

Opinion

Free Press Viewpoint

It's time to focus on that deadly bolt

Sunday will usher in an awareness week we should all heed. It deals with lightning safety and it is being observed now because numerous lightning fatalities and injuries occur at this time of year.

Billed as "National Lightning Safety Awareness Week," all stops are being pulled out by the National Weather Service in an effort to raise the seriousness of this killer.

During the week of June 20-26, the weather service in our area and weather services all over the country, will be promoting lightning awareness by issuing public information statements and playing special safety information on NOAA Weather Radio.

The Fourth of July holiday is just about upon us and this is a time when more people are than aren't out doors at picnics, at the lake, playing baseball or attending parades, fireworks displays, touring golf courses, dipping in community pools from sea to shining sea or just outdoors to be outdoors.

Situations creating lightning can pop up often without warning. Toward that end, the National Weather Service is posting some excellent information about lightning awareness on its web site. Topics include the science of lightning, indoor and outdoor safety, the history of lightning, statistics of being killed or injured by lightning and what type of injuries occur. Their web site is located at <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov>.

There is another good site posted by the National Lightning Safety Institute at <http://www.lightningsafety.com>, where you will find discussions about lightning accidents and incidents, statistics and lightning safety.

During the coming week, the Goodland National Weather Service office will issue public information statements discussing a different aspect of lightning each day, and NOAA Weather Radio stations in the tri-state area will play short segments.

Don't be fooled by lightning. It is deadly. It has its eye on you. But there are things you can do to protect yourself, especially if you are caught out in the open. Just go to the broadcast locations and web sites available to assure your safety.

Summertime is fun time. Keep it that way. Don't let lightning bolt you out of the picture.

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@nwkans.com.

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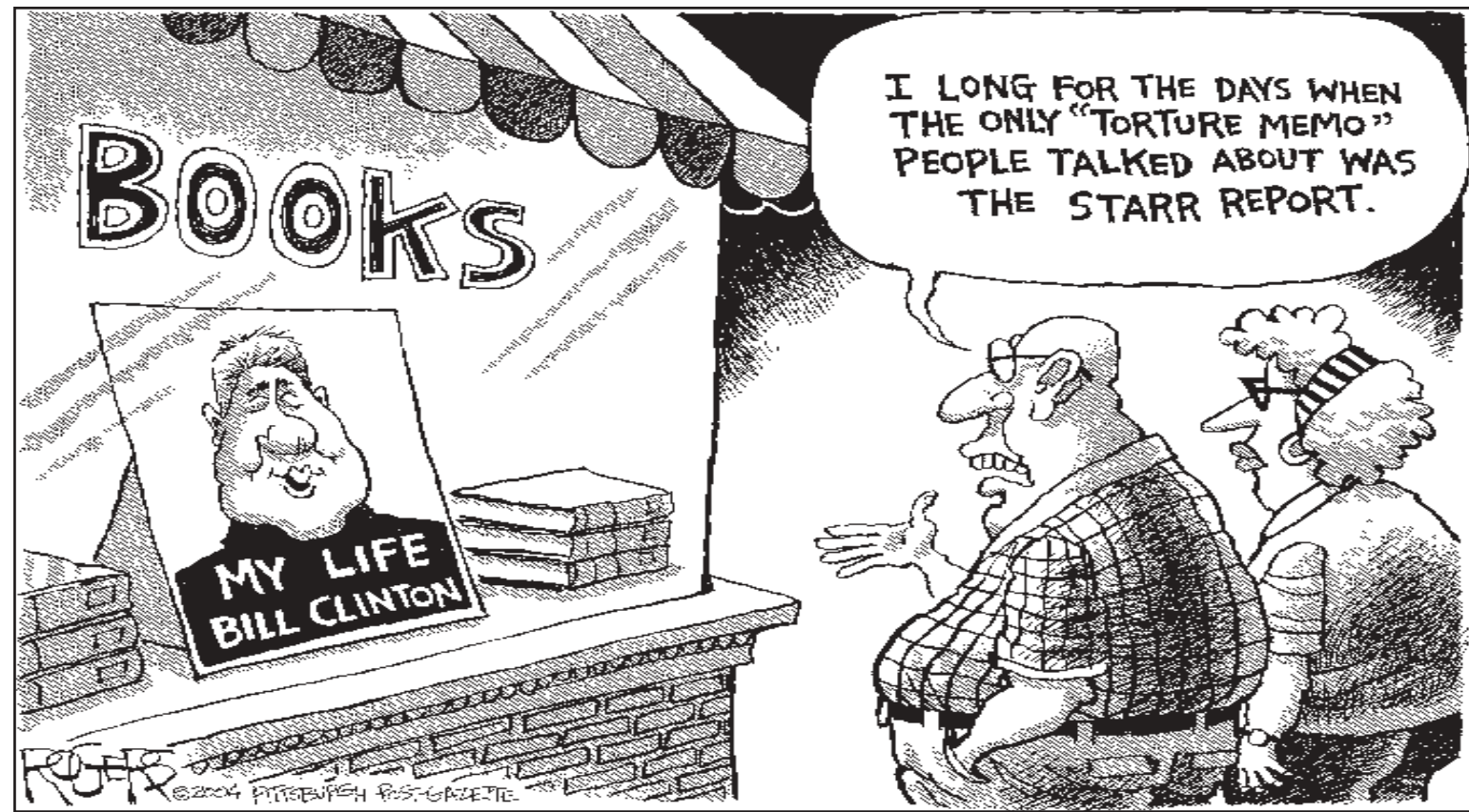
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Madonna...rainfall...Oberlin Herald

