

War footage causes us to ponder freedom

In Iraq, television is taking us inside war as never before. The invasion was swift and easy, if sometimes scary. Most of our fears melted away in the swift advance on Baghdad. But the occupation may well wear us down. And that is something we cannot afford.

A CNN crew went with an American unit on patrol, raiding homes of suspected resistance members. They found few of the wanted men as they barged in, breaking down iron gates and beating on doors.

The troops were met mostly by grandmothers, women and children. All claimed to know nothing about fighters.

But there are no Miranda Rights in Iraq. The American troops seemed almost proud of using fear and intimidation, shaking down the Iraqi women in their own living rooms.

Troopers take the grandmother outside for a chat, and the other women begin to talk. Now they remember the men the soldiers are seeking. Crying, they say they don't know where they are.

The grandmother is released, the soldiers leave the home. Next, the troops stop and pay for a door they broke on a raid the day before. They buy back an American antitank missile from two Iraqi men. They share cigarettes and make friends.

It's a strange dichotomy.

On the street, troops set up a roadblock and stop motorists, questioning them about suspects and suspicious activities. Some are cooperative, some are not.

"Ask him," an American captain says, "if he gets five years in prison, would he remember then?"

Shadowy figures, identified as "civilian agents," are shown only as depixelated faces. They apparently are CIA or defense intelligence agents working with the Army, but they let the troops do the talking.

We were disturbed.

If we are fighting to keep this kind of thing from happening here, then why are we doing it there?

It wasn't about weapons of mass destruction, though the government and the military clearly believed the Iraqis had and would use poison gas and maybe other weapons when cornered.

Ousting a cruel and hideous dictator has not been a bad thing. We can take righteous credit for that.

The mass graves and buildings full of chemical suits attest to the basis of our cause.

Installing a new and lasting government that will provide at least some moderate level of human rights for all Iraqis may be an elusive goal.

The mantle of superpower does not rest easily on a nation that traditionally disbanded its army between wars, but we are that.

We need to remember that while we are on the side of right, we need to do things the right way.

But in the living rooms of Iraqi women, looking for supposed terrorists, right and wrong may be hard to come by.

— Steve Haynes

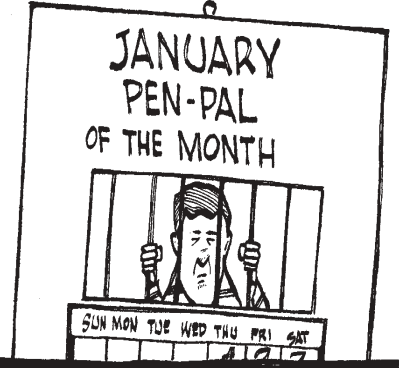
Kansas Predictions for 2004...

GOV. SEBELIUS SHOCKS G.O.P. LAWMAKERS AND AVOIDS A TAX INCREASE IN 2004...



BY BORROWING AGAINST THE TAX INCREASE SHE'LL PROPOSE IN 2005.

TO PROMOTE COMPANY INTEGRITY, WESTAR ENERGY ISSUES NEW '04 CALENDARS TO EMPLOYEES.

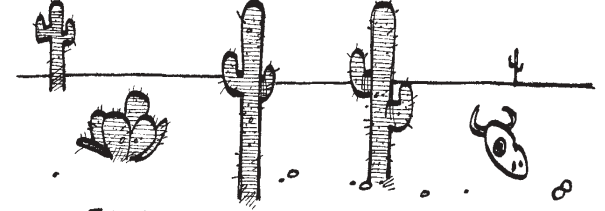


THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER FINANCIAL SCANDAL IN THE KANSAS PRESS ASSOC. IS ELIMINATED...



THANKS TO CAREFUL MONITORING.

DUE TO DROUGHT CONDITIONS, KANSAS FARMERS EXPAND THEIR LINE OF FARM PRODUCT ENDORSEMENTS...



TO INCLUDE CACTUS ETHANOL AND TEQUILA.

Weight of history falls heavily on her

American History nearly killed me. Actually, it still is considering that I'm writing this on a Tuesday and history doesn't end until Thursday.

Chapter upon chapter, page upon page, video upon video. And that's just 1865 to present. I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to pre-1865. I really, really can't.

American history has never been my favorite subject to begin with.

I think that's because every school year, since before man was primordial ooze (that's right, I said primordial ooze), covers the same things over and over again.

We've got the Mayflower, then we have war. Lots and lots of war, whether it's the Revolutionary War, the French and Indian War, the Civil War, or any of the other wars that came in between.

It makes my head spin.

Although I must say, the framers did a lovely job on the Constitution. They were under tremendous pressure and they pulled through, making a document that has stood the test of time.

We covered this in my federal government class.

But, now it's time to study for my sociology final. Then it's back to American History.

—nn—

Have you ever noticed how some people need to be equipped with a mute button? If this could be possible, think of

Night Noise Veronica Monier



all the violence that could be avoided.

