

Opinion



From other pens

Time to remember freedom's enemies

America's presidential candidates stopped at the Pentagon or Ground Zero on Sept. 11.

As was appropriate, they recalled the treachery that seven years ago claimed almost 3,000 lives. They spoke of the sacrifices our military personnel have made since that day and of the value of unity, courage and persistence in achieving ultimate victory over terrorists. ...

Sept. 11 has been named Patriot Day. ... Millions of us remember what we were doing when we first learned of the airliner strikes. That was the day that changed everything. Or so we believed. ...

Our leaders sent troops into Afghanistan, where we were successful enough in battling the Taliban that we decided to fight an elective war in Iraq that has cost us greatly in lives, treasure and prestige. Now that we seem to be winning in Iraq, we find ourselves refocusing on Afghanistan and on resurgent Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. If we're very good or very lucky, we might still capture or kill Osama bin Laden.

It's no small irony, as the candidates paused to bow in reverence that day, that change, which we thought imminent after Sept. 11, 2001, is popular now in the slogans of both the Democratic and Republican presidential tickets.

We haven't so much changed as we have changed back. Seven years ago, we were not so much red Americans or blue Americans as simply Americans. ...

Sadly, the unity so evident then has dissipated. Maybe we just let it go. Now candidates, perhaps too willingly under the spell of professional advisers and partisan hacks, have lost sight of America's real enemies. Candidates and parties will win and lose in November, and by January probably revert to the familiar scheming that stymies real progress and siphons our strength.

Meanwhile, our real enemies — enemies who celebrate Sept. 11's anniversary — take comfort in the knowledge that the more wounds we inflict on one another, the safer they are.

— *The Manhattan Mercury, via The Associated Press*

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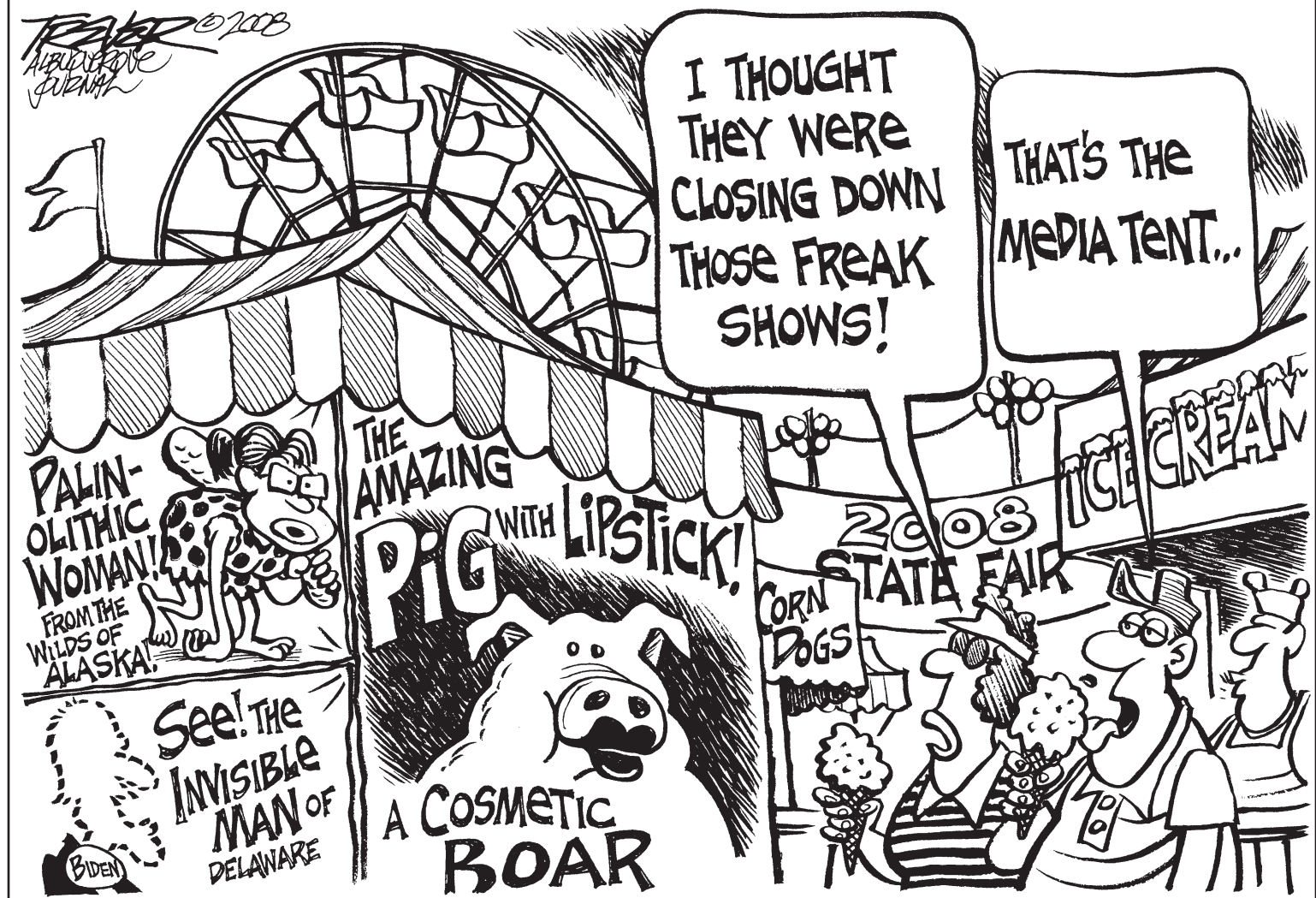
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Our trip brought adventure at every turn

