

Opinion



Other Viewpoints

Leavenworth not a good replacement

There's a school of thought that says moving the Guantanamo Bay detention facility to Fort Leavenworth would be good for Kansas because it would bring an influx of jobs and federal dollars to the state.

There's also a school of thought that says moving the detainees would pose no more of a risk to Kansans than relocating the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Laboratory from Plum Island, N.Y., to Kansas State University, a project state leaders embraced.

But weeks after the move was first proposed, it's become clear that the arguments in favor of transferring the detainees haven't taken root among the people closest to the situation.

Leavenworth city officials and state leaders remain convinced the proposal is a bad idea, which is enough to convince us it's time to take it off the table....

Among the concerns of community leaders:

- The detainee facility would be difficult to secure. The site of the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, where the detainees would be incarcerated, is near the Missouri river and railroad tracks that carry 50 trains per day.
- The presence of the detainees might prompt some countries to refuse to send officers to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth.
- Leavenworth could become a target for extremists.

A bipartisan group of Kansas governmental leaders shares the concerns of city leaders. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius lined up against the idea before President Obama nominated her as secretary of Health and Human Services, as did Republican Sens. Pat Roberts and Sam Brownback and other state and federal lawmakers....

The chilly reception the plan received in Kansas hasn't thawed over time.

Fact is, it appears nobody wants the detainees. Efforts to bar them have taken root in Indiana, California, South Carolina, Texas, Colorado and Arizona.

Now that Obama has signed an order to shut down Guantanamo Bay, what happens from here is anybody's guess. Some detainees may have to be sent to a U.S. detention facility.

We'll add our voices to those who believe they shouldn't be sent to Kansas.

— Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press

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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124

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Hiking paints a picture of friendship

I mentioned in my last column that my college frequently cancels classes so that we students, faculty and staff can spend a day focusing on God, praying or serving those in our community.

Wednesday, March 11, was one of those days. Twice a semester, we have a Day of Prayer. We pray and worship corporately in the morning and can have the rest of the day to continue praying or find a creative way to dedicate our attention to God.

My group of friends—there are five of us—have begun a ritual of hiking after each Day of Prayer. Looking at God's beautiful creation compels us to worship Him. The peaceful trails open our hearts so we can hear Him. And the rocky places, overrun paths and tricky climbs bring me, Katie, Kim, Tom and Jordan closer together.

So far, Multnomah Falls, located right next to the Columbia River Gorge, has been one of our favorite hiking destinations.

Multnomah Falls is the second highest year-round waterfall in the nation, dropping at 620 feet from the top of Larch Mountain. It also boasts to be one of the most romantic locations in Portland. Pull up an image on Google and you will see why. A stone bridge extends above the lower part of the waterfall and gives a breathtaking view of the Gorge as well as the massive plummet of water into the spring pool. From the top of the falls is an equally impressive view of the Columbia River Gorge.

Our first visit to the falls consisted of only hiking to the top, which is a half-mile hike. This time, we decided to take on a bigger challenge. The trail to the top splits with a path going to the lookout or miles of more trails that cover Larch Mountain. There are also a few loops located on the mountain. We chose the



Michelle Myers

• A Moment with Michelle

loop that has several waterfalls and a handful of lookouts along the trail, taking us hundreds of feet above the top of Multnomah Falls. The loop is also 5.2 miles long.

When the day arrived, we were more than ready to hike new territory. We packed our lunches, filled our water bottles, grabbed our cameras and headed down Interstate 84 to Multnomah Falls.

We also had piled on layers of clothes. Extra clothes for warmth were essential. It ended up being a cloudless day, unusual for Portland at this time of the year, sending rays of sunlight into the cold air. However, we knew that the sun would not be enough to thaw the trail, which we anticipated being covered in snow near the summit.

We arrived at about 1 p.m., and even though the espresso stand looked very appealing, I knew it would be waiting for me by the time we returned.

