

# Opinion



## Other Viewpoints

### Federal offices need age limits

Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska is a living argument for a constitutional amendment putting age limits on federal office. Sen. Stevens is 84. After this election, he would be 90 before he ran again — which he might well do if he is still in this world....

He was convicted of seven felonies recently for lying about gifts he received from a wealthy oil contractor who also is a close friend.

But Alaskans are forgiving folks who, like Kansans, like to keep incumbent elected officials in office....

It is not up to us to judge Alaska's political morals — but while we're writing this amendment, perhaps most Americans would like to see convicted felons disqualified for federal office, as well

And it should be obvious by now that most members of Congress have slowed down a great deal by the time they are 80 and some have become dysfunctional.

How members of Congress function affects the entire nation, not just the state they represent. With this in mind, it would be a good idea to prohibit anyone over the age of 70 to run for election or re-election to the U.S. Senate. Following the same logic, an upper limit of 74 should be imposed on representatives as long as those terms are kept at two years. Mandatory retirement at 76 is not an unreasonable limitation.

While the matter is being studied, the presidency should be included. The job may be the toughest in the country. Vigor, stamina and a broad intellectual horizon are required. Within what age bracket are these qualities most prevalent? Gerontologists — physicians who study and treat the elderly — should be surveyed to discover where the upper limit should be set. Our suggestion is somewhere below "older than dirt." ...

The worship of youth can be overdone. But so can indifference to the effects of aging. The country should look at the example Sen. Stevens has set and do the prudent thing.

— *The Iola Register, via The Associated Press*

### Where to write, call

**U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

**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. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

**State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (7785) 296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

### COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor@nwkansas.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

**Steve Haynes - Publisher**  
s.haynes@nwkansas.com

#### NEWS

**Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter**  
aheintz@nwkansas.com

**Marian Ballard - Copy Editor**  
mballard@nwkansas.com

**Marge Brown, Vera Sloan - Society Editors**  
colby.society@nwkansas.com

#### ADVERTISING

**Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Manager**  
jstewart@nwkansas.com

**Heather Wofter - Advertising Sales**  
hwofter@nwkansas.com

**Stefon Matthews - Graphic Design**  
smatthews@nwkansas.com

**Jessica Estes - Classified Ad Desk**  
jestes@nwkansas.com

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Tammy Withers - Office Manager**  
twithers@nwkansas.com

**Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator**  
support@nwkansas.com

#### NOR'WEST PRESS

**Jim Bowker - General Manager**

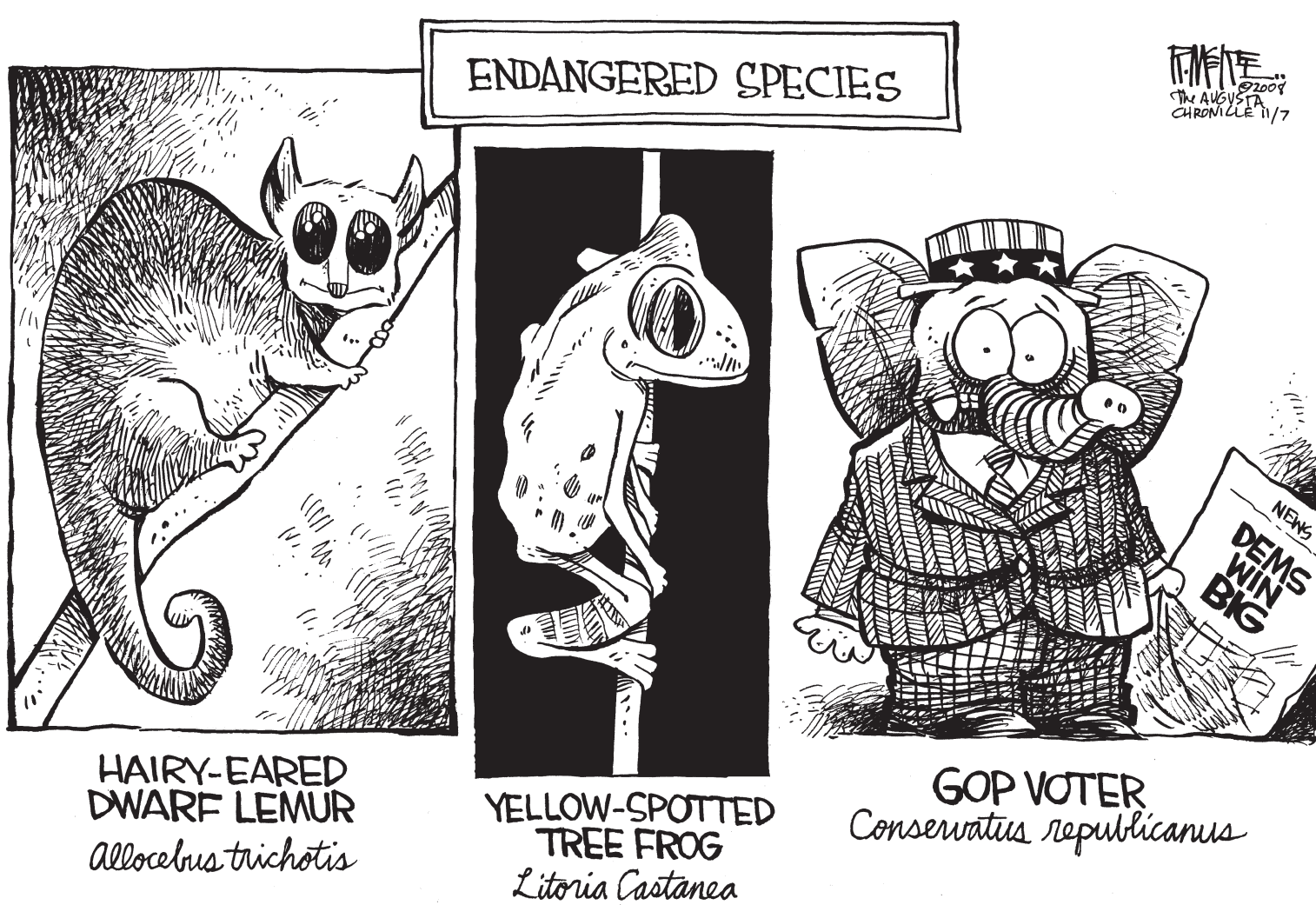
Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, James Ornelas, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Elizabeth Brock

**THE COLBY FREE PRESS** (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

**PERIODICALS POSTAGE** paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

**THE BUSINESS OFFICE** at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 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 herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail within 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.



**HAIRY-EARED DWARF LEMUR**  
*Allocebus trichotis*

**YELLOW-SPOTTED TREE FROG**  
*Litoria Castanea*

**GOP VOTER**  
*Conservatus republicanus*

## Journalism can give a voice to victims

I have introduced myself to countless people, and many of them ask what I'm studying in college. When I say journalism (along with Bible), they ask: "What are you hoping to do with journalism?"

I've been wondering the same thing myself. Ideally, I want my writing to affect the world. Or on a smaller scale, my dream is being able to write every day, knowing that once the words I've written have been read, someone's life has been altered or he or she has been prompted to alter the life of someone else, even if it is just slightly. Sometimes a little can be enough.

As I was talking with a friend about how my journalistic dream could come true, the issue of human trafficking arose. We both have a heart for helping people, but trying to verbalize the pain we felt for these children often left us speechless.

I was then reminded of a short film I saw earlier this year called "Fields of Mudan." Though the story itself is fiction, it documented the reality of human trafficking. The story centered on sex slavery in Asia, displaying what I call the essence of evil experienced by a young girl named Mudan.

The film opens with Mudan racing through the open range with her smiling mother. The girl thrived in her age of innocence, unaware of the injustice she would encounter too soon. Her dream of going to America, a place where dreams come true, was short-lived when she was ripped from her mother's arms and into



**Michelle Myers**

### • A Moment with Michelle

the hands of the heartless Madam Zhao, owner of a child brothel. At age 8, Mudan was introduced to modern-day slavery. Memories and a friendship shared with another brothel girl, Faye, are Mudan's only consolations as her future dims.

At the end of the film, tears flowed down my face and my whole body ached. I was completely powerless in that cold auditorium as the credits rolled. No one came to that girl's rescue, or any of them for that matter. The perverted men were not punished. The end was not resolved. All I could do was bury my face in my hands and pray for these precious girls in captivity.

