

Opinion

Your turn

If Hildyard leaves, so does a patient

Alice Brown
Goodland

Thank you to the ladies from Gem and Grinnell for their letters on the medical dispute in Colby. It is indeed disgraceful. Dr. Hildyard is an excellent doctor who cares for his patients. There is a reason people from the surrounding communities come to Colby for medical care, the reason is Dr. Hildyard. He has been our physician since he began his practice in Colby, he and his staff continue to provide outstanding care. If Dr. Hildyard cannot continue to practice in Colby, our family will also be going to a doctor elsewhere. At present we purchase all our medications, some of our groceries and many everyday needs in Colby. Sadly, with the decrease of doctors, this will probably mean leaving northwest Kansas.

Bicycling downtown has benefits

Anna M. Juenemann,
Barbara L. Bickner,
Laura E. Juenemann
Colby

Hello. We are Anna Juenemann, 14, Barbara Bickner, 14 and Laura Juenemann, 13, of Colby. We are writing in reference to the article in the "briefly" section of the *Colby Free Press* on June 23. This article was titled "Bikes not allowed on sidewalks." We live by School Street, a couple of blocks away from downtown. We often have to run errands for our parents downtown. This includes going to the bank, picking up prescriptions at Palace Drug Store and going to Dr. Washburn's office. Our time is important to us, so we have to get ourselves there and back home as quickly as possible. When we ride our bikes it is much faster and easier, especially on hot days. If you make us ride on the street at all times it is much more dangerous for us as bike riders and to the drivers that sometimes do not pay a lot of attention to their surroundings in the downtown area. Also, as we all know, parking is severely limited in the downtown area. If you do not allow bikers on the sidewalks you are forcing the bike riders to take up a valuable parking spot that could be used for the adults that support downtown with their money. Most of us bikers are very conscientious of our surroundings and are slow and careful around pedestrians. I know that most of the bikers would appreciate it if you would provide a safe biking area in the downtown area, or a bike rack more conveniently located to Franklin Avenue, like by Sunflower Bank, in the parking lot. We thank you for your time and hope you consider our suggestions.

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.

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Making an impression



John Van Nostrand
• Line in the Dust

If you don't think your marriage means anything to anybody, you will be surprised when it does. Last year, weeks before Jennifer and I moved to Colby, we went to a reception in honor of a mutual friend. Clinton, who had become a good friend of ours the previous five years, went with us because he also knew the person the reception was for. We had some time to talk while driving to the reception. We were talking about our futures. Jennifer and I were hoping Colby would be the best place for us. I got the job I was looking for and our kids would be in a school we wanted them to be in. Clinton was preparing to leave for training to go to Iraq. (He's there now.) Clinton was talking about what he wanted to do after his military service is over. Jennifer was driving and Clinton was in the passenger seat. I was in the backseat sitting with our children. Clinton turned to Jennifer and said, "If I get married, I want it to be like you and John," he confidently said. There was a moment of silence. All you could hear was the hum of the van going down the road. My eyes met Jenn's in the rearview mirror. For a split second I could see every reason why I love

her and wanted to marry her and spend the rest of my life with her. It complemented Clinton's statement. We thanked Clinton for what he said. Then in my own head I thought, about 98 percent of the time Clinton saw Jennifer and I in good times and atmosphere. Clinton never did see the differences of opinion, and occasional arguments, Jennifer and I had. Jennifer and I have had our bad days, weeks, months and even a year or two. Fortunately Jennifer and I eventually recognized the trouble, appropriately informed the other and found the way to solve the problem. It can be difficult to admit when you are wrong, but the reward in securing and strengthening the marriage because of the admission and mutual plan for improvement is much greater.

We didn't want Clinton to see our debates anyway. Who would want to show somebody, just out of high school, what a troubled, married couple looks like? Clinton did not see the stresses Jennifer and I had after we had our second child, just 13 months after we had our first. Nobody said marriage and parenting is easy. Jennifer and I saw the light at the end of the tunnel being reminded that we were husband and wife before we were parents. We were told by reliable people not to forget our marriage comes first and a strong marriage is an important tool to use while being parents. We responded by regularly setting some time aside for each other. Thursday, Jennifer and I celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary. We are both proud reaching that milestone, especially in a time when divorce is so common. We have close friends who divorced during the past 10 years, but we will probably never know all the reasons why those marriages dissolved, because we were not there to see it all. Clinton's comment showed Jennifer and I we have been doing the right thing. *John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.*

The folly of our age



Jay Kelley
• Speaking MyMind

I was listening to a radio commentary a few days ago in which the speaker said she was uncomfortable asking a younger person to turn down his headphones because she was 20 years his senior and therefore not "cool." I wonder if the commentator in question understood that middle-aged people are not supposed to be "cool." We are supposed to be adults and as an adult we have every right and responsibility to confront, albeit politely, boorish behavior on the part of our juniors. Much is made of disrespectful behavior on the part of younger people, but I would submit that a lot of such behavior happens simply because older folks let it happen. We live in a society obsessed with youth and our generation, as we hit middle age, seems to be among the worst. We do not want to be seen as the heavies, so we have abdicated the leadership roles we should be stepping into at this stage. As I approach my mid-40s, I'm enjoying middle age. For one thing, I don't have to wear ridiculous, uncomfortable clothes so I can be in style. There is nothing more absurd than a 40-year-old wearing styles designed to make 20-year-olds feel good about looking silly. Like it or not, middle age means you are an adult and you have something to say to the younger generation. When I hear excuses like "we did it,

too" given as reasons why adults don't say anything about teenage drinking, drugs or sex, it makes me wonder who the adults really are. Some of us did some of those things, but that doesn't make them right or safe and we are supposed to know that by virtue of our experience, whether we learned it the hard way or were fortunate enough to study the mistakes of others. The same goes for less dangerous, but no less important things like respect for our elders and simple manners. We are the adults and we are supposed to know better, yet we are curiously absent from the arena when it comes to teaching and using them ourselves. Of course, we live in a less formal society today and I think some of that is good. Not so many years ago, when I was 17 and in Navy boot camp, I was going to write a letter to my grandmother. It went pretty well until I started to address the envelope and realized I didn't know her first

name! I had never heard her called anything (other than mom and grandma) except Sister Snow at church or Mrs. Snow elsewhere. I don't think we need to go back to that, but teenagers and young adults should not feel it appropriate to discuss the shortcomings of their elders in a rude and public manner. By the way, that goes for us as well. There is a generation or two ahead of us and I suspect some of the disrespect directed toward us was learned by watching our interaction with our parents and grandparents. Some complain that the younger generation doesn't listen, but again that isn't really the point. Being headstrong and having all the answers is part and parcel to youth. So is invincibility and immortality. We can't (and probably shouldn't) stop all of that, but we can be there to warn, guide, direct and even say I told you so from time to time. The Bible has a lot to say about the wisdom that comes with age, but it also talks about the foolishness of an old king who will not listen. As we get older, we have to continue to listen and learn. We also have to pass on what we learn. *Jay Kelley is a local preacher and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelly@st-tel.net.*

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

