



Other Viewpoints

Cautious optimism greets withdrawal

The withdrawal of about 40,000 troops from Iraq calls for celebration despite concerns about the future of the country. President Barack Obama announced in October that troops will leave Iraq before the end of the year.

Still, reasons for a reasonable U.S. military presence in the country exist. The region and the nation have stability issues with warring religious factions, terrorist recruitment, re-forming government and overstepping neighbor nations. Certainly military training from the U.S. could continue to help the Iraqis.

But the withdrawal stems from a 2008 agreement. Renegotiation attempts failed when Iraqi leaders would not extend immunity from prosecution to troops left to train Iraqi security forces.

No immunity, no deal.

And our troops will return home.

Combat formally ended in August 2010. Since the war started in 2003, our nation lost more than 4,400 Americans, spent more than \$800 billion, and sent servicemen and servicewomen on tour after tour, with tens of thousands sustaining mental and physical injury.

Was the "mission accomplished"? No.

Is this "war" over? Likely not.

The debate certainly isn't over, as 12 members of the Senate Armed Services Committee are asking for a hearing about the decision.

With an unclear mission then and today, we can pin hopes on what is clear: Many of our nation's military men and women thankfully will be safe at home for the holidays and beyond.

We can all appreciate that.

And we can hope our nation's influence and regional changes set Iraq on a path to a strong democracy.

— Loveland Daily Reporter-Herald via the Associated Press

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

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 225-E., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

State Rep. Rick Billinger, Docking Building, Room 754, Topeka Kan., 66612, (785) 296-7659 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov

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.

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

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor
kbottrell@nwkansas.com

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

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansas.com

Tomi Miller, Christina Beringer - Society Reporters
colby.society@nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING

colby.ads@nwkansas.com

Kathryn Ballard

Advertising Representative
kballard@nwkansas.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Kylie Freeman - Office Manager
kfreeman@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager

Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, Jim Bowker,

Judy McKnight, Kris McCool

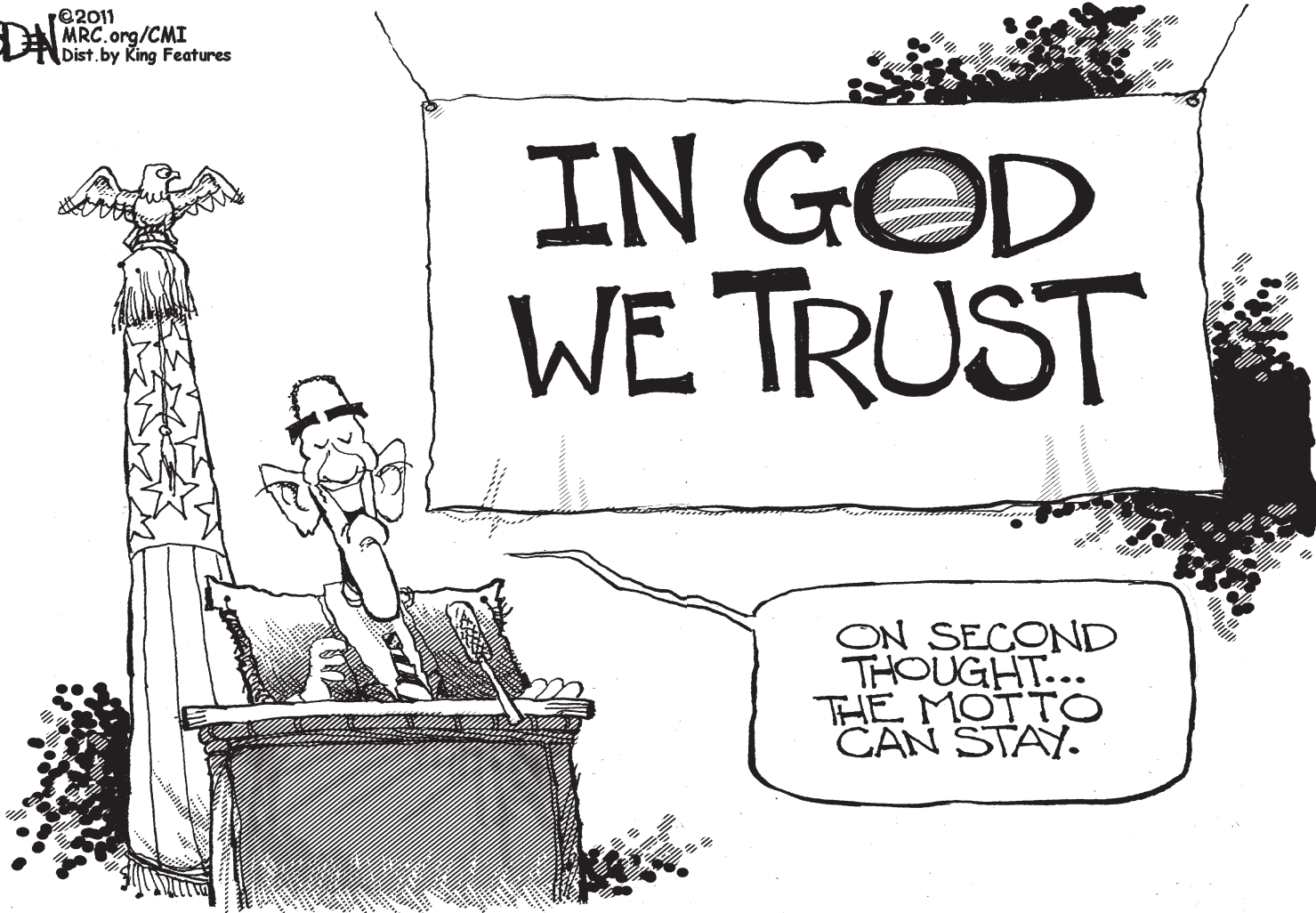
THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

