

Opinion

Letters



Let's all do our part

To the Colby Free Press:
The American Cancer Society "Relay for Life" is just around the corner. This event provides us with money to do cutting-edge research; educate students, health care professionals and the public on the prevention and early detection of cancer; advocate for public policies that further the fight against cancer; and provide services for patients in our community.

This year's event is slated for Aug. 20 at Dennen Field. Now is the time for individuals, corporations, small businesses, and community groups to commit their team participation. The "Relay for Life" is the perfect site for a company picnic or family gathering, all while supporting a great cause.

In an average year in Kansas, approximately 12,940 residents learn from their physician that they have cancer...and 5,330 Kansas residents succumb to the disease. It's a pattern that continues year after year. We plan to change that pattern.

We hope Colby will join as we walk through the night to celebrate cancer survivors and provide hope for those who will be diagnosed in the future.

To learn how to form a team, call 785-460-3481.
Sincerely,

Chuck Dempewolf
Thomas County Relay for Life Chair
American Cancer Society
(Letter #38)

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. 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.

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 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: sclark@ink.org

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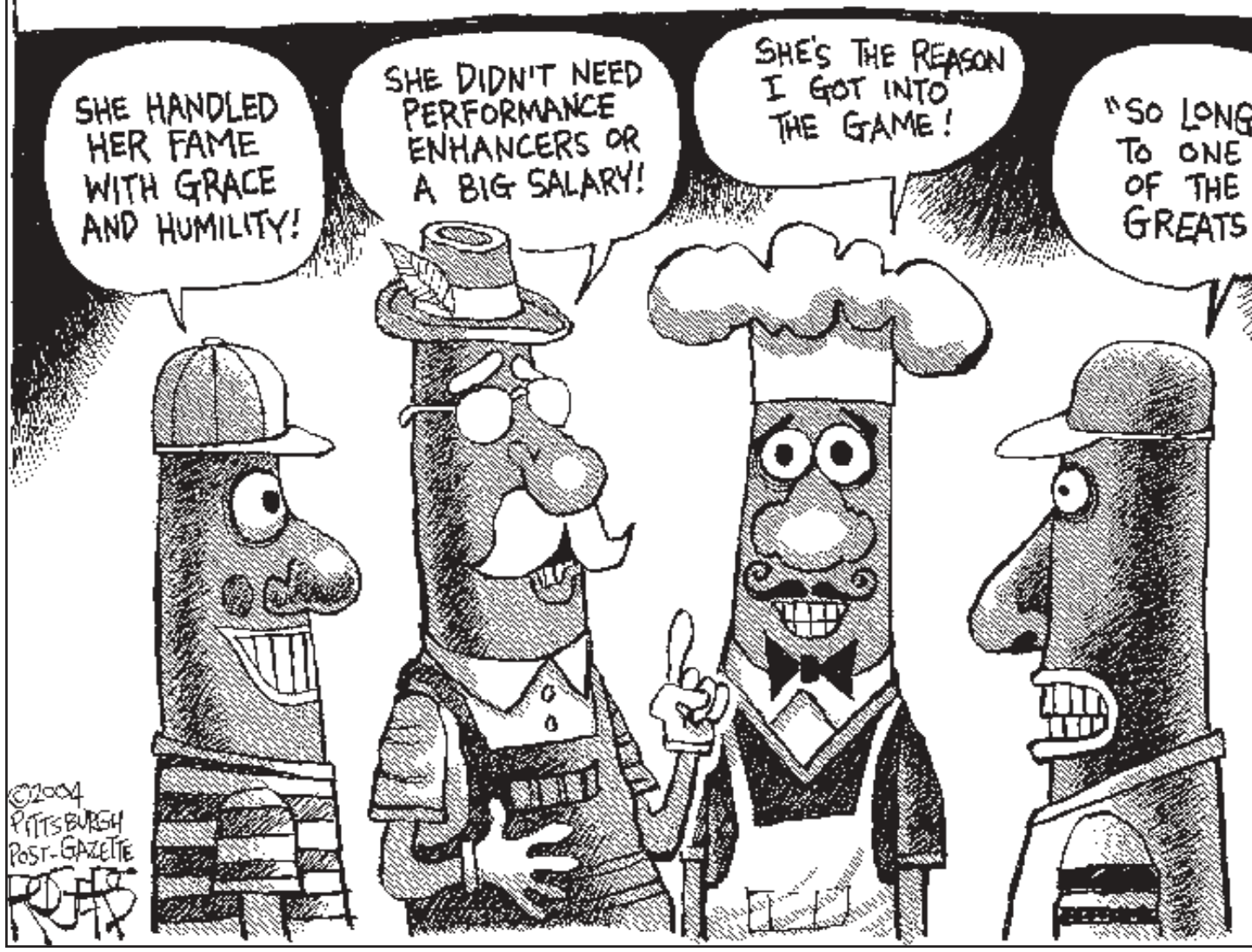
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Nor'West Newspapers
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NEWS ITEM: WOMAN HIT BY BAT IN SAUSAGE RACE RETIRES...



