

Opinion

Segregation is here

By William A. Collins

Birds of a feather,
Flock together;
Much akin,
To whitish skin.

Race relations are fraught with irony. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution prohibits governments from requiring schools to be segregated.

In 2007, it may well prohibit governments from requiring that those same schools be integrated. Sounds pretty even handed, no? Well, no.

The practical outcome is plain. Here in Connecticut where school districts follow town lines and are consequently small, concerned white folks in a mixed town can simply move across the border to escape blacks. But if the Court rules for the plaintiffs, even that little move may no longer be necessary. Busing for integration would be outlawed, so towns could internally segregate themselves even more than they do today, simply by use of zoning and differential housing prices. Neighborhood schools would be the rule.

In states with bigger (countywide) school districts, the impact would be greater. Major busing often goes on in those places, so that today's fleeing whites often have to move long distances to escape black faces. No more. Most could then stay right in their old neighborhoods and let the schools resegregate themselves as God intended.

One big loser in such a realignment, however, would be private schools. A hefty percentage of their enrollment now, especially in the South, derives from folks who want segregated education but don't want to bother moving. Thus with towns no longer able to bus for integration, the public schools would gradually resegregate themselves to an acceptable level, and parents could save a bundle by not having to move. That's the bad news for private schools.

But it's all bad news for the blacks. The great crusade for integration culminate in 1964 with the Civil Rights Act. The aftermath of that national groundswell for equality carried on for several decades. It established itself in statute, regulation, ordinance, corporate practice, and affirmative action. But that enthusiasm for integration has waned, and other segregating social forces have gained in prominence.

Dominant among these is money. White median family income is \$50,000 per year; black median income, \$30,000. The segregating implications of that disparity are huge: home ownership, neighborhood, health care, school quality, education level, playmates, savings, and net worth. All these impinge on the ability of blacks, and to a lesser degree Latinos, to compete in America's white-designed economic race.

For example, if the home mortgage system is stacked against you, it is very hard to build a family base of wealth.

To make matters worse, historically the working class mostly rose to the middle class through manufacturing jobs, now largely lost overseas. Workers in the '50s and '60s used that steady income to climb to the owning class with FHA and VA mortgages, then largely denied to blacks. The lingering effects of such prejudice, much like the lingering effects of slavery itself, still today make it very hard to pull yourself up by your bootstraps.

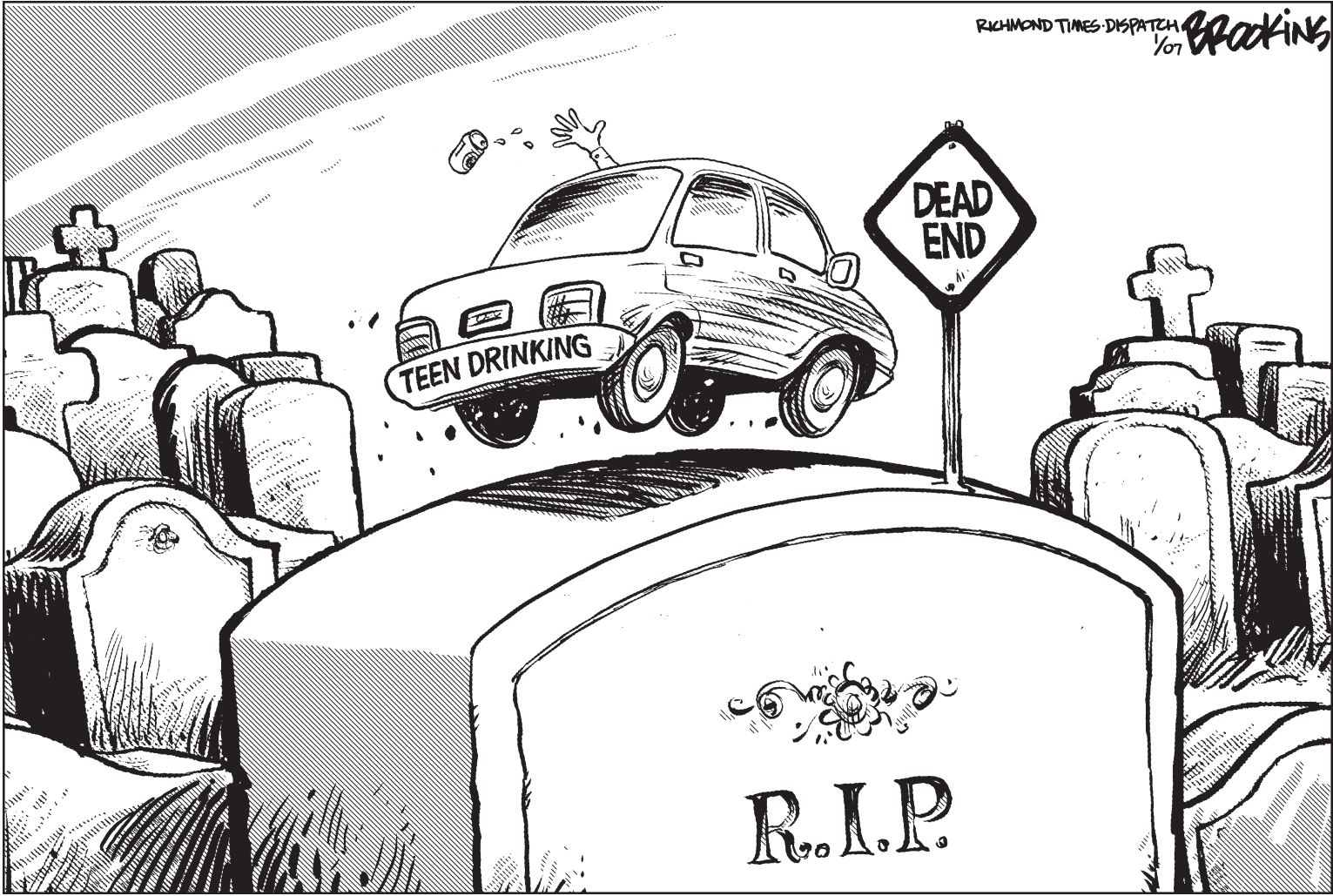
Also, impeding self-help has been the steady erosion of Pell Grants, originally designed to bolster the poor through college. Their decline matches a devastating steady rise in tuition.

