

Opinion



A Kansas Viewpoint

Post-election may reshape legacy

From The Manhattan Mercury

President Bush in a press conference went on the offensive about Iraq and on behalf of Republican candidates — even those who want to distance themselves from his policies. A day later, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, whose resignation is increasingly sought by fellow Republicans, went to the microphone.

... Rumsfeld castigated reporters for what he considers oversimplified reporting on U.S. handling of the war and the politics in Iraq, and for what appeared to be disagreements between U.S. and Iraqi officials on where things stand and where they go from here. Rumsfeld emphasized that there is “no daylight” between the Iraqi and U.S. positions.

Although President Bush can boast some genuinely impressive economic statistics — low unemployment and interest rates and a succession of Wall Street records among them — he knows this election could well turn on the war. He also knows the rising casualty rate and lack of tangible success have hurt his own approval ratings and put GOP candidates at risk.

And although his determination and optimism about the eventual outcome haven’t changed — “absolutely” the United States will prevail over terror — his acknowledgment that changes are needed was welcome.

If dropping “stay the course” was politically motivated, it also was overdue. A change in course is necessary, yet it need not involve a timetable for withdrawing U.S. forces. “Stay the course” was part of a rhetorical attempt to paint Democrats as less-than-patriotic citizens who would “cut and run.”

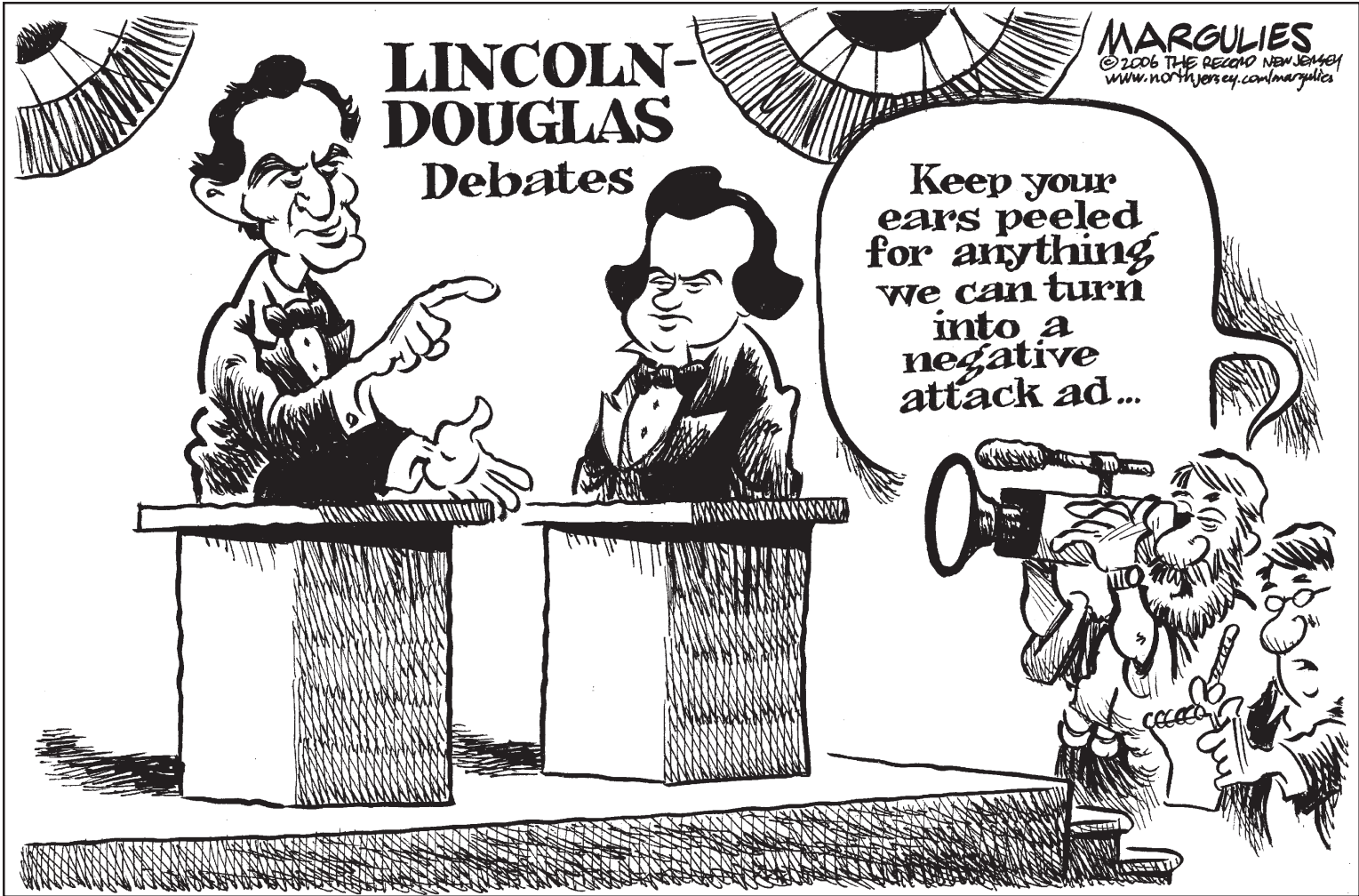
... This war and this election are inseparable. President Bush wasn’t just right, he was smart to point out that local issues will play an important role in each congressional or Senate race. And he was right and a little contrite as well as smart to say that “ultimate accountability” for the war rests with him.

After all, he might not be running for re-election, but his domestic policies, the war and his legacy may be reshaped by what happens Nov. 7.

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@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free Press*.

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



Holidays starting earlier

Over the weekend, cruising the latest headlines online, I stopped when I saw one about the No. 1 movie. The big earner for the first weekend of the month was “Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan.”

