

Opinion

Your turn

Coach bashing

I am writing concerning what seems to be one of our community's favorite subjects, "coach bashing."

I attended the football awards presentation and special speaker Thursday night, and was disappointed by the lack of numbers there. Judging by the talk of the coffee shops and donut shops I was expecting a packed house of people interested in hearing about "How to Build a Successful Program." While I thought the special speaker was quite a let down, the message he was trying to get across rang loud and clear. Any program, if it is to be successful, needs the support of not only the kids, but the parents and community as well. That is something that doesn't happen around here too often.

There are plenty of opinions flying around about what needs to happen with our football program, and most of them involve another coaching change. I say another, because after doing a little research, I've found that Colby has had a total of 12 football coaches in the past 30 years. That's an average of 2.5 years per coaching tenure. It's a little difficult to build any kind of a program with stability and continuity with that much turnover. None of the other sports programs at our high school have had anywhere near that turnover and most of them are very successful. But of course success doesn't even ensure that a coach is secure here.

It seems that anyone who has ever played sports or watched them on TV knows exactly what is wrong with what Colby is doing. Which I find hard to believe since the coaches are the only ones who see what is happening in practice every day, what is happening in the weight room, and what is happening in the classrooms. I took English and Science in high school and even in college, but that doesn't mean I know how to teach it. Why can't we let people do their jobs and give them our support?

We also seem to have graduated from just criticizing and second guessing out in the public, to now doing it over the airwaves on the local sports talk show. Boy, we're really progressing now....what's next, a <http://www.fire(fill in name here).com Web site? All the negativity and such is simply counterproductive to anything any coach is trying to accomplish.

I know doing the armchair quarterbacking stuff is fun, and I do it myself. But it cannot be done in front of or where the kids who are working hard every day can hear.

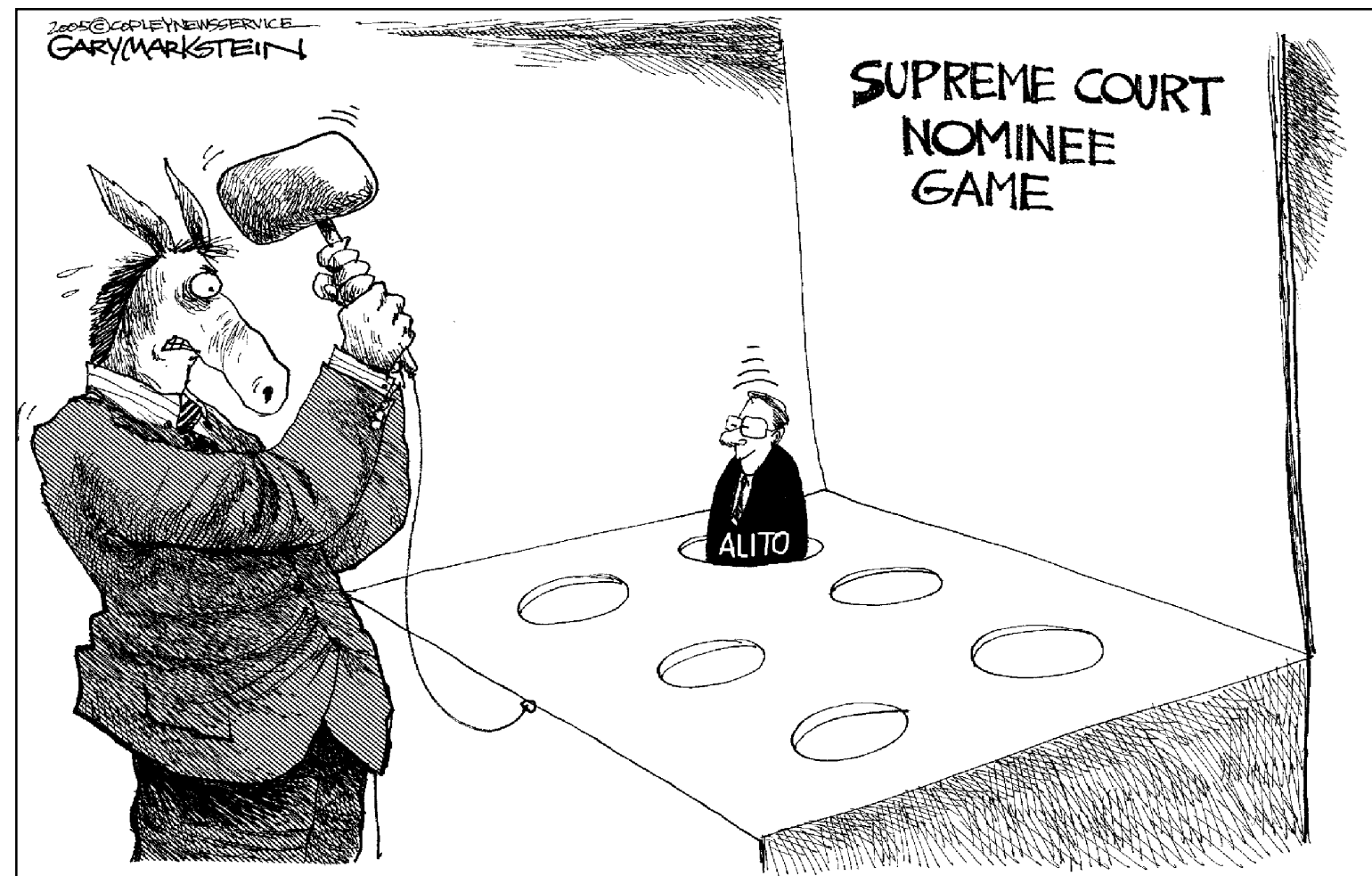
It seems that second guessing coaches is the American way because it happens all the time with college and pro teams. The big difference is, those coaches are making hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars to do their jobs. A high school coach is getting a supplemental contract which, when broken down by the hours they put in, probably doesn't amount to much more than minimum wage. Should they be subject to the same criticism? I say no, but I've never been accused of being the brightest crayon in the box either.