Nor is racial equality enhanced by uneven law enforcement, especially for drugs. Suspicion, enforcement, and sentencing are all heavily weighted against blacks. Unless they have a great jump shot.

So now, the Supreme Court is being asked to further consolidate the racial separation that our forefathers visited upon us 10 generations ago. As yet, no end is in sight. Thus, it seems that the Bible may have to be rewritten to increase its estimate of the length of our punishment. Ten generations may just be a drop in the bucket.

Columnist William A. Collins is a former state representative and a former mayor of Norwalk, Conn. Distributed by MinutemanMedia.org

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*.



Breaking cabin fever

Like many people in Colby, I spent New Year's Day weekend snowed in. And of course, new snow last weekend pretty much kept me at home, with the exception of going out for a photo assignment and to the store.

This weekend wasn't so bad, but two weeks ago, I nearly went stir-crazy.

I watched most of the DVDs I received for Christmas, and listened to two of the three CDs I got, cooked some new recipes and finished reading a book or two.

This weekend, more of the same — abusing my DVD player and this time gluing myself to the SciFi Channel.

With winter not even a month old, there is still plenty of opportunity to get more snow, and spend a few more days snowed in before spring arrives.

In that vein, I offer a few tips on things to do to keep cabin fever from setting in when the snow starts to fly again.

Of course, movies are probably the most obvious choice. Old movies, new movies, rented movies or something from the bottom of the movie collection that hasn't seen the light of day in a while.

Watch as a family, or send the kids to their room to watch their own, like a Disney flick or two.

Reading a good book is another good choice. The library has plenty to choose from. A book I would recommend related to being snowed in is Stephen King's "The Shining." Perfect for that day when you can't get outside because of the snow.

Time on the Internet is another option. Looking up something that is interesting or unusual, or just to waste time.

One of the best for both pursuits is



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

www.imdb.com. The Internet Movie Database has movie news and almost all the information one could want to know about their favorite movie, including quotes, shooting locations and trivia.

An oldie but a goodie is <http://www.virtual-bubblewrap.com/popnow.shtml>, where virtual bubble wrap can be popped. All of the satisfaction without the mess.

Newer but still fun is youtube.com. Almost anything videotaped or had been on television can be found here.

One of my favorites on there is the commercial with the cat and ceiling fan.

People can upload their own videos for the world to see, or look up anything else.

Feeling creative? Indulge in a little poetry at <http://www.magneticpoetry.com/magnet/>.

From the makers of the real world magnetic poetry, the site has a place where the magnetic squares can be manipulated into poetry online.

Giving into domesticity is always an option, too. Cooking, organizing, or cleaning can get the house whipped into shape post-holiday, as well as give one a decent workout.

