

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

It can get worse

By John Van Nostrand

Had a bad day at the office? That weekend, home-improvement project didn't come together like you visioned?

Car won't start?

Although those are unfortunate moments in their own right, they really can't compare to hearing the haunting sentence, "You have cancer."

Having cancer not only impacts the person who has it, but it can change the entire family. Work schedules, trips to specialists miles away and changes in lifestyle all come into play.

Colby and the area will have a Relay for Life event tonight at Fike Park. Held at towns across the country, the event is a fundraiser and awareness program for the fight against cancer. There are people expected to be there who have heard those three scary words.

Part of the Relay for Life event is the survivor's lap. Those who have had cancer, and eventually beat it, will have a moment to ponder on that time in their life and to show support to others that cancer can be beat.

But not everyone diagnosed with cancer overcomes the ailment. The funds raised at Relay for Life events are used to help pay for more cancer research. Those who have donated to the event, either with the money or volunteering to organize, have done a wonderful contribution to the community.

If the printer at the office went on the blink, or the lawn mower sounds more like a bad cough, remember, there are people around here who have heard worse things.

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

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. 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.

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

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH 7/08 Brackins

A story about a song-and-dance

For my first three columns, I will be sharing a story. This story is about my experience of touring last year with the Continental Singers.

"Wouldn't it be amazing if all we did was sing and dance every night week after week?" I excitedly asked my friend towards the end of a concert we attended at the Berean church. I recognized many of the songs the group performed and enjoyed watching their bodies move to the beat under the colorful lights. Their harmony was perfect, the solos were outstanding, and just watching them dance made me tired. It looked exhilarating.

"I know! We should go fill out an application. The director said he would hold auditions here for those who apply," my friend said to me.

"Yeah, but there's no way I would actually do something like that," I said, already feeling a rush of anxiety just imagining myself singing in front of the director.

"What?! Are you kidding me, Michelle? Besides, you said yourself that it would be amazing to do something like that all the time."

"Well, yes, but can you really see me doing that?" I asked, throwing in a small laugh of amusement.

"Yes," she stated with a serious tone. I remained silent as she eyed me for several moments. "I am going to go apply and audition and you are coming with me!" She said this very forcefully, grabbing my arm and pulling me to the recruiting table at the back of the church.

I reluctantly filled out an application while repeatedly telling my friend about how unbelievable it was that I was considering touring with the Continental Singers for three, solid months. I was thankful that the director allowed my friend and I to audition together. That was good for my nerves.



Michelle Myers

• A Moment with Michelle

He seated himself at a piano, began tickling the keys to a familiar tune and told us to jump in whenever.

At the end of our audition, the director began scribbling notes on our application forms. I wasn't sure if I should pray that I'll make it or pray that I won't, so I wouldn't have to decide if I wanted to do it or not. While I was debating what to pray about, I noticed that he had stopped scribbling. He had a big smile on his face.

"You two are perfect for this! You sounded so good! We would really love for you to perform with us. I am going to send in your applications right away." He sounded exceptionally pleased and excited, which was far beyond my expectations. "I really hope you girls decide to do this."

While many choirs travel the surrounding area for several days to perform, this tour was unlike anything I had ever seen or experienced. It was the most intense, out of my comfort zone, insane, amazing experience of my life.

It all began in the fall of 2007 when I took the semester off my sophomore year, boarded a plane and flew to Los Angeles. Ironically, my friend wasn't able to go on tour with me, but I still managed to find a bit of courage somewhere to head off to the west coast by myself.

Under the direction of Omar Alexis Rodri-

quez of Puerto Rico, 20 girls and six guys gathered at a hotel in southern California. Known as Tour G, we represented 13 states and three countries. And even though we hardly knew each other at all, we started rehearsing the two-hour program for eight days before taking it on the road. We learned how to sing, dance, smile and breathe at the same time, while attempting not to smack each other in the face. Or at least make the smacking unnoticeable.

While our choral sound was beautiful and angelic, we soon learned that dancing was definitely not our strong point as a group. So, we would gather in the hotel parking lot early in the morning before practice, doing our best to learn and memorize each choreo movement. We practiced on break, in the bathroom, in store parking lots, anywhere that gave us enough space to perfect our moves.

At rehearsal camp, I was given the job of Business Manager. This meant that I was in charge of the tour's finances while on the road. I also filled out daily business reports explaining how we were doing financially, which I mailed back to the main office twice a week. Throughout tour, our revenue relied only on sales and love offering donations, often making our budget extremely tight and forcing us to be creative from time to time.

At the end of the eight-day rehearsal camp, we did a final dress rehearsal, then started chipping away at our tour schedule. We began making our way up the west coast and into Canada, then dropped back down into North Dakota and headed east to New York. At the JFK airport, we prepared to fly to our next destination: London, England.

To be continued...

Michelle Myers is a summer intern with the Colby Free Press. Her column will appear on Fridays.

Your turn

Be careful with endorsements

Chuck Frankenfeld Goodland

A politician endorses another politician for a job based in Goodland. Not much of a surprise. However, what is surprising is the choice.

I attended the forum at the Goodland High School Auditorium introducing candidates running for election in primary elections Aug. 5. [Andrea] Wyrick concluded her remarks by stating, "You can check my records at District Court Clerks office."

Wyrick has "served" Wallace, Logan and Thomas Counties as their county attorney. In Jan. 2005, she was quoted by Editor Julie Samuelson in the Western Times as stating,

"I can't imagine pleading a felony to a misdemeanor."

However, in her first year she did this 50 times in Thomas County alone. In the Colby Free Press before she took office she was quoted by reporter Tisha Cox as stating, "I am ready to take on the role of being proactive again—too many diversions are being handed out with plea bargaining which has minimal consequences for committing a crime." Again, in her first 80 cases ended in dismissal in Thomas County alone. Recently, it was revealed in the July 16 edition of the Colby Free Press that Wyrick had funneled thousands of drug forfeiture dollars to Heartland Christian School in Colby; a school her brother serves

as principal. All this while leaving the Colby School district and Sacred Heart School high and dry. A blatant conflict of interest. Should a county attorney who has such a disregard for the rights of victims be elevated to District Judge?

Jim Morrison states that experience is not necessary for a district Judge. He feels we need a new "unspoiled" face to fill the position. Does he really think inexperience is such an asset, especially since he is an incumbent politician himself? Would you use such standards when you pick a doctor or a lawyer?

Perhaps more thought should be given before endorsements are handed out.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

