

Opinion

Your Views Count

• Letters

Great place to live

To the Colby Free Press:

I am writing this letter to say, "thank you," to all the people who helped us on Sunday, Aug. 19. After a very enjoyable weekend with our grandchildren, we met our son in Goodland to give the children back to their parents.

Our son used our car keys to unload our car and reload his with all the children's things. We told them "goodbye" and they headed for Byers, Colo.

My husband asked if I had the car keys. I did not and neither did he. I said, "no problem, I will just call him on the cell phone and he can bring them back."

It became a problem when his phone was dead. Getting car keys and getting home became our next concern.

We would like to thank the Herl Chevrolet parts man for trying to make a new key that evening. He was unable to make the key Sunday, but did tape our windows to keep out rainwater and pick-up the car Tuesday after making a new key.

We would also like to thank the people who own the Radio Shack and The Avalanche for their help in calling the police and sheriff's departments. We would like to thank the Kansas Highway Patrol for trying to catch our son before he left Kansas.

Last, but surly not least, we would like to thank the Goodland police officers, Sherman County sheriff's department and the Thomas County sheriff's department for getting us home.

Our son called just before we arrived home. He had been to Denver and to his home south of Byers before discovering he had our keys.

He had gotten home before we did and we only had 35 miles to travel.

It's nice to live in Kansas where all the people are so helpful.

Sincerely,

**Pat (and Bill) Turrell
Colby
(Letter #68)**

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 pjschief@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com.

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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: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison

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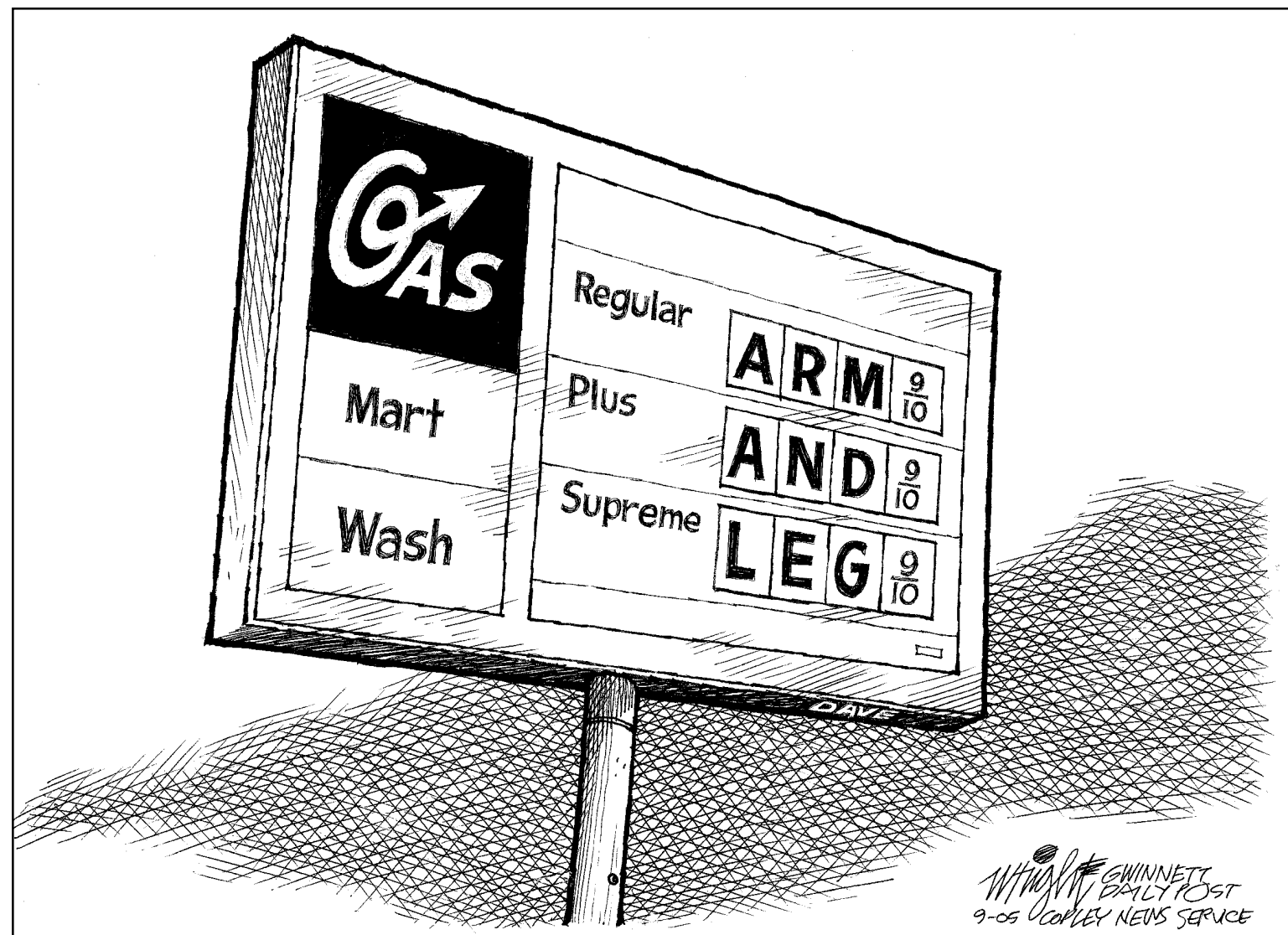
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New job has new challenges

A new or different job is like moving to a different town or new school. It involves some apprehension and anxiety. Challenge and change are opportunities for growth and learning.

