

Opinion

Monday's Salute

Thumbs to...

√**Mike Shubert** — on the message you shared with the Colby Lions Club on your continuing bout with the West Nile Virus. Prayers and words of encouragement continue from the community.

√**William Rickoff** — for your years of providing some of the best tasting sweet corn in the territory.

√**Bob Mannebach** — on your induction into the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association "Hall of Fame."

√**All Winners** — in this year's Thomas County Free Fair parade.

√**Colby College Baseball** — on the distinction of being named the best academic junior college baseball team anywhere.

√**Cathy Gordon** — on your selection as chair of the Dr. Max Pickerill Lecture Series at Colby Community College.

√**Gerry Fulwider** — on that comprehensive report on the population status in Northwest Kansas (page 3, Free Press, Aug. 11).

√**McCarty Dairy** — on your continuing successes.

√**Margo Schiefen** — on your first Harley-Davidson motorcycle experience — at the age of 96!

√**Grace Griffin** — on this your 96th birthday.

(This column is prepared each weekend by the newspaper's publisher. To submit a name, names or group, fax 462-7749, e-mail td@nwkansas.com or drop by the office or regular mail to 155 W. 5th, Colby 67701.)

Letter Drop

• Our Readers Sound Off

A sincere thanks to all

To the Colby Free Press:

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our friends and patients who helped us celebrate 30 years in medical practice. Your outpouring of love and support was overwhelming. You are the very reason that Colby is a great place to practice and live.

Thank you and God bless,

LaDonna Regier, M.D.
Victor Hildyard II, M.D.
(Letter #69)

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@nwkansas, fax to 785-462-7749 or call 462-3963. All submissions must contain a signature of the writer, a daytime telephone number and an address. The telephone number and address are used for verification only.

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Some sports aren't just about the money

Tramping around in the cold after dark isn't something most people do voluntarily or out of necessity.

It seems like I'm in a minority because I've actually spent quite a bit of time doing just that. Or standing around in the cold after dark.

But I've usually had a good reason. Like hockey players. Or something equally unique that I care about.

Or watching my sister at a skate park. It takes a special kind of breed to want to do something like that and even enjoy it.

Thanks to extreme sports, I've done just that. My younger sister is the main reason since she just happens to be one of those athletes who took a different path than volleyball or golf or tennis. She's an aggressive inline skater.

It's not all fun and games. It's also a long, hard struggle to success and then that's even a long shot, depending on the sport.

Skateboarding and moto-x are the darlings of the extreme sports world right now but it was other sports that put it all on the map.

Inline skating and BMX freestyle definitely helped. Now skating has been pushed back and twisted around for the monetary benefit of a few individuals and they're in the process of raping everything else.

It's not about money. It's about love and dedication.

Some of the best extreme athletes you'll never see because they toil away in empty parking lots or on the open, empty streets of a city in the middle of the night.

Been there, done that and chased by the cops to prove it.

Big money, ESPN's coverage and commercials have helped push alternative sports into the mainstream spotlight.

However, those things aren't what makes these sports what they are.



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

It's about throwing down that trick you never thought you'd land failed try after failed try. It's about taking chances and putting it all on the line.

It's also about standing up for what you believe in, whatever that might be.

We've spent some serious hours on the road because of it all, usually to reach a skate park or to see a competition.

It's fun but it's also frustrating to have to drive so far.

Some of those trips have included freezing nights at Vans and that one really cold night at Eisenbergs in Dallas.

Rainy afternoons at Apocalypse in Boulder. Silverthorne, Breckenridge, Ulysses.

Then there have been just the trips to look at parks. Salida, Wichita and the concrete park in downtown Denver on the Platte and outside looking in at the Boulder park.

That doesn't even include all other places where there's no alternative but to use what's handy.

Then there are all the stupid people you have to put up with — the posers, the preppies and the ones who keep bugging you because they want to see how good you are.

Females are also getting the short end of the stick. Title IX helps college athletes but it does nothing for extreme sports. Not that it should.

But there are a couple of insects out in SoCal

who have pretty much made it impossible for a girl to succeed.

I've talked to a couple of people here in the United States and Europe and they've said they would love to see more women in extreme sports, and not just competing in wake boarding or surfing.

They want to see more girls in the skateparks riding and pulling stuff just like the guys.

That might never happen though because girls have the understanding that such sports are only for the guys.

Not so.

People are also starting to "encourage" their kids by getting them a skateboard and pushing them toward these sports because they see how much money they make.

Unfortunately, Tony Hawk and Dave Mirra aren't representative of how much everyone else is making.

Financially, these two are at the top of the food chain in their respective sports.

There are literally hundreds of other people out there, whether competing or not who will never see that kind of money.

Some will be lucky if they get sponsorship from a local bike or skate shop, and that is usually just parts or clothes.

People need to understand where these sports are coming from and respect that not everybody is in it for the money.

That's not what it's about in the end.

It's about doing something because you want to, because you enjoy it.

And it's something that no one else can take away from you.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. E-mail tcx@nwkansas.com, or call 785-462-3963.

