

Opinion

Your turn

Landfill facts

Larry Jumper
Thomas County Landfill Supervisor

Please allow me to correct misstatements and misinformation that filled your article titled 'Landfill might raise fees' in Thursday, Dec. 22, Colby Free Press.

The Thomas County Landfill does collect approximately 90 percent of its tipping fees from the city of Colby Sanitation Department. This is not 90 percent of its total revenue as the landfill receives monies from taxes also.

We have always felt this is an adequate percentage as approximately 90 percent of our time is consumed by processing the city trash. This includes pit digging and repair, equipment maintenance, hauling dirt and, of course, the actual pushing, compacting and covering of the waste. The city doesn't pay for all refuse deposited at the landfill. Year to date, the city deposited 922 tons of waste at the landfill and was charged no tipping fees.

I researched tipping fees across the state of Kansas just to make sure our rates weren't out of line. Of the 24 responses I received, the average fee per ton of M.S.W. was \$35.54 per ton.

The average fee for construction and demolition debris was \$24.88 per ton. On Jan. 1, the tipping fee for municipalities, trash haulers and contractors who bring in M.S.W. will be \$29 per ton.

Whether it is 14 tons or 140 tons, there is no tipping fee for any Thomas County resident on M.S.W. taken to the landfill if they are depositing their own waste.

There is absolutely no discriminating as to who pays a tipping fee. City and county residents pay the same rate.

All who enter the landfill pay a tipping fee on construction and demolition waste.

All who enter the landfill pay a tipping fee on concrete. All who enter the landfill pay a tipping fee on tires. All who enter the landfill pay a tipping fee on undrained CFC appliances. Only those municipalities or contractors who are in the business of refuse removal pay a tipping fee on M.S.W.

All those that bring out their own household trash pay no tipping fee. There is no charge to anybody who lives in Thomas County, and yes, this includes Colby residents, for yard waste, trees, their own M.S.W., metal, dirt, sod. Approximately 80 percent of the loads deposited at the landfill are no charge. Approximately two of 10 loads pay any fee to unload.

We at the landfill are depositing M.S.W. and construction and demolition waste into two different areas of the landfill.

We have absolutely no control as to how fast an area gets filled up with waste. That is dictated completely by the amount of waste entering the landfill. We are running out of room at the current site and are making every inch of space count until the new pit is opened. To suggest that the landfill operators are intentionally filling up a whole quicker than necessary is just plain nonsense.

New construction and demolition laws and regulations were passed this last year. At this time, construction and demolition, landfill and M.S.W. landfill regulations just about mirror each other. With this in mind, if both wastes are subject to the same regulations, why not put them in the same pit?

Can any of the individuals that are Monday morning quarterbacking the way I am running the landfill explain to me why the taxpayers should pay the added expense for two holes in the ground?

As the Thomas County Landfill is grandfathered in as a small arid landfill, no liner has ever been required.

I can assure all Thomas County residents that my crew and I will continue to work with both our engineers and K.D.H.E. to keep the Thomas County Landfill in compliance with all rules, laws and regulations and continue to be the standard by which other landfills in the state are judged.

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 jvannostrand@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com.

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Is hockey slipping on its own ice?

Now that Christmas is over, I'm starting to get wistful for another reason. I love hockey, but I haven't been able to see much of it this year.

This is the time of year it starts to get interesting, and when trade rumors start to pop up. And the NHL's mandatory trade freeze is also over.

The league does this every year — freezes trades over the holiday so players can have a few days to not worry about ending up in a new area code, which wouldn't exactly be a nice thing over Christmas.

Imagine being say, an L.A. King player getting the call he's been traded to Buffalo right in the middle of Christmas dinner. The thought of a new team might not be all that bad, but going from Los Angeles to Buffalo in the dead of winter would be a daunting prospect.

Why do I bring it up? Because between now and mid-March, it's open season in my favorite sport.

This new hockey season hasn't brought too many trade rumors. I don't know if it's because of the bloodletting before the new year where players jumped ship on their teams like rats on a burning boat.

Think I'm torqued off about politics? Gary Bettman takes the cake.

The season wasn't even a week old when there were hockey fans jokingly soliciting donations to hire a hit man to off Bettman. At least I think they were joking.

Bettman turned the league into a shadow of itself.

Take for example a recent Colorado Avalanche-Nashville Predators game. The Predators skated circles around the Avalanche, a team that's been one of the most dominant in the league for the past decade.

Two Stanley Cups and a playoff appearance in every year since 1996, and the most wins in the



Tisha Cox

● Off The Beaten Path

regular season are a few of the team's accomplishments.

Now they can't even beat some of the sub-par teams in the league.

Why?