LEAVE it up to Madonna. She's getting the public pulpit again to straighten all of us out. Excerpts from an interview to be carried by "20/20" tonight n ABC-TV, were aired on "Good Morning America" this morning.

Ugh!
This 45-year-old woman who, for years had no idea that you wear clothes, seems to want to take a more mature look at the world. Maturity? Madonna? Now that's one for "Comedy Central."

I listened to her garbage — and hey, folks, the First Amendment allows us to spit out our garbage wherever we choose — and came away from the couple of minutes preview of what to expect tonight thinking another Bush (as in President George W.) basher.

She said that President Bush and Saddam Hussein are both irresponsible leaders and that's one thing they have in common.

Eh?
She kind of smugged over that statement but nonetheless the universe's Miss Morality is now taking on the commander-in-chief. I wouldn't mind someone with intelligence — like you and me — doing that but somebody like Madonna? Chuckle! Chuckle!

I guess I'll be watching her on "20/20" — if I don't forget. She covers other areas in the interview and if I understand things correctly her Bush bashing isn't all that prolonged.

What a goofy way to wake up!

WHILE reflecting on a multitude of things yesterday, I came up with this thought: "The longer you live, the greater the risk of death."

I SEE where we got another 0.33 inches of rainfall in the past 24 hours ending at 8 o'clock

Thanks to Grace Jones for sharing the first item in today's column. You'll chuckle out loud. Also, I have included some registration figures for the state's political parties that I think you'll find interesting. -td-

Why God Created Children
(and in the process grandchildren)

To those of us who have children in our lives, whether they are our own, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or students...here is something to make you chuckle. Whenever your children are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to His own children. After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve.

And the first thing he said was "Don't!"
"Don't what?" Adam replied.

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit," God said.
"Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey Eve...we have forbidden fruit!"

"No Way!"
"Yes, way!"
"Do not eat the fruit!" said God.

"Why?"
"Because I am your Father and I said so!" God replied, wondering why He hadn't stopped creation after making elephants. A few minutes later, God saw His children having an apple break and He was ticked!

"Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit?" God asked.

"Uh huh," Adam replied.
"Then why did you?" asked the Father.

"I don't know," said Eve.
"She started it!" Adam said

"Did not!"
"Did too!"
"Did not!"!

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

this morning. That brings the month's total to 2.54 inches. Boy, how badly that was needed and the forecast leaves out hope that more rain in the next day or so. Charts from the Northwest Research-Extension Center in Colby show that June's average longtime rainfall is in the neighborhood of 3 inches, so we aren't too far off the mark. The most rainfall for the month of June came in 1975 when 8.95 inches soaked the soil; the least was 0.15 in 1981. "Bring it on" — I think that's a phrase someone we all know used some time ago.

