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PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

The many faces of attorney Edward Ramey, a member of the law firm Isaacson, Rosenbaum, Woods and Levy in Denver, are a study in contrasting remarks as he addressed a large crowd Thursday evening at Colby Community College as part of the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series. Ramey dis-

cussed the effects of the PATRIOT Act on American Civil Liberties and the consequences of the passage of the act in October of 2001. He is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union and known for his comments criticizing the PATRIOT Act.

Speaker questions ‘how’ government protects us

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

Even though he believes the government is trying to do the right thing in defending America against terrorism with the USA PATRIOT Act, Edward Ramey, a Denver attorney who was the guest speaker for the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series Thursday night at Colby Community College, said he questions the “how” in the way the government is going about protecting America.

“I believe it’s a commendable goal,” Ramey explained to the more than 300 attending the lecture, “but the PATRIOT Act, which is 342 pages long and was written into law some 45 days after Sept. 11, should give anyone pause to think.”

Ramey said the act was created and passed into law as a “reaction to the huge traumatic stress triggered on Sept. 11.”

And while Ramey said he isn’t against the government using measures to protect the people, it’s his opinion that the PATRIOT Act has the potential for abuse and could even jeopardize who we — as Americans — are. “We don’t want to give away or lose our soul,” referring to what this country is all about.

In his opening remarks, Ramey said the PATRIOT Act is itself an acronym which stands for Uniting and Strengthening America (by) Providing Appropriate Tools for Intercepting and Obstructing Terrorism.

Whether the acronym was intentionally manipulated or just luck in

the wording, Ramey said he sees this particular legislative act as having the potential to threaten the country’s check and balances afforded to them by the judicial branch and guaranteed under the constitution.

“This is not a good time to be a non-citizen,” he said.

With the act, immigration, deportation or extradition proceedings are closed and Americans won’t know why because the court reviews have been eliminated.

These non-citizens have no right to habeas corpus, he said, which is a legal term meaning that an accused person must be presented physically before the court with a statement demonstrating sufficient cause for arrest.

In other words, no accuser may imprison someone indefinitely

without bringing that person and the charges against him or her into a courtroom.

Yet this is going on at Guantanamo Bay where a lot of people are being held indefinitely. “They have no right of habeas corpus,” Ramey said, “and the reason this is allowed is because Guantanamo is not based here, but rather on an island in Cuba.”

Citing another example, Ramey said he didn’t believe it would be too big of a leap that if the court fails to convict Zacharias Moussawi here that the possibility could be to use the PATRIOT Act to transfer him to a military tribunal.

“We are talking about precious stuff here,” he said, “and we need to question if we really need to remove those checks and balances by continuing to talk about it.”

As part of his lecture, Ramey gave historical accounts as to how the United States has dealt with trauma throughout its existence starting with the Bill of Rights and how the framers wanted to make sure that after the revolution the country moved away from a centralized government having all the power.

Then in 1803, Thomas Jefferson wanted to change things by giving the executive branch more power, but as chief justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall served to strengthen the power of the court during his tenure and thus affecting Jefferson’s changes.

Other major traumas in history included the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln’s decision to suspend writ of habeas corpus until the war was over and in World War II, the

internment of Japanese descent.

“The government is not evil,” Ramey said, “and 9-11 was a time of great national stress.”

However, Ramey also believes that it doesn’t work because of the threat of losing this country’s checks and balances between the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

Ramey is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union and well-known for his controversial commentary criticizing legislative acts like the PATRIOT Act.

Ramey was the first guest speaker for the 2004 Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series at the college.

On March 11, Robert Kennedy, Jr. will be talking about environmental issues.



Maybe snow

Colby, Oakley, Hoxie area Tonight...Mostly clear. Not as cool. Lows around 17. Northwest winds 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday...**Mostly sunny in the morning then becoming partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 40s. North winds 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday night...**Partly cloudy. Lows around 17. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph. **Sunday...**Partly cloudy in the morning then becoming mostly cloudy. A 20 percent chance of snow. Highs in the upper 30s. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph. **Sunday night...**Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of snow showers. Lows around 19. **Presidents’ Day (Monday) and Monday night...**Partly cloudy. Highs around 40. Lows in the lower 20s.

The numbers

Wednesday’s high, 29
Low this morning, 3
Records for Feb. 13, 79 in 1962 and -20 in 1905 Year ago today, 58 and 16

February 2004 precipitation, 0.27 inches (adjustment from previous reports)

February 2004 snowfall, 6 inches
Precipitation past 24 hours, 0.00

The sources:

The forecast is from the National Weather Service, and other numbers are from the Northwest Research-Extension Center, Colby. A recorded forecast updated throughout the day is available by calling (785) 899-7119. Current temperatures are available by calling 460-TEMP.

Catholic bishops back Sebelius housing plan

TOPEKA (AP) — Kansas’ Roman Catholic bishops have endorsed Gov. Kathleen Sebelius’ proposal for a program to make home ownership more affordable for Kansans with low or moderate incomes.

