

commentary

from other pens...

Lindh's plea a surprise but justice is served

The Manhattan Mercury on John Walker Lindh's plea agreement:
John Walker Lindh's guilty plea was a surprise, but nowhere near as astonishing as the revelation last November that an affluent Californian might join a terrorist organization and take up arms against his own country.

The 20-year sentence he is expected to get for his two guilty pleas seems about right.

Twenty years isn't life, but it's about as long as the 21-year-old Lindh has lived. And though he could whittle a couple years off with good behavior, parole is not a consideration. Moreover, he will be required to provide information about the Taliban and al-Qaida to the government.

In entering the plea, Lindh avoided risk of a longer sentence, but as is the case with plea bargains, he wasn't the only beneficiary. The government got important convictions on serious charges, and Lindh faces long, hard time. Part of the prosecution's rationale — that agreeing to the plea saved the government the expense of a trial — is curious, given the initial outrage and determination to make an example out of Lindh, seemingly at any cost.

Perhaps the government realized that as criminal and offensive as Lindh's actions were, he was more misguided than evil, guilty more of abominable judgment than of treason. His youth and immaturity have earned him another chance. Deservedly, because of his association with sworn enemies of this country, that second chance won't come for 20 years.

The Topeka Capital-Journal on nuclear waste:

Everyone wants the advantages of nuclear reactors, but no one wants to deal with the waste they produce.

Kansas has participated in that not-in-my-back-yard war. A few years ago, the state fought being the site of a low-level nuclear waste dump for a five-state area, and when a site was agreed upon in Nebraska, that state also protested.

Now the focus is on Nevada. The Senate voted last week 60-39 to approve a dump site inside Yucca Mountain, about 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas. The site, already under construction, would allow 77,000 tons of nuclear waste from 39 states to be moved to the site, where it would be entombed.

Nevada, of course, is vociferously fighting the decision, and despite the Senate vote and President Bush's approval, it is far from a done deal. Five lawsuits are pending against the project, and Nuclear Regulatory Commission approval could take up to five years. Even supporters of the project say it is optimistic to expect the site to be in operation by 2010.

Meanwhile, nuclear waste accumulates at 103 nuclear reactors and more than 30 other commercial, industrial and military sites.

Some who oppose the Yucca Mountain site argue that it would be better to leave the waste where it is because of the risks in transporting the radioactive material across country. But there also are dangers in having waste in so many locations rather than contained in one spot.

The Nevada site, located in an isolated area, seems a reasonable choice — at least to those of us whose back yards have been spared. Both Kansas senators, Pat Roberts and Sam Brownback, voted in favor of the Yucca Mountain location.

While Nevada's resistance is understandable, the fact remains that as long as this country depends on nuclear reactors, it must also deal with the waste.

Be The First To Solve
THE NUKE WASTE PUZZLE
FUN • EDUCATIONAL • FOR UP TO 50 PLAYERS

INSTRUCTIONS:
MOVE THAT NASTY NUCLEAR WASTE FROM YOUR STATE TO ANOTHER STATE WITHOUT GOING THROUGH OR LANDING ON A STATE THAT DOESN'T WANT IT.
GOOD LUCK!

edSTEIN '02
Rocky Mtn.
NEWS-NEA

Iced tea anyone?



pat schiefen

• postscript

Pineapple tea cooler

11 cups cold water
6 regular sized hibiscus and rose hips tea bags
One 12 ounce can frozen pineapple juice concentrate, thawed

In small pan bring 3 cups of water to a gentle boil. Add tea bags, cover and remove from the heat. Let steep 15 minutes. Remove tea bags without squeezing them. Meantime, in a 3 quart container stir the pineapple juice concentrate into the remaining 8 cups of water. Add the steeped tea and stir. Cool, chill and serve over ice.

Berry-spiced iced tea

3 cups water
3 regular sized black currant flavored tea bags or 3 teaspoons black currant flavored tea leaves
3 cinnamon sticks (about 3 inches long)
10 cloves
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 1/2 cups cranberry juice cocktail
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
thinly sliced lemon for garnish optional

Bring water to boil in a small pan. Add tea bags or loose tea, cover and remove from heat. Steep for 10 minutes. Remove tea bags without squeezing or strain out leaves. Add the cinnamon sticks, cloves and sugar. Cover and cool to room temperature. Strain liquid into a pitcher. Add the cranberry juice and lemon juice. Stir. Chill, serve over ice and garnish with lemon slice.