Getting home from Columbia, Mo., last week was an adventure at every turn, literally.

First, we had to get out of Columbia, and with a Missouri football game at 11 a.m., that was no sure thing.

Since we were staying on the south side of town, a friend suggested, why not go south, toward Jefferson City, rather than north past the stadium to I-70, where traffic was sure to be bad?

Good idea.

We started south, but apparently missed the turn to the Jeff City highway — what shows on the map as a gentle curve to the east actually is a hard left at a light — and went straight down a county road that wandered, eventually, south, then west, then back north to the small town of McBaine. We thought we were lost, but another paved road headed northwest. A couple miles out of town was a sign that said, "I-70, four miles."

Bingo.

OK, we were lost, but the roundabout route got us to I-70 about 10 miles west of Columbia in 25 minutes with nary a bit of traffic. It might have taken longer to go the 15 miles past the stadium.

On the way, we passed the largest oak tree I have every seen. It was big, bigger than any cottonwood I'd seen in western Kansas. Trees out here can run six feet across or more, but this was more like 15. I can't tell you exactly



Steve Haynes

- Along the Sappa

how big, because someone had made off with the plaque from the concrete pedestal beside the tree.

It's about 10 miles south of Columbia on Route K, if you want to see it. And well worth the trip.

Next, we had to get through the vanguard of the Storm Formerly Known as Ike.

They expected torrential rain all day in central Missouri — fine football weather — and that we got on I-70, sheets of rain that turned the driving lanes to puddles and reduced visibility to under a mile.

To hydroplane was simple, and a lot of people tried it. We passed at least eight cars in the ditch, though no serious crashes. Cynthia was driving, so I kept busy calling the state patrol.

We reached dry pavement halfway to Kansas City, and made it in time for a lunch of barbecue. Then it was off to Emporia to see my brother and sister.

Only we couldn't find them. No answer at either house, no answer on their cell phones.

I am missing the old sports writer

To the Editor:

In one of last week's papers, Steve Haynes' article ended with, "this is a good business for those who pay attention to what readers want in the way of news."

So, I decided, as a *Colby Free Press* subscriber ever since the paper started, I would let you know that I am really missing sports writer Joe Falkoff. He was by far the best sports writer the *Free Press* has ever had. He didn't just cover the Colby sports, but he covered the whole of Thomas County, including all the Brewster school sports — volleyball, football, basketball, track and cross country — and not only had wonderful write ups but many times had pictures he had taken while attending a particular game.

He also had the same coverage of Golden Plains.

Is it going to be possible for you to have another sports writer like him to cover other schools in the county and just not Colby sports and Colby Community College?

It is good to have the newspaper clippings for scrapbooks. I'm really missing Joe.

Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

Another thing I am missing is the daily markets. If you don't put them in every day as you have done in the past, maybe you could publish them once a week. I'm handicapped and don't get to elevators to check on grain prices, and when I hear them on the radio, I'm not usually able to write them down. They give them too fast.

Hope we can continue to have a good newspaper.

Oh yes, another thing, I have been missing recently is the daily reports from the police department.

Nadine Kammer
Brewster
Letter No. 4

Editor's Note: We do have a new sports

writer, Andy Heintz, a K-State grad. He joined us last week. With the departure of our editor and part-time reporter, though, we're going to be short-handed for a while. Sorry about the markets; they returned with the Monday paper. The police reports should follow, but we'll be short until we get some people hired.

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. 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.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

