

Opinion

Free Press Viewpoint

Money decisions hard for schools

As the monetary decisions become tougher and tougher in the school districts what will hit the chopping block next. There are the arguments about cutting sports, not to mention, eliminate band, chorus, drama and art. I am not a big sports fan. Although I would have liked to learn to play tennis and golf.

Some young adults would not remain in high school without the outlet that sports brings. If your grades need to be at a certain level to play that can be a powerful motivator. Some sports are never played after people get out of high school. Football is played by very few people after they get out of high school.

I do not think all the cuts should come out of music, drama and art. The appreciation of music is an asset for an entire lifetime. I have heard of someone becoming an artist after retirement age a surprising number of times. In the face off with sports the arts can be likened to David vs. Goliath.

It would be interesting to know the actual costs of each sport? What is the cost of having the band?

The three basics of education reading, writing and arithmetic seem to have taken a back seat. The U.S. math scores in relation to the rest of the world are an embarrassment. Math is a tool, language as much if not more than a computer. Without math would we have computers?

I have seen where parents from foreign countries send their children here to learn American. Most Europeans know at least two languages fluently. They are not alone in the world. The study of foreign languages seems to be an afterthought in the U.S. We are slowly catching on to the fact that knowing Spanish might be useful. What about the oriental languages?

Schools need a dose of reality when dealing with actual plant size. With numbers shrinking do the building numbers need to stay the same. Do we need to think outside of the box?

Everyone needs to be involved in funding the schools especially the parents. Even the poorest should have to put some money in. Knowing their money is going there could give them some ownership in the schools. I don't think anyone should get a free ride. Now most of the monies for education come from people who own property. What about the people who rent who have children?

When this area was settled the parents banded together when there were enough children to start and pay for schools. Has it really been that long ago?

School finance problems have no easy answers. Some decisions will be more painful than others.

—Pat Schiefen, Interim Publisher
Colby Free Press

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Who's in charge in the administration?

About a year ago I asked the question, "Who is in charge"? That article was addressing the weaknesses in our present administration and who was responsible. Of course there are some folks who don't see any weakness in this administration. Some think we are winning the war against terrorism and that reforming Iraq into the image we want is going to protect our homeland from terrorism. There are some who think our economy is strong and getting stronger. There are some who are happy with the shifting of tax burdens. There are some who are happy with the compensation packages of CEOs while the companies are going into bankruptcy. There are some who are happy and supportive of outsourcing jobs to foreign countries and giving our national corporations tax breaks for doing it. Again I say, "Who is in charge?"

The same folks are in charge of the national relief and recovery programs for the devastated gulf coast line as were in charge of the political agenda of our nation, a year ago and still are today. An awesome task, to say the least.

I'm not sure any single person or even small group of persons is capable of putting together a fair and equitable program. Maybe one of the first things that needs to be done is to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing. Maybe we need to depoliticize the program. Partisan politics cannot take charge. Political opportunism is evident, as we watch the process and observe

Ken Poland

Ken's World

the struggle for who gets to call the shots or the scramble to identify the shooter when the shot misses.

We are 1,000 miles removed from the area and must depend upon, for most of us, second hand information. The national news media has most often proven to be lacking in unbiased representation. Even private individual reports are coming back with totally different stories about what is going on. Some report positive progress and appreciative response from the victims of the storm. Some come back with negative reports on the progress and success of programs and relate stories depicting angry people lashing out verbally even at those who are delivering material aid and helping to clean up and restore.

Is it surprising that we are getting such radically different pictures of the situation? We all have different concepts of the proper role government should have. We all have different concepts on the degree of personal responsibility the local residents should have. There is definitely racial bias and economic bias entwined even in the religious views and solutions. We even have religious folks who have dismissed themselves from

any responsibility on the basis that those people and communities are getting what they deserve. (God punishes sinners and they are, obviously, bigger sinners than we are!)

Some say, "God is in charge. What he has destroyed, he will rebuild if he wants it rebuilt." There are some who say there is no God and the survival of the fittest will determine who is in charge.

I say, "We all have a responsibility to assist our fellow man in his recovery from the severe lashing delivered by nature. No man nor region can adequately prepare or defend themselves from such awesome destructive power."

We all take charge with our support of local community programs to put together relief packages and offers of assistance. We all take charge, when we support our religious organizations, as they offer spiritual as well as material assistance for the stricken area and people. We all take charge, when we write to our political leaders and offer support or opposition to specific government programs. We all are in charge or can be, if we demand accountability from our government leaders. We all are or can be in charge, if we exercise our rights and duty to inform ourselves on political issues and express our views and choices at the polls, when election time comes.

You can reach Ken Poland at rcwine@cheerful.com

Colby student body is amazing

Letter Drop

Our Readers Sound Off

To the Colby Free Press:

We have been attending football games for the past four years, religiously following our son and the team. Friday night we were so excited to see the student body in amazing force cheering on the team. Other parents in the stands commented on the same thing, "Listen to the Kids" — "Isn't it Great!" —

"That's what I like to see."

The students were so excited and boisterous! Exactly what the team needed to hear, and the crowd needed!

Thank you 2005-06 CHS student body! School spirit is back and I hope continuing to grow in Colby! Continue the great job!

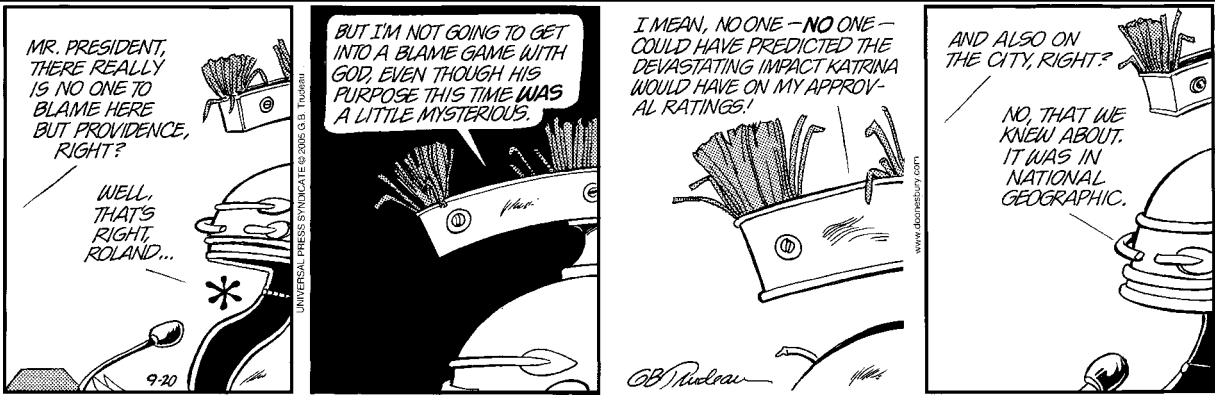
Tom and Tina Schrick, Colby Letter #74

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Gary Trudeau



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