

Opinion



Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

You made it successful

To The Free Press:

Thomas County EMS would like to recognize everyone, sponsors and volunteers, who helped to make our seventh "Nine-Run-Run" — IOK-5K-2K run and 2K Walk, and our first "Nine-Ride-Ride" 53K bike ride — a great success. A total of 38 runners, 29 walkers and 7 bikers participated.

Our race volunteers consisted of many. The Thomas County EMS volunteers and their family members took part in setting up and running the three aide stations, finish line, registration and awards table. The National Guard of Colby and Tony Morton did a super job controlling traffic along the course to keep our runners safe. Thanks to Lonnie and Skyler for following the bike riders, to make sure they were safe.

Our thanks to the following who sponsored this event: Harrison Chapel, Comfort Inn, Northwest Kansas Hearing Services Inc., Van's Body & Frame Inc., Ramada Inn, Gambino's, Sunflower Bank, Citizens Medical Center Inc., Horlacher Jewelers, Kersenbrock Funeral Chapel, Colby Medical & Surgical Center, Office Works, CK Lumber & Supply Co., Farmers & Merchants Bank, His Shop, Beringer Hardware, KXXX/KQLS, Dr's Morrison & Wahlmeier Optometrists, Jenny Barton-Niblock ARNP, Alan Focke DBA Litter Critters, Family Center for Health Care, Overtime Liquor, Pink Cadillac/DJ Service, Leroy's Printing & Publishing, Inc., T's & Things, Kansas Quick Lube, S & W Supply Co./Colby, Total/C-Store, Southwind Plaza, S & T Communications, Colby Photo, Peoples State Bank, Lantern Park Manor, First National Bank, K.K.K. Enterprises/Kenny Hansen, John Icke Family Village Inn, Straightline, J & J Oil Co. No 8, Pizza Hut, Dillons, Wal-Mart, Culligan, Sports Shoppe, Eagle Med Air Ambulance, Keyna Baalman, Pepsi, and Car Quest.

We appreciate the time, commitment, and enthusiasm shown by all those involved in helping with the run, walk and bike ride. Your team effort and personal involvement made the "Nine-Run-Run & Nine-Ride-Ride" a very successful event.

**Kathi Wright, Director
Thomas County Emergency
Medical Services
(Letter #113)**

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 td@nwkansas.com

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A deal you can't pass up

Tom Dreiling

- My Turn



HAVE I got a deal for you. Well, it really isn't "I" but they, but inasmuch as I am using this column to spread their word, I become part of they. Confused? You aren't the only one.

How would you like to host one of the candidates for governor — Kathleen Sebelius or Tim Shallenburger — in your home for dinner and let the television cameras roll?

If you are interested, folks, read on.

There is still time to participate in "Political Grille," Smoky Hills Public Television's program covering the Kansas governor's race. The television station, known as SHPTV (headquartered in Bunker Hill east of Russell), is partnering with The Salina Journal, Hays Daily News, Garden City Telegram and High Plains Public Radio to produce the show, which will air in October. Families are needed to host a gubernatorial candidate in their home for dinner and discussion of the issues, all while being videotaped for the show. To apply for "Political Grille" families are asked to provide contact information, including name, mailing and physical address, and telephone number, as well as to write in 500 words or less why they should be chosen to host a gubernatorial candidate. An application form can be downloaded from the websites for SHPTV (www.shptv.org), The Salina Journal (www.saljournal.com), The Hays Daily News (www.hdnews.net) or The Garden City Telegram (www.gctelegram.com). Entries will be reviewed by a panel of faculty and staff from Fort Hays State University. Families selected to participate will be randomly matched with gubernatorial candidates. The deadline for applications is Thursday. So you better hurry is you would like to participate. If you have questions, call Kristy Nypat SHPTV (785) 483-6990, ext. 128 or knyp@shptv.org. I think something like that would be fun and educational.

Give it some thought this evening and then if you decide to do it, download the application form, scratch out an essay, and who knows — you just might be one of the featured families to be seen over a large area of the state just before the general elec-

tion. Go for it!

A READER brought in an item she spotted in another newspaper that I think merits mention. It's about high school graduates being mandated to provide at least 40 hours of community service before they can be awarded their diploma. This breaks down to 10 hours each year of their four high school years. Not asking much. Something like this would give the students a feel for their community with a hands-on approach, and it just might result in their being able to help solve problems. There are any number of groups and organizations right here in our community that are always looking for volunteer help. Instead of moaning and groaning about being bored, doing community service would quickly end the boredom. Of course they will need an encouraging nudge from mom and dad. And schools would also have to sign off on the project. But it was just one person thinking aloud, but the more I think about it the more I think it has merit.

Community service — what a wonderful way to pay back one's community for the education it provided. Wish they would have had something like that when I was a high school kid.

