

# Opinion

Your Turn

• Our Readers Sound Off

## Remember this number

To the Colby Free Press:

Need a ZIP Code? Are you moving and need a change of address card? Leaving for vacation and want to place a hold-mail request? For a quick response to your postal questions or requests, customers can now call 1.800.ASK-USPS (1.800.275-8777).

The U.S. Postal Service is making it easier for customers to get information and resolve service issues by telephone.

Research indicated that many customers get a busy signal or their calls do not go through when calling a local post office, because of the volume of calls received. Since 80 percent of all calls to a local post office are seeking information on such topics as ZIP Codes, post office hours and locations and mailing rates, these calls can more efficiently be handled by a Contact Center agent. Those calls requiring local assistance will be handled by our post office.

To enhance customer service the 1.800.ASK.USPS Contact Center network, has specially trained agents to provide information about:

- ✓ZIP Codes and addresses
- ✓Mailing rates and requirements
- ✓Hours of operation
- ✓Product and service information
- ✓Change of address information
- ✓Redelivery and hold mail requests

In addition, Contact Center agents can assist customers with service issues. If an agent cannot resolve a service issue, the local phone number will be provided to the customer. If the local post office is closed, agents send the customer request or service issue electronically to the local office for action the next business day.

Establishing a telephone Contact Center makes it easier for our customers to get prompt, accurate information about the postal service and give us more time to resolve local service-related issues.

**James McDonald**  
Colby Postmaster  
(Letter #11)

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.

### Addresses of elected officials:

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 302 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**, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web:http://www.idir.net/~jmorrison/
- State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail:

## COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
Colby, Kan. 67701

freepress@nwkansas.com

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.

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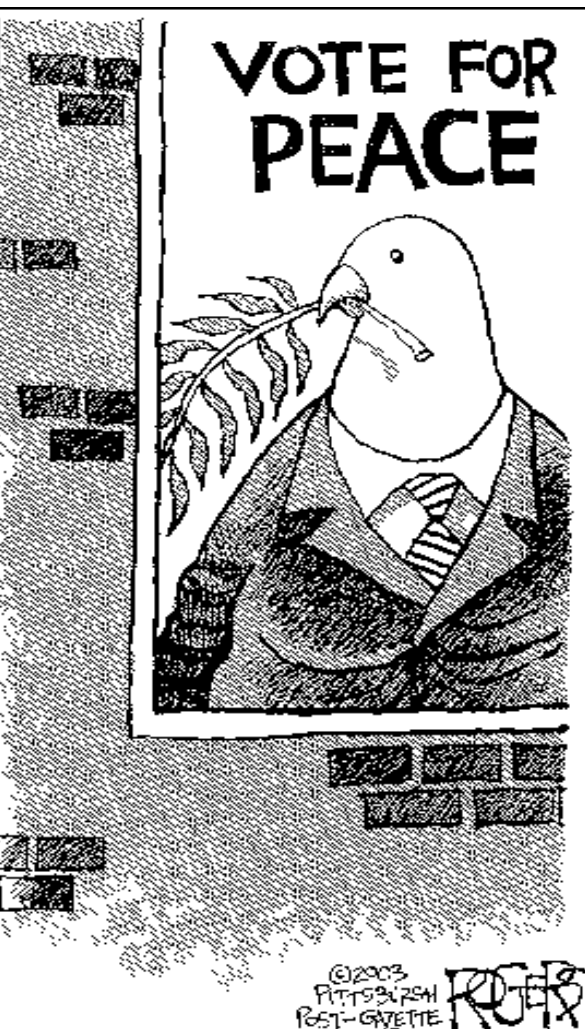
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## Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



