

## Free Press Viewpoint

### First week leaves good impressions

First impressions often tend to color your viewpoint, be it of a person, a thing or a place, even long after you become familiar with them. Having just spent my first week as the news editor of the *Free Press*, I am still very much in the first-impression phase.

When I first drove through town, it seemed to me to have much in common with many of the other small mid-western towns that I have been through: Green parks right next to dusty fields. Bright restored houses next door to run-down '70s-era fixer-uppers. Hundred-year-old restored buildings and brand new schools. Everything you would expect from small-town America.

Things are starting to sink in for me, and I find there is much to like about Colby. The weather is decent, and although I miss the mountains from my time in Colorado, there is a beauty to the open plains that is beyond compare. The town is a place where people can feel safe and not have any fear of their neighbors. There are a lot of great places to eat, whether you like Mexican or Chinese or fast food.

What attracts me most to towns like Colby is the slower pace that life seems to have out here. It has the relaxed atmosphere that you just don't find in the city. Even cities of 20,000 or 50,000 people these days have as much hustle and bustle as cities of a million or two. I think that slower pace helps people be friendlier. On my first day here, I had two or three passing motorists wave. It was just a friendly gesture that you see so seldom outside small towns, but it really added to my first impression.

Even for the slower pace, it was obvious that the town has a lot going on. Nearly every apartment or house for rent that I checked out was full. That tells me there are a lot of people who want to live here, even if they don't want or can't afford to buy a house.

Colby Community College, of course, is a large part of that draw, and I heard many positive things about it even before moving here. Small towns tend not to grow in great leaps and bounds, but Colby shows many signs of slow and steady growth.

From what I have seen, this will be a great town to live and work in. Even with only one week under my belt, I am already enjoying my time here. I can only hope my positive first impression stays with me.

— Kevin Bottrell

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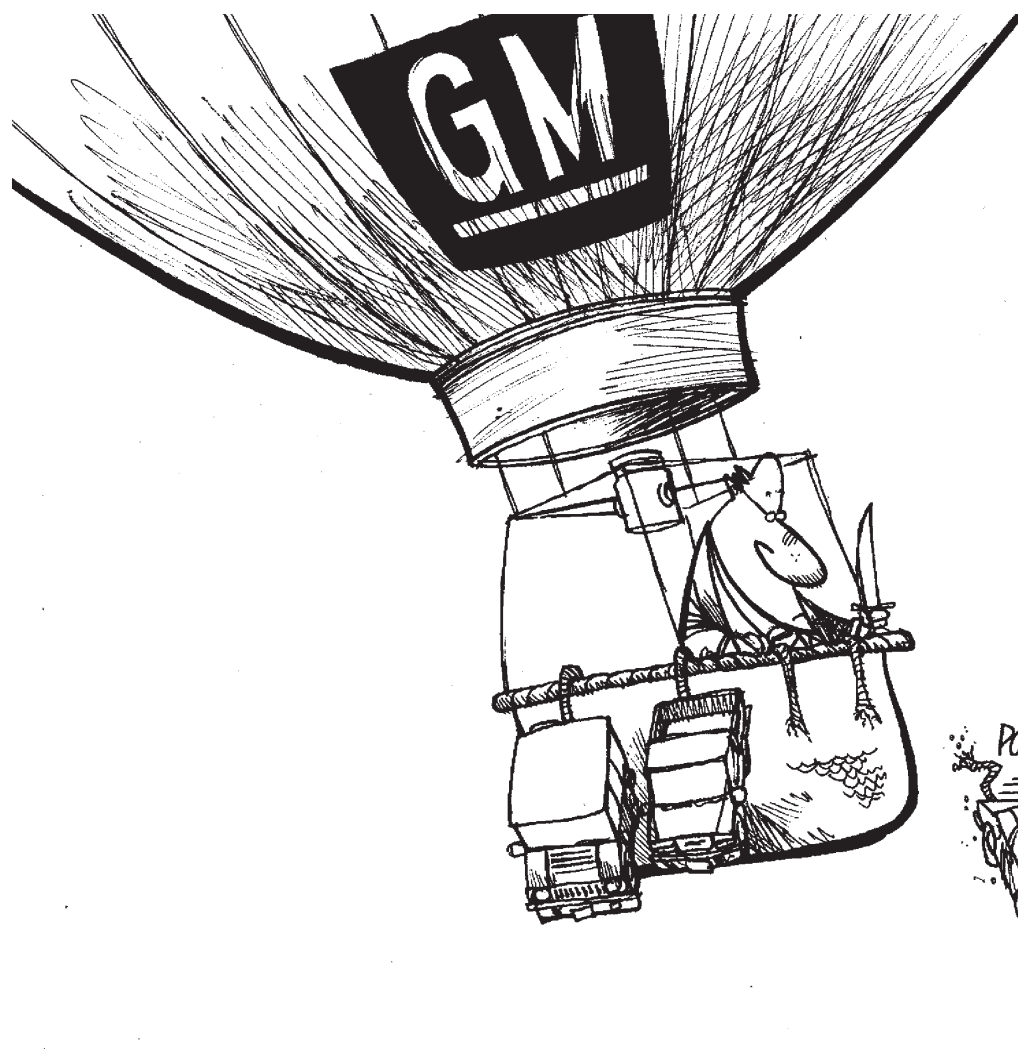
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## 'Drug War' needs a transformation

