



## Free Press Viewpoint

### Writing the news harder than it looks

In past editorials, the *Colby Free Press* staff has explained how many of the aspects of the paper work in order to help readers better understand how we operate.

Of particular note was a piece written by Publisher Steve Haynes on the Briefly section. It laid out exactly what the rules are for Briefly, and since then, the quality of the Briefly submissions has seen a marked improvement in the completeness of information given to us. There have also been fewer requests that we have had to turn down.

Perhaps it is time for another entry on submitting general content for the news side of the paper.

Running that side of a newspaper is no easy task. You have to make sure that you have enough stories each day to fill up all the space in the paper not taken by the ads. This changes every day. No two ad setups are the same, and we have to fit what we have around what our ad department sells.

We get content from many places: Press releases, club minutes, law enforcement, columnists, funeral homes, the Associated Press and our own staff of writers. Content comes in by e-mail, fax, by people coming into the office or by our writers seeking it out. We spend much of our day sifting through the various notes and e-mails and stories, trying to decide what gets printed, when it gets printed and how much work will it take on our part before it becomes ready.

As you see, when things come in from so many different places and so many different people, it can be an awful mess. A press release from Colby Community College will be handled differently from an obituary from one of the funeral homes. The gardening column will be done differently from the police blotter. Our staff has to reconcile these differences into a consistent language and style, so it is easier for people to read the various parts of the paper.

We use a particular brand of English known as Associated Press Style. The AP Stylebook dictates everything from what words are hyphenated to placement of punctuation. Sometimes it conforms to the kind of English taught in schools, and sometimes not. Everything that we print is edited to conform to this style.

We also edit for content and clarity, which is what throws many people. People who submit content sometimes think it should run exactly the way they did it. In some cases, that might be possible, in some cases not. Some of the content that comes to us doesn't really fit newspaper style, but we still want it to go in the paper. And so we edit, rearrange or even completely rewrite some things to make them easier to understand and more succinct.

In some cases, specifically for birth announcements, engagements, weddings and obituaries, we have developed a more or less standardized format of how we say each bit of information and in what order it goes. The length of each item will vary by the amount of information given to us. We have done this primarily for clarity and fairness. Sometimes we have to ask for more information to fit the standard, and sometimes we use less.

The newspaper is here to serve the reader, and one of the ways we do this is by offering to post this information free of charge. We want people to submit content, we thrive on it, but we have to follow our rules before we print it. For the most part, we try to accommodate everyone. But we have rules we follow, and this means sometimes changing and sometimes turning down content.

— Kevin Bottrell

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## Only big corruption is acceptable

It's sad to see what passes for politics these days.

There is so much propaganda being spread on the cable news shows and through the Internet that it's a minor miracle when anyone is able to distinguish between reality and pure nonsense.

The surplus of smear campaigns being served up to the masses by corporate-funded public relations outfits and political spin doctors has left people with a distorted view of many of today's most pressing issues.

The latest hypocrisy to surface in Washington has been the "defunding" of a community activist group called Association of Communities for Reform Now, popularly known as Acorn. The shocking double standard involved in this case has nothing to do with Congress voting to bar it from federal programs.

Acorn, a group made up of poor and working-class people, has done many commendable things including helping many low-income people buy homes, but the organization has also had its share of corruption. A couple examples of unlawful activity members of the group have been involved in include founder Wade Rathke, trying to keep his brother Dale's embezzlement of \$1 million kept secret and a recent video that caught two of the group's employees giving advice to a couple of conservative activists disguised as a prostitute and a pimp about how to evade taxes and set up a prostitution ring.

These two women's behavior was lamentable, and they were fired after the video surfaced. So Congress' decision to cut the group's



Andy Heintz

• Wildcat Ramblings

funding is understandable even though the women's behavior probably does not reflect the group as a whole. What is hypocritical about this group being denied federal money has to do with those companies which have done far worse, yet still remain on the government payroll.

According to Jeremy Scahill, a writer for the left-wing magazine *The Nation*, the non-partisan Project on Government Oversight and Reform recently revealed that the top 100 government contractors made nearly \$300 billion from federal contracts in 2007 alone. Since 1995, these same contractors have been involved with 676 cases of misconduct and paid \$26 billion in fines stemming from fraud, waste or abuse.

Scahill said the government's three top war contractors, Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Northrop Grumman, engaged in 109 instances of misconduct and paid fines or settlements totaling nearly \$3 billion. The Bush Administration awarded \$77 billion in federal contracts in 2007 alone. Keep in mind that Acorn has received just \$53 million over the past 15 years.

