

commentary

from other pens...

Two sides to stem cell research arguments

The Ottawa Herald on stem cell research:
... As he ponders whether to approve federal funding of research using stem cells from human embryos, President Bush must consider ... the arguments on both sides.
One side argues that stem cells taken from human embryos created outside the womb could lead to treatments for diseases once believed incurable. The other side maintains that destroying unused human embryos is destroying human life.
It's an emotionally charged political and religious debate over a potentially groundbreaking, but controversial, form of research.
After all, stem-cell research may not bring cures for any incurable diseases.
Or it could.
Society owes it to the many stricken with disease ...to find out. We should take advantage of all resources available, including stem cells from embryos created but not used for in-vitro fertilization.
... Using embryos that would be discarded anyway is both sensible and responsible.
... Involvement by the federal government would ensure that certain guidelines are met. Leaving the research to the private sector means more potential for abuse: human cloning, for example.
That's a chance we can't afford to take.
... Allowing the federal government to fund research that holds promise of cures for debilitating diseases such as diabetes, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's is an opportunity we can't afford to miss.

The Topeka Capital-Journal on Menninger:
They're not saying why the deal with Baylor University fell through. They're not publicly saying "I'm sorry" to the patients, staff and residents whose lives were turned upside down by the yearlong failed negotiations. ...
If Menninger officials care at all what people here think, they're not showing it. ...
It's understandable that Menninger, in order to stop financial bleeding and maintain its stature in the field of psychiatry, would seek an affiliation with a "major medical school," as they put it. But dismissively noting in a press conference that the University of Kansas Medical Center doesn't rank among the top 50 medical schools in the country — well, what was the point of that? ...
"Just give us a chance to see what we can do," Gov. Bill Graves said in a press conference last week.
Instead of seeming to signal that KU Medical Center isn't good enough, Menninger officials should be embarrassed and humbled by the mountains being moved for them. ...
Menninger will be making a monumental error — and quite likely will never be forgiven — if it now sends a message to the state that it should keep its red carpet rolled up. ...
So KU Medical School isn't ranked. So what? Neither was the Kansas State University football team when Bill Snyder had the guts and vision to take it over. ...
Menninger officials have some fence-mending to do, if they care to do it.
The first step — and it's not difficult — is to listen to the governor.

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Finding humor in everyday human events

I don't know about you, but I have a sense of humor, contrary to popular belief.
My ideas of humor have changed through the years, as have my ways of expressing humor.
The summer slumps have hit me, so I'm resorting to sharing other people's funniness instead of thinking up my own ideas. I read this one recently in Prairie Times by an unknown author; it's called Pregnancy Questions:
Q: Should I have a baby after 35? A: No, 35 children are enough.
Q: When will my baby move? A: With any luck, right after he finishes high school.
Q: How will I know if my vomiting is morning sickness or the flu? A: If it's the flu, you'll get better.
Q: What is the most common pregnancy craving? A: For men to be the ones to get pregnant.
Q: What is the most reliable method to determine a baby's sex? A: Childbirth.
Q: The more pregnant I get, the more often strangers smile at me. Why? A: 'Cause you're fatter than they are.



lorna g. t.

• commentary

Q: My wife is five months pregnant and so moody that sometimes she's borderline irrational. A: So what is your question?
Q: What's the difference between a nine-month pregnant woman and a model? A: Nothing, if the pregnant woman's husband knows what's good for him.
Q: How long is the average woman in labor? A: Whatever she says, divided by two.
Q: My childbirth instructor says it's not pain I'll feel during labor, but pressure. Is she right? A: Yes, in the same way that a tornado might be called an air current.
Q: Is there any reason I have to be in the delivery room while my wife is in labor? A: Not unless the word 'alimony' means anything to you.

Q: What does it mean when the baby's head is crowning? A: It means you feel as though not only a crown but the entire throne is coming.
Q: Is there anything I should avoid while recovering from childbirth? A: Yes. Pregnancy.
Q: Does pregnancy cause hemorrhoids? A: Pregnancy causes anything you want to blame it for.
Q: Do I have to have a baby shower? A: Not if you change the baby's diaper very quickly.
Q: Our baby was born last week. When will my wife begin to feel and act normal again? A: When the kids are in college.
Children are wonderful gifts from God.
I rejoice with anyone who has experienced or is in the process of experiencing pregnancy.
But my heart is sad for those who are unmarried teens and facing so many extra complications, for those who can't or don't value and/or properly care for their children, and those who are homeless with children through no fault of their own.
For all of these people, pregnancy is probably anything but humorous.
Send comments to: <lornagt@nwkansas.com>