President Barack Obama should restructure the "War on Drugs" in a way that stresses treatment and education over enforcement and incarceration.

Since President Richard Nixon declared this war in the early 1969, American politicians have stubbornly continued to promote the utopian belief that drug use can be halted through arresting major dealers and breaking up drug cartels in America and overseas. What they fail to realize is that the drug-dealing economy is not based on the power of one person or group, it's based on the rules of supply and demand.

When one drug lord is arrested, another dealer will come in to replace him. When drugs are curtailed in one country, the narcotics traffic will just shift to another.

The only way to drastically decrease drug use in this country is to decrease demand. And to decrease demand in America, or any other country, governments must invest in treating addicts and creating a society where low-income citizens have other ways to make a decent living than drug dealing.

One of the major problems with America's war on drugs is that it has been fraught with double standards. Many times over the years, politicians have been willing to turn a blind eye while the Central Intelligence Agency worked with and protected drug dealers for "national security" and economic reasons. In his book, "The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade," Alfred McCoy gives examples of times when the government and the CIA chose to align with drug dealers to defeat what they viewed as the greater enemy.

"As our knowledge of the cold war grows,"



**Andy Heintz**

• Wildcat Ramblings

McCoy writes, "the list of traffickers who served the CIA lengthens to include Corsican syndicates, Nationalist Chinese irregulars, Lao generals, Afghan warlords, Haitian colonels, Honduran smugglers, Panamanian generals and Nicaraguan Contra commanders. These alliances may reflect only a fraction of CIA operations, but they had a significant impact on the narcotics traffic."

After CIA support for nationalist Chinese in Burma (Myanmar) in the 1950s, McCoy claims, Burma's opium production rose from 18 tons in 1958 to 600 tons in 1970. During the agency's covert war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, Afghanistan's harvest increased from an estimated 100 tons in 1971 to 2,000 tons in 1991 and continued to rise 4,600 tons after the war had ended.

Even after the cold war had concluded, our government continued to respond to the drug problems by filling up our prisons and working with foreign governments to eradicate drug use in their own countries. Recent attempts to suppress the worldwide drug trade have included the U.S. backing anti-drug policies of governments in Peru, Colombia and Bolivia.

Our alliance with the Peruvian intelligence Chief Vladimiro Montesinos did decrease the

harvest of coca from 22,000 tons in 1991 to 69,000 in 1999, McCoy writes, but Montesinos turned out to be very corrupt, bribing legislators, protecting local drug lords and sending arms shipments to a marxist terrorist group in Colombia known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. While coca production also declined in Bolivia due to U.S. backed anti-drug efforts, the progress made ... was offset by expanded production in Colombia.

Our country's anti-drug efforts in Colombia have included a close alliance with the military. This alliance has become controversial because while the military has been aggressive in going after the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, they have also worked with rightist paramilitaries in order to combat the leftist guerillas — despite the fact that these paramilitaries are also involved in the drug trade.

A *New York Times* article said the paramilitaries "collaboration with the military is becoming more overt and their involvement in the drug trade is deeper than that of the guerillas." While I have not followed Colombia closely of late, I would guess that even if we manage to decrease drug use in that country and eliminate the marxist threat, the always-flexible international drug trade will simply shift to some other country.

