

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Time should heal the losses

Once again, Colby school administration is back in the huddle finding a football coach.

With Bob Ray's resignation approved Monday, Colby will be looking for its third coach in as many years when the 2007 season kicks off.

Ray was not here even 12 months but will be remembered as the coach who broke the Eagles' losing streak that goes back to the early stages of the 2004 season. Ray and the Eagles defeated Hugoton this past season, Colby's first win in 20 games.

The football team is not the sole or first priority for a high school, but like with anything else in public education, it needs a plan for success.

Fans' talk about who could coach leading up to the hiring of Ray will probably continue, if it has not stopped.

One of the items mentioned was to give a coach time to develop a program. If the coach leaves soon, like Ray, so be it. He had that choice. You can fine him for breaking a contract early, but you can't force him to stay.

Golden Plains sports talk show host Rich Epp once estimated Colby football coaches stay an average of three years. A freshman won't have the same coach when he is a senior. That does not provide the foundation and stability most things need.

Colby has success with longtime coaches. Look at what Lesley Wagoner has done in volleyball and Bob Mannebach for the cross country teams.

The week Colby played Saint Francis in football, some fans said Colby should use Saint Francis as a role model for its football program. Those who know Saint Francis football know the growth and success it has had with the same coach.

Tim Lambert started coaching the Indians in 1993. When he started work at Saint Francis in 1992, the team would have a combined 1-17 record between 1992 and 1993. Like Ray, Lambert went 1-8 in his first year at St. Francis.

But things started to change. The next year, Saint Francis finished 5-4.

Since then, Saint Francis fans have become used to winning seasons and playoff games. This past season, Saint Francis lost 6-2 to the incredible powerhouse of Smith Center in the playoffs.

Saint Francis was the only team in the playoffs to hold Smith Center to less than 46 points. Yes, 46 points. Smith Center went on to win the state title. Some have joked Smith Center should join the Big 12 North.

Lambert once told Saint Francis' newspaper the program's success is because of "kids who work hard, not afraid to sweat and a supportive administration."

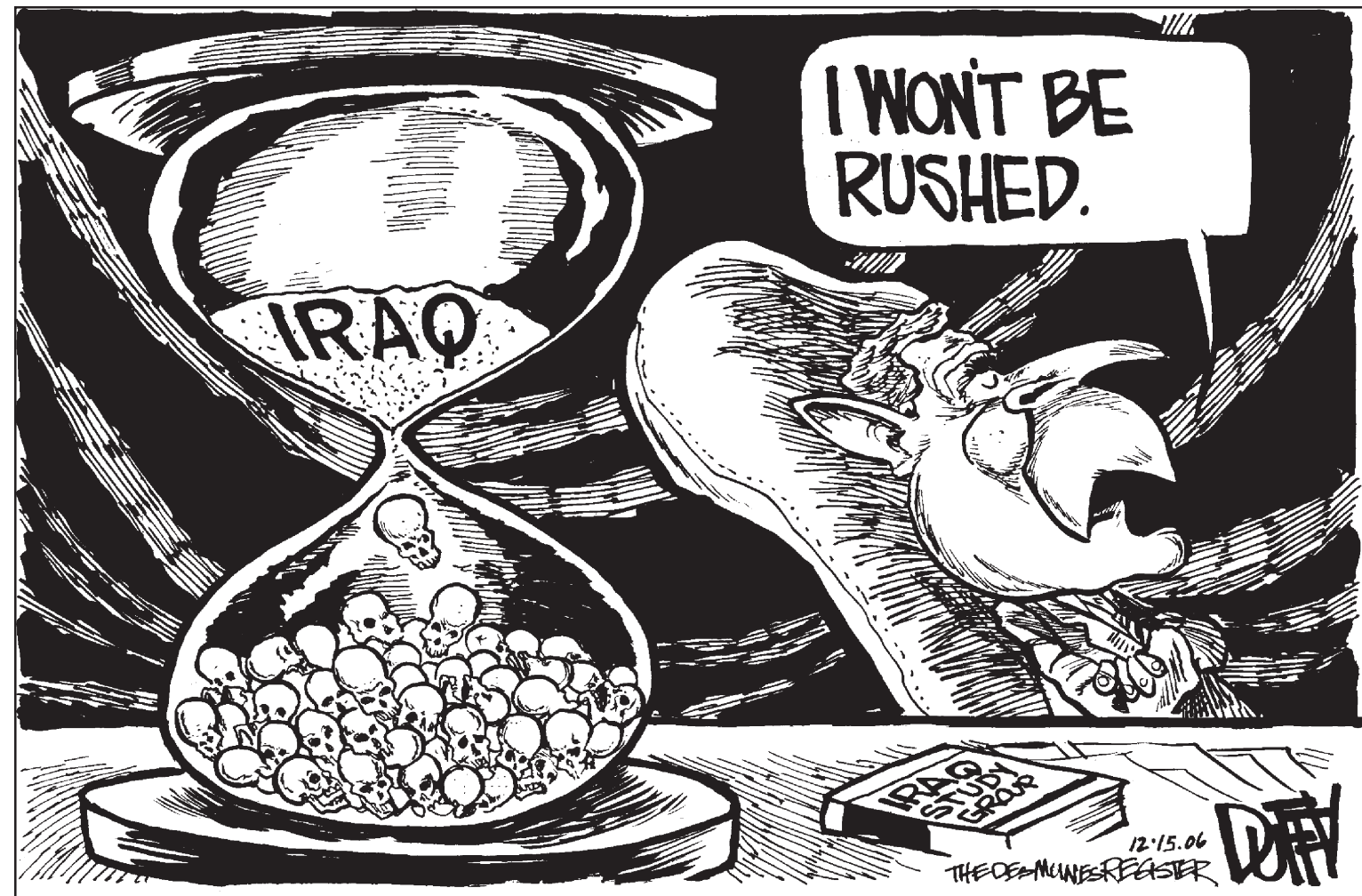
That is the foundation for any high school sports program. Kids want to know who they will be working and sweating for as a freshman and as a senior.