All of those really irritating people who just don't know when to quit could keep on talking, because it wouldn't matter, no one would be able to hear them anyway. At least for a while anyway. Might as well wish for a rewind button as well.

—nn—

Hey, while we're wishing for things, I wish for a way to stop time so that I can get everything I need to done before I have to have it done. (Makes sense, doesn't it.)

It's Thursday now and I have all of my classes done except (of course) American History. In that fabulous class I still have to interview my grandma and do about nine lessons. All of this needs to be accomplished before this evening, which is when I have to turn it all in. Bah, it's never going to happen, not in this reality anyway and definitely not without that way to stop time.

—nn—

Do you ever reach that point where you're ready to bang your head repeatedly into a wall, because that's about all you can manage to get accomplished? That's

about where I am right now.

—nn—

On a completely different note, here are some things to think about...

- Who was the first person to look at a cow and say, I think I'll squeeze those dangly things here, and drink whatever comes out!"

- Who was the first person to say "See that chicken there? I'm gonna eat the next thing that comes outta its butt."

- Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?"

- If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a song about him?"

- Can a hearse carrying a corpse drive in the carpool lane?"

- If the professor on Gilligan's Island can make a radio out of coconut... why can't he fix a hole in a boat?"

- If quizzes are quizzical, what are tests?"

- Is Disney World the only people trap operated by a mouse?"

- Does the Alphabet song and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star have the same tune?"

- Why did you try singing the two songs above?"

- Do illiterate people get the full effect of Alphabet soup?"

- Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him for a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?"

- Does pushing the elevator button more than once make it arrive faster?"

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Editor,
The AdoptaPlatoon Soldier Support Effort is a nonprofit 501C-3 organization managed nationwide by volunteer moms and dads to ensure that U.S. service members deployed around the world in all branches of the military are not forgotten and to promote patriotism in our schools and communities.

To keep our military personnel a bit safer, the effort has created projects that meet the need of military requests, establishes special projects for holidays and assigns individual morale-lifting mail support to soldiers deployed around the

world.
At the present time, we are desperately in need of Americans who will step forward to support a U.S. service member deployed overseas!

If you are ready to count yourself as one who defends the freedoms of our country. Please visit our website at: www.adoptaplatoon.org, or you may contact me directly for more information.

Sincerely,
Platoon Mom, Teri Corl
564 W. 2nd
Hoisington, Kan. 67544

It's time to get in there and help out

Feliz nuevo año! Or is it Feliz año nuevo? We're not sure how to say it, but either way it means "happy new year" in Spanish.

Since we're going to be spending New Year's Eve in Juarez, Mexico, we thought we should be able to offer greetings in the language of the area.

At this writing, Jim and I are in El Paso, Texas. In the morning, we meet the volunteers we'll be taking across the border to help build a house (in three days) for a Mexican family. So far, we know there are about 30 people, so they will be split into two teams. We also know they are Menonites from Fairview, Okla. Other than that, we just know they are a lot like us — they want to help someone else to a better life.

Someone recently asked me, "Why don't we help people in this country first?"

That's a good question, one I had to consider seriously. Perhaps it's because you need to get out of your comfort zone to become more aware of people's needs. And believe me, there is nothing comfortable about life in Juarez. We're only there three to four days, but during that time you will have slept on the floor, gotten dirty, and been hot or cold (depending on the time of year). But then, you're so tired you don't care if you're hot or cold or dirty.

Perhaps it's because you and I, as taxpayers, help support the welfare system in this country. To my knowledge, Mexico does not have such a luxury. The poor in America live a grand life com-

Out Back Carolyn Plotts



pared to the poor in Juarez.

But mostly, we go because we have come to love the young people at Casas por Cristo, who have committed their lives to doing this work. And we have come to love the Mexican people. Despite the crushing poverty so many of them live in, on the whole, they are content with their lives, their children are happy and always smiling, and the family unit is all-important.

Yes, there are many deserving causes in this country, and I hope you have picked one to support with your time, talent or

money. We have. But, if you ever get a chance to cross another country's border, I urge you to do it. You'll never be sorry.

—ob—

Taylor is only 4, but she thinks far beyond her years. Kara had to call and share this gem.

She and Taylor were riding in the car when Taylor pipes up.

"Mom," she began, "When you get old, like Grandma, I'll drive you around and you can have the best seat, OK?"

I want to remind Kara that the day Taylor starts driving is only 12 years away, and it will be here in a snap. I'll only be 68, but she will be 43!

—ob—

A friend's father lies gravely ill. She sits by his side. Waiting. Her daughter was there, also, and relayed what a nurse said: "He was there when you came into this world. Now, you're here when he leaves it."

To everything there is a season.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Wednesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, Norton, Kan. 67654

Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor

Office hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Kristen Brands reporter
Carol Erlenbusch advertising rep.
Barbara McCool advertising rep.
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Sonya Montgomery bookkeeping