As the movie replayed in my mind, I prayed for these girls again, trying to picture their sweet faces. I honestly don't know what little girls do for fun if they aren't privileged to enjoy what technologically advanced countries such as ours offer. But I remember being a little girl, oblivious to the wicked nature of some people. I even thought there was another girl like me, who did the same things I did,

but looked different and was somewhere else in the world.

Obviously, my view of the world has shifted since then. At 21, I feel that I must do more than absorb the things that will make my life easier and more enjoyable. I have no idea how to go about saving these girls whose childhoods are stolen for someone else's pleasure.

I often think that writing several hundred words will not even make a dent in this evil, which thrives beneath the surface, behind closed doors. I am absent of ability and knowledge to fight against human trafficking, in whatever form it presents itself.

But maybe I'm just not dreaming big enough.

*Michelle Myers, a Colby native, is a student at Multnomah University in Portland, Ore., majoring in Bible and journalism. She enjoys the 32 Starbucks found within five miles of her campus.*

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail s.haynes@nwkansas.com or colby.editor@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

## Farmers do care about animals

Farmers and ranchers have always adhered to sound principles of animal husbandry and providing the best care for their livestock. Society's views on animal welfare, on the other hand, continue to evolve.

Today, people are becoming more concerned for the animal's quality of life.

While there are extreme fringe groups, "activists" if you will, many people today have honest questions and concerns about the quality of life for animals while they are in the production environment.

Who are these people? These people are average individuals. Some are like you. Others may be like me. Many are one, two, three or more generations removed from the farm and no longer understand what goes into the care and feeding of farm animals.

Most of these people are not opposed to eating meat. They believe it is okay for people to eat animals for food. They just want to know while that sow is going through the production cycle she has a reasonable quality of life.

Raising livestock on the farm or ranch is a dynamic, specialized profession that has proven one of the most successful in the world. Only in the United States can less than 2 percent of the population feed 100 percent of our population — and other people around the world — as efficiently as we do.

Today's animal husbandry is no accident. Only because our livestock are the best cared for, we can provide such efficiency.

Farmers and ranchers work hard, long hours to care for and nurture their livestock. Farm-



**John Schlageck**

### • Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

ers and ranchers are neither cruel nor naive. A farmer would compromise his or her own welfare if animals were mistreated.

"We love our animals," says Dana Pieper. "We want to produce healthy animals that will one day feed others. We produce beef animals that are destined to be food for all of us."

Pieper, a fifth-generation farmer/rancher from Rooks County, is a hands-on producer. She operates a 120-head Hereford cow-calf herd. More than anything, Pieper wants to carry on her family livestock operation and provide an opportunity for her children to continue this legacy.

"Our Herefords eat, sleep, drink, walk and reproduce," Pieper says. "They're living creatures. Caring for them gives us a chance to be in charge of each and every animal's welfare."

Many consumers are unaware of farmers' relationship with their animals. They don't know how meat, milk, eggs and other food products wind up on their dinner table. Few know all that goes into caring, feeding and nurturing of livestock on farms and ranches across Kansas.

To help tell this story, Kansas Farm Bureau has produced a documentary, "The Care and

Feeding of Farm Animals." This program will debut to a statewide television audience at 9:30 p.m. next Monday. It will air on the public television stations of KPTS-TV (Channel 8, Wichita), KTWU-TV (Channel 11, Topeka) and the Smoky Hills Public Television stations (Channel 8, Lakin; Channel 9, Bunker Hill; and Channel 21, Dodge City).

This documentary illustrates how farmers and ranchers are adapting and illustrates the care, empathy and passion involved in raising animals for food in Kansas. It's a story of a long and deep-rooted family farming and ranching enterprise worthy of being told and retold. It's also the story of Kansas livestock producers who are tuned into consumer concerns and remain responsive.

Kansas farmers and ranchers are committed to continuing the enhancement of well being throughout the life cycle of our food-producing animals. Today's producers remain dedicated to using all the scientific measures available to develop long-term management options and short-term production practices based on scientific research about animal well being.

That said, today's consumers should continue to regard the profession of farming and ranching highly, and embrace a quality, abundant food source they value second to none.

*John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.*

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

