

# Opinion

## A Kansas Viewpoint



### Do we care?

It shouldn't happen, but .... Underage drivers. Over a four-year stretch, 33 drivers age 15 died in car crashes. Not passengers, pedestrians or innocent bystanders, but drivers. Kids hardly old enough to see over the steering wheel. Kids not old enough to drive, even in this state, except to and from school or on a farm errand.

The statistics don't break it down, but chances are the majority of them were driving illegally, either without a license or in violation of their restrictions.

It happens mostly because parents allow it. It's convenient for them if they don't have to haul their kids to town. They think their kids are safe drivers. They think it's silly to follow the law. Until they see their 15-year-old on a slab.

It's not pretty, what an accident like that does to a family, a school or a community.

We've made life a lot safer for our kids, but it could be safer yet. Why let 15-year-olds drive at all?

Kansas is one of the few states left that hand out restricted licenses to kids 14 and 15. Many are cutting back on privileges for kids 16 and 17, making them earn the right to a full license.

Not Kansas. Why not? Don't we care about our kids?

Then there is the case of the 16-year-old hit by a train Saturday down by Solomon.

He was trying to put a coin on the track when the speeding freight clipped him. Luckily, the boy was struck a glancing blow by the steps of the engine and lived.

Many who get on the tracks are not so lucky. Out here, people tend to be careless about railroad crossings. It's a foolish thing to do. Being hit by a train, even one going 20 mph on a weed-covered branch line, almost always kills.

Along the Union Pacific line from Solomon to Oakley, and in Nebraska just north of us, even freight trains are clipping along at 50-60 mph. They can't stop in less than a mile.

Get in the way, and you could be the next statistic. As the railroads say, "Stop, Look, Listen and Live."

Just one mistake at a railroad crossing is too many. You won't get a second chance.

And don't be putting coins in front of a moving train.

— Steve Haynes, owner of Nor'West Newspapers

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](mailto:jvannostrand@nwkansas.com) or [pdecker@nwkansas.com](mailto:pdecker@nwkansas.com). Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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### Roll credits...



**Tisha Cox**

#### • Off The Beaten Path

The 2006 summer movie season officially ends Labor Day weekend. I would almost say that's a good thing, because most of the big movies have already been released.

The latest of the end-of-summer movies would be "Snakes on a Plane." It took the box office crown over the weekend, but it isn't a flick I will see if it plays in Colby.

Snakes and I don't get along that well, so the makers of that movie will have to do without this movie fan.

Though the studios and critics may say this was another sub-par summer, I would disagree. I've had a good time going to the movies this summer.

My top favorite, of course, was "X-Men: The Last Stand." With my 20 years as an X-Men fan, that one was guaranteed to have me in a movie theater seat.

Another movie I enjoyed, yes, another comic adaptation, was "Superman Returns." Even my sister Chris, who usually doesn't like comic movies, liked that one. I wasn't disappointed, and neither were most people who saw it, because director Bryan Singer got it right.

And for trivia buffs, Singer was the man responsible for the first two X-Men movies, but jumped ship at Fox when Warner dangled his dream movie "Superman" in front of him. In a twist of irony, Brett Ratner, who was originally to have done "Superman," replaced Singer as director of the last X-Men movie.

The other really, really big movie of the summer has been "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest."

Disney did it again with its sequel to the 2003 movie "Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl."

Johnny Depp and Orlando Bloom are always

popular draws for audiences, and the last I heard, this one was closing in on \$1 billion in worldwide earnings. Now that's staying power.

And even though summer is nearly technically over, there is much to look forward to this fall.

September brings "The Covenant," which might be popular with the teen crowd. (Think "The Craft," only with warlocks instead of witches.)

Bufs of Hollywood history should find "Hollywoodland" intriguing. It is the story of the death of George Reeves, who portrayed "Superman" on television in the 1950s.

Another, in the same vein, is "The Black Dahlia," based on the true story of the 1947 murder of actress Betty Ann Short, the "Black Dahlia."

So far, October has only one notable release, "The Grudge 2," the sequel to 2003's "The Grudge."

Based on the popular Japanese movie series, "Ju-on," again a remake of the Japanese sequel, only using American actors, and in English. Should be some Halloweenish mayhem.

Also, another possible October release is "The Fountain," by director Darren Aronofsky.

The release date has been moved back and forth between October and November, so I'm

not certain of its actual debut. However, it should be a powerful film, based on the depth of Aronofsky's past work, such as "Requiem for a Dream."

Not for everyone, but definitely worth a try. Ah, sweet November. Bond, James Bond, anyone?

