

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Beautifying towns

The Topeka Capital-Journal

Randy Speaker, deputy city manager, said recently he had asked the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization to consider conducting a study of South Topeka Boulevard.

About the same time, Shawnee County commissioners joined a partnership examining development of a 10-mile stretch of U.S. 24.

In both cases, those are areas worth examining.

At a time when competition for tourism dollars and economic development is as fierce as ever, making a good first impression is important.

While both studies will look at aesthetics, the purpose isn't solely to beautify the area for visitors and newcomers.

The U.S. 24 project is aimed at generating a long-term plan to facilitate economic growth in the corridor while also managing safety and functionality of the highway.

Recent growth in the area would suggest it's important to develop such a road map.

Besides retail, grocery and restaurant establishments that have sprung up at the junction of N.W. Rochester in recent years, plans were announced last year to build a new hotel along the highway just west of N.W. Topeka Boulevard.

It's also encouraging to see city, county and state authorities taking part. The study, funded by the Kansas Department of Transportation and the metropolitan planning organization, is expected to be completed next February at a cost of \$215,000.

The potential study of South Topeka Boulevard is worth discussing partly because the corridor leads to one of Topeka's prime tourist attractions, Heartland Park Topeka. ...

Many studies have been conducted here over the years, often with few tangible results.

The \$215,000 committed to the U.S. 24 study is a significant investment.

It's the responsibility of those involved in the study — and, should it come to pass, the South Topeka Boulevard proposal — to work together to provide the community with a solid plan for the money.

Anything less would be a waste — of money and an opportunity.

Where to write, call

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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Rm. 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

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We aren't alone in making mistakes

Newspapers all over the country make mistakes in grammar, misspelled words, punctuation and, of course, headlines.

I must admit we have our fair share of errors. In fact, now and then readers love to point this out.

I recall not long ago a faithful reader e-mailing me about a headline she found fault with. She was unkind and quite insulting, but like many jobs, it goes with the territory.

In recent weeks, I also had a gentleman upset because something didn't make it into the newspaper and he wrote me about that as well.

When some people are angry (not all) they have a tendency to find fault with everything about the particular target of their emotions.

For example, the person upset about the article felt it was his duty to blast us on everything. In his response, he told us nobody likes the newspaper, nobody reads the newspaper and my cats were ugly. Actually, I am kidding about the cats.

Seriously, though, I try to treat others the way I would like to be treated and when someone is hammering me or the institution, it's not what I want to "pay forward."

Overall, most people I come across in this business are friendly.

Regardless of whether someone likes or dis-



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

likes the newspaper, we know we can always improve on our coverage and minimize our errors. It's the reason I keep coming back to work — to make it better.

I think I have wandered off the point of this column, though. So getting back to where I started, newspapers make mistakes and the following headlines prove it.

In fact, for those who remember Maxine Nelson, our society editor for many years, she forwarded me these actual headlines from newspapers all over the country.

Even though Maxine retired many years ago, I often think about her and how she helped me through many tough times.

Here are those headlines and hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

- Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Expert Says (No, really?)

- Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers (Now that's taking things a bit far.)
 - Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
 - Miners Refuse to Work after Death
 - Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
 - War Dims Hope for Peace
 - If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile
 - Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures
 - Enfield Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide
 - Man Struck By Lightning: Faces Battery Charge
 - New Study of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group
 - Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft
 - Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
 - Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half
 - Hospitals are Sued by seven Foot Doctors
 - Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead
- Whenever I hear from someone taking apart articles, I have to remind myself that we are not alone and striving for perfection is the goal. We aren't there yet, but it's a plan!

Patty Decker is editor of the *Free Press*. Her column appears on Mondays.

Your turn

Who was there?

Clair and La Rita Schrock Colby

The buzz surrounding the Colby Football Camp should be about who was there not who wasn't. The athletes who participated in the camp and have spent the summer lifting and working on skills should have been the topic

of a positive story.

Negative comments about previous coaches do not have a place on the sports page as reasons why high school boys do not go out for a sport. They did not go out because they did not have the desire to work hard for the coaches and help their fellow team mates make the team a greater success.

Most of our Colby athletes go out for three sports and spend time to bring success to themselves and the teams. Support the coaches and the athletes that work hard every season for the team and are full of Colby spirit not those who blame others for not participating.

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.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

