

Other Viewpoints

Drinking age 18? College chiefs ask

So much for the "dispassionate debate" that scores of American college and university presidents want citizens to hold on a federal highway law that has effectively set 21 as the minimum drinking age in this country.

No sooner had the college presidents issued their plea than the national president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Laura Dean-Money, said, "It's very clear that the 21-year-old drinking age will not be enforced at those campuses." ...

To the group's credit, its members' passion has been essential in spreading awareness about alcohol abuse and in lowering society's tolerance for drunk driving. The college presidents ought to be heard, though.

Among the college presidents' concerns is that many young people resent the law and consider it unfair and discriminatory. Moreover, the law is routinely ignored, and not just by college students, but by high schoolers and even younger students. The presidents' statement argues that the current law doesn't work and that it has contributed to a "culture of dangerous, clandestine binge-drinking."

The presidents add a familiar argument — that adults who are under 21 can vote and serve in the armed forces, yet "are told they are not mature enough to have a beer." ...

It's not hard to appreciate the college presidents' problem. They're concerned about their students. ...

And although the mothers' allegation that the drinking-age law won't be enforced at the universities of the 100 or so presidents who signed the statement is a bit shrill, those educators' apparent inclination to blame the law cannot be part of any solution. ...

Yet with so many students taking foolish and dangerous risks with their own lives and the lives of others, the conversation the presidents seek is a conversation worth having. As William Troutt, president of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., said, "I'm not sure where the dialogue will lead, but it's an important topic to American families and it deserves a straightforward dialogue."

- The Manhattan Mercury



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, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715, Eax (202) 225-5124

Fax (202) 225-5124 **State Rep. Jim Morrison,** State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-

7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW

10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

155 W. Fifth St. Colby, Kan. 67701 (USPS 120-920)

(785) 462-3963 fax (785) 462-7749

COLBY FREE PRESS

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence,
Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing,
Sports Columns, News, Photography.
Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Steve Haynes - Publisher s.haynes @ nwkansas.com

<u>NEWS</u>

Patty Decker - Editor

Jan Ackerman - Reporter jkackerman @ gmail.com

ADVERTISING

Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Manager i.stewart @ nwkansas.com

Heather Woofter - Advertising Sales hwoofter @ nwkansas.com

Steifon Matthews - Graphic Design smatthews @ nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator support @ nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Becky Foster, Jim Jackson, Kris McCool, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Cheryl Holub, and Amanda Campbell

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail within Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.



Singing the newspaper delivery blues

It's no secret the Free Press has been having a heck of a time delivering newspapers the last few months.

This has been a burden to many of our loyal customers and a royal pain to our staff. The new publisher has only begun to appreciate the depth of the problem.

Several routes have been without a carrier for anywhere from a day to a few weeks. When there's just no one to take the papers, we put the route on mail status.

That's a rotten solution. The customer gets the paper a day late, and we get the complaints all evening.

I'd like to report that we've put a stop to this practice, but we're not out of the woods yet. We're not even sure we can see a clearing yet.

The carrier system we've used for years has ceased to be dependable. Kids who used to take paper routes today have sports and other activities after school. They don't seem to be interested in making money.

Worse, the kids we do get seem to include a fair number who're not familiar with the idea of responsibility. That's only some of the kids, mind you, a minority. But they cause us a lot of grief. They come in and say, "I want to go to a dance tonight. I can't take the papers. I quit."

Turns out the dance was three hours away,



Steve Haynes

Along the Sappa

plenty of time to carry the papers, but it didn't happen.

Days past, we had a list of substitute carriers who would step in and take a "down" route. Today, we're lucky to have enough carriers to just cover the regular routes.

We are not the only ones having this problem. Across the country, the "kid-carrier" system is falling apart. Some papers are turning to mostly adult carriers. Others have switched to the mail, since postal carriers seldom quit without notice.

Some of our most reliable carriers are adults, who carry several routes and know the value of the money we pay them. They're usually happy to have the work. That's one avenue we're exploring, having four or five adult carriers, and maybe a backup, to cover the town.