Newspaper isn't helping the cause

I have been out of town for a variety of reasons for the past three weeks and upon my return began sorting through a stack of *Colby Free Press* newspapers. I was particularly interested in an editorial in the July 30 edition that urged people to sift through the hype of the Democratic Convention by browsing a website called Vote-Smart. Once there, the user could view John Kerry's voting record in the Senate and get all the answers they needed to make an informed decision. It would be great to have a one-stop answer to all your voting needs, but unfortunately, this issue really isn't that simple.

Anyone who has ever served as an elected official knows that you don't always get to vote the way you would like. There are as many factors and variables in voting as there are chances to vote. As a member of the local school board for eight years, there were numerous occasions on which I voted against something, not because I didn't want the kids to have it, but because I felt like we didn't have the money or the money was needed elsewhere.

Someone looking through my voting record that just wanted to make a point could say, "Cathy Gordon voted against the tech lab at the High School; she is obviously anti-technology" when in fact the opposite is true. I teach technology classes at the college — I know the importance of computer literacy, but at the time of the vote I really felt it was more important to finish our building project, air-condition the primary building, and continue searching for grants to help pay for the lab.

I did spend some time on the Vote-Smart website looking over the voting record for John Kerry's eighteen years in the Senate, but it didn't tell me why he voted the way he did. The site showed what would be deemed "the heart" of the bill, but it didn't fill in the blanks on any additional attachments, so we really don't know what else was in the bill that was being voted on. Often times these bills are so loaded with pork that they are doomed to failure no matter what. Keep in mind that in the case of John Kerry you could look over more than 6,500 votes.

Another problem with the Vote-Smart site was that when I clicked on George W. Bush there was no voting record to use as a comparison because he has never served in the legislative branch. So in other words it is apples and oranges. We can see how John Kerry voted on an issue eighteen

Cathy Gordon

• Guest Commentary

years ago and then scrutinize (without any substantive information) as to why he did vote in a particular way but not how George Bush would have handled the same situation.

The real problem with looking solely at voting records is that someone trying to pigeonhole a candidate can selectively identify certain votes while ignoring others. Interesting enough, Tom Dreiling proved this point in the very same edition of the paper in his *My Turn* column adjacent to the editorial to which I have been referring. In his article he printed a list of weapons and weapon systems that John Kerry voted to "kill." He said someone sent it to him and we could take it with a grain of salt, but he knows that many people seeing this list would be outraged and view John Kerry as soft on national defense.

This is disconcerting because someone who failed to identify himself (it should be noted that the *Free Press* requires signatures on editorials but apparently it was not needed here), picked a few votes beneficial to their point, ignored other votes regarding the same weapons systems and purposely failed to tell the entire story. They then ended the list with a cryptic note regarding what the "Good Book" has to say about Kerry's voting record.

What Mr. Dreiling failed to disclose to his readership was that in February of this year the Republican National Committee released this list of thirteen weapons systems in order to imply that John Kerry is weak on defense. What the RNC failed to disclose was that ten of these systems were a part of one vote (not ten separate votes), the Fiscal Year 1991 Defense Appropriations Act. Pay particular attention to the year, as you may recall the Secretary of Defense that year was none other than Dick Cheney. It was Dick Cheney who actually proposed the Appropriations Bill cutting the Patriot air-defense missiles, B-2 bombers, Tomahawk cruise missiles, Apache helicopters, the Bradley Fighting Ve-

hicle, the Navy's Trident submarine and the F-14 aircraft and the Air Force's F-16 airplane among others.

In his 1992 State of the Union address President Bush (Senior) said the following, "After completing 20 planes for which we have begun procurement, we will shut down further production of the B-2 bomber. We will cancel the small ICBM program. We will cease production of new warheads for our sea-based ballistic missiles. We will stop all new production of the Peacekeeper (MX) missile. And we will not purchase any more advanced cruise missiles. The reductions I have approved will save us an additional \$50 billion over the next five years. By 1997 we will have cut defense by 30 percent since I took office."

In a speech given by Dick Cheney on March 17, 2004 at the Ronald Reagan Library he attacked John Kerry's voting record: "On national security, the Senator (Kerry) has shown at least one measure of consistency. Over the years, he has repeatedly voted against weapons systems for the military. He voted against the Apache helicopter, against the Tomahawk cruise missile, against even the Bradley Fighting Vehicle."

So let me get this straight: even though Dick Cheney actually oversaw and recommended these exact cuts (the largest in the history of the defense department between the years of 1989 and 1993), he currently berates John Kerry for being soft on defense? Were these defense cuts warranted? If you look back at the early 1990s, Dick Cheney may have had sound logic for eliminating certain weapon systems; I am not arguing that point. I am pointing out the sheer hypocrisy of his attack against John Kerry's voting record.

Whether or not you are Democrat, Republican, Independent, or other, you owe it to yourself and the future of your children to search through the issues and the history surrounding votes.

Read books and magazines and turn the remote control to a variety of news programs for differing views.

One website alone will not give you the information you need.

Cathy Gordon is a Colby resident and attended the Democratic National Convention as a voting delegate in Boston in July.