Some may take this letter the wrong way, and believe me, I'm not attacking anyone in particular. I just feel this is an issue that has been getting continually worse and we need to change it somehow. I don't know what the best thing for our program is, but I do know what isn't. Changing coaches every 2.5 years or less is not going to help anyone except people selling real estate.

Tracy Rogers
Colby

About those letters . . .

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



Getting 'spoiled'

Last week, I opted not to watch "Lost" thinking it was another re-run. Unfortunately for me, I didn't realize it was the much-touted episode where somebody was supposed to get killed.

I didn't find this out until the next evening when I got home from work, turned on the computer and went to check my Yahoo! mail. That's when I saw the headline professing to the world just which character had, well, bitten the bullet, so to speak.

"Annoyed" pretty much covered it. This wasn't the first time it's happened, and I'm sure it won't be the last.

The first time I ever heard the word "spoiler" was 10 years ago, in college. One of my friends was taunting me about the latest "X-Files" episode and wanted to know if I wanted to know what was going to happen before it happened.

I thought she was nuts, but then I was introduced to the world of Internet spoilers.

They've grown and are now everywhere and exist for movies, books and television shows. Miss an episode of "Joey," "The Apprentice," "Survivor," "Battlestar Galactica" or "Desperate Housewives" or you just can't wait another day, go online and the world of spoilers lies in waiting.

Many sites are out there, and a few of the more well-known are the likes of <http://www.aintitcool.com>, which plugs movie rumors and spoilers, and <http://www.spoilerfix.com>. It has a page with links to most major popular shows.

The quickest and easiest way I learned all those years ago is to simply type in the name of whatever you want to know about followed by the word "spoilers."



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

Some are accurate, some aren't. That's the gamble.

In the past six months, there were two highly anticipated works that created lots and lots of buzz. I was really interested in one and kept tabs on the other. Plus "media frenzy" was a cliched phrase to call what went on.

Two of the best recent examples are "Star Wars, Episode III: Revenge of the Sith" and "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince."

Internet rumors ran rampant for months over these two. I do have to admit I'm guilty of actively looking for rumors on both before they came out.

Most of the spoilers for the last "Star Wars" flick ever were true. Some of them were left over from "Attack of the Clones" three years ago, and they still ended up being true.

