

# Opinion

## Your turn

### Hospital needs to end the vendetta

Hank Vette  
Colby

In reference to the strategic planning article in the July 13 Colby Free Press, the best thing that you can do for Colby and surrounding towns is to put an end to the vendetta that the hospital has against Dr. Hildyard and let him take care of his patients.

This has gone on too long and has split the community up for no reason. It is pure and simple, if you don't want to doctor with him then go to the doctor of your choice.

I am sure that if you like a Ford product that you would not try and run the Chevy dealer out of town and take his license to take care of his customers.

### Bluegrass festival is excellent

Jim Vollmer  
Colby

"Pickin on the Plains" is the finest entertainment value I've ever enjoyed. Great music at an incredible price: \$20 for more than 25 hours of excellent music, great comedy and wonderful family fare.

In this day and age, when Americans are being ripped off everywhere, Colby, Kansas has an answer for those who live paycheck to paycheck; however, I've discovered that most people in this town are not only unsupportive of "Pickin on the Plains" but have no clue as to what kind of excellent entertainment is available to them each year for a mere pittance.

Somehow folks here have the idea that this is just bluegrass.

Country Western, gospel, rock 'n' roll and other genre accompany the bluegrass. We brought six people in from Colorado this year for the festival. Coming in, not one of them considered himself to be a bluegrass fan; however each of them plans to be back next year and bring others with them.

The people of Colby have a wonderful opportunity to experience outstanding first-class entertainment at affordable rates.

Give it a shot next year, Colby. You won't be sorry.

#### Where to write, call

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- 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: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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@nw kansas-.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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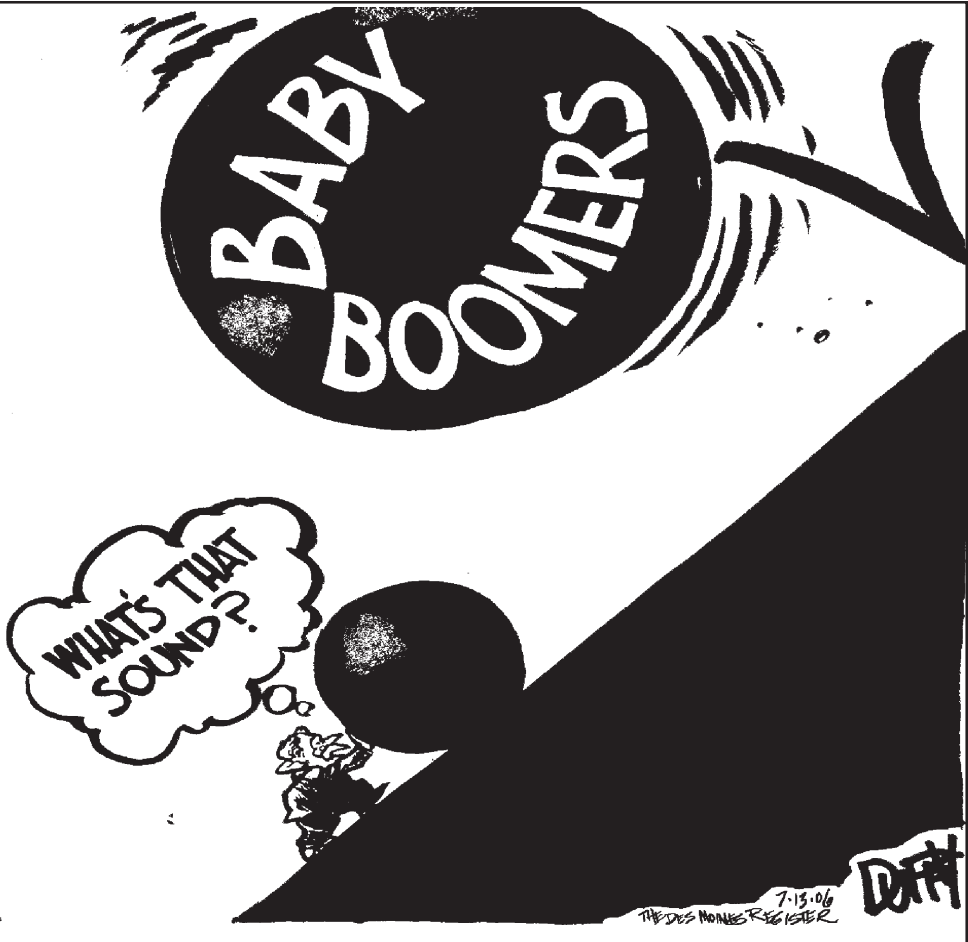
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## My turn

**John Van Nostrand**

- Line in the Dust



Weeks ago I made reference encouraging Colby residents to be good diplomats this summer. I reminded people they may be asked for directions or suggestions from travelers passing through Colby.

My turn happened Saturday.

About the same time that column hit our racks, Ralph Fischer, who coordinates volunteers at the Colby Visitors Center at Interstate 70 exit 53, asked me if I would volunteer at the center for an afternoon. I told him I would before he finished asking. I first met Ralph when I came to Colby looking for a house in preparation of moving to town.

