



Other Viewpoints

Veterans deserve best medical efforts

Kansas is taking the lead in caring for veterans with a new state and federal telemedicine partnership that officials say is the first of its kind and could be a model across the nation. It links up veterans throughout the state via the Internet with health care providers at Veterans Affairs hospitals in Topeka, Leavenworth and Wichita.

Such a link will be a time- and money-saving option for veterans, who will be able to visit telemedicine-equipped clinics closer to home for mental health or basic health services and still access top-notch VA care. It may also open such care to veterans previously unable to travel to one of the three veterans' hospitals in the state.

The partnership, which was championed by Rep. Tom Sloan, R-Lawrence, marries the resources of the University of Kansas Medical Center with those of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The KU Center for Telemedicine and Health has been providing telemedicine services since 1991 and has more than 80 telemedicine and telehealth sites throughout Kansas. Veterans will benefit greatly from this established infrastructure.

A clinic in Garden City offers the telemedicine services, and the program is expected to expand across the state in the next year. A pilot program in 2011 assisted 18 veterans and was deemed a success.

The program currently offers only mental health services but will eventually include primary care.

While health services of all kinds are in demand, mental health services are clearly a current need for veterans. An April 2012 news release about increases in mental health clinicians at the VA noted that since 2007, the VA has seen a 35 percent increase in the number of veterans receiving mental health services and a 41 percent increase in mental health staff.

At that time, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki noted: "As the tide of war recedes, we have the opportunity, and the responsibility, to anticipate the needs of returning veterans. History shows that the costs of war will continue to grow for a decade or more after the operational missions in Iraq and Afghanistan have ended. As more veterans return home, we must ensure that all veterans have access to quality mental health care." And, of course, health care services overall.

Thanks to this telemedicine partnership, Kansas veterans will face fewer hurdles to accessing quality care. We owe them no less.

— The Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press

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.

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 @ nwkansas.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.

Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander @ nwkansas.com

NEWS

Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter
colby.sports @ nwkansas.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard @ nwkansas.com

Sam Dieter - News Reporter
colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

Christina Beringer - Society Reporter
colby.society @ nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING

colby.ads @ nwkansas.com

Kathryn Ballard - Advertising Representative
kballard @ nwkansas.com

Janene Woodall - Advertising Representative
jwoodall @ nwkansas.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter @ nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager
medmondson @ nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support @ nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager

Gary Stewart, Foreman

Jim Jackson, Jim Bowker, Pressmen

Kris McCool, Judy McKnight, Tracy Traxel,

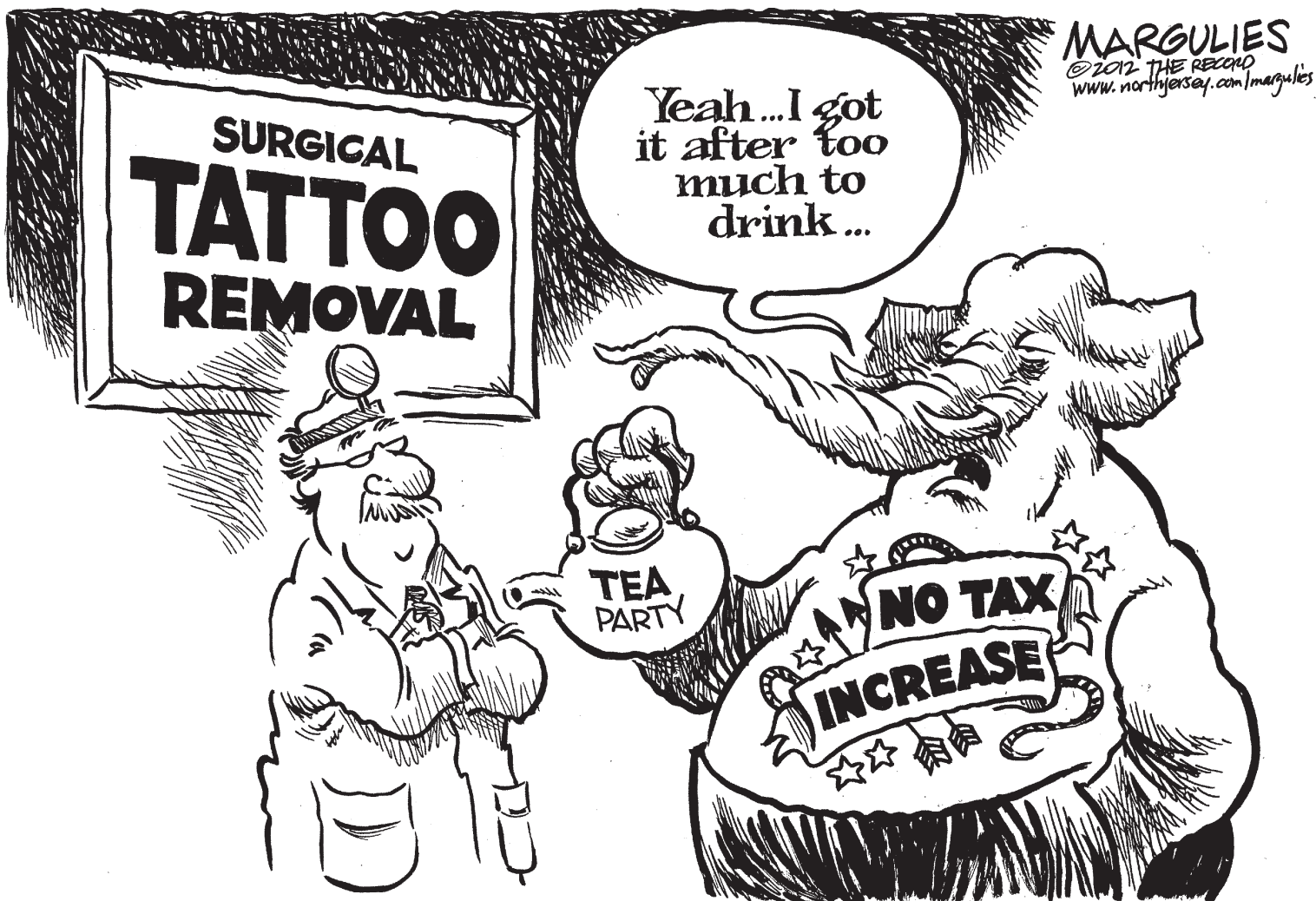
Sheri Arroyo, Mailing

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



Porcine park users pollute for everyone

Pigs.

That's the only thing I can think of to call 'em, people who throw trash out of their cars.

A lot of them out there, too, judging from the amount of trash you find along a typical American road.

If people would only stop and think what they're doing. But that'll probably never happen, except maybe for some of the younger ones. The adults, chances are they're never going to change.

What do they throw? Packaging from anything they eat, drink or smoke, it seems.

Judging from the roadsides at Sappa Park, there are a lot of Budweiser, Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, Coke and root beer drinkers out there. Fast food. Snack food. Junk food. Cigarette packages — mostly Marlboro. Cigarette butts. Pheasant wings and entrails. Once, a deer carcass.

Oh, yeah. A bucket of excrement. Souvenir of someone's camping trip, I guess. We didn't bother to move that one.

You name it; if someone had it in a car, it'll wind up beside the road.

And all this is in a park. A park, people. A



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

park with a dumpster for trash.

But, of course, it's always easier to just toss something out the window than to take care of it.

One thing I can't figure out, though, is how so many of them manage to hit the space below the bridge with beer cans and bottles. If you're driving, it's a pretty small target. Do they stop and aim? Or are we the only ones who go down there?

Now I have a confession to make.

Once, I was one of the pigs. A long time ago. I didn't like having trash in my car, so I threw it out. All of it. Cups, bottles, wrappers, you name it.

Oh, I was a teenager then. And there was some method to my madness. We'd learned

that empty beer bottles in your car were just evidence. But if you were throwing evidence out, it was just as easy to throw everything else out.

