

# Opinion

## Your turn

### Nine-mile corner must be fixed

Everett L. Lynn, D.D.S.  
Helena, Mont.

The caption, "Wreck Claims Second Person", of the June 14 Free Press issue was yet another chilling reminder of the all too frequent scenes of carnage and tragedy at Nine Mile Corner. (Editor's note: Nine mile corner is the local nickname for the intersection of U.S. Highways 24 and 83 east of Colby.)

Eight fatalities there from 1995-2006. All told, deaths total many more. These victims, one of whom was my daughter Nancy Irion, once lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow; loved and were loved; but now, sadly, are only memories.

Why?

How much of this lamentable slaughter could have been prevented? The attending highway patrolman for Nancy Irion's death related that previously many had testified and implored the Kansas Department of Transportation to install a four-way stop sign there, only to be ignored.

Has anyone ever wondered whom this department truly represents and if they are for or against you? I have.

Nancy Irion's auto, according to Joshua Ellis did stop, but then pulled out in front of him to his horror.

For nonbelievers, stand at that intersection looking west at late sunset. Notice how easily blinded you can become, missing an east-bound vehicle traveling the highway rise to the corner.

Presently two lonely crosses stand there in mute testimony for accident victims. Crosses added for every such victim could collectively deliver a powerful statement.

The challenge is to slay the Nine Mile Corner dragon. The dead have bequeathed their invisible gauntlet. The answer could be an organized community lobbying effort including your legislators demanding this four-way stop.

To paraphrase Ernest Hemingway; "Ask not for whom the bell tolls. For it tolls for thee, Thomas County."

#### Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts,**  
109 Hart Senate Office Building,  
Washington, D.C. 20510.  
202/224-4774

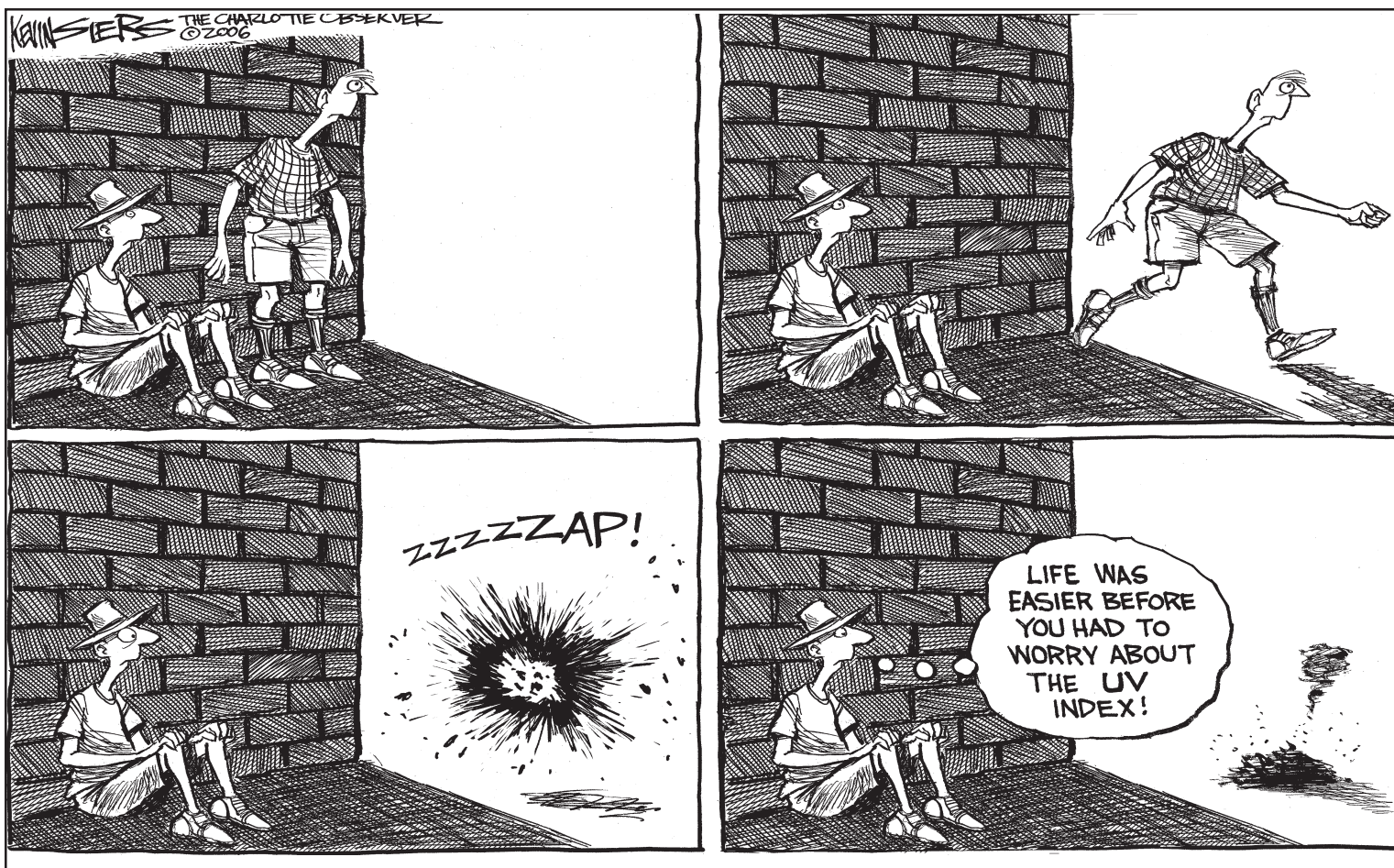
**U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback,**  
303 Hart Senate Office Building,  
Washington, D.C. 20510.  
202/224-6521

