

# Opinion

## Free Press Viewpoint

### Year 2003 brought 133 letters to paper

During the year 2003 we printed 133 letters from our readers. That's down from the 174 letters published in 2002. But situations locally dictate public comment. In 2002, we published a ton of letters from people voicing their opposition to plans to remove the viaduct over the railroad tracks on K-25/Range Ave. Also, a number of letters in 2002 addressed the medical situation here.

Ms. Edna Hatcher of Colby, a name familiar to *Colby Free Press* Opinion Page readers, wrote the final letter of 2003 and it appeared in the Dec. 19 issue. Ironically, the first letter of 2004 also came from Ms. Hatcher and it appeared on Jan. 2. No one can hold a candle to Ms. Hatcher's apparent belief of sharing instead of shelving opinion.

Many of her letters never make print but that doesn't keep her from commenting on issues of general interest. She is probably best known for her voice on Social Security and Medicare issues. And we have a hunch her name is common on Capitol Hill, especially with Rep. Jerry Moran and Senators Sam Brownback and Pat Roberts.

There are a lot of people who will say, "If I knew how to write I'd write a letter to the paper." You don't have to be a writer to write letters. Simply put your thoughts down on paper much as you would explain them to someone over a cup of coffee. It's that simple.

The Opinion Page is there for you to use. Just follow the guidelines, that are simple in nature: 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.

We might add that the telephone number and address are not published, but are used only for verification of the writer.

So, do as Ms. Hatcher for: share, don't shelve. —*Tom A. Dreiling, publisher*

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](mailto:td@nwkansas.com).

#### Addresses of elected officials:

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 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. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: [jmorriso@ink.org](mailto:jmorriso@ink.org) web:<http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso>
- State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: [stclark@ink.org](mailto:stclark@ink.org)



## Whining doesn't do any good

I'm sick of people whining about stuff. I'm no better especially when it comes to something I want to do.

There are many things I want to do, things I want out of life. Some of it I can't help along no matter what I do, some of it I can.

It's just in the past couple of years that I've started to recognize what I can and can't help.

Learning to pick your battles isn't giving up, it's just helping along the things you want to happen.

Some things in my life haven't worked out the way I wanted, some have.

Like when I was in college, I had an epiphany of sorts over one Christmas break. I really didn't want to be a veterinarian.

I wanted to do something that I hadn't done since high school, something I had denied myself, probably one of the biggest mistakes I ever made.

For some strange reason, I didn't want to write. It was something I enjoyed, but I didn't think I could make a living at it.

During my sophomore year in high school, my homeroom teacher told my mom that he wouldn't be surprised if he one day saw my writing published. I scoffed at it when she told me because I had other ideas about what I wanted to do.

I didn't want to do it because it was something others wanted me to do, except at the time, I didn't realize it was probably what I should've been doing all along.

Like archaeology, which to this day is still one of my passions, and yes, I had truly wanted to be a veterinarian when I was in grade school. But people change and what they want changes.

I won't deny I was miserable when I wasn't



**Tisha Cox**

#### • Off The Beaten Path

doing what I wanted to do, but the experiences I had when I wasn't doing it are worth their weight in gold. At least the school of hard knocks literally made me see I wasn't cut out for the life I thought I wanted to lead.

There was no one to blame but my own stupidity and I wonder why I was so stubborn. Now that I'm older, it's probably a good thing I ended up taking the path I did because I wouldn't be the same person otherwise. Eventually though, I did end up becoming a writer of sorts, a journalist.

I have learned it's one thing to get advice, another to take it or not. I don't take much anymore on faith or face value.

I've also hit a point in my life where there are some things I want to do and after years of whining about it, the chance has come up to actually do it. I now need to suck it up and bite the bullet and get off my butt and do something about it.

I keep second-guessing myself and putting off finishing what I'm working on. Other times, I get a bout of ego and think I'm good, real good. Either way, stuff isn't getting done and it needs to NOW.

It makes me wonder if I'm good enough to do what I do.

I think right now it's maybe time to take a stand and put it on the line and actually see.

Tamping down my pride is a hard thing to do, especially when so much is riding on the quality of my work.

I've always had this thing about my writing — it started when I was in college. I was in the news writing classes as a junior while some of the others were freshmen.

I was doing OK, trying to settle into a new major after four years of animal science.