Outer banks fall tea

2 cups unsweetened brewed black tea, chilled
1 quart fresh apple cider
1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (1 1/2 lemons)

One 1 liter bottle ginger ale, chilled
Mix brewed tea, apple cider, and lemon juice together in a 1 1/2 quart container. Keep chilled until ready to use. Pour tea mixture into a 2 1/2 quart pitcher and slowly pour in ginger ale before serving and gently stir. Serve over ice.

Sugar syrup

1 1/2 cups cold water
1 cup granulated sugar
Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan. Stir over low heat until sugar is dissolved. When the gritty sound stops. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, and cook for about 10 minutes. Very hot. If you spill it on yourself rinse with cold water until it's all off. Let cool. Refrigerated will keep for about a month, tightly covered.

When the heat waves of summer hit, iced tea and lemonade are the drinks we think of. The following is from "Iced Tea" by Fred Thompson.

Tea is basically sold in three forms. Black tea which is the most consumed type of tea. Black tea goes through a total oxidation (fermentation) process before being heated and dried. Green tea goes through no fermentation. Oolong tea is fermented somewhere between black and green tea. Oolong is the tea preferred in Asia and has a luxurious, smoky, almost peachy flavor. Herbal tea infusions or tisanes are made from flowers, herbs and spices. Hard iced tea contains alcohol.

To make stronger tea, add more tea bags (or loose tea). Lengthening the steeping time brings out its bitterness and making the tannins more pronounced. For weaker tea reduce the steeping time rather than reducing the amount of tea. Start with a two minute reduction.

Putting hot tea in a cold refrigerator will cause tea to become cloudy. Let it cool before refrigerating. Adding some boiling water to cloudy tea will clear it sometimes. Keep your tea fresh. Drink within two to three days. Three regular sized tea bags equal one family sized tea bag. Use three tablespoons loose leaf tea in a gallon of water to brew loose leaf tea cold brew.

The author is from the South and likes his tea very sweet so adjust amounts of sugar to your taste.

Kerr likes idea of limiting sessions to 90 days

It's interesting that the president of the Kansas Senate has picked up one of our ideas. He may even think he thought of it first, which is OK with us.

Dave Kerr, who is running for governor (isn't everybody?), is pushing for a 90-day limit on sessions to force legislators to get their work done and go home.

It's an idea this newspaper has been behind for some time. During the past session, we noted that the legislators kept paying themselves even after they knew the state was broke.

Members get paid by the day, and the longer they stay in Topeka, the more they make. The less they do, and the less they get along, the longer they have to stay.

Duh.
It's a situation ripe for reform. Hurrah for Sen. Kerr for suggesting a limit. We hope he'll back pay limits, too, because as long as they are getting paid, it's pretty easy for legislators to hang around Topeka.

☆☆☆☆

Can't say if it's a trend, but the aforementioned Sen. Kerr sent his wife out west to campaign for him.

Patty Kerr was in Goodland and several nearby towns last week to talk up her husband's campaign. She said they met while both worked at TWA's then massive operations in Kansas City. Those were the days.



steve haynes

• along the sappa

Later, she worked for Rep. Jerry Moran, so she can claim some western Kansas credentials. And now she's out here rounding up votes while Dave is, presumably, back east, where the votes are.

It makes sense to a point, but there comes a time when the candidate needs to get out and meet people, too. It's nice to meet his wife, but she won't be sitting in the governor's office.

Sen. Kerr is from Pratt and lives in Hutchinson, so he's sort of on the cusp between western Kansas and eastern Kansas. Both towns are west of U.S. 81, but Hutchinson usually claims honorary status in the east.

Come out and show us your cowboy boots, Dave.

☆☆☆☆

Kansas may be unique in having a three-party Legislature.

Most states where one party has the kind of majority the Republicans have here, the party rules. Not Kansas.

Kansas Republicans have been the majority

party for so long, they have to fight among themselves. The Democrats just aren't up to it.

Kansans keep sending Republicans to the Legislature, even though it seems they seldom do anything but fight. Guess they like their politics interesting.

