



Other Viewpoints

Take a moment to savor your rights

It's not recognized as a national holiday. We don't get the day off from work. We don't see throngs of people carrying signs celebrating it — or denigrating it, for that matter. And the day doesn't even show up on most calendars. In fact, if Jay Leno went "Jaywalking" and asked the average American citizen what we celebrate on Dec. 15 each year, he likely would get nothing more than a blank stare.

Dec. 15? "I have no idea," would be the common answer. "I'm too busy shopping for Christmas presents."

Yet, on that day and virtually every other day of the year, Americans freely exercise the rights that came with the ratification of the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

- Freedom of speech.
- Freedom of religion.
- Freedom of assembly.
- Freedom to petition government for a redress of grievances.
- The right to due process.
- The right to bear arms.
- The right against self-incrimination.
- The right to a jury trial.

And, lest I forget, freedom of the press. Yes, 218 years ago, the founders accepted almost verbatim George Mason's "Virginia Declaration of Rights" as the bedrock statement of our individual rights as Americans.

George Mason isn't a household name, unless you're a huge sports fan, especially of college basketball.

While we should put our nation's founders on their own unique pedestal, we can't lose sight of the fact that had it not been for George Mason's dogged determination to get his "Declaration of Rights" accepted as the first amendments to the new Constitution, we might not live in a country where we can speak out, hold opinions that others find objectionable or even abhorrent, be considered innocent until proven guilty, exercise our religious beliefs or choose not to believe and assemble for or against an issue without fear of recrimination.

George Mason held back his support of the new Constitution, saying that the blueprint for a new nation lacked the absolutely essential ingredients that would place the individual above the state in almost all circumstances.

Had he not done so, we might be living in a very different country today.

So, on Dec. 15, whoop it up a little in celebration of Bill of Rights Day.

And if you happen to go to a holiday party or two, you can impress your fellow guests with your knowledge of the history of the Bill of Rights.

Someone once said they never discuss politics or religion. What country are they from? — *Doug Anstaett*

Doug Anstaett, executive director of the Kansas Press Association, is an award-winning editor and a former publisher.

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@nwkans.com or colby.editor@nwkans.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the *Free Press*, its staff or the owners.

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@nwkans.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@nwkans.com

NEWS

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor
kbottrell@nwkans.com

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter
aheintz@nwkans.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkans.com

Vera Sloan and Aubrey Spencer - Society Editors
colby.society@nwkans.com

ADVERTISING

Heather Woofter - Advertising Representative
hwoofter@nwkans.com

Andrea Miller - Advertising Representative
a.miller@nwkans.com

Shaly Niemeier - Advertising Representative
sniemeier@nwkans.com

Kathryn Ballard - Graphic Design
kballard@nwkans.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Robin Tubbs - Office Manager
rtubbs@nwkans.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkans.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager

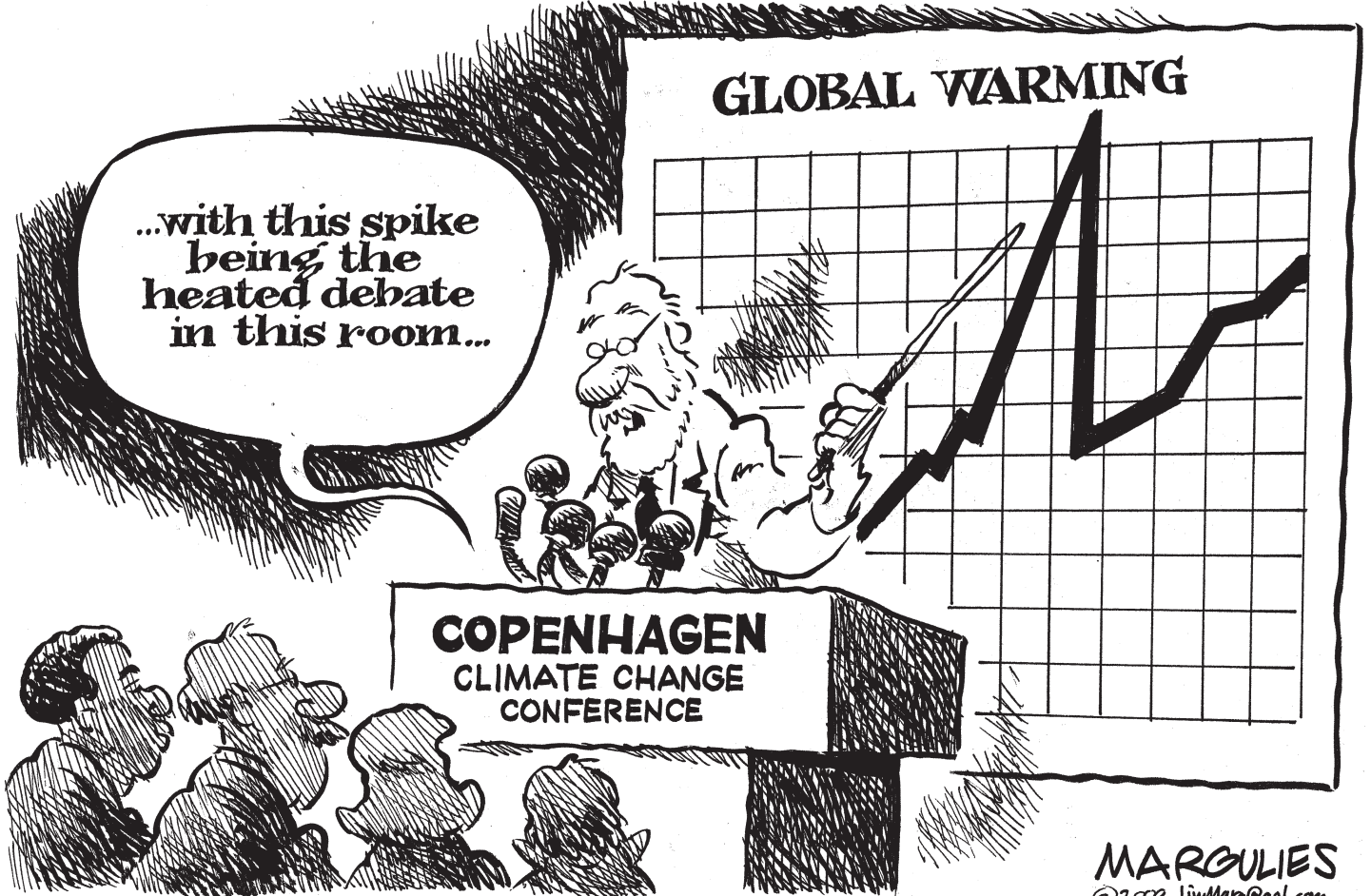
Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, Jim Bowker, Judy McKnight, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Kris McCool

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, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



The odds said it had to be a girl

It wasn't just me that thought it would be a girl.

Her sister Felicia thought it would be a girl, too.

Felicia said she had scientific grounds to say that, however.

Last year, she said, all her friends who were pregnant had boys. All of them.

And this year, all her friends who've had babies have had girls. ALL of them.

So there was no doubt in her mind that her sister's child would be a girl.

Then there was the checker at Kroger, which for Midwesterners, is like a southern-fried Dillons. Right Store, Right Price, and all that.

She looked at Lindsay, smiled sweetly and told Brad he looked like the kind of guy who was just made to spoil little girls. She was just sure Lindsay's baby would be a girl.

Me? I had no particular reason. I just thought it would be a girl.

Not that I have a preference; I don't. All babies are fine with me. I always figured you got what you got, call it luck of the draw or the will of the Lord.

Whatever it was, it's yours, and you're stuck with it.

And that worked pretty well with our kids, two girls and then a boy.

So I figured our first grandchild could be whatever it would be.

Cynthia and I, we'd be thrilled. I think Lindsay and Brad look at it that way, too.

But between me and the checker at Kroger and Felicia, I think we pretty much had the kids greased on this one.

I kept referring to the baby as "my granddaughter" and Felicia threatened to buy only



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

girls' clothing. I stayed out of that part.

But pretty soon, Lindsay was giving me reports on what "your granddaughter" was doing. I figured it would be pretty easy to switch directions if we were wrong.

We'd have five months to get used to the "boy" thing, and they could pick a boy's name. (For girls, it's supposed to be between Ella and Emma, but there's still time to change.)

Then came last Tuesday, the big day for the sonogram. We all bundled up against a chilly southern morning and headed to the obstetrician's office. Once there, we'd barely been seated when they called us in to the ultrasound room.

The sonographer smiled a sweet southern smile, motioned for Lindsay to climb up onto the table and pull up her shirt, then gave her a good, cold squirt of goo.

