

Opinion

Letter Drop

- Our Readers Sound Off

The rest of the story

To the Colby Free Press:

Jim Hightower of "The Hightower Lowdown" tells about a (columnist)/speechwriter, William Safire, who wrote a hypothetical story for *The New York Times* about a low-income mother whose 12-year-old boy had said to her, "Momma, I need new shoes because the old ones with the holes hurt my feet, and the other kids in school are laughing at me."

But Safire tells us sadly, his fictional momma had to say to her boy that she "couldn't afford no \$50 on new shoes made in America."

But glory be! Safire's morality tale ends happily, when momma found a store that was "having a clearance of shoes made in China or Indo-someplace. I bought him a pair of fine leather shoes for \$24. You shoulda seen my boy's face light up."

In case you missed it, Safire pounds the moral home: "Free trade is helping that lady make ends meet because her hard-earned dollar now has more buying power. If those fast-talking protectionists had their way, the high cost of living would deny her boy those shoes."

Gosh Bill, thanks for that little lecture, but let's move from fiction to real life. Fact is that Nike doesn't lower the price on its shoes just because it pays workers in Indo-someplace a dollar a day, instead of the \$10 an hour it used to pay U.S. workers. No, Nike simply pockets their savings.

Also, if 'Momma' hadn't had her middle-class job offshored by the likes of Nike, she wouldn't be poor — and then she could afford those \$50 shoes made in America.

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(Letter #65)



Not in MY America!

ARE you getting as tired of hearing everybody calling everybody a liar as I am? There is nothing — absolutely nothing — being said politically today that isn't being challenged by someone with the 'liar' argument. Of course you have to be one to know one.

I don't care how Sen. John Kerry did or did not get his medals, or if he threw them away, or burned them, or if he flip-flops like an unruly pancake, or how he voted a billion years ago on an issue. Or issues.

I don't care if President George W. Bush did or did not drink too much when he was younger, or if he served or not served in the Air National Guard, or if he wears his religious beliefs on his sleeve, or if he is a Bible thumper.

I just don't care. But I do care that figures in both these camps continue that 'liar' drumbeat, and as much as Kerry and Bush try to distance themselves from the 'corps of liars,' I do care that they just don't come out and in good old-fashioned English tell their liars to quit lying.

In other words tell their surrogates to butt out! They — Bush and Kerry — look into the television cameras daily and disavow any knowledge of the creeps that crawl the land telling one lie after another. They can't fool me and I know they aren't fooling you because in the background they are smiling every time an apparent 'hit' is scored by their liar.

Those sneaky television commercials that impregnate our homes with lies do little to convince watchers that this is still the greatest of all lands on the planet. If we want to gauge ourselves based on lies told by those who guide or want to guide our fortunes then hope is shedding itself much like leaves fall from trees at the change of seasons.

This is fast becoming one of the trashiest campaigns in this nation's history. We have a wannabe first lady whose mouth is best saved for



Tom Dreiling

- My Turn

talk over a few drinks. Some people think it's cute. "She's speaking her mind," they say. I don't buy it. Her use of "shove it" and "hell" are not meant for the public stage and especially by someone who wants badly to be our first lady. If she does become such, the dictionary of "First Lady Lingo" will have to be completely rewritten. No, it's not acceptable language in my opinion.

We have a vice-president who has gone beyond the tainted language and reached into the bottom of the garbage can to express his disdain for a senator's comment on the floor of the United States Senate. There is no place for this vulgarity on our public stage. It's a common word that finds its way into conversation when someone can't think of any other word to use. It'll never find its way in print in this newspaper.

Sen. Edwards can smile all he wants. Looks can be deceiving. And as this fight goes on I'm sure the smiles will become less obvious. His battle scars from the spring's primaries are nothing next to what he's going to endure in the final months of the campaign.

And Sen. Kerry's awkwardness could be a hint of his discomfort even with himself.

What's wrong with MY America? It is being ruled and governed by a four-letter word — LIAR.

Both Bush and Kerry could put an end to it — just like that. But cleaning up politics would be

akin to making the landfill suitable for an evening meal. It just isn't going to happen.

I wonder if the ballot allows for a write-in in the presidential box. If it does I will pencil in "God." At least the poll workers will know how I voted.

MY America deserves better. And it has deteriorated so much that God may even find it almost impossible to repair.

Sad, isn't it, that in MY America the choice is the lesser of two evils.

