

# Opinion



## Free Press Viewpoint

### Rumble strips will be appreciated

By John Van Nostrand

Every so often, in states across the country, crosses and other memorial items are left by the side of the road where a fatal accident happened.

Hopefully, one day, with what the state of Kansas has planned we won't see anymore of those memorials.

The state of Kansas announced its plans to install rumble strips in the center of two-lane highways. The rumble strips, measuring about 7x12 inches and in the shape of a football, will warn drivers they have driven to close to the center of the road. Kansas officials have noticed the tendency of front-end collisions on two-lane highways. Some of those accidents may have been avoided by the rumble strips.

Rumble strips in the center of two-lane highways are not new and not only in Kansas. Years ago, the state of Delaware had a similar problem with the number of front-end collisions. The state installed a center rumble-strip on portions of suspect highways. Delaware officials eventually noticed the decrease in front-end collisions.

So they do work.

Kansas drivers need to be patient. The state said it will probably take at least 10 years to install rumble strips on every state, two-lane highway. Of course, there is a cost to do the work. One estimate has the work costing \$1,800 a mile.

Don't forget, a portion of the taxes drivers pay when purchasing gasoline, goes toward road improvement projects.

People should remember, it's better to pay for those gasoline taxes than hospital or funeral expenses from a car accident that could have been avoided.

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

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## When is enough enough?

If this showdown becomes reality, we want front row seats! If possible, we'd like to sit in the ring. Watching every move, every political punch. The fight of the decade.

Rumors are running wild that former Vice President Al Gore will enter the Democratic presidential race with the Nobel Peace Prize in hand.

Should he emerge as a candidate, his target would be the frontrunner Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton. It's no secret there's bad blood between the Clintons and Gores.

Political gossip centers in the country say a Gore entry won't materialize. They say he is content with winning an Oscar and now the Nobel Peace Prize. They argue he is at the top of his game and has no interest in seeking the office he lost to President George Bush in 2000. Despite winning the popular vote, that election took all kinds of twists and turns, eventually ending up in the lap of the U.S. Supreme Court, thus becoming the biggest political pretzel of all time.

Other voices say Mr. Gore has not lost his desire to become president. If he should enter, and that's a big IF, the rest of the Democratic field might as well fold up their tents because it'll become a Hillary-Al fight. And the media will really feast on that!

How will this change the Democratic face? Sen. Clinton will, no doubt, lose her edge. There are a lot of Democrats not totally satisfied with the current field and a Gore entry would give them one more option.

Both Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Gore have eight years experience in the White House. He, in an elected role, she in an appointed capacity. Comparing the two in terms of experience, knowledge and electability, Gore wins. Sen. Clinton upset a lot of folks after husband Bill was elected president, by saying as first lady she wasn't going to waste her time staying home and baking cookies. Her first real challenge as first lady was pushing a national health care plan. That was a disaster, and she would have been better served

baking cookies.

There's another issue that's hiding in the background, seldom mentioned, but could play a role if Mrs. Clinton should win the party's nomination for president. It's the Bush-Clinton dominance of the presidency. If she is elected in 2008 and subsequently re-elected four years later, the Bush-Clinton families will have run this country for more than a quarter century — 28 years to be exact. The elder George Bush served four years, Bill Clinton eight years and the younger George Bush is closing out his eight years.

When is enough enough?

That should be answered in 2008 — with or without Al Gore.

And by the way, we aren't making plans to be ringside. We side in with those who don't see Mr. Gore jumping into this thing.

He's got better things to do, like endorsing a candidate for the nomination, and then actively campaigning for success.

— Tom Dreiling, publisher Norton Telegram

## Native Americans lack national day

### From The Garden City Telegram

Students at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence are proud of their heritage, and for good reason.

Their ancestors were among the true natives of our land, and managed to endure in spite of being practically overrun by European settlers — a chapter of history that's led American Indians to target the day that honors the explorer whose arrival triggered the influx of immigrants from the east. In part of what's become an annual protest, Haskell students recently asked the Lawrence City Commission to erase the name of Columbus Day, the federal holiday being, and

call it Indigenous Peoples Day.

It's a plea to honor the country's natives, rather than observe what American Indians see as a day celebrating the conquest and occupation of their land. ...

Commissioners rightly acknowledged students' concerns, but conceded that the notion of changing the official name of the holiday would be best left to state legislators.

In an attempt to overcome a generations-long failure to properly recognize the nation's native people, U.S. presidents have proclaimed various days, weeks and months to be times to honor Native American heritage.

But there's still no day set aside that's achieved national legal holiday status, unfortunately.

So observances like National American Indian Heritage Month in November and American Indian Day in September pass with little if any notice.

Despite that oversight, American Indians at universities and beyond do their best to celebrate and preserve a culture and history that are invaluable parts of our national fabric. ...

Renaming Columbus Day wouldn't fix problems American Indians face today. Their energy should instead turn to ways to improve the future for generations to come.

### About those letters . . .

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## Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

