We've had carrier quit after one or two days.)

A Free Press paper route is not brain surgery. It's pretty simple work. Come to the office, pick up your papers, get your list and you're on the way. We'll even show you a couple of times.

Route sizes vary to attract more people. Most routes can be done in 90 minutes on foot. Some like the exercise it offers. Others like the money every month to go to a certain bill or prize. One carrier even liked it to meet new people in town.

Some people have told us, "Just pay the carriers more."

It's not that simple and, besides, throwing money at problems doesn't guarantee it will be fixed. (Some people may have also forgotten that paying carriers more will mean an increase in subscription prices.) These jobs have always been targeted toward kids, hence the pay scale in relation to work.

Carriers who quit usually find something else to do. A kid wants to play a sport in school or be involved in another activity in the afternoon. That's the challenge with papers with carriers across

Our carrier pay competes with some other Kansas papers with larger circulations. The difference is we don't penalize carriers who miss houses or receive complaints.

Too make things easier for carriers (and everybody else) we hope our subscribers have their sidewalks cleared of snow and their house number is visible and lit. Porch lights are so simple but add so much in the evening.

We apologize for the inconvenience switching to mail will cause to those subscribers. But to ensure they will still get a paper and the office will continue to operate in an efficient manner, switching those routes to mail was our only choice.

If you are, or know of someone, interested in being a carrier, please let us know.

- 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@nw kansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the Free Press.

Colby Free Press

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What is old is new again

This week ESPN and ESPN Classic have been running replays of old Celtics/Lakers NBA Finals games almost non-stop in preparation for this year's Final series which began Thursday.

Even though I'd seen many of these games replayed on TV before, I got caught up in the Boston/LA madness and couldn't resist watching some of them again.

Tuesday, ESPN showed a replay of game six of the 1987 NBA Finals, mixing in commentary from Boston and LA writers, analysts and former players. It was pretty neat to hear some of the beat writers describe what the rivalry was like back in the '80s. As a diehard basketball fan, you almost get goosebumps because it's portrayed as basketball in its finest hour.

The ratings, financial impact and undying love affair for the Celtic/Laker rivalry show that to be the case, but when I actually sat there and watched the games I came away pretty unimpressed.

I just don't see what all the fuss is about, because to me the level of play and skill level across the board are nowhere near what it is in

I watched Kobe Bryant last night, and even though he had a pretty bad game, Magic Johnson wouldn't hold a candle to him. Magic was a great passer, but he wasn't a good shooter, he wasn't that quick and he didn't have any moves off the dribble. I see Kobe make passes just as good as Magic, he has moves like Michael Jordan and he can get his shot off whenever he wants.

That fade away he hit in the corner Thursday from just inside the three-point line is a shot Magic or Larry Bird would never make and probably wouldn't even attempt.

I know Bird had one of his worst games of

Joe Falkoff

 A Sideline View

the series that night in 1987, but nothing he did really wowed me any more than any of the good shooters who are playing today either.

It's tough for me to admit because I was one of those kids who worshipped Bird. I probably have three or four of his highlight videos at home and his autobiography. His whole persona of being this dumb, hick from French Lick, Ind., with no athletic ability totally endeared me to him. Slow, white guys weren't supposed to be good at basketball, but he was like a wizard with the ball in his hands.

Bird could be a good player today, just not one of the greats of all time. The game has so much more athleticism I don't think he could average 25 or 30 points a game.

Some people might think I'm crazy, but the better than 1967. Robert Horry even said that

Everybody is more athletic, ballhandling is better, shooters have more range, guys are bigger, faster, stronger, moves are made quicker and most noticeably the defense is much

You watch guys guard Magic and he would be able to set up inside the three-point arc with a guy five feet off of him. It's not like that anymore. Defenders are in your grill over 20 feet from the basket and the defensive schemes are much more complex.

I watched a game between Detroit and Denver from 1984, which turned out to be the highest scoring game in NBA history, and nobody played any defense. It's not like guys were making great moves either. They were just given wide open jump shots, because pressure defense wasn't really stressed until later on. The Lakers were probably the most modern

team of the 80s and that's why they dominated that decade. But I look at the Phoenix Suns of the last few years before Shaq and wonder what the difference is between them and the Showtime Lakers

The point is while the 80s were a prosperous time for the NBA, especially with the Celtics and Lakers in the Finals, we all need to move past that, embrace this year's series and the NBA game of today.

I think we're all holding out hope this series is going to produce just as much intensity or hostility as those in year's past and that's unfair to today's players. It's never going to be like it was in the 80s. There will never be a setting like the parcade floor of the tradition-rich NBA game is head and shoulders above where Boston Garden and there will likely never be it was even in 1987, and in 1987 it was a lot a rivalry like Bird and Magic ever again. Still, that's not a reason not to watch the NBA.

It's good the Lakers and Celtics are playing because that will draw in the casual fan. Heck, I even heard someone at the Bee Hive talking about it last Friday. I just hope those casual fans will enjoy this series and stop complaining about how the NBA has gone downhill.

Because in reality, it's better than ever. -Joe Falkoff is a reporter for the Colby

Your turn

Trying to sell what she ran against

Scott Showalter Goodland

It is with some interest that I read Mrs. An-

drea Wyrick's letter to the citizens of Thomas County on May 23. As we are both candidates for district judge, I believe she forgot a few facts that should have been included in her let-

Four years ago Mrs. Wyrick ran on a prom-

and plea bargains. "There would not be mini- felony. What she fails to point out is if a person mal consequences for committing a crime."

She is now trying to sell the same thing she ran against. A record full of diversions, plea bargains and dismissals. Have the county attorney's actions been for the benefit of Thomas County or her desire to take the easy way out?

In just three years the number of filed criminals cases have decreased from over 400 to ise to be a proactive county attorney. One that ago. Mrs. Wyrick argues that a misdemeanor would leave a record not marked by diversions conviction can result in more penalties than a

is convicted of a felony and they violate their probation, they can go to prison. The cost of which is paid by all state taxpayers. A person convicted of a misdemeanor is sent to the local jail which is paid for by Thomas County taxpayers. Guess what? Rarely do criminals convicted of misdemeanors go to jail.

"Seems like this is could be described 300. Her last jury trial was more than a year as minimal consequences for commtting a

About those letters . . .

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. 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.

Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce

Tinsley