-td-

THE final two days of the fair are upon us. If you haven't been out to the Thomas County Fairgrounds I suggest you do so. There's lots to see and lots to do. And again, my hat is off to that group of people who just wouldn't give in and their persistence paid off. What am I talking about: The CARNIVAL!

-td-

INSIDE the doors to the commercial exhibit building at the fairgrounds you will notice a new, white, four-door Focus. It could end up being yours before this month is over. Sacred Heart Parish of Colby is trying to raise some funds for its school and those with a clearer mind than mine came up with this car thing. If you participate — details at their booth next to the car — and you don't drive the new car home, you might be stuffing a thousand dollars or five-hundred dollars in your wallet.

And if the fair slips by and you haven't gotten involved, contact any member of the parish and they'll clue you in. Good cause.

-td-

HAVE a good evening and a good weekend. And remember to include church in your plans.

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. E-mail td@nwkansan.com, fax him at 462-7749 or call 462-3963.

Those 'poor' mall children

I received some interesting stuff for this week's column. Hope you enjoy it. And if the moment allows, please forward stuff to me you would like to share with readers of this Friday featurette. -td

Grandma writes:
Dear Family,

I recently spent several hours observing teenagers who were hanging out at the mall and came to the conclusion that many teenagers in America are living in poverty.

Most of the young men I observed didn't even own a belt; there was not one among the whole group. But that wasn't the sad part as many of them were wearing their daddy's jeans. Some of these jeans were so big and baggy that they hung low on their hips, exposing their underwear. I know some of them must have been ashamed their daddy was short, because his jeans hardly went below their knees. They weren't even their daddies' good jeans, for most of them had holes ripped in the knees and had a dirty look to them.

It grieved me that in a modern, affluent society like America, there are people who can't afford a decent pair of jeans. I have been thinking about asking my church to start a jeans drive for the "poor kids at the mall." Then on Christmas Eve, I could go Christmas caroling and distribute jeans to these poor teenagers.

I don't think this group of guys had even had much to eat, because as they were walking, their heads leaned to one side as if they didn't have enough strength to keep them up. Oh, they tried. With each step, they tried to lift them up, but to no avail; they always dropped back to the side. This group of guys must be from the same family, because they all walked with their heads bobbing together in the same manner. But that wasn't the saddest part. It was the girls

TD

- At Week's End

they were hanging out with that disturbed me the most. I have never in all of my life seen such "poor" girls. These girls had the opposite problem of the guys. They all had to wear their little sisters' clothes.

Their jeans were about five sizes too small. I don't know how they could even put them on, let alone button them up. Their jeans barely went over their hipbones. Most of them also had on their little sister's top; it hardly covered their midsection.

Oh, they were trying to hold their heads up with pride, but it was a sad sight to see these almost grown women wearing children's clothes. However, it was their underwear that bothered me the most. They, like the boys, because of the improper fitting of their clothes, also had their underwear exposed. I have never seen anything like it. It looked like their underwear was only held together by a single piece of string.

I know it also saddens your heart to receive this report on the condition of our American teenagers. While I go to bed every night with a closet full of clothes nearby, there are millions of "mall girls" who barely have enough material to keep it together. I think their "poorness" is why these two groups gather at the mall, the boys with their short daddies' ripped jeans, and the girls wearing their younger sisters' clothes.

The mall is one place where they can find acceptance. So, the next time you are at the mall doing your shopping and you pass by some of these poor teenagers, would you say a prayer for them?

And one more thing: Will you pray that the guys' pants won't fall down, and the girls' strings won't break?!

Love you,
Grandma

Time out...

√How come we choose from just two people to run for president, and 50 for Miss America?

√Why is it that our children can't read a Bible in school, but they can in prison?

√Bumper sticker of the year: "If you can read this, thank a teacher...and, since it's in English, thank a soldier!"

√When I was young we used to go "skinny dipping," now I just "chunky dunk."

√I saw a woman wearing a sweat shirt with "Guess" on it. So I said "Implants?" She hit me.

A lady pulled into a crowded parking lot and rolled down the car windows to make sure her golden retriever had fresh air. The dog was stretched out on the back seat, and she wanted to impress upon the animal that it must remain there. So she walked to the curb backward, pointing her finger at the car and saying emphatically, "Now you stay..... Do you hear me?... Stay!.. Stay!"

The blonde driver of a nearby car watched for a few seconds, then rolled down her window and said, "Why don't you just put it in park?"

Send your submissions for this column to td@nwkansan.com, fax to 462-7749 or mail it to 155 W. 5th, Colby 67701.Thanks.

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and must 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.

Where to write

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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

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