The center is a very attractive and comfortable place. There is air conditioning, cool water to sip, comfortable furniture, plenty of things to read and bathrooms so clean I would not be afraid to walk in there barefoot. It was a great place to sit on a 100-degree-plus day.

I started at 1 p.m. and Ralph gave me a quick training lesson; about where certain things are located in the office, answers to the typical questions and a list of telephone numbers, just in case of an emergency. Ralph said to expect a variety of questions, people and somebody from St. Louis.

For starters, a man came in and asked where he could get one of his tires looked at. Not knowing who was still open on a Saturday afternoon, I made a phone call to one place and they said they were still open. I gave him directions and he was on his way. Ralph said the worst day of the week to find a mechanic is Sundays. He knows one who will help. His telephone number is there.

Becca Bargmann stopped by to give me pictures of my kids she took at KGCR's Fourth of July party. She saw my car in the parking lot. She liked the couch in the center.

Another person came in and said he was tired of eating fast food. He asked if Colby has Chinese food. I told him what Colby has. Another couple wanted a salad bar.

Ralph said questions about Colorado are popular considering how close we are. One woman was looking for directions to Sedalia, Colo., south of metro-Denver. She asked me to confirm the directions she already had. I gave her an alternative route if she wanted to avoid Denver. I told her about Colorado Highway 86, which intersects with Interstate 70 west of Limon. About half of Colorado Highway 86 is void of civilization. She chose Interstate 70.

"Is it 'Lie-mon' or is it 'Lee-mon'," another person asked. I said Lie-mon.

An Arkansas couple asked about Colorado Springs. Although the Colby center is full of material about Kansas towns and attractions, I told the woman the Burger King in Burlington, Colo., should have information about Colorado Springs. I've been to that Burger King. They may go home through Dodge City to see what it is all about.

A couple from Vermont was interested in Colby's museum. I told them about the museum's current wheat art exhibit. That seemed to have increased their interest. I asked the woman if the fall colors in New England states are worth all the hype they get. She said it is. She also said the Ben and Jerry's ice cream factory is interesting too.

After a lull, a couple walked in and I could not understand the language they were speaking to each other. The man turned to me and said, in English, they are from Belgium and driving across the country. His English was good, but his Belgium accent was so thick. He said we

## No time for drunks

**Jay Kelley**

- Speaking MyMind



When one looks at the history of alcohol consumption in America, there are a couple of startling conclusions.

First, it would seem our colonial ancestors consumed more alcohol, at least per capita, than we do today.

Second, those same ancestors didn't seem to think they had to drink themselves stupid to enjoy life. In fact, drunkenness that is seen today as harmless fun would have been seen as a sign of extreme moral dissipation.

Alcohol is apparently not the problem, in and of itself. No bottle of booze ever jumped off a shelf, ran out in the street and forced its way down someone's throat. Instead, someone chose to drink and more than likely someone else encouraged it.

Of course, we can try to restrict the availability of alcohol, but prohibition worked about as well as our current war on drugs. The flow didn't stop and criminals got rich.

No, I'm not defending the sale of alcohol. If I had my way, hooch would be classified where it belongs, with drugs like heroin and cocaine, and those who sold it would be classified as the drug pushers they are.

What I am saying is the permissive attitude of our society is part and parcel to the problem. There are those who say morals cannot be legislated. They are fools. All laws have to do with morals, that is the nature of right and wrong.

It is not enough to simply avoid alcoholic beverages, although that is a good start. Nor is it always practical to avoid everywhere which sells the stuff. For one thing, boycotts often defeat the purpose of changing corporate policy by removing customers who don't buy the objectionable product and therefore raising its percentage of total sales.

It is, however, possible to change minds and affect change by our actions. Of course, the aforementioned refusal to buy such products ourselves is probably the most effective. We cannot change anything if we act hypocritically. Witness the failure of the alcohol industry's so-called "responsible drinking campaigns."

There is one other area in which we sometimes behave hypocritically and I, as a former drinker, have been as guilty as anyone. If we want to stop this menace, we cannot take it lightly or excuse drunken behavior.

While the foolishness of humanity is often the

source of humor sometimes we must laugh to keep from crying, but such destructive behavior should not be glamorized. Drunkenness is not cool or funny, it is deadly serious and I, for one, plan to be more circumspect in the future.

We can also take those businesses which sell alcohol as their major product seriously. Personally, I don't really like drunks, so avoiding bars isn't all that big a deal for me, but it is an axiom that the local bars usually have good food and many non-drinkers go there to eat.

The problem with eating at the local bar is that we give said establishment a veneer of respectability it does not deserve. I know there are towns where the bar is the only restaurant in town, but maybe we need to ask ourselves why a bar can make it but a restaurant can't?

Finally, we need to take a real look at prevention. Yes, alcohol related illnesses are a multi-million dollar headache to our medical community, but so are heart attacks, cholesterol and cancer from our rich diet. The difference is no one ever got hopped up on a top sirloin and ran down an old lady in a cross walk.

We can't do anything until we are honest with ourselves. Drunkenness is not a personal problem: it is a societal problem and it won't go away until society won't tolerate it.

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

**Mallard Fillmore**

- Bruce

Tinsley