Then I got a fire lit under me when I started having to deal with all these freshmen who thought they were Pulitzer Prize material. All I could think was "who do they think they are?"

There was no way those little freaks were gonna be better than me. That kind of thinking landed me a part-time sports writing job at the Daily O' Collegian.

It just drives me nuts when people around me are like "Well, I did this" and just kind of settle on their laurels and that's it for them.

They think they're better than everybody else.

That gets me going. Yeah, sure, I've done a few stories I'm proud of but that's in the past.

They're over and done with.

What is there to tackle in the future, or right now? That's the important thing.

Now I take a look around and I still think, I can do that, or I can do better than that.

Maybe it's time to prove it.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. Send e-mail to [tcoc@nwkansas.com](mailto:tcoc@nwkansas.com).*

## The gift of remembering

Every day someone somewhere picks up roots and moves to another town, state and in some cases to another country. Often a job transfer, a vocation change or the inability to remain in one's current living situation precipitates such moves.

These moves are often difficult. For families such moves can really upset the proverbial apple cart. Mom and Dad and the kids often dread these moves. Often times, a part of them refuses to go. Saying good-bye to friends can tear at one's soul.

For many the new house isn't home. Happy families face unhappiness and pleasant smiles and warm laughter can be replaced by gloom and dark frowns.

During such times as these families often need a sympathetic ear. They need friends, family and maybe even a counselor to talk with and listen.

A family I know just moved and they are dealing with this separation of friends in a community where they lived for more than a decade. While visiting with them recently, I remembered a short story I read several years ago, "The Gift of Remembering." This story dealt with personal trials and tribulations.

**John Schlageck**

#### • Guest Commentary

Someone named, Aunt Grace, compiled this collection of thoughts. Seems Aunt Grace was one of those wise individuals who'd been around for some time and lived a pretty full life. You know the type, older and wiser, gray hair and crows feet around her eyes. She'd raised a family and now had a host of grandchildren on her knee. Aunt Grace lived her life by six simple rules. Seems she considered six rules a manageable number. Here are the six rules she resolved to implement every day.

- 1) Do something for someone else.
- 2) Do something by myself.
- 3) Do something I don't want to do that needs doing.
- 4) Do a physical

exercise. 5) Do a mental exercise. 6) Do an original prayer that always includes counting my blessings. Well, I shared this story with my friends and they took the points to heart. It's not so important to measure how well you fulfilled these six rules; the important thing is to do them each day. Give yourself credit for just one letter written, one room cleaned or taking the time to listen intently to the concerns or needs of your child.

It's amazing how good feelings about a small accomplishment often enable you to continue to do much more. If there were one message to learn from this it would be that if you live by these six precepts, you tend to become more involved with others and less concerned with yourself.

Remember Aunt Grace's motto: "Bloom where you are planted."

\*\*\*\*\*

*John Schlageck has been writing about farming and ranching in Kansas for 25 years. He is the managing editor of "Kansas Living," a quarterly magazine dedicated to agriculture and rural life in Kansas.*

#### 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. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. 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. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the *Free Press* allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of *Colby Free Press* readers. Thank you.

**COLBY FREE PRESS**  
 155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963  
 Colby, Kan. 67701  
[freepress@nwkansas.com](mailto: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.  
**Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher**  
[td@nwkansas.com](mailto:td@nwkansas.com)  
**NEWS**  
**Patty Decker - Editor**  
[pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com)  
**Tisha Cox - General Assignment**  
**ADVERTISING**  
**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative**  
[crystalr@nwkansas.com](mailto:crystalr@nwkansas.com)  
**Shelby Moses - Advertising Representative**  
[smoses@nwkansas.com](mailto:smoses@nwkansas.com)  
**BUSINESS OFFICE**  
**Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager**  
**Danielle Silsbee - Bookkeeping & Ad Building**  
**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
[support@nwkansas.com](mailto:support@nwkansas.com)  
**NOR'WEST PRESS**  
**Jim Bowker - General Manager**  
**Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight**  
 THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.  
 PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.  
 THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 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 credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association.  
**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$32, 8 months \$47, 12 months \$64. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$44, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$72. Other Kansas counties and surrounding states: 4 months \$51, 8 months \$61, 12 months \$75. All other states, \$75, 12 months.

**Nor'West Newspapers**  
 Haynes Publishing Company

**Doonesbury**  
 • Gary Trudeau

