



Free Press Viewpoint

Trees on Range just a beginning

Within a few weeks, drivers rolling up and down Range Avenue will begin to see a few more trees lining the road. A Colby Tree Board project will add 85 trees to the stretch from Farm Credit to McDonald's. And these won't be little trees, either. Given time to grow, these maple, elm and oak trees could grow to huge sizes.

We think this is a great idea. It will make a heavily trafficked area of our town a lot more beautiful.

Compare Range and Fourth Street, two of Colby's major thoroughfares. On Fourth, you have great old trees like living pillars with branches that stretch over the road. In the summer, when the branches are full of leaves, they shade the sidewalks for children walking to the pool. In the fall, they create a brilliantly colored tunnel through the heart of the town.

Some of these trees have to be 100 years old – and still thriving.

It is a different feel on the south end of Range Avenue. This area is almost a new downtown. It has hardware stores, restaurants, hotels, a movie theater and other businesses, not to mention Colby Community College. It is an area that draws a lot of people from Colby, the surrounding towns and from Interstate 70. And although it lacks a good sidewalk system to accommodate a lot of foot traffic – the city is working on that – it still sees a lot of people out and about.

It's this area that is growing. New hotels, new restaurants, new stores are going up mostly in this area. The Sleep Inn and Butch's Smokehouse have set up out there. J&B Meat Market, Beringer Hardware and Farm Credit have all moved there. This is the direction Colby is growing.

It sounds to us like a perfect place to spruce up. The trees won't fix every problem, but they'll really help this area look a lot better, a lot more like a town instead of a collection of buildings. They will give a better first impression for people coming from I-70 into town and a more inviting place for Colby residents to shop, eat and go to the movies.

But why stop there? There are other places in town that could benefit from lining the road with trees. There are only a few trees on Country Club south of the Beulah Cemetery. We have a new fire station there, as well as a lot of businesses.

The stretch of Franklin from the Methodist Church to Walmart has only a few scattered trees around homes, the hospital and the museum, and we'll soon be building the new water park and Multi-purpose Activity Center on either side of it.

There's no shortage of good places to plant trees. The tree board says they want our ideas, so let's give them some.

— Kevin Bottrell

Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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.

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Bootstraps only work on boots

During the 25-plus years I have spent on this earth, I have come to the realization that life isn't always fair.

Dreams don't always come true and the good guy doesn't always get the girl. Sometimes bad people live easy lives and good-hearted people get stuck in hellish situations.

I've seen selfish people rewarded for bad behavior and good people stuck all alone in situations they are not equipped to handle. It would be great if life was like the movies and we all got to experience happy endings, but this just isn't always the case.

I think many well-intentioned authority figures mislead young people when they reassure them their lives will be fine as long as they work hard and follow the rules. I understand why people would want to perpetuate this myth.

Those who work hard certainly have a better chance of leading successful lives than those who do just enough to get by, unless the less-motivated folks are born into a life of permanent luxury. There is nothing wrong with promoting personal responsibility. But there are many unintended consequences that come from the "work hard and find success" theory.

While it's true that some people are able to make lemons out of lemonade, this doesn't mean all hard-working, morally grounded people find material success or self-fulfillment. This may be a harsh truth that many wish to deny, but it's a truth nonetheless. And denying this truth can lead to many people being alienated, even though their problems were due to situations beyond their control.

We may be tempted to avert our eyes, but the reality is there will always be people who die too young or endure constant loneliness



Andy Heintz

• Wildcat Ramblings

even though they spent their lives trying to do the right thing for themselves and those they care about.

Sometimes our country's enthusiastic endorsement of rugged individualism has blinded us to those who struggle through no fault of their own. Americans' strident belief in self-reliance and personal responsibility has certainly been a catalyst for some of our country's greatest accomplishments.

Who knows how many new discoveries and innovations were due to Americans' strong sense of self-determination? I certainly don't want to come off as someone who is against people taking responsibility for their own lives. I've seen people rewarded time and time again for bad behavior, and nothing makes me madder. But I think our country's fondness for rugged individualism could be coupled with empathy and understanding without compromising our core principles.

Whether it be through private or public business, nonprofit organizations or through personal relationships, our country has a moral responsibility to take care of the people who are stuck in situations they can't get out of despite their best efforts. Instead of having the traditional argument about whether people struggling should be helped or left to fend for themselves, it would make more sense to focus

on differentiating between who deserves help and who does not.

For God knows how long Americans have been arguing about what to do about the plight of our most vulnerable citizens. This argument has usually been between one group that professes people's lack of success is due to laziness and reckless decisions, while the other group has argued that people are poor, illiterate or sick because they don't have access to opportunities already available to most Americans.

The self-reliance group is more likely to blame mental disorders on a person's lack of mental toughness, while the other group believes mental disorders happen because people's brains don't work the way we think they should.

That argument has gotten our country nowhere, because it offers people a false choice. Both sides are half right. It's true some people are poor because of reckless decision making and selfish behavior and some people's mental disorders, while legitimate, have not improved because of the person's unwillingness to seek treatment. But this is not the case with all people dealing with the problems associated with poverty and mental disorders.

People who keep taking advantage of those who try to help them should be left to fend for themselves, but our country should always strive to help the people who just need a little help to get back on the right track.

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.

Tree board regrets oversight

To the Editor:

The Colby Tree Board is very excited about the Range Avenue Tree Project. We feel it will greatly enhance Colby's image and make our city a more welcoming place. The Colby Free Press article introducing the project was informative, with great images showing the project. However, the acknowledgment of the donation made by Tracey and Relda Galli was omitted. We regret this oversight.

We feel this project is only the beginning of improving Colby, and hope other individuals, clubs and businesses step forward to fund this and future projects.

Marvin Bickner
Colby Tree Board member



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

Midwest values exhibited every day in this country, which often go unnoticed or are taken for granted.

My wife and I were driving back to Illinois from a visit with our daughter and her family in Denver when a pheasant decided to alter our plans by destroying our Jeep's windshield in eastern Colorado. After crippling our way to St. Francis, we stopped and spent 1 1/2 hours seeking help. We needed quick repairs to stay ahead of a huge snow and ice storm coming out of the Rockies.

I was finally given a phone number for Butch's Body Shop in Colby. He told me if I could get to Colby, he would take care of the

rest, and he certainly kept his word. What a middle-American gentleman. He and his staff were absolutely excellent in their service. He ordered a replacement windshield before we reached Colby just to speed up the process, took us to the Comfort Inn and had Rhett pick us up in the morning. Tremendous staff!

The Comfort Inn folks went above and beyond, too. Beth Howard and Becky made us feel at home and assured us that they would make us comfortable and that the Jeep was indeed in excellent hands at Butch's.

After a great supper at the in-house restaurant and tasty breakfast at the Village Inn next door, Rhett picked us up and had us on our way just barely ahead of the storm. The windshield certainly got a workout, as we encountered heavy fog, freezing rain and sleet on our way. But we made it safe and sound, thanks to caring and kind inhabitants of Colby. Thank you for renewing our faith in the character of the citizens of America's Heartland.

You were all awesome!
Brad and Sarah Lawson
Jacksonville, Ill.

Colby helped out

To the Editor:

We just wanted to send a few words of thanks to some of the wonderful people of Colby for assisting us recently. You folks were further proof of the kindness and American

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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

