

Opinion



Monday's Salute

Thumbs to . . .

✓**Chester Andregg** — oldest graduate present at the recent Menlo Alumni Reunion — at the age of 94!

✓**Winona Community** — on your school being nominated for approval as a Kansas Historic Site.

✓**Jim Engel** — on your new position as Thomas County emergency management director.

✓**Lauren Dempewolf**, Colby kindergartner — for being selected to have your artwork appear in the 2006 “Don’t Spoil It!” statewide calendar.

✓**Mirl Barnett** — for the super job in preparing the Rexford cemetery for Memorial Day.

✓**Barbara Gilley Hoover** — formerly of Brewster, on the honor accorded while receiving your nursing pin during ceremonies at the Beach/Schmidt Performing Arts Center at Fort Hays State University.

✓**Jim Griffin** — Colby American Legion Commander, for the fine message delivered at the Memorial Day service at Beulah Cemetery.

✓**Karl Pratt** — on being selected to sing in Europe this summer.

✓**Brewster** — on the very successful All-School/Five-Year Reunion!

To submit a name, names or group for consideration in this column, please e-mail td@nwkansas.com, call 462-3963, fax 462-7749 or drop by the office at 155 W. 5th, Colby. Thanks for your input. - td

Where to write, call

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, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso
State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701

freepress@nwkansas.com
State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher

td@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor

pdecker@nwkansas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment

tcox@nwkansas.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter

ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director

crystalr@nwkansas.com

Jasmine Crotinger - Advertising Sales

jasminec@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager

lea@nwkansas.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building

japplegate@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator

support@nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

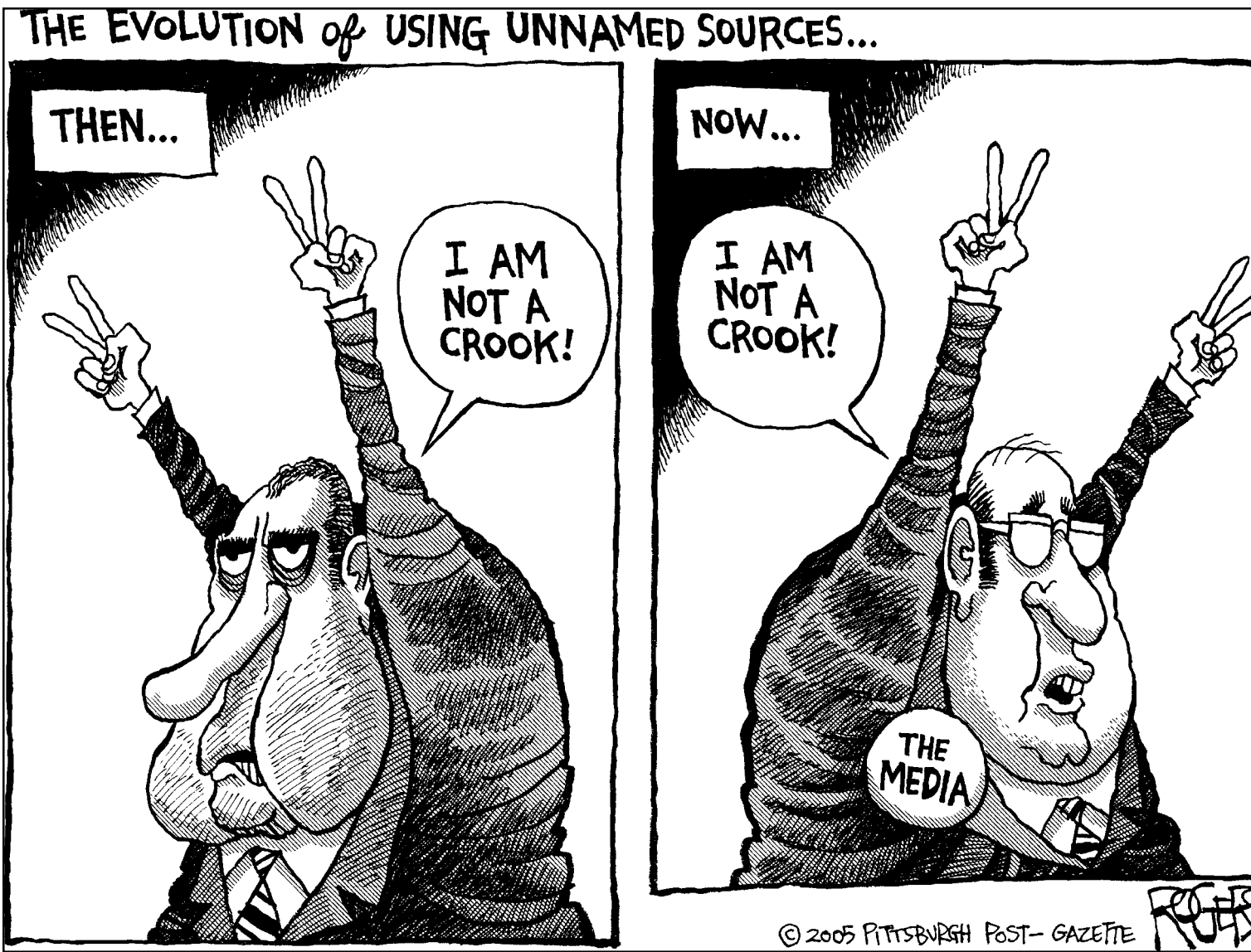
Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701. THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$38, 8 months \$53, 12 months \$70. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$50, 8 months \$62, 12 months \$78. Other Kansas counties and surrounding states: 4 months \$57, 8 months \$67, 12 months \$81. All other states, \$81, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



We may have it too good



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

education and live lives free of oppression.