We continue to recruit kid carriers, but we wonder how long we can keep that up. Changing to mail delivery means changing the deadlines and press schedule so we could mail a "fresh" newspaper to everyone in the morning. That would take some planning, and it's a last resort to us.

Still, our sister paper in Goodland switched to the mail a few years ago when it changed from five days per week to two. The switch all but eliminated circulation complaints. Today it's rare for a customer to miss even one paper a year there.

The situation didn't get this way overnight, and it's going to take us some time to get it fixed. We've had some staff changes and we're currently looking for an office/circulation manager.

We do pledge to keep after it until we solve the problem. We want to make a major commitment to customer service, and delivering your newspaper reliably and on time is a cornerstone of that commitment.

Until we do get it right, please bear with us. And please do call if you don't get a paper or if delivery is in any way unsatisfactory. We need to know what's wrong. We're trying to fix it, and we'll keep after it until we do.

Oh, and if you no someone who'd like to be a newspaper carrier — or an office manager — send them over.

Fireworks ban leaves bad taste

To the Editor:

We visited your city on the Fourth of July to spend time with our family and friends there. After dark and after the rain, we participated in having our fireworks.

We were about half way through and a Colby policeman, Officer D, came down the street about half a block away. As we watched him, he came trying to sneak up through private property and finally over to where we were. He displayed a very negative, pushy attitude as if he were really proud of himself (over-time

ego).

He informed us that what we were doing was illegal and he confiscated the rest of the fireworks. He never witnessed the discharge of any fireworks from our gathering, but he gave himself the authority to assume that we were. I questioned him as to why he was doing this

and he said that it was his job.

We had our whole family together for just a nice get-together to celebrate Independence Day, including our four grandchildren, ages 3 to 7. Some kind of freedom and independence they saw. They were broken hearted and the officer's not-so-nice attitude did not help. If it had to be done, he could have handled it with a

Drop

Letter

Our Readers Sound Off

little more discretion, dignity and trepidation.

I would like to say to the Colby city councilmen, if you think your town is too dignified to handle one evening of families getting together and having a few fireworks on Independence Day, perhaps you should step down and let some more freedom-minded citizens take over. Perhaps there is the possibility of a conflict of interest, if the city councilmen are members of a group charging for the viewing of a fireworks display. Change can be good and needed!

I know we were not the only ones this happened to, so you all need to ban together and get this outdated ordinance changed. We were told "It is a fire hazard. We could go outside the city limits and discharge fireworks." The

firemen live in town and could be present at a moments notice. Outside the city limits, where there are dry pastures and wheat stubble, we could freely set off fireworks. Something doesn't make sense here.

We were told the next night, residents were setting off fireworks and law enforcement was patrolling and did nothing. That is real consistency.

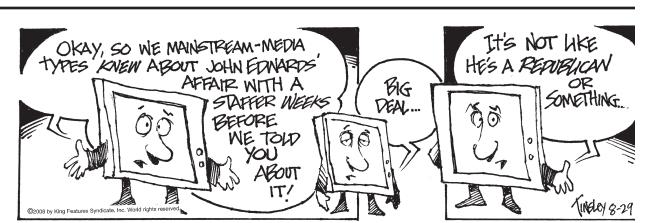
I guess after spending money in your city at restaurants, gas stations, motels and retail stores, we will need to go back to our great Cornhusker State where we can enjoy our freedoms.

To Officer D, you might wonder where the respect for law enforcement is. You must give some respect if you want to receive it.

Two days later, our 5-year-old grandson was still upset. Uniformed personal have left a negative scare on his life. We tried to explain about the policeman doing his job. It made no difference to him. You lost integrity for all police officers.

A visitor from the great Cornhusker State, Alice Yost

Waunita, Neb.



Mallard Fillmore

BruceTinsley



Edit pg 2 Fri 8/29/08.indd 1 8/29/08 1:02:40 PM