

commentary

from other pens...

Death of McVeigh doesn't advance justice

The Iola Register on Timothy McVeigh:
Because the FBI failed to send all of the evidence to the court that it had gathered on the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Timothy McVeigh won't be executed until June 11, if at all...

What will the postponement of the execution do to the American psyche? Will millions of us fall into depression because we have been robbed of the vicarious thrill of counting down the seconds until McVeigh's last twitch?..

There is a happier alternative. Attorney General John Ashcroft could take this opportunity to review this past two months of incessant publicity on Mr. McVeigh's impending demise, decide it did nothing to advance the cause of justice and ask President Bush to commute the sentence to lifetime in prison.

Of course the world would have been better off without McVeigh — if he had been snatched from this mortal coil in a timely fashion, before he murdered 168 innocents.

But given the ways of the information age, executing him turns out to be a kind of glorification which focuses the attention of the entire nation for weeks on end on a person unworthy of an hour's thought... Enough is enough.

Rather than promoting another month of nonstop McVeigh, Ashcroft should pull the plug. Send him back to his 8- by-12 cell. Seal him off from reporters and ghost writers. Let him stare at the walls until he dies of the corrosion that hate and anger wreak on the human body and soul. Cruel and unusual punishment? Probably. But how richly deserved.

The Garden City Telegram on helping hands:

With no fanfare, or expectation of any attaboys, a handful of men nodded approvingly...when one among their ranks suggested making a donation to those in need in Hoisington.

A modest sum —\$250 —will be sent off to a sister council of the Knights of Columbus, a gift from the men who make up the St. Dominic Church council in Garden City.

Given the devastation caused by the F4 tornado on Hoisington's prom night last month, \$250 seems a tiny amount. The reality is, it's a tremendous sum, as much in gesture as in cash.

All across Kansas, just as Kansans did a year ago for the folks in Parsons, small clubs are digging into their modest bank accounts to ship off what they can to help those whose possessions were destroyed and lives perhaps forever changed by the killer storm.

Less than a week after the tornado struck, relief efforts sprouted up all across Kansas...

The guess here is all of the public efforts to help those in need in Hoisington pale compared to the private ones. The small civic and church groups who passed hats for spare change; employees at area businesses who did the same; and individuals who on their own scribbled out a check and sent it off. They won't know how their money was spent or if their money was spent at all.

In time of need, Kansans don't worry about such things. And that's the best part.