The so-called parity that allegedly leveled the ice for everyone in the league. Excuse me, but the last time I looked, teams like Calgary, Tampa Bay, Anaheim, Atlanta and Minnesota got where they are because of good choices rather than a lot of money to throw around.

Sound management is the reason why these one-time bottom dwellers have managed to claw their way to the top.

Through the draft, trades and hard work, these teams have joined the elite levels of the league. They haven't developed a reputation as being elite, but rather teams with a work ethic that has earned them the respect of the league.

Timing has also had something to do with it. It takes time to build a winner. Other NHL teams, and franchises in other sports seem to forget this.

Calgary's Flames are a prime example. Through the trades and the draft, they managed to stockpile a supply of prospective young players with a lot of potential. They nurtured those players in the minor league system, and found a mix that worked — and lead them to an appearance in the Stanley Cup finals in 2004.

On the other hand, teams like the Philadelphia

Flyers have tried to buy their way to a championship. It hasn't worked.

General Manager Bob Clarke has stolen some of the best players in the league — just because he thinks anyone and everyone who's available will plug into the opens spots on his team.

That doesn't work.

In baseball, George Steinbrenner has used the same strategy but in his case, it's worked out.

Also, players are starting to complain about the loss of the game's more physical component. They say goals are coming too easy now, and it's turned into the NBA. I think they're right.

Either way, Bettman's managed to turn the NHL into "Slap Shot 2."

So maybe if enough players complain, we'll get a return to 'old-time hockey.'

Holiday Hijinx

Christmas was relatively quiet this year. We had a good time, saw friends and family, and revived an old tradition or two.

The usual included looking at Christmas lights while consuming caffeinated beverages and listening to music (Korn and U2), although the only decorations that generated any interest were the snowman on TOP of a Christmas tree and the "booty Claus" comment that nearly made my sister choke.

She's still laughing, but not because of that.

We had fun this year. For many reasons, that's a good thing. And in spite of the fact I got some nice gifts this year, the good humor and smiles was the best gift I could ever receive.

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

Another year gone by

I'm home again, recovering from Christmas weekend at my mother's home. For a number of years, there were no grandchildren in the family and Christmas had become a rather staid, albeit pleasant, affair.

Then the next generation came on the scene and things changed. After looking at the destruction left in the wake of opening presents, my mom said she could remember now why she could never get the house clean when we were small.

It seems each new year comes in with more of a rush than the last. In reality, each year is a mix of disappointment and triumph and this year is no different. However, there are some ominous clouds even among the silver linings and many of the decisions and their results will have much to do with determining the long-term future of this country.

In spite of the "nattering nabobs of negativity" (Spiro Agnew actually said that, but I've always wanted to use it) the situation in Iraq does indeed seem to be changing for the better. More indigenous forces are coming on-line each day and the mistakes of the initial occupation seem to be correcting themselves through an Iraqi-led government.

There are, however, some negatives. American troops may well start a pull out next year, but they will be needed for some time and that is not any better than having them "containing" Saddam while stationed in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.



Jay Kelley

● Speaking MyMind

(It isn't any worse, either. Those who say it was have forgotten that one of the things that set Osama Bin Laden on his rampage in the first place was infidel (American) troops in his holy land.)

We won't be able to get out of the Middle East completely until we are no longer dependent on oil for our very survival and we won't be able to wean ourselves off oil until we make some sacrifices.

Of course it is easy to blame George Bush, but he isn't the only one without a coherent oil policy and higher prices have done something no president has ever been able to do; enforce some conservation measures.

The bottom line is no elected official is going to tell the American people to make sacrifices because they all want to get reelected and our troops are going to remain in harm's way as long as we want to keep pulling our travel trailers with our hemi engines.

We are also a more secure people than four years ago, but at what price? Monitoring con-

versations; and especially looking at random phone records to find patterns, is at least a dangerous precedent. The legality of the practice has yet to be determined, but such behavior is not in keeping with our principles.

Again, it is easy to blame George Bush and if his actions are found to be illegal he should be blamed, but I would like to hear someone, liberal or conservative, address the real issue. When did the presidential oath include protecting us from everything from hurricanes to the bogey man?

If we really desire to live in a secure society, we will have to dismantle most of our constitutional protections against government encroachment or we will have to start taking responsibility for ourselves again.

There is the whole issue in a nutshell. If we are unwilling to take accountability for ourselves, we will slide into a welfare state and eventually into an oligarchy which controls every aspect of our lives.

There is still hope, however. The American Republic still stands because most of us still believe that God has endowed us with certain inalienable rights. We need to practice those rights and demand that others practice them as well.

All it takes is a responsible, informed citizenry.

Are you ready?

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

Doonesbury

● Gary Trudeau