## He brings up a good point



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

I HAD occasion to listen to a reader's complaint Thursday evening. And a valid complaint it was and rest assured it will be addressed. He lives in the country and gets his *Free Press* the next day. And often times meeting notices that would be of interest to him appear in the Briefly column on page 1 the day they take place. By the time he gets his paper the next day it's too late. We will make it a top priority to make sure these things are handled in a much more timely fashion. The school boards, the county commissioners, the city councils, the college board, the fair board — and others — will appear a couple of days in advance of their meeting. That's not asking too much. We pride ourselves on being a *reader-friendly* paper, but apparently we aren't quite as friendly as a newspaper as we should be. I will personally instruct staff of the urgency of this situation and have them take every step necessary to make sure events and activities appear in Briefly several days before they are to occur. This notice should also signal those who call us or bring in notices for Briefly, particularly, to make sure we have them in hand at least 3-4 days before they are to occur. That's not asking too much. Anything else you see that might improve our *reader-friendly* goal please let me know. This is YOUR *Colby Free Press*. Many thanks for your suggestions.

NICE way to begin your adult life, I'd say. I was reading the other day where Athina Roussel — hardly a household word — inherited \$800 million on her 18th birthday last week. Where did she get that kind of money? Well, she's the granddaughter of the late Aristotle Onassis, the shipping tycoon who married former U.S. first lady Jacqueline Kennedy, several years after President John F. Kennedy's assassination. Eight-hundred million dollars. I cannot even imagine that. That's more than the state of Kansas' current budget deficit. She could write our state a check to put us back on track — with a little extra thrown in — and never miss it. Of course we know that isn't going to happen. I am waiting now to see how long it'll be before television lures this young lady into

starting on a new reality show. Move over "Joe Millionaire," you're just peanuts!

GRACE is sharing these thoughts on grandmothers as taken from papers written by a class of 8 year olds. Enjoy.

- ✓A grandmother is a lady who has no little children of her own. She likes other people's.
- ✓A grandfather is a man grandmother.
- ✓Grandmothers don't have to do anything except be there when we come to see them.
- ✓They are so old they shouldn't play hard or run.
- ✓It is good if they drive us to the store and have lots of quarters for us.
- ✓When they take us for walks, they slow down past things like pretty leaves and caterpillars.
- ✓They don't say, "Hurry up."
- ✓Usually grandmothers are fat, but not too fat to tie your shoes.
- ✓They wear glasses and funny underwear.
- ✓They can take their teeth and gums out.
- ✓Grandmothers don't have to be smart.
- ✓They have to answer questions like "why isn't God married?" and "How come dogs chase cats?"
- ✓When they read to us, they don't skip.
- ✓They don't mind if we ask for the same story over again.
- ✓Everybody should try to have a grandmother, especially if you don't have television, because they are the only grown ups who like to spend time with us.
- ✓They know we should have snack-time before bedtime and they say prayers with us every time, and kiss us even when we've acted bad.

✓Pass this along to another Grandmother. It will make their day.

### HAPPY Birthday to...

**Feb. 7** — Sharon Vap, Chris Mead, Treasure Glad, Mary Rose Sondburg, Misty Bolling, Sarah Downing

**Feb. 8** — LeAnn Rall, Abby Friesen, Laura Schmid

**Feb. 9** — Kipp Nelson, Melissa Rall, Rena Werner

**Feb. 10** — Shirley Shaw, Doris Duden, Carlene Bruggeman, Jo Kready

**Feb. 11** — Fansion Juenemann

**HAPPY Anniversary to...**

**Feb. 11** — Oliver & Anna Fyfe, Don & Nadine Shull

Congratulations!

If you had a birthday or anniversary during this time period and it didn't appear, call us at 462-3963 or email td@nwkansas.com so it can be included. Many thanks. And please remember to keep us updated on all changes in any listing(s) you are familiar with.

ONE WEEK from today is Valentine's Day — the day set aside to remember that someone special you share life with. Or, in some cases, you shared life with. If you have lost a loved one whom you would be remembering if that person were still alive, go ahead a remember him or her anyway. Recall the good times. Utiya Powers, who writes for the Kansas Senior Press Service, says a visit to the cemetery is in order on Valentine's Day. She suggests placing a bouquet of flowers. Or perhaps fix up a little "memory spot" in a corner of a room of your choice at home containing a few personal belongings, a picture, a note, a little drawing. Don't let Valentine's Day slip away without evoking memories in some way or another. You'll feel better for doing it.