Though notable, that wasn’t what caught my attention. A couple of articles referred to this past weekend as the first of the holiday movie season.

Say what? Halloween is only a week over, Thanksgiving is two weeks away and Christmas more than a month. I guess I was under the mistaken assumption the official holiday movie season started with Thanksgiving weekend.

Well, a couple of movies did come out this weekend that are holiday-themed. One was “Flushed Away,” but it’s an animated family movie, perfect for anytime of year. But “The Santa Claus 3” is already out, and playing in Colby.

I’m not complaining about that, just the fact studios have chosen to try to get the holiday cheer going a little earlier than usual this year.

The signs have already been popping up in the stores, but that is nothing unusual. A Christmas movie four days after Halloween, now that’s jumping the gun a little. Although years ago there was “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” but Tim Burton’s movie could go for either time of year. I think.

Other Christmas movies will be out over the next month, but I think there are a few bigger



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

flicks people are anticipating, and a nice distraction from the coming hustle and bustle of the holidays.

Like “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix” or “Eragon.”

The boy wizard has become a holiday staple, with the exception of the summer, 2004 release of “Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban,” and will surely be a big attraction this holiday season.

Another literary adaptation is the motion picture debut of Christopher Paolini’s “Eragon,” about a boy plunged into a world of magic, dragons and a battle between good and evil.

Many more movies will come out between now and the end of the year, most with a theme having nothing to do with the holidays, but this is the second biggest time of year for the movies.

And with the holidays still a few weeks away, but with reminders everywhere, now might be a good time to think about the things that are important about the coming time of year, instead

of getting bogged down in the details.

Planning for holiday meals, shopping for gifts and family gatherings are all looming, and so possibly are people’s expectations.

People aren’t perfect, so the holidays probably won’t be perfect either. Expect the unexpected, and enjoy what happens.

And remember, like Dwight Eisenhower said, plans can be changed, but it’s planning that is important.

Don’t forget to vote. . .

The mid-term general election is Tuesday. I hope people remember to get out and vote, and exercise their constitutional rights.

It doesn’t matter who they vote for, as long as they vote for the candidate they think is right for the job. That is all that matters.

For months now, the television media has been going on about how important this election is, and could change the complexion of the House and Senate.

But things will or won’t change based on how many people vote.

So, I hope the country mobilizes and votes. During the last general election in 2004, a small percentage of voters decided who would represent a great many people.

If people don’t vote, they have no one but themselves to blame.

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

Your turn

Remember why there is a parade

Jeanie Sies
Specialist/E-4
US Army 1997-2001
Colby

As Veterans Day approaches, I wanted to take a minute to think of our men and women in uniform, past and present.

Colby is again having their annual veterans parade and I encourage each and every one of you reading this to attend and support our veterans and current troops.

I also realize the elections this year are taking sides on one view or another of the current hot spots and battles our soldiers face. Regard-

less of your political stance or your thoughts on our current Commander-in-Chief, our troops deserve our support and respect.

See, the typical soldier in the battle zones around the globe aren’t concentrating on the outcome of Election 2006. They are following orders and relying on their battle buddy next to them to get the mission done and back to camp in one piece.

Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13 NIV) Our troops need to know we are behind them come what may. Our veterans and military families deserve our thanks for the sac-

rifices they have made.

I read a Special Forces poster once, that said, “We sleep peacefully at night because rough men stand ready to do violence on our behalf.”

I feel this is basically what is behind our rights in this nation.

So thank a vet with a handshake or hug and let them know you appreciate them. And when you see Old Glory pass by in the parade, stand up, place your hand over your heart or salute if you’re a former military member as a show of love and honor for the flag, our troops, and our freedom.

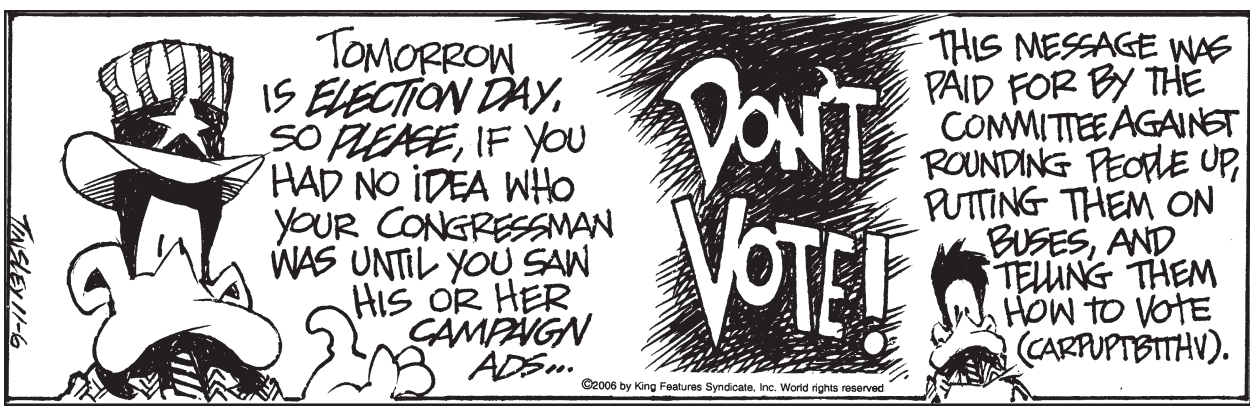
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COLBY FREE PRESS
155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701

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@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcoc@nwkansas.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkansas.com

Jasmine Crottinger - Advertising Sales
jasminec@nwkansas.com

Joe Hayes - Advertising Sales
jhayes@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwkansas.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, 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 \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.

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