We actually started at the return end of the loop. We were told the ending of the trail would give us a gradual incline, much different from the winding, steep trail at the other end.

As we made our way up the mountain, we passed by icicles hanging off cliff edges, walked over wooden bridges, some of them demolished by the rushing river that always seemed to be quietly roaring in the back-ground.

We were over an hour into our hike when our trail started becoming sprinkled by little piles of snow. We were used to the trail having its slippery places, but snow had started to completely cover the trail, making those icy parts hard to spot. Having someone slip and fall was the last thing we wanted to happen, so taking a hold of each other's arm or hand became a habit. This method of linking us together also helped when the trail would become steep and difficult to climb. We were basically pulling each other up, extending our strength to the next person to make it easier to climb.

Later on down the trail, Katie mentioned that hiking is so much easier and more fun when she is with a group, instead of by herself. Katie and I started to realize that our helping each other on the difficult parts of the trail was a picture of friends helping each other through the hard times in life. If someone starts to stumble, we should take immediate notice so we can catch them before they hit the ground. If at some point life is too hard to handle alone, we should be there to help that person make it through safely. If one of us starts going down the wrong path, we should tell that person to stop and turn around.

Without realizing it, we had painted a picture of what it means to truly be a friend, to be there for each other when it matters. But even when it doesn't matter, we are still there for each other because we want to be.

Michelle Myers, a Colby native, is a student at Multnomah University in Portland, Ore., majoring in Bible and journalism. She enjoys the 32 Starbucks found within five miles of her campus.

Ag's pizza party a big deal

Looking at the world of agriculture through the eyes of a fourth grader, one word comes to mind—BIG.

For those 700 students fortunate enough to attend the Ag Day Pizza Party, that means a BIG building, BIG displays, BIG slices of pizza and really BIG tractors and other equipment—all used to produce the ingredients that go into pizza.

Held in conjunction with the annual celebration of national Agricultural Week, this year's pizza party is slated for March 24. The site is the Ag Hall of Fame near Kansas City. This marks the 14th year for the Ag Day Pizza Party.

It's difficult to imagine children from the city immersed in the world of agriculture. Like so many of their parents and others from urban environments, most youngsters believe pizza and other foods they eat come from the grocery store.

Few understand farmers and ranchers across Kansas help provide almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis. Few know crops help fuel their parents' vehicles.

Today, more and more Americans are moving farther and farther away from production agriculture. A classic example of this occurred during the early years of the Ag Day Pizza Party, when students often asked for "vanilla" milk, meaning white milk. These kids thought



John Schlageck

• Insights

Kansas Farm Bureau

milk came in chocolate or vanilla.

In an effort to help them better understand how farmers and ranchers provide the materials that go into their food, groups of about 14 students rotate through educational stations set up by the Kansas and Missouri beef councils, corn growers, dairy organizations, pork producers, soybean associations, vegetable growers and the Kansas Wheat Commission.

Kansas and Missouri Farm Bureaus help sponsor this event each year and provide classroom materials for use during National Agriculture Week, March 15-21 this year. Four Farm Bureau counties — Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte — helped pay for this year's event.

In past years, the students' enthusiasm, energy, sense of awe and willingness to soak up knowledge at this learning event was inspirational. Most listened attentively. For some, it was an eye-opening experience.

Once the children finish with the education-

al part of the event, they feast on the tasty food they learned about. What better way to capture a child's attention than to use his or her favorite food for an illustration?

Students always enjoy this Ag Day Pizza Party celebration. Many express amazement at their new-found knowledge of agriculture.

They'll also have the opportunity to understand the essential role agriculture plays in maintaining our nation's economy and learn to appreciate the role this industry plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable food products for them and their families.

While the fourth graders probably won't remember exactly how many bushels of wheat, corn or livestock are produced on Kansas farms each year, they will take away something even more important — a new understanding of the foods they eat and the No. 1 industry in Kansas — agriculture.

And most fo them take home the lesson that the foods they love to eat are produced on the farms across Kansas.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