HAVE a good evening and a good weekend.  
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Dreiling is publisher of the *Free Press*. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays.

## FBI returning to your library?

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, Congress passed a massive package of law enforcement powers whose impact Americans are still learning about today. While legislators struggle to discover how some of these powers are being used, Representative Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is challenging one that could reach into your hometown library.

The provision Sanders hopes to reverse is one granting unconditional government access to library information, including a patron's borrowing history, Internet research and more. Under this provision, the FBI began visiting libraries last year. Concrete information about the visits has been difficult to obtain, because the USA Patriot Act not only makes these searches legal, it protects them from public scrutiny with a gag order. Librarians who even discuss FBI searches or requests can be prosecuted as criminals.

Librarians intimidated by the threat of arrest haven't revealed many details of the FBI's invasion of library users' privacy. However, a University of Illinois survey found that by June 2002, law enforcement officials had contacted 85 libraries.

The story of FBI snooping in libraries begins years before September 11, 2001. In 1987, the FBI's Library Awareness Program was brought to light through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit filed by the National Security Archive and People For the American Way Foundation.

The Library Awareness Program is a classic example of misusing national security as a rationale to restrict privacy and other rights. The stated purpose of this program was to draft librarians into the fight against communism and to protect U.S. assets against espionage. In practice, the program abused the core constitutional values on which our nation was founded.

Agents asked librarians at Columbia University about any "foreigners" using the library.

Ralph G. Neas

• Another Viewpoint

(Columbia had over 2,000 international students enrolled in each year through the mid-1980s.) University of Maryland librarians were questioned about the reading habits of people with "East European or Russian-sounding names." A librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library was urged to "look out for suspicious looking people who wanted to overthrow the government."

For years, the FBI revealed little about the program. First disclosed in 1987, press reports indicate that the Library Awareness Program was suspended by 1988.

Perhaps most disturbingly, late in 1989, FBI officials revealed that they had actually conducted investigations into the lives of hundreds of Americans — librarians and others — who had protested the program.

All of this transpired in the 1980s, when the horrors of international terrorism hadn't yet darkened our shores. Yet the misguided attempt to pry into library records — and the launching of investigations against civilians who opposed the program — demonstrates that, even then, the FBI was unable to balance its mission of crime fighting with the need to respect the constitutional liberties of all Americans.

Perhaps the greatest danger revealed by the new library investigations is the draconian restriction of oversight. By barring librarians from discussing an FBI library investigation or even acknowledging that one took place, the law prevents the kind of oversight that is essential to

guarding against abuse. Without information, Congress, the courts and the American people cannot determine whether powers are being misused or take steps to prevent such problems. It was in the public eye that the original Library Awareness Program was revealed as an invasion of privacy and an attack on civil liberties. The USA Patriot Act's secrecy provisions are designed to keep us in the dark.

Since the passage of the USA Patriot Act, the Bush administration has demonstrated a willingness to eschew the system of checks and balances that is the genius of our Constitution. The administration has pushed legislation through Congress without meaningful debate. People who raised concerns were attacked by Attorney General John Ashcroft as "those who scare peace loving people with phantoms of lost liberty..."

Congress must monitor the USA Patriot Act closely. Representative Sanders will introduce legislation strengthening oversight and exempting libraries and booksellers from the portions of the USA Patriot Act, which infringe on American's constitutional rights.

Although the administration insists that its library investigations are designed to protect the nation's security, the words of former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis should be ringing in our ears. "The greatest dangers to liberty," he wrote, "lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding."

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Ralph G. Neas is president of People For the American Way Foundation, established to meet the challenges of discord and fragmentation with an affirmation of "the American Way." By this, we mean pluralism, individuality, and freedom of thought, expression and religion, a sense of community, and tolerance and compassion for others. For more information, visit: www.pfaw.org.