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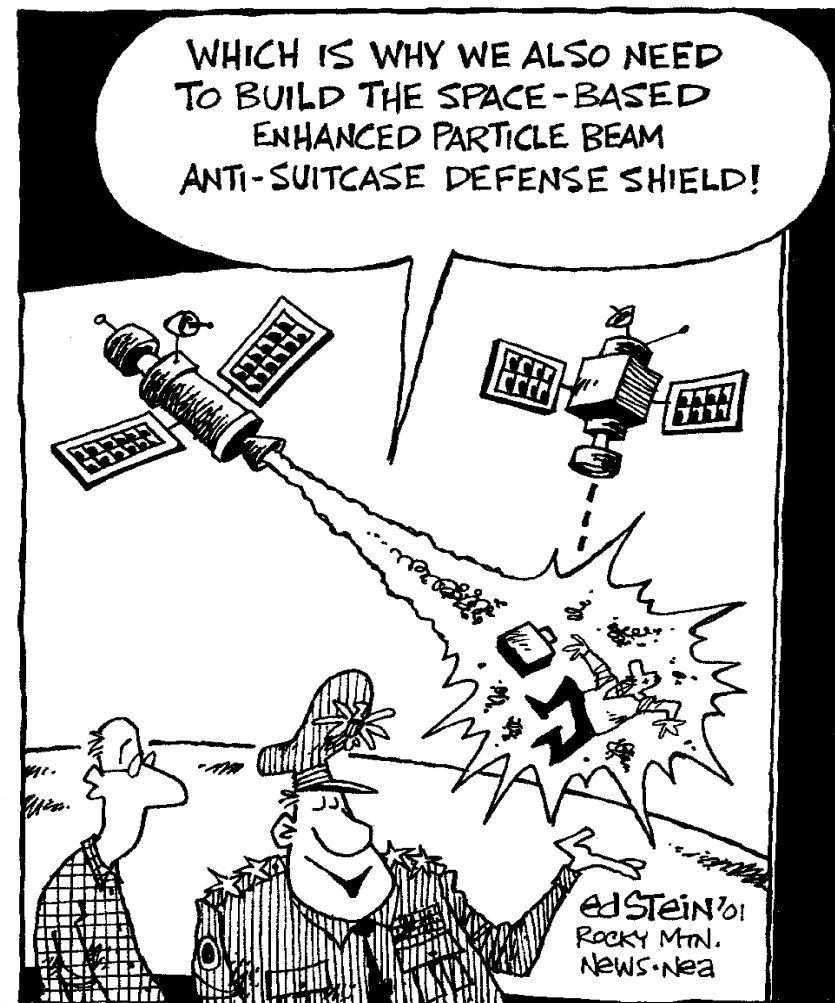
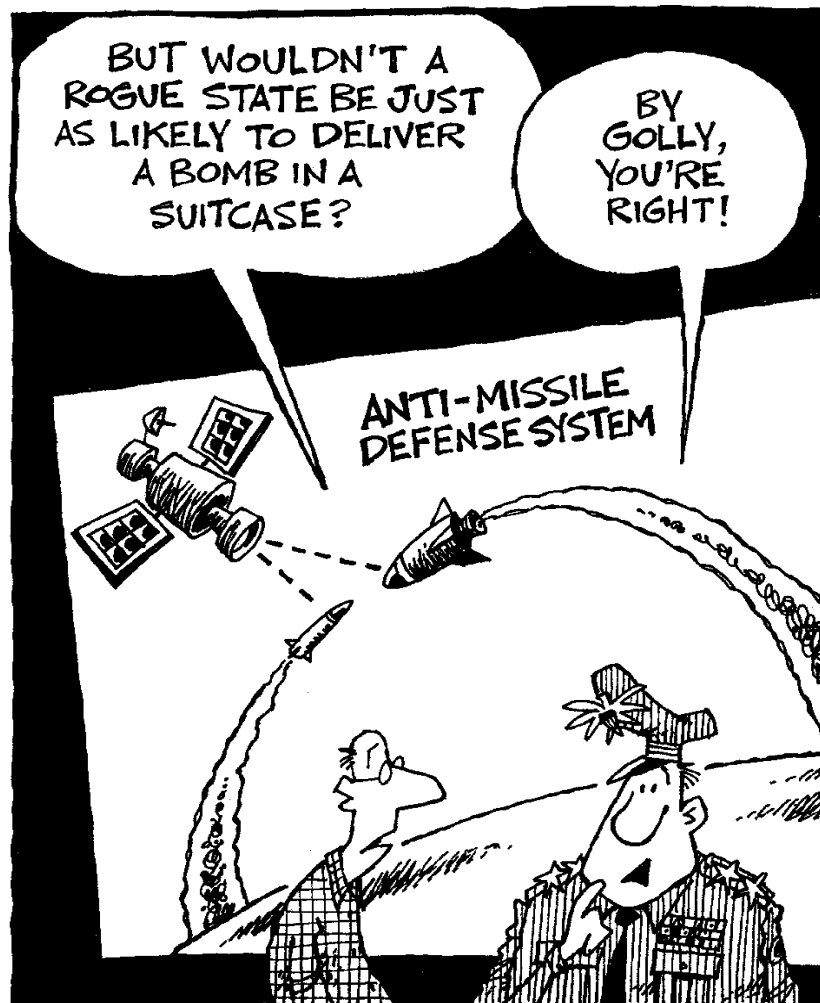
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Background checks for Jiang? Nah, right to carry!

Were there more Chinese spies at Los Alamos than a John Gotti jail break?

Sure looks like it, but don't shut off the swimming pool pumps in California yet.

Just because some U.S. companies have sold sensitive satellite technology to China, is no reason to hyperventilate over this China thing. Its just this cyberspace economy don't you know.

They have more spies in America than the Israelites had when Caleb and Joshua crossed into the promised land. Indeed the home of the Manhattan Project in New Mexico was the promised land for Chinese espionage agents.

It may have been an offense to the sovereignty of Peoples Republic of China when two computer hard drives turned up missing at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The People's Liberation Army of China went for missile technology faster than a town drunk for a five day home brew.

China has a standing army that sounds like our homeless. For them to loose 50,000 men would be like the US loosing 5,000.

The United States has become the world's idiot. These nuclear corporations that are more powerful than the military-industrial-complex don't care about America's national sovereignty.

The giant sucking sound that Ross Perot talked about in 1992 was the New York City money to China. It went to such crony corporations as IBM China Great Wall Computer Shenzhen Co. and Shenzhen Kaifa Technology Co. LTD

While California faces rolling black outs and the eco-terrorists say we don't want your air polluting diesel generators in Californian, Atlantic Richfield Co. and Philips Petroleum Co. entered



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into joint ventures with the Chinese government to build coal-fired plants. And the eco-terrorists say to Americans ride a bicycle.

There are some who say we don't care. Well how about this the People's Liberation Army of China cares. It understands the importance of sea going, trade. What do you think the downing of the EP-3 surveillance plane was about? They want everyone to check with Jinag before using the Taiwan Straits.

Furthermore, they want to make the Gulf of Mexico a Chinese lake. They already controls both ends of the Panama Canal. But they want more, China has built the world's largest sea-air facility just 60 miles from Florida in the Bahamas. Wonder if the envois would care if Fidel and Jiang decided to close the Gulf of Mexico to US farm exports?