I personally get bored if there is no change or challenge after a while.

So when I got the chance to apply for a publisher job I decided to do it.

Now I am not typically impulsive so I thought about it for awhile.

Since I have been working at newspapers for seven years, I know there are a lot of common denominators.

Copy still has to be read, ads built, pages put together and then it all has to be printed. Then there is the last step in the process — delivery.

I usually have a loose schedule that I follow



Pat Schiefen

• **Interim Publisher**

for me. I try to hit the ground running when I show up for work — most of the time. It takes a while to learn new things and incorporate them into a schedule.

I know that being in Colby is temporary but I want to do the best job I can and learn as much as I can during that time. It will also give me a

chance to learn about Colby more from an insider point of view.

Maybe I'll figure out the best places to eat and the best antique stores.

I look forward to trying to help provide the best product I can for the people of Colby and the surrounding area. Newspapers are customer oriented.

I think Northwest Kansas is one of the best places to live and I choose to live in this part of the world.

It has good and hard working people. I like going to other places but this is my home.

Pat Schiefen is the interim publisher at the Colby Free Press. She may be reached via email: pjschief@nwkansas.com

Fabulous job on the reunion

To the Colby Free Press:

Could I possibly use the wonderful home town newspaper as a means to express my appreciation for a fabulous school reunion?

Everything was planned and executed so perfectly! I know it took hours of work to make everything happen the way it did.

Great food snacks and cold drinks at every stop! Only a hometown like Colby could make this happen (as if by magic instead of much planning.)

We were sorry to miss the concert by Mark Schultz on Thursday night, but that was also the night of our once -every -five years family re-

Letter Drop

• Our Readers Write

union. However, I am pleased to say we saw and heard him at church on Sunday morning and he even graciously gave us an autograph for our dear friends from Texas who could not come due to illness. (Where else but my hometown could this occur?)

From the moment we arrived in Colby to stay with relatives (and read the *Colby Free Press* to catch up on events) to the great welcome at the

school and museum, to the final school assembly with the fantastic choir director, it was all so well planned.

We must also thank Sue Taylor and her group for the Wall of Honor at the Prairie Museum.

And again the local paper for the article written about my deceased uncle (Lt.Col. Charles LeRoy Wheaton) by Tisha Cox.

Thanks again, Colbyites for a job well done!

Sincerely,
**Mr. & Mrs. Robert Cox
(Wheaton, class of '49)
Kingston, Okla.
(Letter #69)**

People can change the system

Every month more families are sacrificing their well-being in the face of forced decisions like: "Should I pay rent and the electrical bill this month, or should I buy food so that my children can eat?"

Everyone needs a job to sustain his or her family, but when a worker only earns the minimum wage, one income is just not enough. The minimum wage is leaving many families below or very near the federal poverty level.

The imbalance between the buying power of the minimum wage and the actual cost of living has never been as extreme as today. While the cost of living has risen, the minimum wage has not.

The last time the federal government raised the minimum wage was in 1996. It increased to \$5.15 an hour, only \$10,712 for a full-time worker, which is still below the federal poverty level for a family of three.

If the federal government had hooked the minimum wage to inflation since 1968, it would currently be almost \$9 an hour.

In a country as rich as the United States, workers should not be paid so little.

The typical salary of CEOs of large businesses today is 431 times higher than the salary of a typical worker, which is \$27,460 a year. In 1980, CEO pay was only 40 times as high.

If the minimum wage had been raised at the same rate as that of CEOs, today it would be \$23.03 an hour. One reason why many fight against an increase is the belief that its additional

Gloribell Mota

• Guest Commentary

cost that would destroy many small businesses. However, a study in New Jersey found this not to be the case, as a raise in the state minimum wage did not diminish the total number of jobs.

It is important, however, to recognize that there are vulnerable businesses such as the bodega on the corner or the neighborhood beauty salon.

Some small businesses are hardly able to pay their owners and keep the business going. But the solution is not to just keep the low minimum wage that we have today.

Instead, all businesses should pay their workers a living wage, and small businesses should be supported with government subsidies and tax credits. There needs to be more attention and help to the workers and the businesses in the community.

Congressional leaders and President George W. Bush oppose a minimum wage increase.

In March, the U.S. Senate failed to pass a \$2 hike. This is ironic, seeing that since 1997 (the last time the wage was raised), Congress has raised its own members' salaries six times, up to more than \$160,000 a year. These six raises

in total equate to \$28,500 annually—more than the yearly income of two minimum wage workers.

Some day perhaps this country will guarantee a living wage.

I take hope from the successes of the Living Wage Movement. Fourteen states and Washington, D.C., have recognized that the federal minimum wage does not cover the cost of living and have implemented a state minimum wage higher than the federal.

In addition, more than 100 cities, (including St. Louis, Minneapolis, Boston, Denver, Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, Sacramento and New York) have instituted living wage laws, prohibiting the city from doing business with any company that does not pay a sufficient salary for employees to live above the poverty line.

The most recent hopeful example occurred in Florida last year, when a majority voted to raise the state minimum wage.

These successes reveal that people are able to change the system, state by state, city by city, battle by battle.

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Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