Journey into the modern phone zone

Welcome to the MegaTelCo service center. Your call is important to us. ...
I spent an entire day dealing with phone companies the other day, or at least it seemed like it.
Would you be surprised if I said I was not a happy camper when I got done?
Phone companies decided decades ago that they could not afford to have an office in every town the way they once did. They pioneered the idea of call centers where people from all over the state, or the nation, could call to do business with them.
And if they did not invent voice mail, the hold key and elevator music, they took to them and made them their own.
My first call was to the cell phone company. I needed to have them fix the "features" on one of the company phones which for some reason had lost track of them. Why features which are standard with every line have to be turned on is beyond me, so I didn't even ask for an explanation of how they get turned off.
I just wanted them fixed. This call took half an hour. And I don't know of a phone company anywhere that will reimburse you for your time on hold, but they did say they would give me a credit for the air time.
It went better, though, than my previous call to the same cellular company. That day, the customer service rep kept me on the line for half an hour trying to figure out how to fix my problem. Then I went into a dip and the phone dropped the call. She



steve haynes

• along the sappa

never bothered to call me back, but the next rep was a little more with it. He fixed my problem in less than 20 minutes.
All of our customer service representatives are busy at this time. Please stay on the line. ...
Then I had to call the company which has the phone service for our house in Colorado, where our son is working this summer.
I talked to four people before I found someone who understood what I needed. The "call center" is somewhere in Louisiana, and sometimes I think that is in another country.
Every time they tried to transfer me, they lost my call. Every time they told me where to call, it was the wrong place. And when I finally found someone who understood my problem, he told me it was just my tough luck.
Do you ever wonder why they call it customer service?
Due to extremely heavy call volume, all of our customer service representatives are busy. Your call will be answered in the order in which it was received. ...

Change can only happen with effort, desire

To the Editor:
Imagine putting your hand on a hot stove. As you leave your hand on the stove to sizzle and sauté, what would people around you think if you told them your hand was hurting? Why not just take your hand off the stove?
We all know about the problems in our community, and several recent letters have now beaten the already dead horse.
Personally, I think Goodland has a tremendous amount of potential.
In addition to some of the nicest people I am proud to call neighbors, a non-existent rush hour, almost no pollution except for the occasional scent of cattle in the air, one of the best golf courses I have ever had the opportunity to play, one of the best vocational schools in the country, a regional hospital, a new water park, one of the seven giant Van-Gogh paintings which will exist in the world, and one of the best high school athletic facilities in the area, we have access to more lines of transportation than most communities our size by way of an Interstate highway, a state highway, a railroad and a municipal airport.
These facilities may have room for improvement, but with all of this, how can we look at Goodland as a town without potential?
Now, some people may complain about the cost of these facilities, or how they think Van-Gogh's



from our readers

• to the editor

work can be easily replicated, or whatever, but we already have these things. Why are we so stuck on being worried about things that have happened in the past instead of making a difference on things that have yet to be?
We tend to look at the bad things in town and focus or even obsess about what is, instead of looking at our potential, and thinking about what could be.
Colby is working towards starting a county endowment fund, which will provide them with annual interest income to assist with local projects. Why can't we start one?
Idalia, Colo., received just over a million dollars in grant money to assist with additions to their school. Why can't we apply for those grants?
The sky is the limit, and we are forced to stop only at those limitations which we impose upon ourselves.
There are two camps of people that exist in a town: those that work to bring down the already low morale by complaining about problems without

taking action to correct them, and those that take a problem and see only potential for a positive change, growth and development. Which are you? I don't want to sound too much like Zig Ziglar, but instead of looking at things as problems, perhaps we could look at them as opportunities for growth.
I challenge everybody in our community to assist with making Goodland a better place to live.
Financial or physical limitations are not an excuse, as anybody can formulate an idea that will give others, who can act, the ability to make a difference.
If you are willing to make a difference, let me know. There is a group in town that is working for the betterment of our community, and the more hands and ideas we have makes our work that much easier.
If you have the desire to lend a hand in making a change, or just have ideas that may help, but don't know what to do, or who to tell, let me know.
Change can happen only with effort and desire. Without a dedicated desire to change, we have only apathy.
My last boss in Denver always told everybody in the company, if you have a problem with the way things are run in this company, come to me with a solution. Perhaps we could all adopt that as our mantra.
Schyler D. Goodwin
Goodland