Coaches interested in coming to Colby High, please stay for the long haul, our student-athletes and the program need the stability.

Colby also wants to compete with the likes of Smith Center — and Saint Francis.

— *John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.*

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*.



Wishes

Wishes are pretty common this time of year. Kids are wishing for the new, best toy out this year. Parents are wishing for all the money needed to grant some of those wishes. Families are wishing get-togethers will go well.

During the past year, I have made my own wishlist, but it's not the stereotypical list.

I wish I could be like Randy Regier.

I met Randy through church and he is a wonderful source for our occasional farm-related stories. I was really touched by Randy this summer. His father died and friends of the family told me he had a close relationship with his dad. I went to the family visitation and was inspired by Randy's strength and composure then. Days later, I played softball with Randy and he was still the same. You couldn't tell what happened to him. I was again moved by his strength, composure and faith.

I wish I knew more about wrestling.

Lived in Iowa which is the best wrestling state — period. Go to just the first-round of the Iowa high school state tournament and you'll see, and feel, why. I never really caught on to the fundamentals of the sport though. I was too distracted by other sports, but I respect wrestling and those kids who participate. I'm still learning how points are scored and techniques. If you have one of those "Wrestling for Dummies" books, please send it my way.

I wish I could be like Ralph Fischer.

Ralph, who runs and organizes volunteers for Colby's visitors center, asked me if I would help. I volunteered a couple of times and absolutely loved it. I like how Ralph interacts with people he has never seen before. He is that "grandpa-like



John Van Nostrand

• Line in the Dust

personality." He is comforting, polite and a brilliant conversation artist.

Some have said our center is the best one in the state. They are probably jealous because they don't have someone like Ralph as their representative. It's not what the building looks like or what amenities there are - who is inside is what counts.

I wish I could be like Kathy and Gene Robert.

This year, my wife Jennifer and I, along with the Roberts, went through a lengthy, detailed course on how to raise children.

Gene and Kathy have been foster parents for many years. Their experience and input about how to raise children, even ones who are not biologically theirs, are compassionate, focused and motivated. One would think their kids were biologically theirs. They are a wonderful couple. We are planning to do that course again starting next month.

I wish Kansas and Wichita State would play each other in basketball every year. Many other states have those kind of rivalries. Why doesn't Kansas? Fans deserve it.

I wish I had the multi-tasking skills like....

School secretaries/receptionists may be the most underrated people in the business. We call those schools and people just about everyday. They always find the person we are looking for, naming the kid in the picture, sending us a copy of that document from last night's meeting, confirming the time an event is supposed to happen ... and the list goes on.

I wish I could be like Michael Schriener.

