

Opinion

What are we doing

By Ken Poland

"Later wars of expansion sucked the treasury dry. Meanwhile, the government grew less tolerant of non Muslims, who in turn grew less tolerant of the government." That quote is taken from a brief history of India taken off the internet. It describes the political scene during the 16th and 17th centuries. We have unlimited access to information via the internet that just wasn't available to most of us a few years ago.

"Sucked the treasury dry." Is that not what history reveals for most dynasties that had big appetites? The Old Testament is full of history describing the rise and fall of governments, including the Israelites. It appeared that great dynasties were going to rule the entire world, but sooner or later they had expanded beyond their ability to control their empires. Internal corruption weakened the systems and structures. With recorded history following Old Testament times, we can trace the same patterns.

It appeared like the Roman Empire, established in 509 B.C., was going to rule the world forever. The rise and fall of the Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, Seleucids, and others seemed to feed the hunger for more power and territory of the Roman rulers. The Roman Empire lasted for over a thousand years, probably the longest period of time for any major western power in recorded history. Its downfall began in the 5th century A.D. Religious intolerance, finances, and manpower to control their subjects all were significant facts that led to the eventual fall. The "dark ages" were the result of the failure of the Roman church and state.

Manpower, finances, and religious intolerance were major contributing factors in the fall of nearly all the major dynasties of history. After the fall of the Roman Empire (political and religious), Great Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal all rose and fell in their attempt to conquer the world. Recent history paints the same picture (the Fascists of Germany, Communists of the Soviet Union, and several smaller regional powers around the world).

Can the United States ignore history and continue in our quest to control the world?

We have become a debtor nation in our attempt to control world economy and continue our consumptive lifestyle. We have drained our treasury with our military budget (bigger than the rest of the world combined). We have those in our society who are pushing hard to make Christianity the State Religion. We have deployed our troops around the world in an attempt to police the world. We have ignored basic human rights and dignity in an effort to maintain control and dominance, not only of the world but also our own citizens. Secrecy in government, centralization of power, corporate greed, and a widening gap between the haves and the have nots all should be warning signs that something is not right.

Like my Daddy used to say, "You better change your ways, young man, or you will experience a major outside influence on your activities."

That outside influence was never very pleasant and my ways changed, temporarily, and then outside influence would be employed again. I survived.

Will the United States survive?

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwkskans.com or pdecker@nwkskans.com.

Where to write, call

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison
- State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer**, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

John Van Nostrand - Publisher

jvannostrand@nwkskans.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor

pdecker@nwkskans.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment

tcx@nwkskans.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter

ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director

crystalr@nwkskans.com

Jasmine Crottinger - Advertising Sales

jasminec@nwkskans.com

John Altman - Advertising Sales

jaltman@nwkskans.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager

lea@nwkskans.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building

japplegate@nwkskans.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator

support@nwkskans.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight
THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701. THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 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 credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$38, 8 months \$53, 12 months \$70. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$50, 8 months \$62, 12 months \$78. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$57, 8 months \$67, 12 months \$81. All other states, \$81, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



What's underneath the clover leaf

My red hair, green eyes and freckles clearly mark me as Irish. I'm proud of my Celtic heritage, and learning more of course it is a challenge.

St. Patrick's Day, is, of course, the one time of year everyone gets to be Irish.

I've never been to Ireland, but hope to someday go.

My family's link to Ireland was my great-grandfather Asa Cox, who was born to Irish immigrants in 1870. My paternal grandfather (Asa's son) was Irish, and my paternal grandmother was half Irish.

Out of all my family, I and my sister outwardly reflect this heritage the most, and we're both proud of it.

And, of course, we are not alone. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 34 million Americans claim to be of Irish descent. The population of Ireland itself is nearly 4 million people, but since 1820, 4.8 million Irish have immigrated to the United States.

Besides St. Patrick's Day Friday, it's also Irish-American Heritage Month (and Women's History Month).

Just a few more facts:

Celtic comes from the Greek word "Kelttoi," which, depending on where you look, barbarian or stranger.

"Irish women believe that 30 is the best age to get married and begin a family."

"Irish men believe that 35 is early enough to settle down."

Only 9 percent of the Irish population are natural red heads.

"Less than 2 percent of the Irish population have been bitten by poisonous snakes."

"The Irish drink four million pints of tea a day."

The first man of Christopher Columbus' crew to step onto North American soil was Irish-born



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

Patrick Maguire.

The architect of the White House, and overseer of its rebuilding after its destruction in a fire in 1814 was Irish-born James Hoban.

Henry Ford, William Randolph Hearst, Howard Hughes, James Cagney, John Ford, Jackie Gleason, Grace Kelly, Spencer Tracy, Margaret Mitchell, Walt Disney, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Bat Masterson were all of Irish descent.

Irish stock was also the source of one of the most infamous outlaws of the American West. A woman named Catherine McCarthy was the mother of Patrick Henry Bonney, also known as Billy the Kid.

Another interesting aspect of Ireland and its heritage (at least to me) is its prehistory. The country is rife with Neolithic sites (i.e. Stone Age).

One of the biggest and, I guess, the most well-known is Newgrange, a passage tomb. The site is more than 5,000 years old.

In mythology, it was believed the place was the burial site of the ancient kings of the island, but also the home of the Tuatha de Danann, known also as the Sidhe, or in modern times, fairy.

There are more tombs and megalithic sites, including hill forts, barrows, dolmens and standing stones.

As I said before, I'm still learning about my Irish heritage, and it was just last year I found out about Newgrange. I had seen pictures of its spiral carvings but didn't know much more beyond that. I didn't know there was a whole structure behind the well-known carved rock at its entrance.

It was a reminder there is so much I don't know, yet so much still to learn.

Besides the prehistory, there are also many, many myths and legends. Those have been fun to track down.

One of the first, and a favorite, was the once-held belief that the sage and seer Merlin moved the giant's dance known as Stonehenge from Ireland to its present home on England's Salisbury Plain to mark the crowning of King Arthur.

There are also the Ulster Cycle, about hero Cu Chulainn, and other myths about the origins of the Irish people themselves. They believed they were the descendants of a god and goddess of the underworld.

I've also learned the Irish, and other Celts, like those in Wales and Scotland are experiencing something of a rebirth when it comes to their heritage and language.

Their culture, language and spirit have endured centuries of conflict and re-emergence, and I hope that continues.

Parts of this column came from www.netsoc.ucd.ie/~chrisq/jokes/49irishfacts.html; www.irishamericanheritage.com/Irish%20Facts.htm; www.knowth.com/newgrange.htm and www.stonepages.com.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcx@nwkskans.com.

Your turn

My wounds have healed

Mike Baughn
Thomas County Sheriff

In response to Publisher John Van Nostrand's "Free Press Viewpoint" of March 9, I can only say that I am OK. I have successfully completed counseling with mental health as I stated that I would. The therapist, as a professional, determined length of counseling necessary, not I.

People will think of me what they will and I

have no control over their opinions. I also cannot change the past, but can look to the future with confidence and optimism. I would just ask those who doubt my capabilities to talk to me directly and not carry on a campaign of gossip and innuendo.

Author Dr. K.M. Keith said, "Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and

frank anyway." I am and I will.

I am certainly not without fault but am committed to performing my duties as your sheriff; duties to the public and to my staff. My wounds have healed and I move forward with humility, relying on my abilities, my relationship with my Maker and a desire to serve as best I can.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

