

Opinion

Your turn

Kansas better be paying attention

By Frank Smith
Bluff City

I've closely observed Phill Kline for many years, reading his statements, attending debates and interviewing him. This week newspapers criticized Phill for his inability to financially distance his personal expenses from his political campaigns. Churches were encouraged to make "love offerings" to his wife's corporation that contributed similar amounts back to his campaign. Kline has exercised such terrible fiscal judgment since his 1986 congressional campaign.

Last week Kline claimed that the Kansas Press Association had lauded him. Actually they had contemplated suing him for Open Meetings Act violations, forcing him to retract his statement a day later. Kline constantly takes credit for "passing" Jessica's Law. It needed no help, passing the House 122-0 and the Senate 38-2. Supporters were willing to sacrifice the bill by "bundling" it with special interest legislation solely designed to benefit for-profit prison corporations that would have imported hundreds of murderers and rapists to Kansas. Kline and other proponents have benefited enormously from campaign contributions from these out-of-state operators. They kept Kansas from financing our own, far more economical public prison expansion. In a legislative committee, Kline misrepresented a student's op-ed as "research" endorsing such dangerous enterprises.

A Kansas Board of Education member overbilled the state for thousands of dollars after a Miami Beach junket. Kline illegally met with her and her supporters and declined to prosecute her.

I personally volunteered information and my assistance to his office to combat providers who were engaged in Medicare and insurance fraud, and to apprehend criminals who were targeting Kansans with sophisticated Internet schemes, who had real Kansas victims. Nothing was ever done about them, to the best of my knowledge.

Now Kline is launching false, disgusting, personal attacks against his opponent. There is no way Kline's behavior can be called "Christian." I only hope Kansans are paying attention.

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* will publish letters related to the Nov. 7 election until Friday, Nov. 3.

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@nwkansan.com or pdecker@nwkansan.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

John Van Nostrand - Publisher
jvannostrand@nwkansan.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansan.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcx@nwkansan.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkansan.com

Jasmine Crotinger - Advertising Sales
jasminec@nwkansan.com

Joe Hayes - Advertising Sales
jhayes@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwkansan.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701. THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association. **SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

THE ONLY THING KEEPING THE WORLD FROM NORTH KOREA'S PLAN TO SELL A NUCLEAR BOMB TO TERRORISTS IS THE STEELY RESOLVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS.



BUT TRY TO GET SOME SLEEP TONIGHT ANYWAY...

The easy, caring simple life of Colby

Earlier this week, an article in the *Denver Post* highlighted Colby and life in a small town.

Since I wasn't sure what the writer's intentions were when he wrote this piece, I decided to call and talk with him about it.

The writer, Rich Tosches, told me he grew up in a Massachusetts town of 400 people and his father was editor of a 10,000 circulation daily newspaper for more than 50 years.

"One of my favorite things to read was the police blotter," he told me. To this day, he said he still enjoys reading the blotter and particularly in small towns where people care about one another.

"Where else (but in a small town) would people be concerned enough to let police know children are playing in the streets or signs are missing?"

Tosches said in his current position he travels throughout the western part of the country — Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, etc. and is always looking for those special parts of America that differ from larger metropolitan areas.

He also had one other ulterior motive.

"Possibly and even likely, my son could be playing baseball at Colby Community College next year."

In fact, the team his son plays on, which is a high school all-star team known as the Colorado Jets, was in Colby last weekend playing against Colby College.

Personally, I think this was a well thought-out article and I thoroughly enjoyed his take on Colby and small towns. Even though we all know there are bad things here, I still thought the article was a nice tribute to us and reinforced my belief that sometimes I take small town living for granted.

For those who may not have seen Rich's column in the *Post*, here it is.

I would also welcome any thoughts from readers on how they liked the article. Let's just say I didn't get a negative feel in talking to Rich or reading his column.