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.

©2011 MRC.org/CMT Dist. by King Features



Mom's laugh lasted through tough times

My mother, Florence (Williams) Richard, had the best sense of humor of anyone I've known. She died many years ago, but even now, every time I picture her in my mind, I picture her laughing. There was nothing she enjoyed more than hearing – or telling – a good joke.

Even though she started out her married life with three strikes against her, she managed to maintain her good nature. She left school early and was married before her 18th birthday. She married a man who became an abusive, incurable alcoholic and suffered from severe migraine headaches all of her life.

My father was out of town most of the time since he was in the construction business, so Mom was pretty much on her own. She had four children to manage: my older sister, Shirley; my younger sister, Ann; my baby brother, Dick and, of course me. Maybe that's why she was always trying to find something to do that would make her days a little more fun and exciting.

Because my dad won some land in a poker game, we moved from Oklahoma City to the suburb town of Bethany. There wasn't much to do for entertainment in Bethany, basically because it was a Nazarene town with a Nazarene college, the only church was the Nazarene Church, and the school was a Nazarene school.

Therefore, since Nazarenes don't believe in dancing or going to movies, there was no movie theater in the town and school dances weren't allowed.

Before we moved to town, Dad built a two-car garage on that property and that was where



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

we lived while he was building our new home. As a result of our living conditions, we happened to have the only outdoor toilet in the entire town.

When it was time for the first Halloween celebration after we were finally moved into our new house, rumors got around town that several teenagers were planning to turn over our outhouse on Halloween night.

After hearing these rumors, just before dark on Halloween Mom led us all out into the backyard, and we made a celebration of turning over our very own outhouse. All evening we heard people in our backyard complaining, "Oh darn it. Someone beat us to it." We all got a good laugh out of that.

Mom was also resourceful. While our house was being built, very little attention was paid to the yard around the house. When spring rolled around, Mom decided it was time to do something about the weeds growing in our backyard where she wanted to plant some vegetables.

Since my little sister Ann's birthday was in May, Mom decided to have a party and invite all of the neighbor children. Of course she served cake and punch, but after the refreshments were finished, she announced that we

were going to play a game. She divided us into two teams and gave each team a large trash can.

The object was that the team first to fill their can to the top with weeds would win a prize. After the prize-winning team received their prize of candy bars, Mom announced that if the other team would also like candy bars, they could fill their can with weeds again. When the party was over and everyone went home, the backyard was free of weeds.

Mom also made most of our clothes, but she never bought patterns. She would put a piece of newspaper down on the floor and we would lay on it while she drew around us to make her pattern. Strange as it seems, our clothes always fit.

Actually, Mom's last words to me were that she had pulled something over on someone. During her last years of life, Mom and her older sister, Genevieve Messamore lived in side-by-side apartments in Meadowlark Manor.

Mom often didn't feel well, and I guess it was pretty irritating to her when my aunt would tell her that she was all right; it was probably just something she ate. As a result, just before they wheeled Mom away to have the surgery she never recovered from, she said, "I guess I showed Genevieve. She didn't even think I was really sick."

Mom and Genevieve are probably up in Heaven laughing about that right now.

Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.