Maybe! But they are not the only ones interested in the most strategic waterway in the Western Hemisphere. Nearly every one of these little islands off the coast of Florida is a free trade zone that either launders drug money or is a Shangri-la for tax evaders.

But Jiang is not setting around in his shades and knee pants. Since the People's Liberation Army of China has taken over the Panama Canal it has been smuggling AK-47 machine guns into California.

Bet Maxine Waters (a black Congressperson) blamed it on the CIA. Whether it was the CIA or the government of China the guns still went to street gangs.

This China thing is not bean bags its real trouble. What reason would someone pay \$8,000 to open a bank account in the Bahamas if it wasn't a tax haven for the rich? Then why would the Peoples Republic of China put a move on these little Caribbean islands? It is to hold the United States hostage to a star wars attack on US cities

Its credible! The only thing these nuclear corporations want is your money. Since the downing of the EP-3 surveillance plane corporate America has been huffing and puffing at Beijing. Yep Thomas Donohue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, is really getting mad.

Its easier to sell satellite technology than it is to get an export license to export farm commodities. And these fancy guys say an export license on US satellites is over kill?

Its even easier to launder money with the click of a computer mouse to Barbados. And it would be easier to drain the all sauna baths in California than to make China pay for its terrorist act in the Taiwan Straits. Today, these nuclear corporations have \$300 billion invested in China. It creates nearly half of their gross national product (GDP), and it employs 22 million Chinese to work in their sweat shops.

China still lives in the 18th century when a great empire ruled the world, but today it is the cyberspace economy. So now China is making black berets for the US military. Will it be the stealth bomber next?

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Sometimes the grass is greener

Money can't buy happiness. Right.

This needlepoint bromide surely comes from the same people who would have us believe a smile should be our umbrella, love conquers all, and things will look better in the morning — all fine mottoes if you happen to live inside a Doris Day movie.

Not that I don't cling to these subversive bits of folk wisdom myself when crisis strikes. I can fool myself into believing just about any comforting lie for short periods of time, which has saved me a substantial sum in liquor bills. (This is the advantage in having a brain like a golden retriever; it holds no grudges. No matter how many dead ends I have led it into, no matter how little exercise I give it, it runs to the door, ever hopeful.)

The point is, of course money can buy happiness. Maybe not Deepak Chopra/Dalai Lama happiness. But for one night, money provides an effective substitute for inner-peace and joy, as I found out last week.

OK, I didn't just discover this last week. I have known this since the fourth grade, when my mother broke down and bought me go-go boots and the "Meet the Monkees" album, a day that still stands as one of the happiest of my childhood.

It was reinforced after college when I could afford to buy my friend's 1979 Trans-Am with soft leather interior. Surely there are few experiences in life more uplifting than being 23 and sitting behind the wheel of a midnight blue Trans-Am cruising toward Daytona Beach on a Saturday night with other single friends, but you've got to go a long way.

Last week, I took my husband to a fancy inn in California's wine country for his birthday. It was



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a splurge that perhaps I'll regret when the credit-card bill arrives. But there's something about spending a night in a suite with a Jacuzzi tub, a steam-shower, a feather bed and a view of green, rolling vineyards that can make you start humming "My Favorite Things" from "The Sound of Music."

Call me shallow, but give me a night of living beyond my means and I'm like Eliza Doolittle with chocolates. I am jolted out of the daily-ness of life and into a parallel universe where the bathrooms are sparkling, the robes are soft and the pillows fluffed, where solicitous people ask if you'd like ice brought to your room.

Even in this time when so many around the world are poor, the occasional luxury has its place. I see it as allowing yourself a hot-fudge sundae now and then, though there's no real justification for it. It just lifts your spirits. Life isn't an either/or thing: Either there are thorns or there are flowers. There are both.

In a way, living large recreates the times we clomped around in our mother's high heels and pretended that a prince had come over for afternoon tea. You get to feel like someone other than yourself. It is why, I think, we spend ungodly sums on weddings. For that one day, we are royalty. We splurge on champagne and shrimp and hotel ballrooms. We wear gowns and tuxedos. We spend

more on fresh flowers than we are likely to spend the rest of our lives.

No wonder so many of us remember our wedding day as the happiest of our lives. Would it have been so had we skipped the satin shoes and crab appetizers and eloped to Reno?

When we arrived home from the inn, my son was still grappling with his state report on Hawaii and the first-of-the-month bills were still stacked on the counter and the frying pan from the weekend's breakfast was still on the stove. I'd like to say I looked around and concluded that this was true happiness after all. I didn't. At least not at that moment. Oh, I do think that. Of course. But I kept picturing the terrace overlooking the vineyards and the endless supply of towels in the bathroom and the crisp white pillowcase. My birthday, I thought, is just five months away.

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