THE GOOD folks at *The Oberlin Herald* — one of the six newspapers in the Nor'West Newspapers group — are holding a party today in conjunction with their Chamber of Commerce heralding the 125th birthday of *The Herald*. Hats off to all of them from all of us at the *Colby Free Press*! The *Free Press* is in its 115th year, so we bow to our senior paper at Oberlin. Here's for many more years.

ON THE first day God created the dog. God said, "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. I will give you a life span of 20 years." The dog said, "That's too long to be barking. Give me 10 years and I'll give you back the other 10." God agreed.

It's about children, grandchildren

TD • At Week's End

and it has never changed.
(But there is reassurance in the story!)

If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give children wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself.

If God had trouble raising children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

Things to think about:

1. You spend the first two years of their life teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next 16 telling them to sit down and shut up.

2. Grandchildren are God's reward for not killing your own children.

3. Mothers of teens now know why some animals eat their young.

4. Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said in the first place.

5. The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own.

6. We childproofed our homes, but they are still getting in.

7. Just when you redecorate their room into a nice TV room, they show up with boxes, suitcases and large dogs, to move back home.

Advice for the day:
Be nice to your kids. They will choose your nursing home one day.

No surprise to you, but our great state recog-

On the second day God created the monkey. God said, "Entertain people, do monkey tricks, make them laugh. I'll give you a 20-year life span." The monkey said, "How boring, monkey tricks for 20 years? I don't think so. The dog gave you back 10, so that's what I'll do too, okay?" And God agreed.

On the third day God created the cow. God said, "You must go to the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer. I will give you a life span of 60 years." The cow said, "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for 60 years. Let me have 20 and I'll give back the other 40." And God agreed again.

On the fourth day God created man. God said, "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. I'll give you 20 years." Man said, "What? Only 20 years! Tell you what, I'll take my 20, and the 40 the cow gave back and the 10 the monkey gave back and the 10 the dog gave back, that makes 80, okay?"

"Okay," said God, "You've got a deal."
So that is why the first 20 years we eat, sleep, play, and enjoy ourselves; for the next 40 years we slave in the sun to support our family; for the next 10 years we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren; and for the last 10 years we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.

That's life, folks!

HAVE a good evening and a good weekend. And don't forget Sunday is Father's Day; take him to church and then out to eat.

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the *Free Press*. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkans.com, fax 785-462-7749 or call 462-3963.

nizes four political parties: Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, Reform.

Parties obtain recognition by submitting petitions signed by enough registered voters to equal two percent of the total votes cast in the last general election for governor. Currently, that figure is 16,714.

Once recognized, a party can place its nominees directly on the general election ballot, whereas independent candidates have to circulate petitions and collect signatures.

To maintain recognition, a party must file a candidate for at least one statewide office and have that candidate obtain one percent of the vote in a general election.

While Republicans and Democrats have primaries, Libertarians and Reform Party members nominate their candidates at conventions.

According to the secretary of state's office, Kansas had 1,546,873 registered voters in August 2003, the last time figures were compiled.

Here were their affiliations:

- Republican, 715,724, or 46.3 percent.
- Democratic, 421,876, or 27.2 percent.
- Libertarian, 8,792, or 0.6 percent.
- Reform Party, 1,703, or 0.1 percent.
- No affiliation, 398,778, or 25.8 percent.

When you look at that *no affiliation* total, and this I believe would be pretty much the case all across the land, you can see why candidates, like President Bush and Sen. John Kerry who that category of voter. Those are big numbers all across the board and in our case, if you look closely, the *no-affiliation* bunch is within 24,000 of equaling the Democratic total.

Just thought I'd throw these figures in the mix today inasmuch as we are in the midst of an election year. -td

Got something for "At Week's End?" E-mail it to td@nwkans.com, fax it to him at (785) 462-7749, mail it to 155 W. Fifth, Colby 67701.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

