

Opinion



Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

Telling it like it is

To the Chairman of the Republican party of Kansas and the readers of the Colby Free Press.

We just recently received an email from the Chairman of the Republican party of Kansas. The subject title being, "Sebelius just doesn't get it." It had to do with her remark concerning road safety in Missouri. He suggested we write a letter to the editor. Hoo boy! this ole farmer doesn't need to hear that suggestion a second time.

It just might be that we need to accept the fact that more people are maimed and killed each year on our highways than from the terrorist attacks on 9-11-01. That certainly does not take away from the tragedy of 9-11 but it does point out that we need to be equally concerned about safety on our roads!

We just recently lost an 18-year-old grandson in an auto accident. That loss is just as traumatic to us as any of the losses others suffered in the 9-11 event. Life is sacred wherever or whoever you are and we should be equally concerned about all losses, whether they be from illness, accident, or homicide.

Death and destruction are not partisan issues and we demean the value of property and the sanctity of life when we attempt to use such comments for partisan political purposes. Stick to the issues of public safety, education, SRS (as it relates to all ages), health and health care, economics, fiscal responsibility, etc. There are legitimate differences in partisan and individual candidates approaches and suggested solutions to these issues.

Forget the dart throwing and mud slinging and state your position and suggested solutions to these problems. If you don't have a position or suggested solution then admit it but don't waste your time and ours telling us about the weaknesses in the other candidates positions or statements.

That goes for all party spokespersons or candidates. We who are not candidates can do that over the back yard fence, in the coffee shop, and with opinion letters to the editor.

Thank you,
Helen & Ken Poland Gem
(Letter #146)

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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Seeing candidates in person is a plus

I ENJOYED the political forum Sunday night at the college. Perhaps time limitations didn't give us a clearer picture of what the governor wannabes have in mind, but it did — and this is important — gave us an opportunity to see the four candidates eye-to-eye. Check their body language. And that counts for an awful lot. Most of us see Kathleen Sebelius or Tim Shallenburger on the tube. Their commercials are of the sound-bite variety and their messages resonate only if you are firmly in one of the camps, but for the undecided voter, up close and personal is still the best way to gauge character and sincerity. The unique thing about the forum at Colby Community College was having all FOUR of the candidates on the stage at the same time. Dennis Hawver is a Libertarian and Ted Pettibone is a Reformist. I heard several people comment after the forum that "those two guys pretty much talk and feel like me." Of course we know their clout is pretty cloutless, but nonetheless it is a shame they are not invited to appear at every debate or forum with the two major party candidates so those who attend can hear the other side of the coin. I can truly say I came away from the forum on Sunday still debating with myself on who to vote for — Tim or Kathleen (I use their first names because they are in my front room on a daily basis, via TV, so they feel like members of the family). I didn't attend either reception — Shallenburger's people met at the community building and Sebelius' crowd met at the Comfort Inn convention center. I am still reading, watching and listening. Perhaps I will have made up my mind when voting day arrives Nov. 5. Perhaps.

THANKS to all of you for coming out Tuesday night to hear The United States Air Force Band and Signing Sergeants. What a crowd at the community building! Well over 1,000, perhaps more like 1,200 or maybe 1,300. Whatever it was big. The Free Press was privileged to be one of the co-



Tom Dreiling

- My Turn

sponsors of the program and we graciously bow to the Western Plains Arts Association, Pat Ziegelmeier, executive director, for inviting us to join them in bringing this outstanding group to northwest Kansas. We stand ready to assist them again.

TWO women were talking over a cup of coffee. Said one: "My husband bought me a cool mood ring the other day. When I'm in a good mood it turns green. When I'm in a bad mood, it leaves a red mark on his forehead."

YOU can tell Fred's on the loose. He provided me with these new (tongue-in-cheek) library offerings:

- "Using and Exploring the Internet" by Dorothy "Dot" Com
- "I Heard Them Yell 'Man Overboard'" by Ilene Dover
- "Modern Sewing Tips and Modern Patterns" by Polly Esther Phabrique
- "Favorite Internet Sites" by I. Seymour Cites
- "Raising a Happy Garden" by Daisy Flowers
- "Sleepy Bedtime Stories" by Anna S. Thesia
- "Leo Tolstoy" by Warren Peace
- "Yuletide Music" by Carol Singer
- "Winning Strategies for Tic-Tac-Toe" by Chris Cross
- "The Resident in the Steeple" by Belle Free
- "Tennis Tips for Beginners" by Annette Anna Raquette

I SEE where a public meeting will be held in the community building at 7 p.m. Thursday to discuss health care-related issues. It is under sponsorship of the newly formed Area Citizens for Health Care, John Kern, president. You might want to set some time aside and peek in to see what's happening.