**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: jmorrison@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

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## Outdoor cooking

I've created a new outdoor recipe called the Northwest Kansas Omelet.

Crack open five or six eggs and mix them up in a bowl.

Tear up a piece or two of American cheese and add to the egg mixture.

Add a small can of chopped green chilies, optional.

Take outdoors.

Pour onto sidewalk, stir and cook.

While you really wouldn't want to try this recipe, the past week you could have if you wanted to.

Ouch, it's hot is about all I can say. But think of what our ancestors had to put up with in an era of no electricity, no fans and certainly no air conditioners.

I sure hope the rumored name of our area the Great Northwestern Desert doesn't stick.

However, as each and every day of heat passes we are one day closer to my favorite time of year, October through December. The downside of the current heat wave we are experiencing is that in order to create an average temperature there has to be just as many really cold days to offset these hot ones.

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Summer is passing by so quickly that it will soon be time for schools to reopen their doors. I'm sure bus shop directors and janitors are making a mad rush to get buses serviced, cleaned and ready to roll and floors polished to a sparkle.

I'll never forget when I first moved to northwest Kansas. At the time I held a high school teaching certificate and submitted my name as a substitute teacher in several area school districts.

Low and behold, I was called and asked about filling a long-term slot for a music instructor who needed to take maternity leave.

The conversation with the school secretary and principal at the time went something like



**Jan Katz Ackerman**

#### • From Where I stand

this.

"So what are you certified in?" they asked. "Secondary education with an emphasis in business and business law," I replied.

"Do you or have you played any instruments?" the secretary asked.

"Sure. I've played trumpet, French horn, timpani drums, chimes, piano and was a church organist for more than 12 years," I replied.

"Looks like you are our long-term substitute music teacher," the secretary said with a huge smile on her face.

Wow, that was a wild three months.

Not only was I substitute teaching at the grade school in Hoxie, at the same time I was finishing a semester of teaching business law for Dodge City Community College at its outreach center in Kinsley.

If I remember right (it's been eight years ago and I've slept since then) I'd teach Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for the grade school and as soon as school let out I'd make a mad rush for my car and drive 150 miles one way to teach an evening class.

Driving back to northwestern Kansas Wednesday night, I'd have Thursday off and teach at the grade school on Friday.

Age certainly does make a person rethink putting in those kind of hours, and I'm certainly glad I finally learned to pace myself and say "no."

Speaking of saying the n word, it's a word

many people haven't mastered letting slip past their lips.

When I was younger I used to pile my plate so full it almost cracked down the middle. A much wiser woman now, I've learned to pace myself.

Once an avid gardener, I now don't mind if there's a weed or two in the driveway.

Once an avid house cleaner, my philosophy is if you want to come and see me, come any time, but if you want to come and see my house, make an appointment.

Not that my house is dirty, but with my 2-year-old beagle, Miss Katie, well suffice it to say, don't wear white spandex and come to my house because you'll leave with black, white and tan dog hair.

Katie survived puppyhood, or should I say my husband and I survived her first two years.

Oh yes, she's got us well trained and even lets us live with her. Katie is more like a 2-year-old child in a dog suit.

Seriously, she acts like a little child and I'm still baffled by the fact the silly critter can tell time.