Another large company guilty of illegal behavior is the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer.

Scahill said the company paid \$2.3 billion this September to settle several criminal and civil cases, including Medicaid fraud. The Justice Department called this "the largest health-care fraud settlement" in history. According to Scahill, the company received \$73 million from the government in 2007.

The hypocrisy involved in the recent anti-Acorn legislation has generated some push back from politicians tired of the corruption so evident in the prevailing system.

Democrat Alan Grayson, a Florida congressman, is calling for fraudulent military contractors to be under the anti-Acorn bill.

Grayson said the federal money Acorn has received over the past 20 years, "is roughly equal to what the taxpayers paid to Halliburton on each day during the war in Iraq."

Why weren't there tea parties over these examples of corporate socialism for rich, corrupt companies? Has the poisonous rhetoric in politics left the American people too divided to come together and demand we fix a broken system?

Do rules and ethics only apply to groups representing poor and working-class people? Has the heartbeat of democracy been effectively killed by big-money politics?

For the sake of our nation, I sure hope not.

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.

## New pool makes sense economically

To the Editor:

On Tuesday, Nov. 3, a proposed increase in city sales tax to pay for a new aquatic center will be presented to the citizens of Colby for approval. We encourage you to vote yes.

The current pool is 68 years old and has served generations of the citizens of Colby and surrounding areas well. Many fond memories have been created over the years with the use of this facility. Unfortunately, the life of this pool is coming to an end.

Simply stated, the current pool needs costly renovations and repairs to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and make it more user friendly for the modern day swimmer. These renovations and repairs would be a lot more costly than replacing the old facility with a newer style pool with features including, but not limited to, slides, play area, zero-depth entry, a working heating system, and of course, compliance with the law.

We are a group of people who own businesses in Colby, work within the community and most importantly and above all else, choose to raise our children here. We, too, will pay the additional tax, but we adamantly believe a new aquatic center would improve the quality of everyone's life in Colby.

If built, the aquatic center will not only provide a source of entertainment for Colby's families, but will also attract additional revenue from people visiting Colby to swim or residents staying in Colby to enjoy their own pool rather than driving out of town.

Please vote yes Nov. 3 for the families and children of Colby and Thomas County. For information, you can go to [www.colbypool.com](http://www.colbypool.com) or come to the the Town Hall Meeting at 7 p.m.



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

Tuesday at the Colby Community Building. The Aquatic Center Work Group, Colby Sherrie Wiedeman, Jennifer Burr, Holly Lynn, Kami Booi, Sondra Finley, Melinda Olson, Mandy Lanning, Kris Lemman and Shane Franz

### Freedom is at risk

To the Editor:

Wake up America. God is calling people in every town to awaken to the awareness that we are losing our freedom in this great country.

Our young men and women are giving their lives to protect these rights while we, through ignorance and complacency, continue our daily lives. Like children playing in the street, we are too busy with routine and preoccupied with immediate problems.

We didn't know this enemy would come unrecognized from within our government. We only know we feel helpless as restrictions are put upon us. We do not understand, but fail to investigate how this can happen.

The news media has failed us. The liberal view taught in colleges prevails in textbooks and radical extremists in positions of power, making us feel wrong to object. Liberalism

has lulled us into accepting that government should think for us and control all that affects us. This attitude causes us to feel powerless.

This is not about Democrats or Republicans; it is bigger than that. It is about the threat to our democracy. Socialism is about to envelop our government. These radical extremists now are presidential appointees called czars, 36 of President Obama's closest advisors. They are writing bills, such as health care, cap and trade, and the stimulus bill. They hate capitalism and some are Marxists and communists.

How could this be happening in America? While our military is fighting to protect freedom we are thinking on "cruise control." We are consumed with a spirit of blindness.

When are we going to wake up, America? Fox News is the only station telling the truth. A man named Glenn Beck is our "Paul Revere," crying out to wake up and boldly take action against this invasion.

We have become lazy about remembering what our forefathers wrote in the Constitution as the rights they fought and died to give us. We need to study our Constitution and rise up against this ominous enemy.

Remember we are a nation under God. We have pushed God aside for self. This requires that we surrender ourselves to God, and renew study of the Bible and the Constitution.

I believe in the promise of God which appears in 2 Chronicles 7:14, which says: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Bonnie Cram, St. Francis

### Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