So please, President Obama, reform our drug policies in a way that is more humane and more economical.

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.

## Tax pie doesn't get any bigger

To the Editor:

I'm sure many of you mailed your taxes off on April 15.

How many of you are looking forward to the proposed taxes coming our way in the next few years? How many of you can afford these proposed increases?

How many of you feel, as I do, that our Congress, Senate and yes the president, are not doing the job they were elected to do? Yes, I know it has been less than 90 days since the inauguration, but how long are the American people going to put up with a tax burden that is going to cripple businesses and employees and make paupers of us all?

My dad (God rest his soul) spoke of this day 25 or more years ago. He said at that time, the government was too big and would get bigger, that people would be taxed beyond their means. More and more people would be on "the government dole."

This has all been in the works since shortly after the turn of the 19th century. The government has taken a larger and larger portion of the pie every year. The only problem is, they don't make the pie.

The Idea of a Free Republic that our Founding Fathers had for future generations is quickly becoming something that very few people understand or care to understand. The further we go down the road with this Congress, Senate and president, the more freedoms we will lose, the more vulnerable we will become to the very thing the Founding Fathers feared. That fear was that we would become more like the very lands they left to make a new life



**Free Press Letter Drop**

• Our readers sound off

Why do you think they wanted a Republic? Because the people would be in control of the government, not the government controlling the People!

As this country gets older, the government has more and more and more control. The government now controls what children are taught from preschool through their college lives.

Do you know why the Civil War was fought? It wasn't about slavery, as most books teach. It was fought over states rights. If the Civil War had been fought over slavery, then the emancipation proclamation would have been issued at the start of the war, not two years later.

The Indian Wars were not started by the Indians. It was the white man who wanted more and more and more because the government said it was ours. The white men broke treaty after treaty with the Indians, and what happened to the Indians? They were banished to the reservations and nearly annihilated by the government's greed and frenzy to have the land.

Who is to say it won't happen again? Look at some of the things that happened in the 1980s when some men stood on their own against the

government. What would happen if, as a town, as a county, as a state, We the People stood up against the idiocy, corruption and downright lawlessness going on in Washington?

What if all the states did that? I know this country could get back on her feet and stand tall in the world again.

We should never, ever be ashamed to stand up for our rights as American citizens. We should never be afraid to speak our mind. This is still America, the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave, and everyone has the right of free speech. But mark my words. If they could, they would tax every thought in our minds and every word that came out of our mouths.

God Bless America, and thank you for reading.

Jari Skiles, Colby

### Write to us

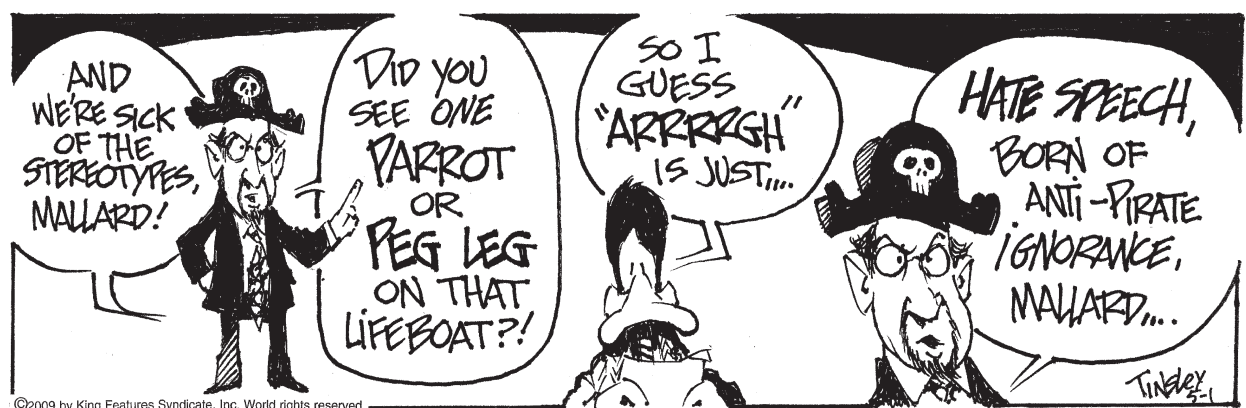
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We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise. Nor do we run form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality.

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



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