By Rich Tosches

Denver Post Staff Writer

Colby, Kan. From the law enforcement blotter of the Colby Free Press newspaper:

Saturday Sept. 2. Suspicious incident: A person called the sheriff's office at 12:46 p.m. say-



Patty Decker

- Deep Thoughts

ing yield signs were taken out of the ground and left in the ditch at County Road F and County Road 13. The sheriff's department explained that the Thomas County Road Department had removed the signs while working on the road. It's a quiet place, this Kansas town just east of the Colorado border. The wind rustles through the cornstalks of the autumn fields and people don't give much thought to things like crime. Or traffic. Or trees.

With urban migration showing no sign of slowing - more than 75 percent of Americans now live in or around cities - Colby could be the poster boy for the thousands of dot-on-the-map towns that have begun a slow fade. Its population has dipped by some 300 people in the past five years. Today, the town with the brick streets is home to 5,145 people. Denver buzzes along some 220 miles to the west. Kansas City is 375 miles to the east. They might as well be a million miles away. Sept. 3. Police were called at 3:48 a.m. about someone knocking on the door of a home on North Country Club Drive. When police arrived the caller opened the door and said she realized it was a roommate.

Kent Dible is a sergeant on the Colby Police force, one of 12 officers in the department. He began working as Colby Police dispatcher just a few days shy of his 18th birthday. He is 49 now. "This town has everything that anyplace else has, just less of it," he said, sitting in an office in the small law enforcement center that sits in the shadow of the towering brick 1906 Thomas County Courthouse.

"The kids at Colby Community College like to decorate their rooms with yard art," he said. Yard art, he said, can be anything Colbians put on their lawns. Garden gnomes. Flamingos. "Lots of little animals," Sgt. Dible said, referring to the ceramic mammals such as squirrels and skunks, not the college students.

And so on a Friday night the police might be

called to a loud party in a rented house. And they bring the list. The list is an important tool in solving crime. Officially it's called the hot list. Not much more than a handful of scribbled notes, the list contains anything reported stolen or suspected of being stolen.

And the police do mean anything. "We'll knock on the door at a loud party to check it out," Dible said, "and there in the corner of the room are two reindeer. Lawn reindeer. So we'll make a note of the reindeer and the address and eventually they'll probably match a theft report." Sept. 1. A bicycle was found at 8:37 p.m. laying in the front yard of a residence in the 100 block of South School Avenue. A report was filed.

"It's a nice town. People from Denver and Wichita stop in and say there's nothing to do," Dible said. And then he laughed.

"My wife is a bowler. I hunt and fish. And we play cards with friends," he said. "That's what we do."

Sept. 25. Suspicious person. Police were called at 9:18 p.m. to investigate a person who was whistling and yelling in the 200 block of North Country Club Drive. My brother lived in Denver for a while," Dible said. "I'd visit him. We'd go to the Natural History Museum. There was so much to do. But I always wanted to come home after a few days. It was a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there." Sept. 27. Suspicious incident. Police were notified at 6:57 p.m. of a juvenile shooting another juvenile with a BB gun in the 800 block of South Court.

Dible, who grew up in the smaller (population 400) town of Rexford, some 18 miles through the corn and wheat fields to the northeast, said the best part of towns like Colby is that residents are concerned about, well, about everything. From yield signs lying in a ditch to someone shouting and whistling to one kid shooting another kid in the behind with a BB gun.

"We take care of our kids," he said. And boy, is he not kidding.

Sept. 20. Police were called at 8:21 p.m. Pine and Country Club Streets. Caller said two children were playing in the street.

Decker is editor of the *Free Press*.

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. These are used for verification of the writer only. If, however, you want your address and telephone number to appear with your letter, please ask us to do so when you submit your letter, or include a note with your letter. 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. You can expect your letter to appear in print within 24-48 hours of receipt. Letters to the Free Press allow readers to become engaged in public debate on topics they deem important. Please consider sharing your thoughts with the family of Colby Free Press readers. Thank you.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