November 17, Daniel Craig will debut as the latest 007 in "Casino Royale." This time, however, Bond will be blond. Hype for this one has been building a long time, and audiences will finally get to see if it was all worth it.

November also means the beginning of the holiday movie season.

This year's holiday season will be a big one, hopefully, as usual, with many good choices for everyone.

The latest Harry Potter sequel, "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" comes out this year, and should be as popular as the other big screen adaptations have proven to be.

Another literary adaptation is "Eragon," to be released Dec. 15. Based on the novel by Christopher Paolini, it is the story of a boy named Eragon who finds a stone that isn't a stone and eventually finds himself thrown into a world beyond the familiar — full of myths come to life — dwarves, elves and dragons.

Also, there is a live action version of "Charlotte's Web" coming to theaters by year's end.

It's good to see there are so many choices again this year, and that Hollywood is realizing diversity is a good thing. And that movies are still a popular diversion any time of year.

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## The president's song and dance

Our president continues to play his flute and sing his song of terrorism! — "Islamofascism" — Boy! that stirs the latent emotions of veterans and Christians. Many of us who are old enough to remember World War II, and certainly those who were in the military service, have indelible memories of Hitler's fascist regime.

Those who have studied religious history know the fervor of the Muslim mercenaries that carried death and destruction to the Christian nations. Linking those two periods of history together is sure to silence any criticism of the president's acclaimed war on terror.

Does this little bit of Hitler's demagoguery give you cause to question today's political pitch from the present administration?

"The national government will regard it as its first and foremost duty to revive in the nation the spirit of unity and cooperation. It will preserve and defend those basic principles on which our nation has been built. It regards Christianity as the foundation of our national morality, and the family as the basis of national life." — Adolph Hitler - Source: My New World Order, Proclamation to the German Nation at Berlin, Feb. 1, 1933

The majority, who considered themselves Christian, swallowed it hook line and sinker. This statement was made by Hitler, just prior to his gaining the undisputed leadership of the German people. His plan of action morphed into what we know as the fascist policies of the Nazi regime. The Christian people of Germany and the rest of the world slept through the imperialistic advances of Hitler's Nazi regime, for the next few years.

We fail to remember the Crusades when the

### Ken Poland

#### • Ken's World

Christians reigned terror and destruction on the Jews and the Arabs (Muslims). We fail to acknowledge the terror and destruction that our awesome military might has demonstrated to the world. We fail to consider the perceptions of the rest of the world that fear the possibility of imperialistic notions behind that display of military might and dominance. (They, too, remember Hitler.)

Fascism is a system of government marked by centralization of authority under a dictator, stringent socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition through terror and censorship, and typically a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism. About the only thing different from the dictionary definition of fascism and my definition of "Bushism" is that sectarianism has replaced racism, for the most part.

Don't confuse sectarian and secular. One is all religion and the other is devoid of religion. Mr. Bush plays all the aces and wild cards from the religious deck.

The terminology of: compassionate, fundamental, conservative, Christian, patriotic, and Republican are all synonymous for this administration. They and their supporters trot out the reference from scripture that "God appoints our leaders" and that is calculated to shame anyone who criticizes any portion of their agenda. I do not judge any man's spiritual relationship with

God. That is between themselves and God. But, I will definitely reserve the right, in a free nation, to judge their policies and actions that affect man's relationship with man. If I don't think we had legitimate business invading Iraq, I will say so and I will vote against any politician I think is making decisions that are not in mine, my neighbor's, or mankind's best interest. I profess Christianity, but because someone does not agree politically with me does not mean they are not Christian.

I will not base my support for any incumbent or challenger solely on their professed religious faith. Remember Hitler? He didn't profess born again, fundamental, evangelical faith. But, he invoked Christianity as his guiding moral principle.

The president's song is tied together with the refrain that reminds us that Sept. 11 is the justification for his every decision. He exempts himself from constitutional law and then parrots the refrain of Sept. 11. He unilaterally defies the advice of our allies and repeats the refrain of Sept. 11. He stalls the U.N. resolution for cease fire in Lebanon and belts out the refrain of Sept. 11. He authorizes shipment of more missiles to Israel and beats out the rhythm of Sept. 11. If the melody begins to falter or the band gets out of step, he livens up the song and gets the parade back in step with the Sept. 11 refrain. Every stanza of his song has to flow smoothly out of the refrain of Sept. 11.

His song has lost its place on the top 10. Hopefully, we'll shuffle the seats in the band and if that doesn't work, we'll get a new performer.

Ken Poland lives in Gem and occasionally contributes to the Free Press.

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