I met Mike at College Drive Assembly of God Church when Jennifer and I were finding a church to go to. I thought Mike was the welcoming committee at that church. Even though we chose another church, I still see Mike every once in a while and enjoy his company. Mike does not know a stranger and more importantly, did not make me feel like one.

I wish work would start on the Bosselman truck/travel stop planned near Colby's east Interstate 70 exit. I can't wait to put Wendy's into my rotation of Colby's fast-food restaurants, provided Wendy's is still part of the plan.

I wish I knew the Wilson family's secrets.

I met Amy Wilson earlier this year and wrote a feature story about her being homeschooled. She is at Colby Community College now. Amy's older sister, Kayla, helps lead my children's AWANA group. My kids think the world of Kayla.

After Amy's story ran, some people told me the only thing wrong with that Wilson family is there needs to be more of them. They are a role model family.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

— *John Van Nostrand is publisher of the Colby Free Press.*

Your turn

No patient or family brought a lawsuit

Tom Carroll Atwood

This letter is to answer a couple of questions that Ken Poland asked in the paper on Monday (Dec. 11).

My name is Tom Carroll. I live in Atwood along with my wife and four children. We have gone to Dr. Hildyard and the Colby Medical and Surgical Center for 17 years and we have illnesses and injuries going on now, where we need our primary care doctor.

I have called the governor's office and the attorney general's office and the only answer they could prove was that the Kansas Board of Heal-

ing Arts positions are appointed by the governor.

The attorney general's office says that they have no authority over the board of healing arts.

I understand that there have been several situations that have happened in the Citizens Medical Center by doctors and nurses that could be grounds for lawsuits if people wanted to pursue them. I have been a victim of a lawsuit recently, that I could not afford to fight. I know how hard it is to get honest answers out of dishonest people — it can't be done.

I came from Oklahoma 32 years ago, we used to have a lot of grand jury investigations. In my

opinion this situation now with the Kansas Board of Healing Arts, the Citizens Medical Center board members and the governor's office all would be prime candidates for investigation. A doctor that has lost his license for being a threat to the public, yet there is no patient or their family bringing a lawsuit. I think this is all about politics and fear of lost earnings at the hospital.

This would be a great story for "60 Minutes" or John Stossel's "Give Me a Break." I know that this issue would not hold up if it could all be brought out into the light. I also believe that people reap what they sow.

It just doesn't make sense

Julie Miller Damar, Kan.

I was reading in the paper the other day about a man who was charged fines and got put on probation for the killing of a buffalo.

It got me thinking that a year ago from Octo-

ber, my mom and her boyfriend were out for a ride on their motorcycle in town when someone failed to yield and killed them both.

That person only received a failure to yield ticket - around \$70 and had to pay a minimal court cost.

It just doesn't make sense to me that a person can get more punishment for the killing of an animal than a person who killed two people.

The way I see it is if you want to kill something in Colby, make sure it's a person or two in a traffic violation rather than an animal.

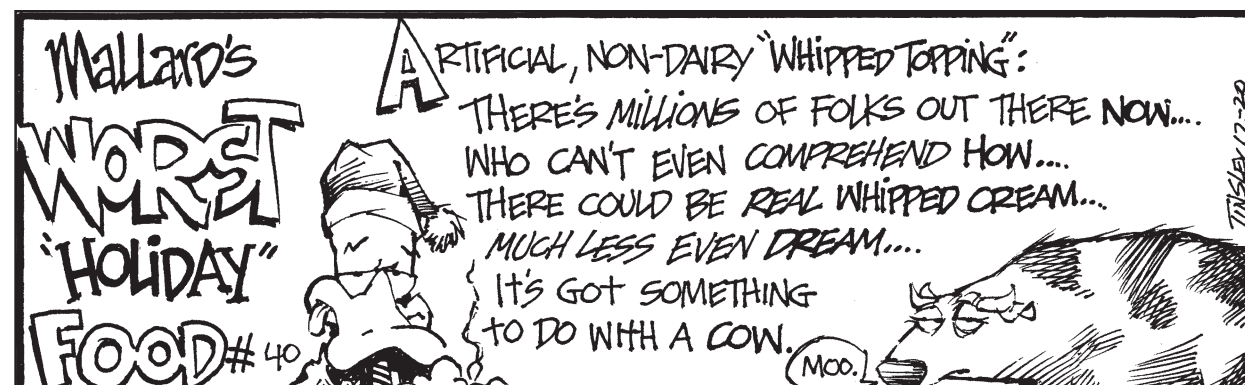
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• Bruce

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