

from our viewpoint...

We are refocused when we remember

There are a lot of traditions tied up in the Memorial Day services, and it was good to see such a large crowd Monday morning.

The flags were presented, the songs sung, a wreath placed on the veterans' memorial, the speaker reminding us that it is through our memories that we keep our loved ones with us, then the 21-gun salute and the playing of "Taps" to conclude the main service.

Linda Koons and Jacque Cooper lent their own touch at the end with the release of red, white and blue balloons in remembrance of all those who were loved and who have died.

The tradition of Memorial Day began after the Civil War, when it was called Decoration Day to honor those who had died in that war.

Over the century or more since it began, Memorial Day has remained a day of remembrance, but it is also a time to pause in our busy lives and get a moment to refocus before we plunge back into the hectic hustle and bustle of the work week.

For many, the weekend has been a time to take flowers and place them on the graves of their family and friends who have died. Some are recent, but some have been gone for many years. For the kids who help their parents or grandparents place the flowers, this is a family tradition they will be left to carry on some day.

Passing on the traditions of Memorial Day is how we make sure that the memories are renewed and the lives of those we remember continue for another year.

Walking through the cemetery, it is wonderful to see the flowers on the graves, and it shows there is a depth of commitment to keep the tradition. The trip will usually bring a person in contact with friends of the family that have not been seen since year before.

Besides the 54 big American flags that are raised by the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts assisting the Veterans of Foreign Wars, there are dozens of smaller flags which are placed on every grave where there is a special veterans flag holder. Mazie Sutton said there are 720 flag holders in the Goodland Cemetery, and each one receives a small flag on this special day.

These are all part of the traditions of Memorial Day, and as one takes time to stand in front of a loved one's grave or the veterans' memorial it is a peaceful time to reflect on those memories of the past.

It is also a good weekend to pause and reflect on how the year has been going, as the Memorial Day weekend is the sign that summer is upon us. May is one of the busiest months, with the end of the school year events and graduations.

Thinking about the people we have known and loved who we honor and remember, it is a good time to use those memories to refocus our outlook as we head back to our busy lives.

— Tom Betz

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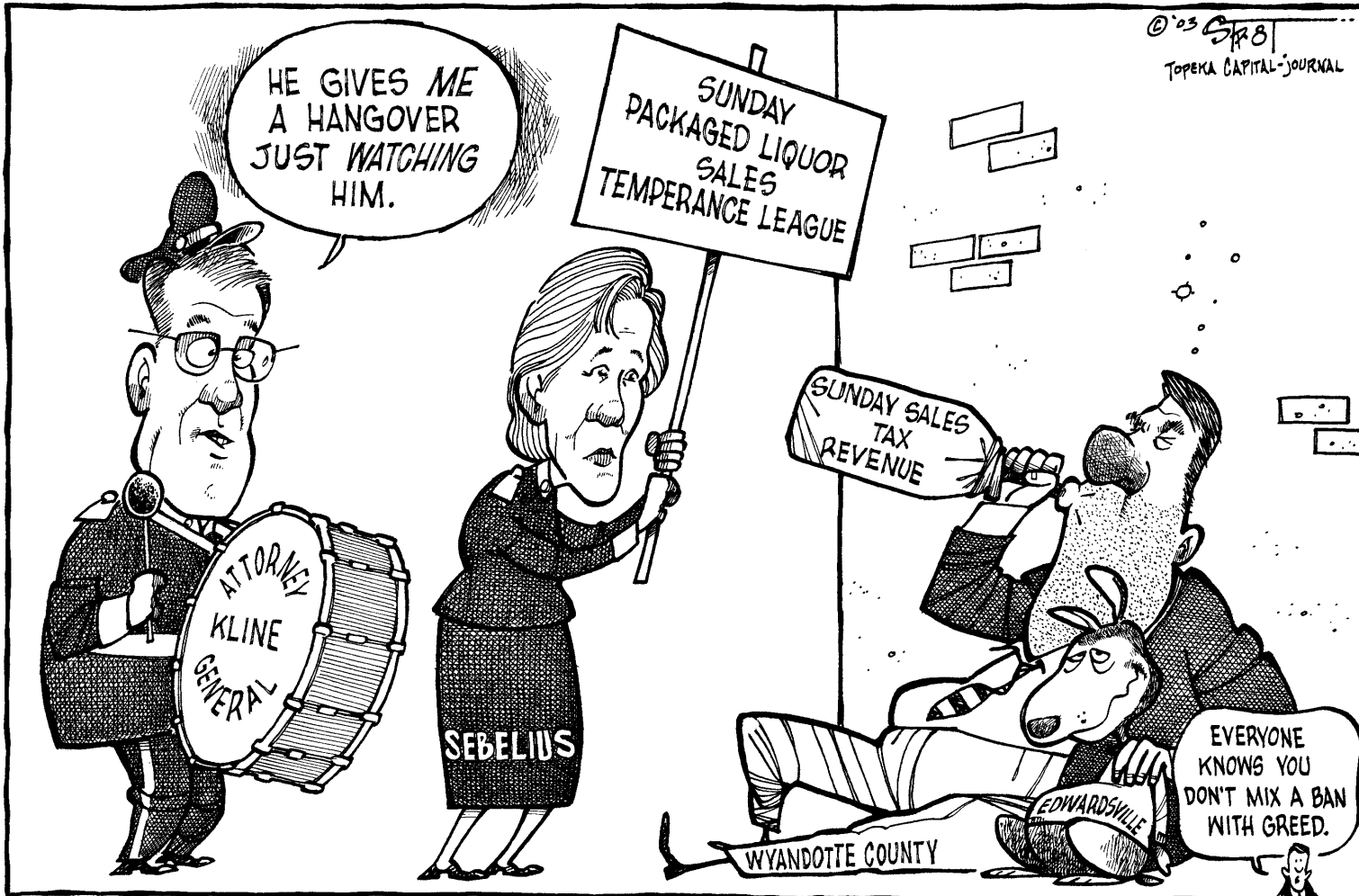
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Does a nose stud mean it is a mid-life crisis?

Oh, children.

Eldest daughter, who is soon to be 29 and lives in Georgia, flew back this weekend to visit her grandmother and take in a cousin's graduation.

Her sister, the kid at 26, picked her up at the airport.

While their little brother is still in college, these two are not co-ed's any more. After three years, eldest is assistant manager of her department in the Internet wing of a large national newspaper company. She makes more than either of her parents.

The younger one is finishing up her second year as a junior high science teacher in McLouth, north of Lawrence.

But while they are no longer college girls, they do try not to act like it. They planned to go out on the town. Of course, now that they're career girls, that means a drink or two and home by midnight, not the usual college girl stuff. But it makes them feel wicked.

I heard by the grapevine — namely their little brother — they had set a noon departure for their trip to Grandma's house. I asked why.

"Oh, they're going partying," he said. "They don't want to get up early."

So I called youngest daughter.

"How drunk do you plan to get your sister, anyway?" I asked.

She giggled.

"Enough that she'll forget about getting her



steve haynes

- along the sappa

nose pierced," she said.

Huh?

"Oh, yeah," little sister said, a wicked grin in her voice. "It's her present to herself for her 29th birthday. Personally, I think it's a mid-life crisis thing."

I said I hadn't heard anything about her sister's plans.

"She thinks you might not like it too well," she said. "She told mom, though."

Oh, great. Now I'm the backward and unsupportive parent. But I got over it and I moved on.

"So, are you getting one, too?" I asked.

"Nooooooooooooo," she said. "I'm a teacher in a small town. I can't do that. I don't even want to do that."

I thought this strange. They've always done these things together. They got belly-button piercings together when both were in college. They got tattoos together a year or two later.

I always thought the liquor came somewhere before the muddled thinking, not after, but you never know. I did think there might be some validity to the mid-life crisis thing, and figured

Longevity in the Bible



sharon corcoran

- use it or lose it

ness they are eighty years, yet their insistence is on trouble and hurtful things."

Why did lives become shorter? What made the difference?

Romans 5:12 says, "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."

Aging and illness is the result of mankind being imperfect and part of the process of dying. Generations living shortly after Adam inherited imperfections from him, and those imperfections became greater with each generation following, reducing people's life expectancies.

Romans 5:14 says, "Death ruled as king from Adam down to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the likeness of the transgression by Adam."

Aging and death had a grip on mankind in those generations, with the process progressively speeding up. Even with modern medicine, with billions of dollars spent annually on research, medications, diagnostic procedures, treatments and such, people's life expectancies are the same as they were in Moses' time, about 70 years. And we are still slowly dying due to our sinful condition.

Psalm 51:5 says, "Look! With error I was

maybe little sister would get one in a couple of years. Sometime after she gets tenure.

Of course, the eldest works in the Internet. Her crew works on the eighth floor of an office tower down the block from headquarters, where the entire bunch is regarded with some suspicion by normal corporate types.

"Those wacky kids on the eighth floor," that's how they think of them.

With one tiny stud in her nose, she won't stick out among the wild hairdos, trendy clothing and alternative lifestyles of the Internet generations. Her sister really doesn't have that advantage.

Anyway, they met us at the lake house outside Emporia on Saturday night. Eldest said she had to change the stainless steel piercing for a gold stud, and would her sister help?

"Sure," she said with some apparent glee.

There ensued an hour of grunting, cries of pain and moaning, after which they discovered she was trying to twist the little corkscrew into a new hole rather than the one the piercer had so thoughtfully provided. Little damage done, though, and you'll hardly notice the new stud once the swelling goes down.

They called Sunday from Lawrence to say that her last-of-the-night flight to Atlanta had been canceled, and she was spending the evening with her sister again. The bars are closed, so I suppose they'll behave.

And stay away from the piercing parlors as well.

brought forth with birth pains, and in sin my mother conceived me."

Everyone is a descendant of Adam; no one is without sin, imperfection and the eventual-ity of death. But does that mean there is no hope for us?

2 Corinthians 5:19 says, "God was by means of Christ reconciling a world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and he committed the word of the reconciliation to us."

By sending Christ to die, God gave sinful mankind an opportunity to be reconciled to him despite our sinful inclinations. He gave Christ's followers the "word of reconciliation," also referred to by Jesus and by the Apostle Paul as a ministry.

In Romans 10:14, Paul asks, "How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach?"

Christians today preach to others about the salvation they can gain through Christ. Because we have been commanded by God to do this, it is necessary for our salvation. Adam and Eve became subject to aging and death by disobeying God; we also have nothing better to look forward to if we continue to deliberately disobey God.

Ezekiel 33:11 says, "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

By turning away from deliberate sin, we have the opportunity to live forever.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."

garfield