Except for a few brief years, the "moderate" wing of the party usually elects the leaders, while the conservatives mostly sit around and complain.

Neither side has enough votes to enforce its will, though, and both will deal with the Democrats when it suits them.

The moderates (or liberals) back bigger government and more spending, the conservatives abhor that. And the Democrats, we know which side they are on — in the end.

The moderates descend roughly from the old-time progressive Republicans once led by men like Frank Carlson, Andy Schoepel, Alf Landon and a fellow named Lacy Haynes. Somewhere along the way, though, they hitched their star to Big Government.

And while the conservatives are tarred as crazy, they often have more sense when it comes to money. They argue for less government, more freedom, and by the way, lady, don't you go havin' an abortion.

What a system.

The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

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Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: daily@nwkansas.com. Advertising questions can be sent to: gdnadv@nwkansas.com

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$25; six months, \$42; 12 months, \$79. Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$30; six months, \$45; 12 months, \$80. By mail daily in Kansas, Colorado: 12 months, \$115. (All tax included.)

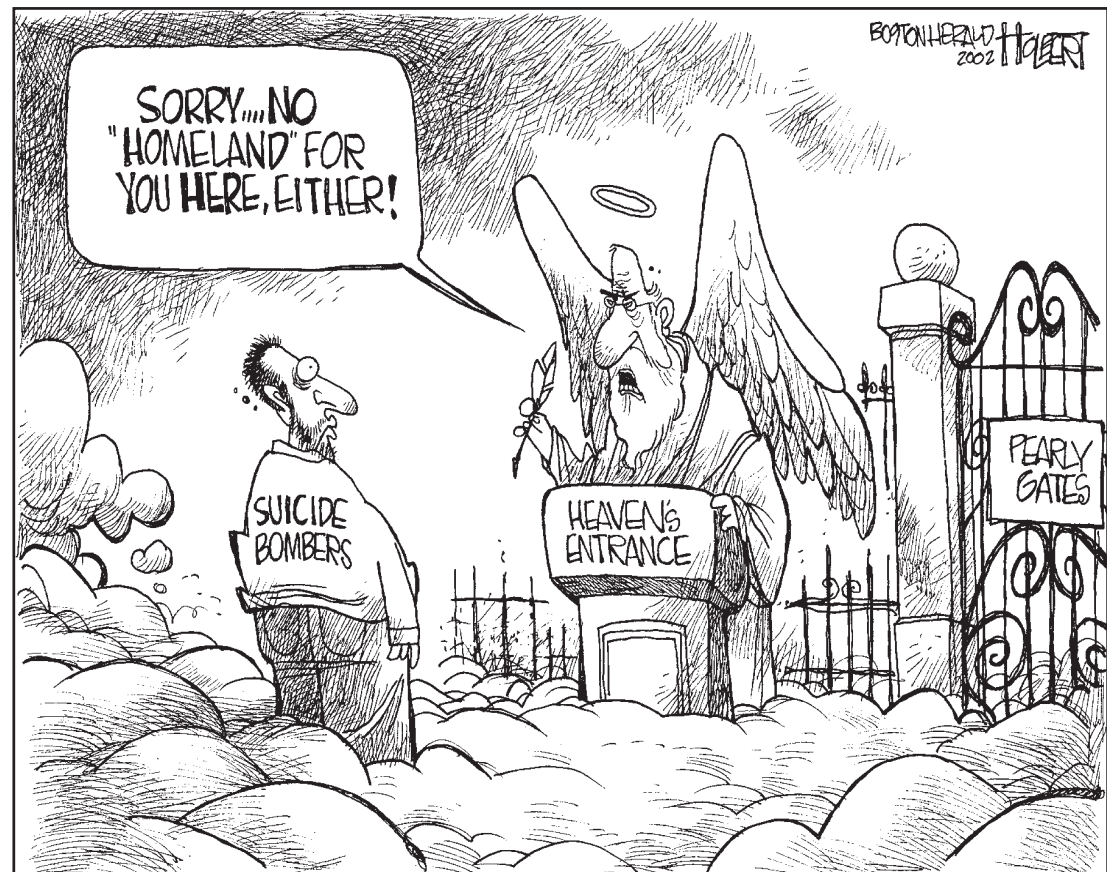
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