HAPPY Birthday to...

Oct. 9 — Randi Donley, Jerrod Zerr, Lana Starkey

Oct. 10 — Angela Tinkham, Brian Boyd, Brett Wiens, David Zahradka

HAPPY Anniversary to...

Oct. 9 — Frank & Bernice Skiles
Call us at 462-3963 or email td@nwkansas.com to have your special day mentioned.

AND from Rod come this:

In a project described as the largest-ever scientific study into humor, the British Association for the Advancement of Science asked Internet users around the world to submit their favorite jokes and rate the funniness of other people's offerings. More than 40,000 jokes from 70 countries and two million critiques later, this is it: "Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He doesn't seem to be breathing and his eyes are glazed. The other man pulls out his cell phone and calls emergency services. He gasps to the operator: 'My friend is dead! What can I do?' The operator in a calm, soothing voice replies: 'Take it easy. I can help. First, let's make sure he's dead.' There is a silence, then a shot is heard. Back on the phone, the hunter says, 'Ok, what should I do now?'"

HAVE a good evening!

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

Nothing like home sweet home

It seems that every time we turn on the news, something is going on that shocks us even more than the day before. We always hear more about the bad than the good, that is just the way it is — especially in the news business.

As all of you, the random shootings in Maryland have me wondering what the world has come to, when someone takes your life from you for no reason at all.

For me, I guess it is even scarier when I lived in the area that all this is happening in. With my job, I worked in about nine different store locations throughout Baltimore, Prince George, and Montgomery counties, and still have many friends out there that still do work and live in these areas. The news is very personal.

Yes I do understand that there are hundreds of thousands of people that live in the small area, and the odds are really small, but nonetheless, I am happy to be living in rural Kansas. I can also say with a fair amount of certainty that my family is happy about that one as well.

When I moved out to Baltimore, I think it was quite a shocker to both me and my family. As we were moving in, it was very apparent that this Kansas girl was a bit out of her element. I had leased my apartment over the Internet and believed that I had found myself quite a good deal. From the pictures on the website, it was a cute apartment, quite large, and was a GREAT price! Little did I know it may have been a great apartment, but it was not in a good neighborhood, hence the reason for the price.

I did know that my neighborhood was a little shady, and I did stick out like a sore thumb due to the fact I



Michelle L. Hawkins

- Pursuit of a Richer Life

was the only one of my particular ethnicity represented, but I wasn't sure how bad it actually was. Right after moving, I had heard on the news that Baltimore was number one per capita in the United States for murder, so needless to say, I was especially cautious and aware of my surroundings.

After living there for probably about a month, I met a family while taking pictures of their son. As I was talking with the parents, the father, who was a police officer for Baltimore City, asked where I was from. He said that he could tell by my accent that I wasn't from the area. I started telling them a bit about myself and where I was from and what I was doing in the "big city." The father asked me where I had moved to in Baltimore.

"Oh, I live in an apartment complex just off Liberty and Rolling Road," I said casually.

"Alone?" was the terrified response he gave me. At that point, the sound of his voice told me that I probably wasn't as safe as I had thought. He proceeded to tell me that he, nor any of his colleagues would even patrol the area by themselves.

"Michelle, you need to be very careful and it probably wouldn't be a bad idea to move," he said.

Thanks! Now that I have signed a year lease and moved ALL my junk up three flights of stairs, someone finally breaks it down for me.

A short time after my conversation with the family, my supervisor told me that the company would like to offer me a promotion and a transfer to Texas. The fact that the company was prepared to break my lease, did help my decision.

Often times over the course of my four months there I would wake up to hear gunshots in very close proximity to my apartment. In fact one night, I was watching television and heard a helicopter go overhead. It passed by very closely several times. I told myself if it went over once more, I would step out onto the balcony and see what was going on. Sure enough, it passed by again. As I stepped outside, I saw the police helicopter with its search light on combing the wooded area and stream that were behind the complex. Let me tell you, I did not get warm and fuzzy feelings from the event. All of this just reminded me how nice it is to be in the country and a place where the news does not seem quite so bad.

Hawkins is Family Page and Religion Page editor, and also a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Colby Free Press. Her column usually appears on Tuesdays.

In Addition: I am working on a special column about "Famous people we are related to." So far, no one has responded with their famous ancestors...I would love to know what historical figure, singer, artist, actor, etc. that you are related to, for my special column. Please call, write, or e-mail me with your response.

Doonesbury

- Gary Trudeau