Cultural and religions restrictions still remain, but not the vice grip the Taliban exerted.

Our freedom is not hard to justify when one considers the sacrifices made to keep it intact. Freedom hasn't evolved and the price that's paid to keep it hasn't changed, but what has is the attitude, I think.

It's not something to be taken for granted. Ever. Especially in light of what is going on in Iraq and changes elsewhere in the world when it comes to civil liberties, oppression and religious freedom.

Religious fundamentalism is an ongoing threat in Iraq and other countries, and not just in places where Islam is the dominant religion.

Those aren't the only problems. Bigger issues are North Korea and possibly Iran, which aren't just threats to anyone's freedom but also human life.

And along with those, come humanitarian crises. Liberation is the first step, democracy can come in the second and third worlds but more importantly, basic human needs need to be addressed first.

And as part of its work in Iraq and Afghanistan, American military forces are helping with such efforts. But those countries aren't the only

places where help is needed.

Africa is a perfect example. Poverty is rampant.

People are using land that was never meant for agriculture to try to grow crops just to subsist. They're driven to kill wildlife, everything from baboons to elephants, just to have food to eat.

More disturbing is not having access to adequate health care, even immunizations that cost only a few cents elsewhere in the world aren't available.

HIV and AIDS continue to kill hundreds and cases among women are a growing problem.

I'm not saying everyone has to volunteer or give money. I'm not advocating sending military aide. And not everyone has the conscience to make a difference.

But ignorance is not a choice in such matters. Disasters can't be ignored. Turning a blind eye to death and suffering is unconscionable.

Even saying "It can't happen to us" isn't an option anymore.

The war on terrorism became global because of an act on American soil.

I'm just saying as Americans, as a whole, we have the chance to make a difference, just by virtue of being American. It's not everything, but it's a start.

And before people try to turn away from problems in the rest of the world, maybe they need to stop and consider that once our forefathers were in the same boat as other developing countries are today.

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

Paying the bill



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

A few days ago, I had a chance to speak to a young man who is about to deploy to Iraq for the third time in his short enlistment. His attitude might best be described as resignation.

Much of the story he told me reminded me of the early days of my own career. When I joined the Navy in 1980, Vietnam was more than a memory; it was a personal experience to the majority of career military people.

There are not enough troops which has created discipline and moral problems. Even drug use is not enough to warrant a discharge in many cases, simply because they need the troops.

Twenty-five years ago, the situation was much the same, but one statement really brought the similarity home. He said, "They're going to have to start the draft."

Of course, the draft is political suicide for anyone who mentions it, with the possible exception of a few grandstanding House members who wound up voting against it when the leadership surprised them and brought it to the floor.

Such a belief, however, brings home the most vital shortage in our military today — volunteers. The typical military complaints about bureaucratic idiocy are magnified by stop-loss orders and extended deployments, but there is also the nagging question — does anyone care?

The problem is not about whether we disagree with the war, or even the president. This is about enjoying the bounty of this country without giving anything back. It is about middle-aged Na-

tional Guardsmen with families serving in Iraq simply because there is no one to replace them.

We can make all the arguments we want about the make-up of our forces being designed for another world war and the transfer of many jobs to the Reserve and Guard now known to be needed among the regulars.

Many of those arguments would, in fact, be true. Most of the Navy Construction Battalion troops in Iraq are reservists simply because most Seabees, as they are called, are reservists.

None of that negates the fact that stop-loss orders, which keep people in beyond their enlistments or even past retirement dates, are issued not because of the make-up of forces, but because there are not enough replacements.

War is not a glorious thing. It is sick, ugly and frightening. It is not for the weak, either mentally or physically. It is also, unfortunately, something human kind has found necessary for the vast majority of recorded history.

Our country is in a fight for its life. I am not

so naïve as to think that we must remake Iraq into a utopian democracy to have won, but I know this; our enemies see the unwillingness of our people to fight for our country and they are encouraged.

They see us barbecue on Memorial Day, shoot fireworks on Independence Day and live in what would be unimaginable luxury in many of their own countries. Then they see us balk when it comes time to pay the bill for such luxuries and they come to a simple conclusion — that we have become weak and do not have the stomach for a fight.

They see our modern anti-heroes, who see the world in various shades of gray and they assume we have no sense of morality and will therefore fold up when our safety is threatened.

Patriotism is more than fidgeting through the national anthem at a sporting event. Patriotism requires sacrifice. Those who have gone before bear the marks of their sacrifice — in body and mind. Sixty-four years ago, another country thought there were no more patriots in America. They had badly misjudged us.

Our enemies today see our enlistment numbers and think the same thing.

I hope they are not right this time.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelley@st-tel.net. He is a member of the Colby Free Press Writer's Club.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

