

# Opinion



## Other Viewpoints

### Helmet laws offer only a start to safety

It happens every spring in Kansas, like the onset of thunderstorms.

The lightning is an outbreak of motorcycle accidents as riders hit the road again after another long winter.

The thunder is debate about whether there should be a mandatory helmet law in the state.

But wait a second. Let's not move from A to B so fast.

The key to making roads safer goes way beyond a helmet law, which could only do so much to keep motorcyclists from dying or getting hurt.

That's not a matter of opinion. It's a conclusion based on facts from the Kansas Department of Transportation....

That's not a knock on helmets. Many motorcyclists would no sooner ride without one than without pants. Then again, many of them also realize that a helmet won't guarantee they'll survive a high-speed crash.

So we can fight about a helmet law until our throats are raw and our knuckles are bloody, and we'll still have dead or broken bodies on the roads each spring.

State officials have acknowledged as much, which is why they created a statewide motorcycle safety advisory committee after the number of fatalities jumped to 64 in 2006 from 35 the previous year....

Far too many drivers fail to watch out for motorcycles, while far too many motorcyclists don't take adequate care to avoid dangerous situations. Far too many members of both groups drive distracted or drunk, which is especially foolhardy for motorcyclists.

Look for motorcycle safety campaigns to start popping up in a couple of weeks, as May has been designated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration as Motorcycle Awareness Month.

Meanwhile, the helmet debate is likely to start simmering again, as usual. That's fine, but we need to spend at least as much time and energy talking about safe driving and sharing the road as whether the helmet law needs to be changed.

— *Topeka Capital-Journal, 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, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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### COLBY FREE PRESS

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Send news to: colby.editor@nwkans.com

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

#### NEWS

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

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

**Vera Sloan - Society Editor**  
colby.society@nwkans.com

#### ADVERTISING

**Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Manager**  
j.stewart@nwkans.com

**Heather Woofter - Advertising Sales**  
hwoofter@nwkans.com

**Kathryn Ballard - Graphic Design**  
kballard@nwkans.com

#### BUSINESS OFFICE

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

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### Gone fishin'



**Andy Heintz**

• Wildcat Ramblings

It's been a long week in the newspaper office. Long hours and breakneck speed have left me ready to sleep 12 hours or more.

There have been meetings to cover, sports events to attend, coaches to interview and people to talk to. The week has featured the usual mixture of compliments and complaints, triumphs and pitfalls and late nights and early mornings. In the midst of all this hyperactivity, I haven't had time to contemplate what to write about this week.

I thought about writing about the political issues of the day. This would not have been too challenging due to the substantial number of critical issues facing our country. The surplus of topics I could have covered include the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, our government's trillion-dollar deficit, the recent anti-tax tea parties, our country's quest for energy independence and our failing health care system.

But I just can't bring myself to write about politics this week. I think anyone who concentrates just on carefully scrutinizing government policy will end up constantly upset when he or she finds out how many times political rhetoric doesn't resemble reality.

The utter hypocrisy on display at the tea parties has left me a little turned off by politics at the moment. It is highly ironic that many of CINO's (conservatives in name only) are endorsing these rallies while ignoring the fact that for the last eight years they had rubber-stamped economic policies that drastically increased our deficit, supported the deregulation of investing banks which led to the collapse

of our economy and allowed President George W. Bush to ram policies through Congress that stomped on civil liberties and promoted a more intrusive government. I don't really know how to react to such obvious acts of self-deception and shameless opportunism.

So I will talk about something that never seems to disappoint me — the sport of fishing. Last week I turned off the television and put down the political book, picked up a rod, hopped in a car desperately in need of a tune-up and an oil change and headed off to Salina to fish a little trout stream below Kanopolis Lake.

For better or worse, I'm a person who takes fishing seriously. It has always been my way of escaping the rat race that is my life for a little while. So last Saturday, my Dad and I indulged ourselves in the mixture of tranquility and adrenaline that defines the stream fishing experience. We caught 13 trout between us in the several hours we spent trekking up and down the peaceful little stream, trying to satisfy the Huckleberry Finn side of our personalities that had gone unfulfilled in the winter.

