

# Opinion

## Monday's Salute

**Thumbs**  **to...**

✓ **Jolene Mitchell** — for proving a personal setback can be the springboard for a positive change in one's life.

✓ **Oakley Organizers** — for bringing the Vietnam War Memorial *Moving Wall* to our area.

✓ **Dr. Kelly Riccitelli** — and your horse team at Colby Community College on your third-place showing at the Zone 7 Region 1 competition at Fort Collins, Colo.

✓ **Red Barn Gang** — on your super senior show at the Colby Senior Progress Center.

✓ **Maj. Phyllis Lawver** — on the thoughtful gift for your father/mother-in-law **Elmer and Donna Lawver**.

✓ **Flag Committee** — on your continuing patriotic project and your invitation for others to join your team in placing the flags on legal holidays at homes and business in the community. (Call 460-2689 or 460-3481 to become a volunteer.)

✓ **Sherry Barrett** — for your exceptional coverage of the action at the Thomas County Speedway. You will be missed.

✓ **Thomas County Health Department** — on your June 16 "Super Safe Sitter" class for local babysitters. (Call 462-4596.)

✓ **Regina Heier and Taylor Miller** — on your first-place finish at the Class 4A State Forensics Tournament.

✓ **All Graduates** — here, there and elsewhere in our reading area. Good luck the rest of the way.

*This column is prepared each Monday morning by the newspaper's publisher. Send comments, submissions or questions to him at td@nwkansas.com, fax (785) 462-7749 or call (785) 462-3963.*

### 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: jmorrison@ink.org web: http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison

**State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: sclark@ink.org



## Angry Americans?

People have been telling me there's nothing we can do about the high gas prices and that I might as well accept it.

What if I don't want to?

According to my Associated Press Style Guide, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a group of 13 countries made up of Algeria, Ecuador, Gabon, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

See anything wrong with that list? I do.

Plenty as a matter of fact.

It's a consortium of countries that can do what it wants to get whatever it wants for its product. They govern petroleum exports and in turn, can set the price they like.

People also blame the prices on the so-called "war" with Iraq, export costs, the possibility of terrorist attacks in Saudi or anything else they want but the bottom line is people will still pay whatever the price is to get around.

But what if we just choose to walk away and not buy gas for a short period of time? Sure, OPEC could find new customers but they won't find them as affluent as the U.S. and the rest of the countries they supply.

Of course the answer is to lose our dependency on foreign oil and I don't think that will be accomplished by drilling in such places as the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve in Alaska, a pristine wilderness sitting on top of a huge crude oil deposit.

The Bush administration has pushed for drilling but experts have pointed out that the cost of putting in the infrastructure needed to drill and pipeline the gas far outweighs any benefit of the supply itself (according to Outside and Sierra Club!).

There are also alternative fuel sources besides



**Tisha Cox**

### • Off The Beaten Path

The federal government has the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colo., one of the leading research facilities in the world dedicated to researching and developing fuel sources such as solar cells and batteries, wind power and fuel cells. The lab also leads the way in trying to make existing technology more efficient and cheaper.

However, the current administration refuses to buy into such research. And almost no one wants to because they say there isn't a viable future in alternative energy sources.

If private industry would invest in developing such sources, they would take off, just like anything else, but of course no one wants to upset the status quo. People should stop buying gas and send the message that the American public won't stand for such an outrage.

While I'm on the subject, I think there's a lot more than that to be outraged about.

I'm sick of being told there's nothing anyone can do about gas prices and everything else and everyone might as well accept it because that's what most people will do.

And also that the Constitution is to protect the rights of the minority in this country. If that's the case, why aren't more people standing up to be heard?

I thought being an American was about fight-

ing for freedom, truth, justice and all of that, not sitting on one's bum and just watching the world go by.

Are we Americans or mice?

Because the way things are going makes me feel very un-American, like the prospect women might have to register for the draft. I'm a woman and if I wanted to serve, I would by my own choice and not because someone is making me. (If it ever came down to it, I would join myself before being forced to do it.)

I thought that was what being an American was about — choice. The simple freedom of choosing everyday.

That's the beauty of being an American — no one can tell you how to live, where to work, what to do, who to love, but if the Bush administration had its way, they would make all of those decisions for us.

People are bagging on John Kerry for his statements on Vietnam after he came home. Who cares? It was his right as an American to protest and at least he's been honest about his service record and what he did after.

It's a little thing called public information, something George W. Bush has forgotten about. If he has nothing to hide, why doesn't he just cough up his own service records and while I'm on the subject, anything else that needs to come to light.