And with so much snow on the ground, why not make something of it?

A few sites, such as allrecipes.com have reci-

pes for snow ice cream.

Though being snowed in can be an excuse to kick back and relax a little, with power outages around the county, it can also be a serious, dangerous time.

I found the federal Centers for Disease Control Web site has tips on what to do when the power goes out. (<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/poweroutage/needtoknow.asp>)

It has tips on how to deal with food and water during an outage, extreme cold, what to do in an emergency and more.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency also offers the following tips

(<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=4615>):

• Keep an emergency supply kit in your home that includes a battery-powered radio with extra batteries, canned food and a manual can opener, flashlights and battery-powered lamps for power failures, wood for fireplaces, and rock salt to melt ice and sand to improve traction.

• Make sure your car is in proper working condition and includes blankets, warm clothing, booster cables and tools, bottled water, dried fruits and nuts, a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher, flashlights and batteries, a shovel and ice scraper.

• Wear layers to protect yourself from the cold. A hat, scarf and mittens are also essential protection against winter weather."

All common sense tips most people know, but it doesn't hurt to have a reminder.

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

Opening of the 2007 session

The 2007 session officially began at 2 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8 with remarks from newly elected leadership and each of our members taking the oath of office. Shortly thereafter, the House Republican Caucus announced the 2007 legislative agenda, taking the lead in detailing the year's top priorities.

House Republican Agenda

Agenda items include funding the current school finance plan without a tax increase, providing tax relief for Kansas businesses and property owners, providing affordable access and services to all Kansans, relieving the burden of increasing premiums for individuals and small businesses and putting Kansans in charge of their health care dollars. The goal for immigration is to ensure Kansans are not burdened by the cost of state services for illegal aliens, to crack down on businesses utilizing illegal aliens and to punish those who deal in false identification documentation.

Another goal is to encourage our state's entrepreneurial spirit by utilizing our natural resources, history, and people as well as encouraging private sector job growth and the reduction of the state's economic dependence on government jobs. House Republicans plan to equip Kansas law enforcement agencies and prosecutors with the necessary funds for better protection of Kansas citizens and to toughen penalties for those who prey on children and seniors.

The last objective is to reform campaign and election laws in the areas of advance voting, satellite voting, identification to vote and reporting during the 10 day black out period prior to



Jim Morrison

• Capitol Review

elections.

Senate "Priorities for Progress"

Tuesday the House initiatives were echoed by the Senate Republican leadership's "Priorities for Progress" which designates public education, health care, government reform and reorganization, energy, business climate and jobs, public debt, life sciences, seniors and retirees, immigration, environment, public safety and campaign finance and elections reform as their top issues this legislative session.

Clearly, many of the issues highlighted by the Senate overlap the House Republican agenda, confirming that these are in fact the most pressing issues for Kansans at this time.

The "State of the State"

Finally, the governor unveiled her legislative agenda at the State of the State last week. She focused on schools, complimenting the legislature for their initiative to pre-fund the coming years of the school finance plan.

She encouraged more local control and providing a multi-year plan for repairs at state universities. Additionally she wants to see increased scholarships and funding "rural oppor-

tunity" programs.

Her "On-track initiative" plans to match businesses with employees and provide state funded bonuses and is her proposal for guarding against the "brain-drain" currently plaguing our economy. The House addressed this issue by encouraging the reform of Vo-Tech training, ensuring that vocational training and workforce development programs are meeting the needs of the Kansas business community while ensuring efficient use of state and local resources.

Gov. Sebelius also echoed House concerns, calling for an increase in the Franchise Tax exemption. Hopefully we can repeal it completely. A graduated reduction of the unemployment tax was offered as well.

Most notably, the governor proposed universal health care. I hope to support legislation that increases access to health care by allowing portability, tax deductible insurance premiums for individuals and tax credits for small businesses that pay health premiums for employees.

Gov. Sebelius talked in terms about energy and environmental responsibility, encouraging Kansas to reduce their energy consumption and proposing that wind power provide 10 percent of our total energy by the year 2010 without any real details as to how that will be accomplished.

The State of the State illustrated that the issues are clear for Kansans, both Republicans and Democrats are faced with addressing the same priorities for their districts.

Jim Morrison is the state representative for Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan and Graham counties.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



To all those Iraqis still waiting in dread... Of the monster who ordered your blood to be shed... Two weeks have passed...



...SINCE HE WAS SEEN LAST... SADDAM HUSSEIN IS STILL DEAD.

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