One day, I woke up to what I was doing to the world. I vowed never to toss litter again, and it's one promise I've kept. Today, I'll scramble after a tissue if I drop one. I try never to let the smallest piece of paper or plastic fly away.

Of course, I don't have any empty beer bottles in the car today. That was long ago.

But if the subject of littering comes up at the Judgement, I'll have to hope I've done enough penance in the days since.

So when you see me on my high horse, railing about the things the pigs dump out at the park or along the highway, you know I haven't led a perfect life. It's just that I've come to believe there's a better way.

You know what they say about converts.

Steve Haynes is president of Nor'West Newspapers. When he has the time, he'd rather be reading a good book or casting a fly.

Thank the teacher who changes a life

"Let me tell you about the teacher who changed my life!"

A year ago, I had spoken about the importance of teachers in students' lives. After the program and before I could leave the arena, I was stopped by parent after parent who wanted to tell me about a special teacher who had "been there" for them at a critical time in their school life.

I listened intently as one described how his teacher worked to help him read when he fell behind. Another was grateful to a teacher who convinced her to not drop out of school.

One parent remembered a teacher who restored her confidence and made her feel worthwhile at a time when she had no friends.

Outside the arena and on my way to my car, another parent recognized me and had to stop to tell me about his teacher who had worked outside of class to help him catch up in math. He learned that if he could stick with tasks that were hard, even if he didn't like it, he could work through them. And that was a skill he carried throughout life.

I visited a student teacher a few weeks ago. She was changing lives, too.

I don't sit at the back of the class where I can only see the back of students' heads. I sit at the side, so I can look back and see students' eyes. My student teacher was enthusiastic. As she taught the lesson, I could see student faces "light up." You could see the "Ah, ha!" in many eyes.

And that is exactly the phrase she used when we met with her principal during her planning period: "I like to see the 'Ah, ha!' in their eyes," she said. "I think I make a difference with some of them."

"She has made a difference in some students' lives," the principal confirmed.

He was eager to get her on payroll as soon as her student teaching was over. With her solid command of biology and chemistry, he needed her in the advanced classes.

"But I still want her to teach one introductory class," he said, "because with her enthusiasm, she can change the lives of some of them."



John Richard Schrock

• Education Frontlines

That was a very wise principal. He knew that no single teacher can change the lives of all of their students. Some students are self-motivated and grow under any teacher. And not all students have crisis points in their life where a teacher can rescue them.

Besides, student personalities vary. They don't all respond to the same teacher.

For the parents who related the special teacher that helped them out at a critical point in life, I know that they had classmates who had different "special teachers." An athlete may relate to a coach. Other students may accept guidance from a shop or home economics teacher. Teachers vary widely in personality. And so do students.

Take the "best" teacher at a school — by whatever measure you want to use — and clone them. Make every teacher in the whole school exactly like this "best" teacher, and you will have a monotonous school.

The real world is full of a wide range of personalities. School is a place where students learn to relate to and interact with this variation. Some teachers let you enter class a few seconds after the bell; others are demanding. Some are gentle. Some are strict.

All teachers should know their subject and be able to communicate it. All should care that their students learn. But a diversity in teachers is critical for a good school.

Our children come into school different. They should graduate as unique individuals.

Much schoolwork is slow work. We learn to write our ABC's over years of tedious practice. We build our math skills from addition and subtraction to multiplication tables without much excitement. If the journey goes well, we

may not remember those teachers that helped us stay on task. We may not remember them, but we would not be reading newspapers and budgeting our subscription rate without them.

I tell my student teachers not to expect their students to know how much the teacher changed their lives. We can all look inside ourselves, see all we have come to be, know and do — and then realize we never thanked our teachers for it. And all of those folks who eagerly explained to me how a teacher changed their life long ago, it's likely they never thanked that teacher either.

Our parents were the first teachers of us all. Most knew not to expect verbal thanks. Just watching us grow up had to suffice.

And for my student teachers, just seeing the "Ah, ha!" on some students faces will have to be reward enough.

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and former department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774
roberts.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

