

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Don't stop thinking about tomorrow

By John Van Nostrand
Everybody needs a little bit of Greensburg inside them. Not even a week after an EF5 tornado, about a mile-and-a-half wide, left only 5 percent of the town standing, Greensburg Mayor Lonnie McCollum said the town will be rebuilt. During the immediate shock and aftermath of the tornado, talk at coffee shops and office copy machines was about if, or when, Greensburg will be rebuilt. "I don't see this mess. I see what it's going to be," McCollum told the Associated Press. McCollum is showing good leadership skills. He has a vision and is trying to get the people in town to follow his lead. Rural America is fighting itself. Some of rural America's residents are getting older and growing in numbers. The younger generations are torn between staying and making the best of where they live or flirting with the opportunities in suburbia. After events like tornadoes, it's easy for residents to say it's easier to continue in another town compared to starting from scratch. McCollum wants Greensburg residents to share his vision. "Who wouldn't want to live in a brand new town? Who wouldn't want to have a business in a whole new town?" he said. There are already signs in Greensburg stating, "Construction under progress." That is the kind of attitude to have. Patience will be needed too. The debris will be removed. Insurance checks will be distributed. Plans will be made to bring Greensburg back. Small-towns rebuilding after tornadoes turned them upside down has happened before. In 1990, a tornado smashed Limon, Colo. Residents rebuilt and some say the town looks better than it did before the tornado. Other Kansas towns have recovered after significant tornado damage. Greensburg, and its approximate 1,400 residents, is too big of a town to be forgotten. It has everything a town needs to have, school, churches, hospital, daily necessities, and the list goes on. Giving up on Greensburg is also giving up on the future.
— 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*.

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'Kids say the darndest things'

While going through my mail this week, I found a Mother's Day tribute worth passing along. The questions dealt with moms and, according to the Red Barn monthly newsletter, were answered by elementary school age children. My personal thanks to the Red Barn staff for such a wonderful way of honoring moms. Here they are:
Why did God make mothers?
1. She's the only one who knows where the scotch tape is.
2. Mostly to clean the house.
3. To help us out of there when we were getting born.
How did God make mothers?
1. He used dirt, just like for the rest of us.
2. Magic plus super powers and a lot of stirring.
3. God made my Mom just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts.
What ingredients are mothers made of?
1. God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world and one dab of mean.
2. They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.
Why did God give you your mother and not some other Mom?
1. We're related.
2. God knows she likes me a lot more than other people's moms like me.
What kind of little girl was your Mom?
1. My Mom has always been my Mom and none of that other stuff.
2. I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
3. They say she used to be nice.
What did Mom need to know about dad before she married him?



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

1. His last name.
2. She had to know his background. Like is he a crook? Does he get drunk on beer?
3. Does he make at least \$800 a year? Did he say NO to drugs and YES to chores?
Why did your Mom marry your dad?
1. My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my Mom eats a lot.
2. She got too old to do anything else with him.
3. My grandma says that Mom didn't have her thinking cap on.
Who's the boss at your house?
1. Mom doesn't want to be boss, but she has to because dad's such a goof ball.
2. Mom. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.
3. I guess Mom is, but only because she has a lot more to do than dad.
What's the difference between moms and dads?
1. Moms work at work and work at home. Dads just go to work at work.
2. Moms know how to talk to teachers without scaring them.
3. Dads are taller and stronger, but moms have all the real power because that's who you got to ask if you want to sleep over at your friend's.
4. Moms have magic. They make you feel better without medicine.
What does your Mom do in her spare time?

1. Mothers don't do spare time.
2. To hear her tell it, she pays bills all day long.
What would it take to make your Mom perfect?
1. On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.
2. Diet. You know, her hair.
If you could change one thing about your Mom, what would it be?
1. She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.
2. I'd make my Mom smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it and not me.
3. I would like for her to get rid of those invisible eyes on her.

Sunday is Mother's Day and is a good time to let moms all over the country know how much they mean to us. As a child, myself, I can remember thinking there should have been a special day set aside for children — after all — there were days for moms and dads. When I tried to enlighten my own parents about this revelation, they responded with a smile, saying, "Children's day is every day." Of course, as a 10-year-old, I didn't think that was a very good answer at all. Now that I am a mom, though, I see where my parents were coming from and their answer is much clearer to me. I'm not sure what my family has planned for Mother's Day, but I pray every mom feels loved. I know I am and the feeling about my children and husband is mutual. Decker is editor of the *Free Press*. Her column appears on Fridays.