And the latest Harry Potter novel is still too new for me to go throwing around spoilers.

I go looking for spoilers when I get impatient or I've waited so long I really don't care and just want to know what happens. (Missing episodes of the first half of the ninth season of "Stargate SG-1" on the SciFi Channel in September prompted my latest foray into spoilerland.)

Another reason is missing an episode of some-

thing and not wanting to get out of the loop, I go after spoilers.

In a way, it's better than watching or reading something and being clueless.

Though spoilers can be bad, they can actually be fun, too.

Going to look at spoilers and rumors after the fact is an interesting experience. It's kind of like knowing what might have been and can put a work in perspective.

I guess it's all really a matter of information, how much is available, and just how easily it can be accessed.

The Internet is instant gratification personified and the news is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Communication is easier than ever before and news and gossip travel faster than the speed of light.

All of these make it harder to not find out something. I think it's a double-edged sword, but like anything else, it all boils down to how things are used.

The free flow of information must drive some people nuts but for the rest of the world, it's been a chance to trade ideas and words unlike any other time.

And like anything else, 'spoilers' can lead to "spoiling." This flow of information isn't something that should be taken for granted, yet must be taken with a grain of salt.

Not everything is valid, or even true. But that is the beauty of it all, and that is in the eye of the beholder.

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

Blood in the water

The smell of political blood in the water permeates the investigation of the identification to the press of Valerie Plame as a CIA operative. It looks as though Lewis "Scooter" Libby, a senior advisor to both Vice President Cheney and President Bush, may go to jail.

In addition, Karl Rove, one of the president's senior political advisors, is finding his influence damaged, to say the least, from allegations that he had a hand in the leak.

Not surprisingly, polls are showing the trust quotient of the president plummeting. That is significant for this president because, even when his popularity numbers have suffered, the majority of Americans have shown a willingness to trust him.

Also not surprising is the response of leading Democrats. Proverbial tongues are being clucked in shock at the dishonesty on one hand, while on the other, there are cries akin to "we knew it all along."

Party chairman Howard Dean showed his amazing chutzpah in proclaiming that it was the Democrats who would restore integrity to the White House. This is from the party who last occupant used the definition of is as a defense against perjury.

In light of all the wrangling, it would probably be good to clear a few things up.

First, Libby has not been proven guilty and Rove hasn't even been charged. Everyone gets their day in court. Calls by Democratic leaders for his and Rove's ouster are not simply grandstanding, they are an abuse of the Constitution



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

by those sworn to defend it and that is malfeasance, an impeachable offense.

Second, if he is found guilty, he will be punished. Even if he is found not guilty, his career in Washington is over, at least as far as this administration is concerned, because of the appearance of guilt.

Third, no one is being tried for outing Plame because she was not a covert agent. Her neighbors knew she worked for the CIA and even Robert Novak, who supposedly outed her in a column, said he was told independently by CIA spokesmen that she was no longer an asset.

By the way, one wonders why no one has subpoenaed Novak. The special prosecutor obviously has no qualms about putting a reporter who refuses to reveal a source in jail. Could it be that Novak might shed light on things the counsel would prefer kept in the dark?

Fourth, the Democrats have no moral high ground here. Libby is being tried for perjury and until they are willing to punish their own poster child, who was found guilty of perjury by the Senate and not only left in office, but allowed a seat at the powerbroker's table in the party, it is

the Republicans who have the high ground by instigating the investigation.

Fifth, Plame's husband was proven wrong. When Joseph Wilson said he found no credible evidence that Saddam Hussein attempted to buy uranium from Nigeria, he was probably telling the truth.

It is also true that both British Intelligence and the CIA were unsure about documents purporting that which were later found out to be false. What is conveniently not remembered, and it was reported by no less than William Safire in the New York Times among others, is that the information was finally proven to be accurate. Hussein did in fact try to buy weapons-grade uranium from the Nigerians.

Whatever comes of this, the Bush administration has actually kept its promise on integrity. Those who are suspected have not been shielded and those charged will be tried. Those who are found guilty will be punished.

In the end, Republicans are doing the right thing "they are putting even their powerbrokers under the law." That may be what scares the Democrats.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is: jkelly@st-tel.net

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