

Opinion

Your turn

City to stress property clean up

Carolyn Armstrong
Colby City Manager

My annual evaluation was conducted by the city council on Dec. 5 and I was given one very important task to work on in the upcoming year.

The mayor and council are very concerned about the appearance of our community and they have directed me to spend more time and effort dealing with the trailers, junk cars, weeds, trash, etc. in Colby.

I will be advertising for a code enforcement officer as a separate position from the building official. Until such time as I am able to hire an individual, I will be looking for violations as I conduct business in the city.

However, the purpose of this letter is to ask for your assistance in getting the message out to our citizens. I would much rather deal with the issue without having the police department issue citations and would appreciate the help of the citizens.

If you are aware of a violation, please give me a call at 460-4411 and I will check on it and get it taken care of. The caller's name will not be used in the process. If you are a violator, please take care of the matter and save me the effort.

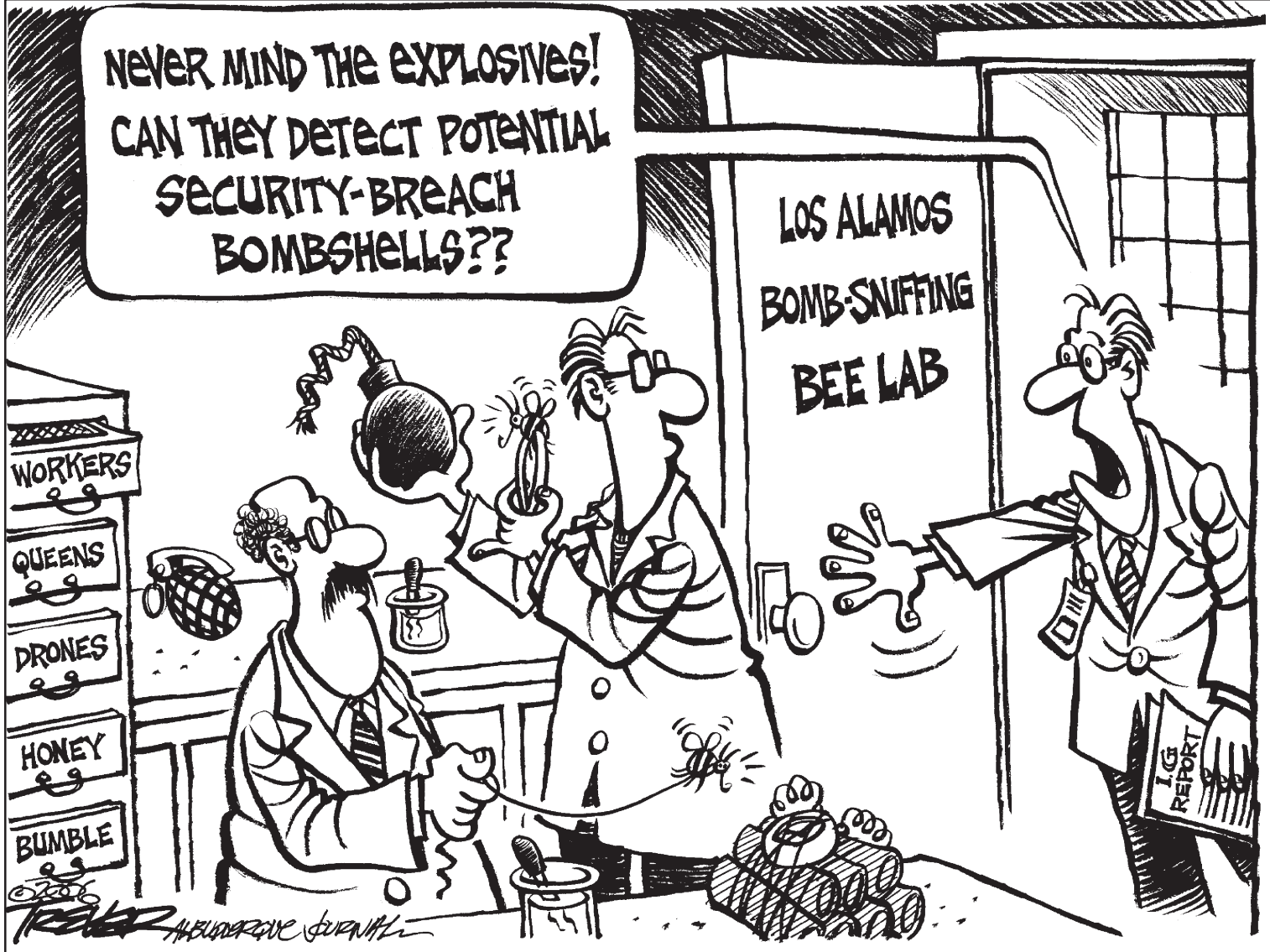
About those letters . . .

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.

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@nwkansas.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



Unconventional Christmas tunes

Along with the rest of the Christmas rush, Christmas music hit the airwaves well before Dec. 1.

However, I can't help but notice a certain local radio station is playing seasonal music that is still in the spirit of the season, yet unconventional.

The Colby Community College radio station, 91.9, has been showcasing Christmas music that brings a smile to my face.

Like "I Want an Alien for Christmas" by Fountains of Wayne.

It's a catchy little punk tune about someone wanting, well, as the title describes, an extraterrestrial as a Christmas present.

It goes something like this:
"I want an alien for Christmas
Bring me an alien this year
I want a little green guy
About three feet high
With 17 eyes
Who knows how to fly
I want an alien for Christmas this year."