"Oh," she squealed. "That's warm." Sarcasm apparently is lost on sonographers, however, and she proceeded to slap the probe onto Lindsay's belly.

"Oh, do you want to know the sex?" she asked.

"Yes," we all replied. And she proceeded to glide the sounder head across Lindsay's belly lickity split. She'd pause every so often to measure something or explain.

"That's the baby's thigh bone," she said. "We'll measure it."

"That's the baby's heart. And those are its kidneys."

She measured the little head, then turned the probe and snapped a picture of its cute little face.

"It's really working its mouth," she said, and we all agreed it must be related to Lindsay — and Cynthia. Or be some kind of alien; from the sonogram pictures, you can't be too sure.

Flash here, measure; dash there, snap. Soon she was done, and started to shut the machine down. We were all ready to jump and shout at once, I think, when she realized her omission.

"Oh, I forgot to show you the sex, didn't I?" "Well, I know, but I didn't have a clear picture."

She turned the machine back on. We waited.

She twisted and turned the probe, finally stopping on something indecipherable.

"There," she pointed to two vague lines. "It's a girl."

Boys, I'm told, are easier to spot.

Then, of course, we had to call our respective offices and the whole family. Later, I compared notes with Felicia. We congratulated ourselves on a correct call.

"Well, dad," she pointed out, "there was only a 50 percent chance we'd be wrong."

So true. But then, Cynthia would have had to get rid of all those girl clothes. Felicia, too. It's better this way.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he like to ride and watch trains.

Thanks to vets while Washington stalls

To the Editor:

I'd like to say thank you to our military. Thank you, veterans and active-duty personnel, and especially, thank you to the wounded. Thank you all for bearing the wounds and scars of a grateful nation. Thank you all for answering the call of duty to our great nation.

The United States and our very way of life depend on you to protect us. You all swore an oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. You all bear your scars, visible to others or not, with dignity, honor and pride. Thank you for a job well done. You are all worth more than your weight in gold.

I wish I could say the same for our elected officials in Washington. I recently saw an interview with one of those officials. He said, in essence, that most of what they do in Washington is not according to the Constitution. He actually had the gall to say it!

The original Constitution is about 17 pages long. It says what the federal government can and can not do. It has strict limitations on the federal government.

Each of the 50 states has its own state Constitution. The people of the states have more power and freedom than the federal government. That was the way this country was designed, that is why people migrated here over 233 years. But over the last 100 years, Washington has taken control over our very spirits.

My free and independent spirit does not like what this country has become or the way this country is turning. Folks, if we don't wake up soon, all the freedoms we enjoy now could



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

very well become as extinct as the dinosaurs.

Do you really want your doctor to have to answer to someone sitting in Washington, or do you want you and your doctor to decide what is best for your health?

Our president is going to Copenhagen, Denmark, soon. He may very well sign a document that will take our United States sovereignty from us! I, for one, hope and pray that he will not bow down to the world and sign that treaty. It will mean that we all have to answer to the world for our very freedom.

You all may very well think I'm crazy, but several years before my Dad passed away he said, "The day will come when the American people will wake up and realize they are no longer free. The day will come when they might have to have a revolution, just like they did in 1776. It may not be in my lifetime or yours, but it will happen."

Dad said that more than 25 years ago. I believe the time is coming. Yeah, I know some of you think I'm crazy and have no idea what I'm talking about, but watch and wait. The sleeping giant of freedom is awakening. She has

had a long nap, and now that she's awake, she finds herself chained to the ground.

She will soon break those chains and be free again.

If you are a praying person, pray like you've never prayed before. The Lord is listening and waiting for His people to take action. It will be done, but only in His perfect time.

Jari Skiles, Colby

Visit Senior Center

To the Editor:

Probably the best kept secret in Thomas County is the Senior Progress Center. This facility is there to serve the senior citizens among us. It's at the southeast corner of Fike Park, with plenty of handicap parking, even a van available for pickup and delivery.

Besides affordable meals, the center has many activities available and they're all free. Besides, it's good to socialize with friends and even make new ones.

My husband and I pick up a menu at the first of the month and choose the meals that we like and go when it's convenient. There's also a schedule of events: card games, exercise and Wii games, to name a few, plus pool or billiards on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

With so many government cutbacks I think it's a shame that more people don't take advantage of this one nice thing we have going for us.

Cookie Koenig, Colby

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

