Opinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Downtown impact likely in liquor law

When it comes to liquor laws Kansas isn't like most states. Our liquor laws are more conservative than most states. In fact only five or six have liquor laws like ours. For instance, liquor can't be purchased on Sunday, liquor stores close at 10 p.m., wine and hard liquor can't be purchased at grocery stores, major retailers, convenience stores or gas stations.

It's always interesting to try and explain our laws to out of state visitors. It's usually just summarized best by just explaining about how it's a product of living in the Bible belt. Kansans accept the laws and know that they just need to plan ahead when they want to purchase alcohol....

The tentative proposal would allow major retailers, grocery stores, convenience stores and other businesses to sell strong beer, wine and hard liquor. Currently those businesses are limited to just selling 3.2 beer.

While the debate will center on convenience, the battle is really about money and that is why both sides have high-paid lobbyists hard at work.

From a consumers point of view most would support this proposal. In the age of convenience, most consumers would prefer to just buy their alcohol at the supermarket instead of making an extra stop at the liquor store. In an emporiagazette. com online poll – 58 percent were in favor of changing the liquor laws and 39 percent weren't.

But convenience will come at a cost which would mean hurting the independent liquor stores.

Over the last several decades retailing has changed. One stop shopping at major retailers has closed many of the independently owned businesses that dotted main streets. For the most part, liquor stores have survived the retailing changes since state law limited competition.

If the liquor laws are changed the impact will vary depending on the size of a community.

For Emporia more liberal liquor laws would be devastating to the independent liquor stores. It would pit the mom and pop liquor stores against the major retailers. Since so much is purchased at the major retailers in our community the independent liquor stores would lose out.

But for the small rural communities who have no liquor stores or major retailers but cling to the one grocery store this change could give those stores extra income to help their community grocery store in business.

This debate in Topeka will be interesting to watch and it will be interesting to see how legislators handle the issue since they represent all sizes of communities where some of their constituents would benefit from the legislation and others would

For Emporia, it's in the community's best interest to keep the liquor laws the same in an effort to keep as many businesses operating as possible....

- The Emporia Gazette, via the Associated Press

Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

Before an election, letters (other than responses by a candidate) will not be published after the Thursday before the polls open.

Colby Free Press

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

(785) 462-3963

fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

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

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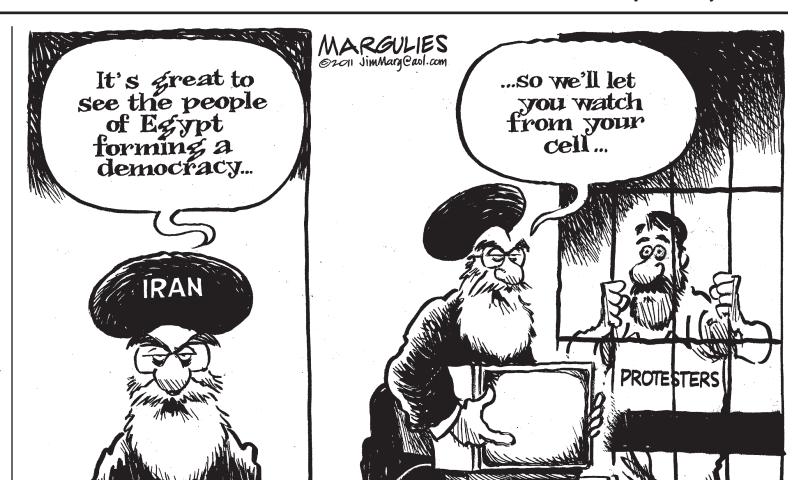
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper 155 W.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

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, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per reek elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



Enlisting was just 'one of those things'

Tom

Dreiling

A View

From the West

Enlisting in the Air Force was not on my agenda. Period. I was studying at Fort Hays Kansas State College (now university) after high school. As luck would have it, a classmate moved to Aurora, Colo., with his family about a year after our graduation from what is now Thomas More Prep-Marian High School in 1953. He invited me to come to Denver for a visit. So I did.

While we were fooling around in downtown Denver, classmate Herb (Schmidt, who now lives in the Overland Park area) spotted a sign on a store front that read, "Air Force Recruiter." We went in, and to make a long story very short, the next morning we were taking physicals, other testing, and then readying for a train ride to San Antonio, Texas, and basic training at Lackland Air Force Base.

The night before all of this, I called my mother and told her what happened. She was stunned, to say the least. After all, when I left for Denver via the City of St. Louis passenger train, I told her I'd see her in a week or two or so. Now I had to tell her that time would be greatly extended. But she got over it.

This trip took me from Hays, to Aurora and Denver in Colorado, to San Antonio in Texas, to Keesler, in Mississippi, to Travis in California and then to Misawa, in Japan.

I sure got around. And how did I end up in Misawa, Japan?