What was said then, may matter now

The following quotes (that I lifted from the internet) could be classified as prophetic warnings for the present situation we face, as a nation today.
"In most communities it is illegal to cry "fire" in a crowded assembly. Should it not be considered serious international misconduct to manufacture a general war scare in an effort to achieve local political aims?" Dwight D. Eisenhower
"How far you can go without destroying from within what you are trying to defend from without?" Dwight D. Eisenhower
How sad it is that the war in Iraq is dominating such a high percentage of the campaign rhetoric for our upcoming presidential election. We debate how to win or how to lose a war that should have never begun. What time is left after that debate is spent on how to enforce Christianity as our state religion.
When we have won that debate, then we frantically try making marriage and sexual persuasion the next most pressing issue facing our society. The marriage issue is baffling. Same sex marriage is being blamed for destroying the "sanctity" of marriage. Never mind the fact that divorce and "shacking up," in the heterosexual

Ken Poland

• Ken's World

ally inclined, is running rampant. And, don't forget, we have to give a little time in the debate to argue the merits of tax cuts. Of course, when debating, we don't mention that the top 5 percent of the taxpayers are getting 90 percent of the cuts. That pretty much sums up the Republican agenda. The Democrats are also debating how to win or how to lose a war that far too many of them authorized. They keep hammering away at the Bush administration, as if Mr. Bush was running, again, for president. They appear to be a way too long on criticism of not only the Republicans but also of their Democratic opponents. Their negative agenda buries any positive format.

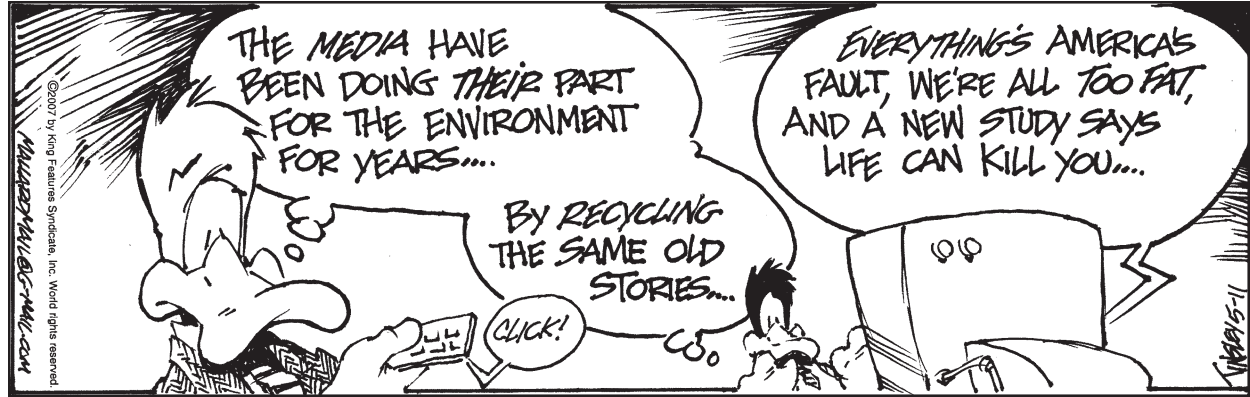
The Republicans and the Democrats are all running to and fro and chirping like a bunch of killdeer. Perhaps, a better analogy would be a flock of noisy, colorful magpie. What is happening in our society while being distracted by the above issues? The rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and the middle class struggles to keep from joining the poor. The veterans, not only from wars past, but even those from the present skirmish are not getting, in far too many cases, the proper facilities, mental health counseling, and, sometimes even, physical treatment for conditions directly related to their experiences in combat. We neglect the depravity that our children and elderly, who are unfortunate in not being members of the "upper economic class", are existing in. We neglect the physical structures of our education institutions. We fail to address seriously the threats to our environment. Drug abuse, both illegal and subscription drugs, drive by shootings, and gang violence are far more threatening to society than the "terrorist" attack from the Middle East. Ken Poland occasionally contributes to the *Colby Free Press*

About those letters . . .

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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