You might want to watch this

Some familiar faces, and some not so familiar, will come into your homes — if you allow them to — on Friday evening at 9 p.m., courtesy Smoky Hills Public Television, channel 3 on the cable system here.

"The Kansas Legislature" will be the topic of the one-hour program, designed to give viewers a chance to hear from legislators about the various issues still on the table, and perhaps chat about some that aren't. The program will last one hour.

The unfortunate aspect of the show is that it will be taped prior to broadcast, thus the panel won't be fielding questions from those out in

Mr. D.

• Of General Interest

televisionland.

Among panelists are Rep. Jim Morrison, Colby, Rep. Ralph Ostmeier, Grinnell, and Sen. Stan Clark, Oakley.

Other panelists include Deena Horst of Salina, Josh Svaty of Ellsworth and Bob Bethal of Alden. You might take note of Josh Svaty, who is among the youngest, if not the youngest member of the

Kansas House. He upset a veteran legislator in winning a seat in Topeka two years ago. He is up for re-election this year.

School funding, we would suppose, will be among topics, then again maybe not. We have no idea what tone the program will take, but we suspect some of the hotter issues will find their way onto the table of discussion.

Anyway, that's our hope. The moderator will be Dave Weiden from the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University.

Peek in, if your schedule permits.
— Tom Dreiling, publisher

Yes, life's like that

Steve is a night person. I am a day person. I get up early. He stays up late. We meet in the middle. The middle sometimes gets stretched, however. This means he gets up a lot earlier than he wants and I stay up a lot later than I plan. This makes us both a little grouchy at times. Last week, I figured I had it made. Steve would be out of town. I could go to bed early and live at my own pace. That was before I found out about prom. Each year, the Oberlin Rotary Club sponsors the after-prom party. It starts at 12:30 a.m. and ends about 3:30 a.m. I was signed up to work the 12:30-1:30 a.m. shift. So much for early to bed. I also needed to take pictures for the paper, so I got to the party at 11 p.m. and started shooting pictures of the kids dancing and having a great time. I then got pictures of the crowning of the king and queen and a bunch of shots of the after-prom



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

party, after the kids changed from tuxedos and ball gowns to T-shirts and cutoffs. I gave up about 2:30 a.m. and headed for the office. I had drunk a couple of cups of diet Pepsi and was wired. I downloaded my pictures, chose the ones I wanted and headed home. It was 3:30 a.m. and I was still wide awake. A hot bath and a good book got me to sleep as the clock struck 4 a.m. I was glad I had been to church Saturday night. I definitely wasn't planning to get up before noon on Sunday. At 10 a.m., though, the phone rang. My husband

— on the way to New York for a memorial service — was lonely and wanted to talk. I pointed out that I hadn't had enough sleep since I had been up until 4 a.m. He got up at 6 a.m. He said he would call one of our children and wake them up. I couldn't get back to sleep, so I got up and fiddled around until it was time to leave for Norton's graduation. After the graduation, I downloaded pictures and headed for home and the couch. I had no sooner gotten to sleep when the phone rang. Yep. It was Steve checking in. That was twice in one day. He'll be home tomorrow and he'll want to sleep in after a long weekend on the road. Of course, he may have a rude awakening every day for the rest of the week.