Harvest conditions good after all

Regardless of the location across Kansas, this fall has served up ideal harvest conditions. Many producers report they are ahead of schedule with the 2011 harvest. Seldom are the temperatures this mild, the humidity this low and the weather this dry during this time of year.

In Clay County, Josh Lloyd finished cutting his corn, most of his soybeans and he's putting the finishing touches on approximately 700 acres of milo. His milo crop has averaged approximately 100 bushels per acre as did the dry-land corn.

Lloyd and his father are happy with this year's yields considering the hot and dry growing season this summer.

"We're still learning about corn in our cropping rotation," Josh says. "The feeling in this region of the state is that you can't grow corn and there've been years when 40-bushels-per-acre corn was a good crop."

Soybean yields weren't so good although they did match the Lloyd's average production history (APH) of 35-bushels-per-acre. Double-crop soybeans did not fare as well and Josh says one of these fields may not be worth harvesting.

This seems to be the case with double-cropped beans in most of this region of the state, he says.

"We've saved the double-crop beans 'till last," the Clay County farmer says. "In addition to the hot, dry weather this summer, the variety we planted was a short season and this probably contributed to our lack of success."

Still the Lloyds appreciate the crops they've



John Schlageck

• Insights Kansas Farm Bureau

been fortunate to harvest. They understand there are plenty of regions in Kansas where harvest was a complete bust because of even less moisture and continuous days of 100-degree heat this summer.

One production practice the Lloyds have been using for more than a decade is blending two varieties of milo when they plant. They generally plant a high yielding variety with a drought resistant variety.

"We never know what kind of year it will be and this helps spread our risk of a crop failure," Josh says. "During the last decade we've seen plenty of advantages with a blend of milo seeds."

The Lloyds are blending their wheat seed also. Here they combine three varieties and this has worked out to their advantage as well.

While many producers in this region of the state were planting more wheat acres, the Clay County grain grower planted fewer acres. His thinking was if he planted more acres of wheat he'd have to raise a more productive crop than his average yields to come out better than the production levels for corn, milo and soybeans on their farm.

"It may work out for all those producers

who've planted more wheat," Josh says. "I hope it does because right now the crop is looking good around this region of the state. Maybe I should have planted our entire farm to wheat."

Even so, the Lloyds would rather not put all of their eggs in one basket. They'd rather play the averages based on their many years of cropping history.

"I'm not sure wheat is any safer of a bet, even in a dry year," Josh says. "This year reinforced this thinking when we were able to make our APH yields with our row crops."

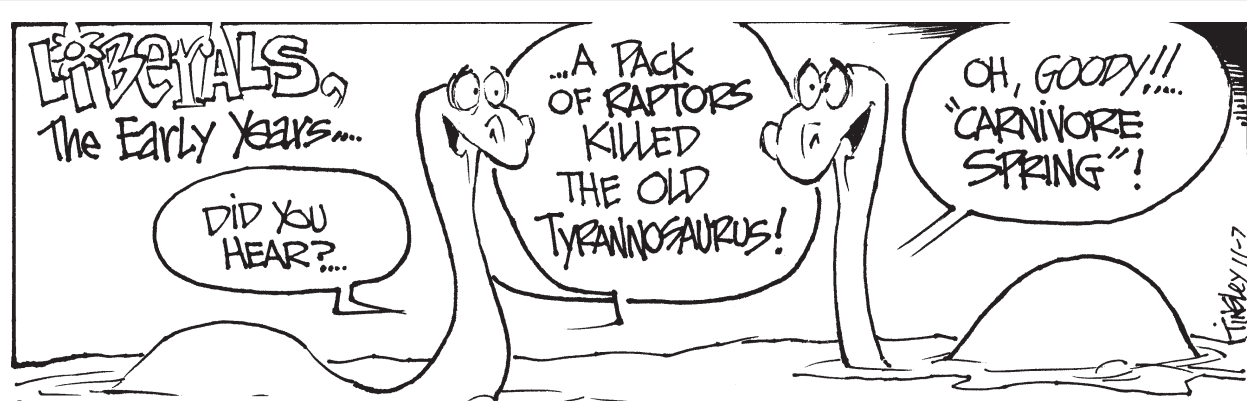
Until next year and especially next summer, the young Clay County producer is looking forward to the approaching cooler weather. He knows rain comes slower at this time of year and generally finds its way into the soil unlike the hard rains of summer that tend to partially run off the land and cannot be utilized as efficiently.

"I can't say what's going to happen next year, next week or even the following day," Josh says. "All we can do is do our best – watch and learn from past experiences. The future will be what it will be."

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

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley



©2011 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.