The plan would authorize the Kansas Development Finance Authority to issue bonds to back home

mortgages. Home buyers would benefit because the bonds would be tax-exempt, which could lower the interest on mortgages. Twenty percent of the bond proceeds would be set aside for rural families.

Sebelius discussed the plan Thursday at a news conference joined by Archbishop James Keleher, of the Archdiocese of Kan-

sas City, Kan.; Bishop Ronald Gilmore, of the Diocese of Dodge City; and advocates of affordable housing.

All four of the state’s bishops issued a statement expressing concern that too many Kansans pay too much for rent or mortgages.

Legislation authorizing Sebelius’ plan was approved by the state Sen-

ate last year and is pending before a House committee.

Kansas is the only state without a statewide housing program, Sebelius said. “Passage of this bill will put us on the map,” she said.

Keleher said the Catholic Church is interested in housing because having a decent, affordable place to live “is a matter of human dignity.”

“There’ll be no economic development unless there’s affordable housing for our people,” Keleher said.

Some legislators are nervous about allowing a state agency to become a player in the housing market, said Rep. Kenny Wilk, chairman of the House Economic Development Committee.

San Francisco mayor’s action both hailed and criticized

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—City officials have issued marriage licenses to nearly 100 same-sex couples and could unite scores more while opponents are in court today seeking to block the nationally unprecedented nuptials.

While the practical value of the marriage licenses remains unclear, their symbolism was evident—especially on a day when lawmakers in Massachusetts debated a constitutional amendment that would strip gays and lesbians of court-or-

dered marriage rights. As mandated, they adjourned shortly after midnight Friday — but without reaching a consensus.

San Francisco’s newly elected mayor, Gavin Newsom, directed the county clerk to accept applica-

tions from gay and lesbian partners for the first time Thursday.

So many couples took the city up on its surprise offer that, by late afternoon, overwhelmed officials told new applicants to return today. In all, the clerk’s office issued 95

marriage licenses to same-sex partners Thursday, and 87 couples took their vows on the spot.

The city’s bold move, however, caused an outcry from elected officials and groups opposed to marriage rights for same-sex couples.

Briefly

Sacred Heart carnival Sunday

Colby Sacred Heart School has scheduled its annual carnival on Sunday beginning at 11 a.m. and continuing until 3 p.m. There will be games, prizes and other fun activities, organizers said today.

In addition to the carnival, a homemade lunch of bierocks, sloppy joes and pie will be served. Everyone is welcome to attend. Proceeds from the carnival benefit the school.

Commissioners meet Tuesday

The Thomas County Courthouse will be closed Monday in observance of Presidents’ Day, thus county commissioners will meet on Tuesday at 9 a.m. at the courthouse. The meeting is open to the public. No agenda was available.

College board to meet

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will hold its regular meeting at 5 p.m. Monday in the board room of Thomas Hall on campus. Items on the agenda include the financial report, approval of contracts and agreements, evaluation of president and negotiations. The meeting is open to the public.

Singers plan benefit performance

A special performance by the K-State Singers is scheduled at 2 p.m., Sunday, in the Oakley High School auditorium for

Christin Molstad, who is battling breast cancer. A free-will donation will be taken at the door in lieu of admission. Proceeds from the concert will help defray medical and travel expenses to Houston for her primary treatment.

For information about this performance, call Deb Kohn at (785) 672-4659 or Michelle Lunsway at (785) 672-4137.

School board to meet

The Colby School Board will meet at 7 p.m. Monday in the board room of the Administration meeting. Items on the agenda include approval of consent agenda, construction projects and the high school woods class, a curriculum presentation at the high school, reports from the principals and superintendent, resignations, employment recommendations, administrative contract extensions and negotiations. The meeting is open to the public.

First aid, CPR classes begin soon

There will be a first aid class on Thursday, Feb. 19 beginning at 6 p.m. and an adult, child, infant CPR class on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 6 p.m.

Classes will be held at the Red Cross, 350 S. Range in Colby. Call the office at (785) 462-7161 to register.

Benefit supper for preschool planned

Kappa Upsilon, a local sorority, is sponsoring a soup supper on Friday, Feb. 20 from 5 to 7:30 p.m., at the Colby Com-

munity Building when Colby takes on Atwood in basketball action.

The menu will include chili, chicken noodle, and vegetable soups, along with cinnamon rolls, cookies and drinks.

The cost is free-will donation with proceeds going to benefit PuddleDuck Pre-School.

No flags displayed Monday

Due to the ice and snow on streets and curbs around Colby, the US flags that are normally displayed on national holidays will not be placed at residential and business locations Monday.

The Special Olympic US Flag committee apologizes. For questions, call Chuck Dempewolf, 460-3481.

Library hosts book sale

Pioneer Memorial Library will host its annual Book Lover’s Sale from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday in the library basement, 375 W. Fourth.

Prices range from a low of 10 cents to a maximum of \$5. For information, call 462-4470.

Youth group hosts pasta dinner

Colby United Methodist Church middle school youth group is sponsoring a pasta dinner from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday. The cost of the dinner is a free will offering.