That isn't the only kind of holiday fare offered on the college station. Over the weekend, I heard a punk version of "The First Noel."

Definitely different, but not irreverent at all. As I said, I do love Christmas music. One of my favorites is "Silver Bells," which I've always enjoyed since I was a little kid.

Traditional songs such as "Away in a Manger" is another favorite, but I can't help but show the fact I'm a member of Generation X when it comes to this time of year.



Tisha Cox

● Off The Beaten Path

I love Christmas, and appreciate classic Christmas music, but there are only so many times I can listen to the latest remake of certain classics before it starts to get old.

So in that vein, I would like to share a list of some of my favorite non-traditional Christmas music.

"Christmas All Over Again" by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. I enjoy this one because it's one of the few songs most stations out in this part of the country will play by Petty.

"Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)," U2. U2 and Christmas. What more can I say? I just wish they had more than this one Christmas song.

"All I Want for Christmas is You," Mariah Carey. Not my usual style, but I do like this song. Fun, catchy, and upbeat.

A "Bond"-ing experience. . . I saw the new James Bond movie, "Casino Royale" Friday. It features new blond, blue-eyed Bond Daniel Craig.

I managed to avoid most of the reviews for this movie, and went in pretty much blind.

I can say I was pleasantly surprised by this movie.

Grittier and much more realistic than past Bond outings, it managed to modernize the popular spy series for a new century.

And Daniel Craig is most definitely not your parents' James Bond, or even Timothy Dalton or Pierce Brosnan.

I grew up on the classic James Bond — Sean Connery and Roger Moore, and up until now, Sean Connery was my favorite Bond.

I have only seen one Dalton/Brosnan movie apiece, and I wasn't impressed. The only thing I liked about "GoldenEye," Brosnan's first Bond flick, was the scene where Sean Bean, as the bad of the movie, questions Bond about his seeming inability to succumb to efforts to off him.

Plus the movie was a good way to get away from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season.

In all, between the radio and movie theater, it's good to know there are such diversions available here, to help celebrate the season, or to take a few moments away from it.

We're lucky to have such a radio station at the community college level, and a movie theater that gets the Hollywood blockbusters.

Just one more thing to be thankful for this time of year.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcox@nwkansas.com.

Someone had better find the answers

It appears we have lost the services of a trusted physician in our community. Has justice been served? Have we been apprised of all the circumstances surrounding this battle? Is it a battle over medical competency or a battle over personalities and power?

Why am I writing, concerning this issue? I don't even have a dog in the fight. Dr. Hildyard has not been my doctor and Citizens Medical Center hasn't been my primary source of medical treatment for several years. Hildyard was not my doctor, quite frankly, because he was too popular and it required appointments too far in advance to get in to see him. Citizens Medical Center has not been my primary source of medical treatment because my doctor is in Oakley. Why am I doctoring in Oakley? Because of the rapid turnover of doctors practicing in the clinic east of the hospital in Colby, I now travel to Oakley.

I feel compelled to address this issue because I'm not convinced the doctor has had a fair evaluation and trial. Also I write because many friends have encouraged me to do so. But, the most compelling reason to address the issue is health care in rural areas and specifically Thomas County and the immediate counties around us. Do our professional medical people have to pass the litmus test of a select few? If so, we will find it harder and harder to attract competent providers.

According to the report in Friday's *Free Press*, letters or requests from friends should not influence me at all. Even though the healing arts board received hundreds of letters from support-

Ken Poland

● Ken's World

ers of our doctor, they deemed them of no value in their deliberations concerning the issue. Where did they get their information that convinced them to ignore the recommendation of their own appointed hearing officer? Why did they even bother to appoint him if they were going to ignore his findings if those findings didn't support what they intended to do, anyway?

Who appoints the members of the healing arts board? What are the qualifications to serve on a board with such power as to pull the license of a physician who is probably the most popular physician in a community? Who gives them the power to pull a physician's license on testimony of disgruntled peers and nurses who feel threatened by that physician's popularity and overbearing personality?

Is there any evidence that the accusations have any substantial basis? Have any of those accusations resulted in charges being filed and heard in a court of law? What is the authority of a district judge, if they can't over rule the findings of an appointed committee or lower court? Has our judicial system been cowed by an administration that thumbs its nose at any attempt

by the courts or legislature at holding them accountable? Has the healing arts board taken their cue from the national administration that allows them to only pay attention to evidence and reports that support their own agenda?

This whole thing is beginning to smell like dirty politics and special interests. Have we become complacent in our acceptance of authority that doesn't need approval beyond its own little clan and special friends? Are we willing to relinquish authority to a group of bureaucrats that don't see the need to look beyond their own selfish interests?

It is quite apparent that I have more questions than answers. I live in a community that has supported a political party that has trampled on individual freedoms; our environment and national popular opinion. That political party or system has cherry picked its intelligence sources and excluded any dissenting opinions. Is it any wonder we are now suffering the consequences of a State Board that appears to be doing the same thing?

Someone had better find some answers and it is quite evident those answers won't come from a cheering section or a few cheer leaders. We must demand competence from the system. Both sides have their cheer leaders. Neither side appears to me to have competent leaders and spokespersons.

We cannot afford the economic costs to our community and we certainly cannot afford the loss of health care providers.

Ken Poland occasionally contributed to the Colby Free Press

Mallard Fillmore

● Bruce

Tinsley