Really! She's got such a schedule that a family with young children could easily run by it.

Up promptly at 6 a.m. ready for her one mile walk, home for breakfast and a lap of water, a nap until 10 a.m., outside for R and R, back inside for a nap until 11:30 a.m. when it's time for lunch.

"Ah, Dad's" home at noon and it's time to bark and get the ears scratched and belly rubbed and it's nap time until about 4 p.m. In and out again, and a nap until 5 p.m. When Mom gets off work and can play outside for a while. Supper time, another nap and 8 p.m. sharp it's time for bed.

See what I mean, any family could run on Katie's clock.

Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter for the Colby Free Press

## Word games

**By Ken Poland**  
Sanctity.

That word has been getting a lot of mileage recently. Political religionists have trotted it out to condemn anyone who doesn't accept their rules and regulations. Those rules and regulations have all the i's dotted and t's crossed. If they can swing it, they will have the power of civil government to enforce compliance.

Find your dictionary and start with the word "sanctified" and read the definitions of all the closely related words on down through "sanctum".

Individuals have a tendency to pick and choose the variations of meaning for all those words in a way that protects or justifies their own lifestyle, morals, ethics and interpretation of their particular religious canon.

Incidentally, all those words and definitions are not the exclusive property of Christianity. We have quite a number of sanctimonious Christians who seem to think their "goodness"

is the defining difference between themselves and the non Christians. They are the ones who have to carefully sort and select definitions to promote the superiority of themselves and their relationship with God. They protect their own sanctity and saintly image by selective choice of what is most grievous to God, in their opinion. Their relationship to God and their salvation seems to be based more on works and law than on faith, penitence, and acceptance of Christ as the instrument of their forgiveness.

For them, some sins are more serious and grievous than others, to God. And, it just so happens those sins are not the particular ones they have a problem avoiding. It is very easy for them to sort and rank the degree of God's wrath according to their own lusts, desires, or weaknesses.

Marriage is a word in the English language that has traditionally meant "the sanctioned sexual union of a man and a woman." That is the definition, regardless of religious or non-re-

ligious sanction or license.

The greatest danger, I see, to the institution of marriage is the blurring of that definition. That blurring is quite similar to the change in what the word "gay", when used as an adjective describing a young male, means today. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (copyright 1953) doesn't even mention homosexuality. Then the dictionaries began putting that definition as third or fourth in popular usage and today most dictionaries show it as first in popular use. You don't describe a happy go lucky young unmarried man as being a "gay young bachelor" anymore.

Will the change in popular definition of marriage have any real influence on the sanctity of heterosexual marriage? Does the state license certificate, that uses the word marriage, have any religious indication of sanctity, today?

What about "sanctity of life?" We will discuss that in a future column.

Ken Poland farms near Gem and occasionally contributes to the Colby Free Press.

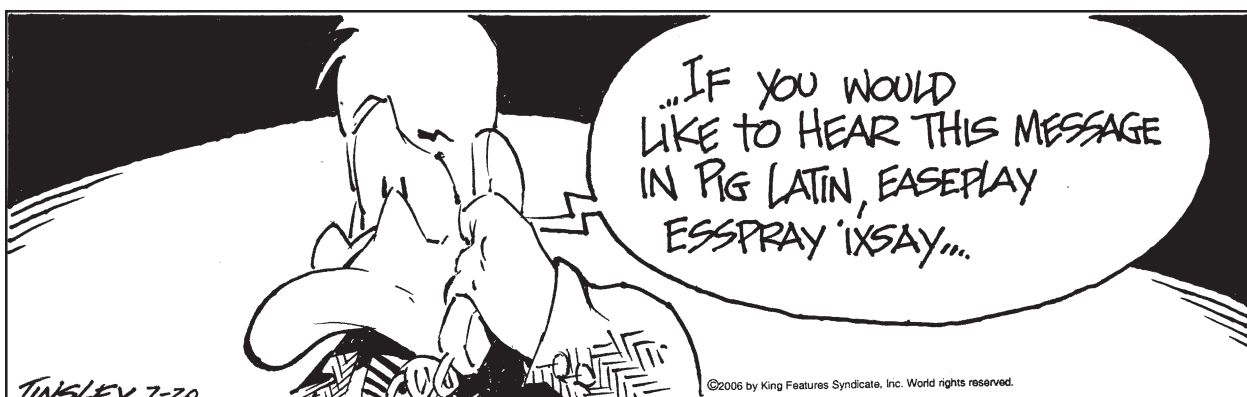
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