The experience reminded me why I love

fishing so much. It is one of the only things I can partake when I don't have to worry about impressing our offending someone. The fish are indifferent to what I'm wearing, and they could care less about what image I'm trying to present to the public. The beauty of fishing lies in its simplicity and its authenticity.

Over the years, I have abandoned my usual daily schedule to escape to little streams and rivers that seem miles away from all the noise and distractions that are commonplace in my daily life. It gives me a good excuse to get away from everything without being viewed as a loner who tends to get mentally fatigued by all the complicated scenarios that arise in daily social situations.

For me, fishing is like a night of drinking — without having to deal with the hangover the next morning. I get all the enjoyment that comes from escapism without feeling like a metal hard-rock band is playing a song in my head when I wake up the next day.

So Dad and I watched the turtles and caught some fish as we straggled up and down the stream, losing weight, appreciating the beauty of tiny waterfalls and peaceful riffles, and trying to soak up enough of the day's experience to satisfy ourselves until the next time we can escape the doldrums of everyday life for some much-needed time on the water.

*Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.*

### She thought 'Religulous' was rediculous

I just finished watching the video disk "Religulous," a cross between "religious" and "ridiculous." It's a documentary narrated by comedian Bill Maher, who says he was raised by a Catholic mother and a Jewish father, but his early religious training was mostly Catholic.

As the film progresses, we discover Maher now has no religion at all and is trying hard to convince the rest of us he is right. He says religion is ruining this world and has been the cause of all wars ever fought on earth.

However, I think if we go back and examine the history of wars, we will find they were actually caused by greed, lust for power, jealousy, the need to be free from oppression, or simply someone or some country trying to get even with the other side.

Maher certainly didn't convince me there is no God and that religion is an evil thing. Actually I never have been one who believes every word of the Bible. That might come from being a writer myself and knowing how story tellers like to embellish their writing to make a better story, but I do think there has to be some truth to some of those Bible stories for all of those historians to have taken the time to write about particular people of their time. So, as it has been said, "Why throw out the baby with the bathwater."

I'm sure Maher was trying to be funny, because he chose to interview mostly people such as preachers we often see on television who are begging for money and don't care if they take the last cent from people who are living on Social Security checks. No matter what the business, you will always find someone who is



**Marj Brown**

• Marj's Snippets

dishonest enough to try to con the rest of us out of what little we have.

I know everyone who claims to be preaching the word of God is not really Godly, and that some have taken some very un-Godly actions, but I also know for a fact, there would be more people in the world dying of hunger if it weren't for religious organizations and Christian missions all over the world today working unselfishly to feed them.

My belief is, we, as human beings, just have a long way to go in our evolutionary development before we actually reach the form God intended for us. We simply haven't come to the realization that we are actually all brothers and sisters and we can learn to live together peacefully.

I, for one, certainly can't say for sure that Jesus, Mohammed or any of those other sacred entities we and other people all over the world believe to be holy, ever really existed; however, as a medical person who worked as a nurse for 20 years, I have to look at the human body as a miracle. It is simply too well organized to have been an accident.

Just look at the circulatory system, for instance. Or the nervous system. Look at how well the heart works with the lungs, how well the lungs work with the heart, and how well

the brain works with it all.

Take the tiny pituitary gland and all of the systems of the body it controls, and the thyroid and its many functions, and all of the other parts of our bodies that work so well together. Our bodies are a miraculous piece of machinery. We are too amazing to have been an accident.

As my thoughts fly above the earth and I look down on this planet, again I am astonished at the way the moon causes the tides, how the sun warms us and gives us energy and helps our vegetation to flourish, and how a cloud can be made from moisture brought up from the earth to be turned back into rain. The world and the universe is just too well choreographed to be something that just occurred for no reason.

No, Mr. Maher will never convince me there is no God. There just has to be some thing, some on, or some force up there, or out there, or among us, wherever it might be, that is greater, more powerful, more wonderful than any of us can even imagine, that created all of this.

If this Miraculous Being decided to send his Representative here on earth to teach us how we should live, I'm sure it could have happened and could happen again; and if that Wonderful Being wanted to allow that Representative to perform miracles, it would not have been impossible.

*Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. It's one of her favorite things to do.*

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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