It's just one of an incredibly long list of things George W. Bush has to be accountable for. As Americans, we have that right to hold our president and our government accountable.

So, why aren't we?

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*Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcx@nwkansas.com.*

## A matter of knowing what you're doing

Even though I had all that trouble deciding what potatoes to throw away on my first job, I didn't have any trouble at all making decisions on my next job, which was candling eggs when I was a sophomore through junior in high school. Back in the 'olden days,' before women's lib, before most women had a job outside the home, and while this was still basically an agricultural society, women had their 'butter and egg' money which they used to buy their little luxuries, such as a ribbon for their hair, a special ingredient for a birthday cake, shoes for the kids, or such.

Much of the family's food was grown on the farm, but the ladies of the family still wanted a few extras, and if the family income stretched that far, the women usually got to keep the butter and egg money, producing which was their responsibility. This was still true in my hometown of Loomis, Neb., shortly after World War II. Loomis had a little 'puddle jumper' train which went from Holdrege to Curtis, Neb., stopping along the way to pick up passengers and freight.

My hometown had an egg processing plant, and eggs in 30 dozen cases were picked up all along the line to be candled and sold from Loomis. The pointed end of an egg should go down because eggs have an air sac in the top end which is empty when the egg is laid and gets larger as the egg deteriorates, depending on temperature and other conditions. Candling consists of holding the eggs up to the light to see what the air sac inside looks like, and then putting the egg into one of four categories, A, B, C or D. If I remember correctly, if it was no larger than a



**Maxine Nelson**

### • Random Thoughts

dime, the egg was 'A' quality; if it was no larger than a nickel it was 'B' quality; and if it was no bigger than a quarter, it was 'C' quality. If it was bigger than that, it was fit for the pigs; or if the egg was black inside, it was rotten and you had better duck because it might explode. Some did, if they had started to hatch before they were gathered, which was always a hazard in hot weather.

The candlers worked in a darkened room. They held two eggs in each hand and rotated them in front of a bright light to see what was inside, distributing them to four cases, two on either side.

Minimum job was four cases an hour, at 25 cents a case. Being young and ambitious at the time, I sometimes could do as many as 20 cases an hour on a good day. That's how I earned my money for college. Our work was regularly inspected, and I always rated high.

You can see I made a lot of decisions on those days, 360 per case, but I didn't have any trouble making those decisions, because someone told me the criteria.

When Steve and Cynthia Haynes bought the

Colby Free Press, Steve came over to instruct us every day for a month on how to do things. He put a new program on the computer, and said, "Now you are going to use this, starting tomorrow." Patty Decker was gone on vacation, so she missed out on this valuable instruction, but the rest of us were pretty stressed.

Steve kept looking at the pages and pointing out mistakes. This was too far this way, that was too far that way. I had no idea what he wanted. Finally in desperation, I said, "Steve, where do you want them?" Everyone gathered around, and he said, "Here, they should be indented 1/8th of an inch."

I didn't know what 1/8th of an inch was. My cooking recipes never called for 1/8th of anything. When they got to less than 1/4th of a cup, they switched to tablespoons and teaspoons. How many teaspoons are there in 1/8th of an inch? I didn't know!

I asked the sports writer what 1/8th of an inch was, and he said, "One-eighth of an inch!" Apparently he knew. (It's a male thing!)

I finally asked Cynthia, and she said, "See that little notch there on the side. That's where he wants it."

OK. That made it perfectly clear. Why didn't Steve say so in the first place?

Eventually, I figured out that 1/8th of an inch is half of 1/4th of an inch. See how simple it is if you know the criteria?

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*Maxine Nelson is a retired reporter/editor for the Colby Free Press and occasionally contributes to this page.*

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 freepress@nwkansas.com  
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**Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher**  
 td@nwkansas.com  
**NEWS**  
**Patty Decker - Editor**  
 pdecker@nwkansas.com  
**Tisha Cox - General Assignment**  
 tcx@nwkansas.com  
**ADVERTISING**  
**Crystal Rucker - Advertising Representative**  
 crystal@nwkansas.com  
**Kathy Brooks - Advertising Representative**  
 kbrook@nwkansas.com  
**BUSINESS OFFICE**  
**Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager**  
**Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building**  
 japplegate@nwkansas.com  
**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
 support@nwkansas.com  
**NOR'WEST PRESS**  
**Jim Bowker - General Manager**  
**Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight**  
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• Gary Trudeau