Cynthia Haynes and husband Steve own *Nor'West Newspapers*, which includes the *Colby Free Press*.

Waist deep in politics

Steve Weiss

• Guest Commentary

The Walt Disney Company's intra-family squabble with Miramax over the distribution of a new documentary that criticizes President Bush makes for great headlines. It also sheds light on the extent to which election-year politics can seemingly weigh on the decisions of a major political donor. Disney and its subsidiary Miramax are arguing over "Fahrenheit 911" a film by the famously liberal filmmaker Michael Moore that is highly critical of Bush's decisions surrounding the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Miramax bought the North American distribution rights for the movie. Disney objected to the distribution deal, *The New York Times* reported, on the grounds that the movie would create a "partisan political battle" that could turn off a large chunk of Disney's audience. Moore's agent accused Disney of acting to protect tax breaks it enjoys in Florida, where Jeb Bush, the president's brother, is governor. The company denies the charges. Regardless of its motivations, Disney predictably wants to avoid becoming entangled in a controversy relating to the contentious presidential campaign. The company, which is well known for its efforts to maintain a squeaky clean image among its customers, has spent millions to establish a powerful reputation in the nation's capital. Disney and its employees are among the biggest donors in American politics, having contributed nearly \$8 million to federal candidates and party committees since 1989. Two-thirds of that total has gone to Democrats. But like a lot of donors, Disney and its employees have sent an increasing share of their contributions to Republicans since the mid-'90s, when the GOP took control of Congress. Disney's donations were split more evenly than ever immediately after Bush won the last presidential election. The company and its employees sent 53 percent of their contributions to

Democrats and 47 percent to Republicans in the 2001-2002 election cycle. So far in the current cycle, slightly more than 60 percent of contributions from Disney has gone to Democrats, versus 40 percent to Republicans. A portion of that giving comes from Disney's political action committee, which has contributed \$158,000 to federal candidates in the current election cycle — half to Democratic candidates and half to Republican candidates. Disney is also a lobbying giant, having spent nearly \$4 million to lobby the federal government last year. Chief among its concerns is preventing the unauthorized copying and distribution of movies and music, but Disney's legislative interests are as broad as its business holdings. In addition to its stake in the movie and theme park business, Disney owns the television network ABC, dozens of local television and radio stations and two major sports franchises, pro hockey's Anaheim Mighty Ducks and Major League Baseball's Anaheim Angels. One reason Democrats edge Republicans in total fund raising from Disney may be Miramax itself, whose contributions are included in the Disney total. Harvey and Bob Weinstein, the brothers who run Miramax, are big Democratic givers who have contributed \$224,492 to Democratic candidates and party committees since 1999. They have given no contributions to Republicans during that time. Harvey Weinstein, who gives far more gen-

erously than his brother, gave \$2,000 last year to John Kerry, the presumptive Democratic presidential candidate. He made most of his political contributions during the 2001-2002 election cycle, the last in which unlimited soft money contributions to the national political parties were allowed. Weinstein gave \$85,000 in soft money to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and \$50,000 to the Democratic National Committee during the cycle. Eve Chilton Weinstein, Harvey's wife and the president of Elegant Films, has contributed more than have the two brothers combined (though her contribution totals are not included with Miramax's). She has given a total of \$383,500 to federal candidates and parties since 1999, all to Democrats. Of that, \$320,000 went to DNC soft money accounts in 2000. Michael Eisner, the embattled Disney chief executive who reportedly encouraged filmmaker Moore to cancel his distribution deal with Miramax, has been much more modest — and pragmatic — in his political giving. Together with his wife Jane, Eisner, who recently was stripped of his duties as chairman by the Disney board, has contributed \$80,500 to federal candidates and party committees since 1999. One-third of that total, or \$27,000, has gone to Republicans, including \$5,000 to the National Republican Congressional Committee last year.

Steve Weiss is Media Director for the Center for Responsive Politics. It is a non-partisan, non-profit research group based in Washington, D.C. that tracks money in politics, and its effect on elections and public policy. The Center conducts computer-based research on campaign finance issues for the news media, academics, activists, and the public at large. The Center's work is aimed at creating a more educated voter, an involved citizenry, and a more responsive government. weiss@crp.org.