If I hear the word "military," you got your

answer. I was stationed at the Misawa Air Base

mountainous region. When I was there for a two-year assignment wa. The unlucky guys had to travel by ship. and a newly minted Coloradan.

in the late 1950s. Misawa itself was a town of probably 20,000. However, if you chased out all the girls from other parts of the country who flocked to Misawa to make sure none of the military guys there would get homesick, the town would probably have had a handful of people.

Today, Misawa, a modern city with its share of casinos, hotels and the like, has a population of nearly 43,000. I wonder if some of those gals of my time are still on the same mission now, only catering to senior militarians who stayed behind for reasons I would never reveal.

I ended up in Misawa after finishing my studies at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., where, as a member of the Air Force Security Service, I was taught the art of putting words tos and ----s. Yep, dots and dashes, Morse Code. It was a challenging study, for me anyway. I think the course was probably seven or eight months.

After successfully completing the course, I was sent to Travis Air Force Base in San Francisco to await orders to Misawa, Japan. I was one of the lucky guys who got to fly over with north of Tokyo along the Pacific Coast in a stops in Hawaii and Midway Island (I believe), tor of the old Goodland Daily News. He is a from there to Tokyo, and then north to Misa- life-long Democrat, a curmudgeon come lately

It took days and days and the stories they tell were precious – to us who flew, not those who were being tossed around by the waves (waves you notice in lower case).

The trip from Tokyo to Misawa was on a coal-fired train that honestly was the dirtiest thing I'd ever traveled in. The soot was absolutely so thick you had trouble seeing the person sitting next to you. And the trip took more hours than I could count. Eventually, we arrived in Misawa looking forward to seeing the beauty of the land in which we were to live for two years.

What a disappointment that was! I suppose you could call it "beauty" if the eye of the beholder was damaged. There wasn't a fancy bus waiting to take us from the depot to the base. The transportation consisted of military trucks with some kind of covering over the bed to shield passengers from the weather. They had wooden benches to sit on.

I can't go into detail as to what specifically I and the other 70 or 80 airmen were assigned to do behind the gates of that guarded compound on base. While our course of study at Keesler was an indicator of what our mission would be, what we actually did was enough to blow your socks off. The responsibilities placed on our shoulders were nothing short of mind boggling. (Shhh, I know a secret....)

More next time....

Tom Dreiling of Aurora, Colo., is a former publisher of the Colby Free Press and The Norton Telegram, and a former long-time edi-

Where are the snowmen?

Or the snow angels? I would even settle for a snow fort. - Or brothers and sisters chasing each other with snowballs.

Kansas has been blanketed with abundant snow this winter. But unlike earlier winters, it lays as a pristine white blanket until warm weather melts it away. Not only were there very few children in our snowy yards this winter, the smooth drifts, unbroken but for a mailman's footprints and an occasional rabbit track, give evidence that very few children ever went outside to play in the snow.

Where are they?

It doesn't take a Sherlock Holmes to solve the puzzle of the missing snowmen and our missing children. Businesses report record sales of video game consoles and electronic toys. Research by the Pew study on the Internet as well as "Generation M3" show our children are spending most of their waking moments inside with electronics.

While our outdoor neighborhoods are silent except for birds at the birdfeeders, our children are indoors beeping away with the hottest electronic games.

Snow-covered yards are but one measure of the drop-off in outdoor activity. Hunting, hiking, and even the spontaneous vacant-lot ball games are rapidly dwindling. The missing tracks of our children are just not as evident without the snow.

While researchers have been investigating the virtual worlds and fake second lives our students are "building," they have not counted up the real world experiences our children are now missing.

There are a lot of natural lessons that are not



John Richard Schrock

 Education Frontlines

being learned in empty sandboxes, ballfields and parks. There is a lot of "commonsense" that is simply not being sensed.

As a biology teacher, I can demonstrate how hot and cold are two distinct senses because students should remember playing in the snow too long. When they ran room temperature tap water over their cold hands, it felt warm. But if they haven't done this, I get "Huh?"

Then there are the pleural membranes allowing the lungs to get along painlessly, until the membranes dry out when you run and play and inhale dry air and exhale a moist breathe that you can see. But they haven't, and I get "Huh?"

There are thousands of little lessons a child gets from playing with real things both indoors and outdoors: discovering bugs, feeling and smelling soil, learning what to risk and what to respect. Tinkering with cars and taking apart clocks. Trying to make things work. And if you don't fix it right, it doesn't work.

These are the important lessons of how the world works. We learn that there are real consequences when you don't understand. And when you do understand, you gain a sense of control over that part of the real world.

But now, we are letting our children avoid

many of those experiences. They stay inside and play artificial games in artificial worlds where wishing makes it so.

Our children are looking more like snowmen as obesity rates climb. For the first time in history, American life expectancy is going down. We remove the school vending machines but then sit them in front of computers at school and play stations at home.

When the next snow falls on Kansas, if we leave our kids' coats in the closet and let them hibernate inside electronic caves once again, we will be losing a lot more than a few snow-

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

Where to write, call

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