WE KEEP hearing missing kids reports, particularly on the cable news networks via *breaking news* and come away with thoughts of an epidemic sweeping the land. It's not. A few things are in play: 1) the number of missing kids is not on the increase, and in fact, statistics show, on the decrease; 2) television generally gave little if any airtime to reports of kid-

napped or missing kids in the past which explains why it seems to be bigger today than it is; 3) only with the advent of round-the-clock news has the attention to this tragic matter shifted to valid news status. It's a good thing television is getting involved to the extent it is. They are instant and when a child is kidnapped that information needs to get out immediately. They're finally caught on!

HAPPY Birthday to...

Aug. 14 — Verla Weber, Marvin Bickner, Rachel Perkins, Leighton Koel

Aug. 15 — Jared Gilmore, Viola Newman, Anthony Repshire, Leisa Hansen

HAPPY Anniversary to...

Aug. 14 — Brian & Judy Luedke

Aug. 15 — Drew & Julie Barnes, Scott & Becky Butts, Jayde & Karen Adelman, David & Sharon Oren

Congratulations!

Call us at 462-3963 or e-mail td@nwkansas.com to have your special day mentioned as our gift to you. And *please* keep us advised of any changes. Many thanks!

EVER wonder why:

Lemon juice is made with artificial flavor, and dishwashing liquid is made with real lemons?

The man who invests all your money is called a broker?

The time of day with the slowest traffic is called rush hour?

There isn't mouse-flavored cat food?

If flying is so safe, why they call the airport the terminal?

Noah didn't swat those two mosquitoes?

They sterilize the needle for lethal injections?

HAVE a good evening!

Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkansas.com

Estate tax repeal is wrong for America

Genevieve Melford

- Another Viewpoint

Acting responsibly and in the best interest of the country, the U.S. Senate defeated a bill to permanently repeal the federal estate tax. Approval of this proposal would have only benefited the richest 2 percent of Americans, and would have had significant negative impact on the country as a whole.

In the wake of the defeat, Sen. Phil Gramm, the lame-duck Texas Republican who sponsored the legislation, lamented that without permanent repeal the tax will "rise out of the grave in 2011 and start destroying family businesses, family farms and family dreams." Under the \$1.35 trillion tax cut that President Bush signed into law a year ago, the estate tax is to be phased out entirely by 2010, but a "sunset clause" effective in May 2011 will restore the estate tax to the regulations in effect in May 2001.

But who does Gramm think he's fooling with this phony attempt at populism? The so-called "death tax" will have zero effect on 98 percent of Americans, and half of all estate taxes are paid by the richest 0.1 percent of Americans. An individual's wealth is currently exempt from taxation up to \$1 million, a couple's up to \$2 million. These are the privileged elite of America — not people who need a helping hand from the government and other taxpayers.

In addition, the bulk of the largest personal wealth accumulations are unrealized capital gains from investments such as stocks, bonds and real estate. Without the estate tax, these gains would never be taxed, since income tax forgives those deferred taxes at

death. Why should a form of income that primarily goes to the rich be exempt from any taxation? As for the much-hyped plight of family farms and business, of all taxed estates, a mere 3 percent have farm or family business assets that constitute a majority of the estate. In fact, farmers and small business owners prefer estate tax reform over repeal by a margin of 56 percent to 40 percent, according to a recent survey.

In addition to benefiting only a few of the richest families in America, estate tax repeal would have serious economic consequences for the rest of us. The current value of estate taxes raised by the federal government is about \$30 billion. Nine cabinet departments — including Labor, Commerce and Agriculture — have budgets smaller than \$30 billion. If the estate tax repeal is made permanent, the federal government is projected to lose \$740 billion in revenue between 2012 and 2022. This is money that will be sorely needed in those years to pay for improving education, access to health care, and highways, as well

as to secure the future of programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

The obvious impact of estate tax repeal therefore would be either a crushing increase in the tax burden borne by middle- and low-income Americans, or extreme cutbacks in government services, not to mention fiscal chaos at the federal level.

The Bush administration has already returned to deficit spending, thanks to the irresponsible 2001 tax cut the president signed.

And for what?

Just so the wealthiest 2 percent — millionaires and billionaires — can build family dynasties of wealth unchecked, destroying any possibility of the rough equality of opportunity and resources necessary for healthy participatory democracy and an economy based on fair competition.

Genevieve Melford is a research analyst for LRA Consulting, The Labor Research Association (LRA) is a New York City-based non-profit research and advocacy organization that provides research and educational services for trade unions. For more information, visit www.laborresearch.org.

Got a rebuttal? Send it to td@nwkansas.com or mail it to him at the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th, Colby, Kan. 67701. The views expressed are solely those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Free Press.

Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau

