

Capture of Saddam great, but Iraq still dangerous

One more down. U.S. troops caught up with Saddam Hussein over the weekend, opening the last chapter in a sorry history of murder, deceit and brutality.

Dragged out into the light and given a quick physical at U.S. headquarters, Saddam did not seem all that fierce. He had few friends, no command, no forces. His last two bodyguards tried to run when U.S. troops approached.

He was spirited out of the country, taken to an undisclosed location where American military experts will interrogate him.

The one-time dictator appeared in film clips to be confused and disoriented, but his defiant nature reportedly came to the surface later, when Iraqi leaders were taken to see him in person.

The ex-despot said he had been "firm but fair" and dismissed the thousands found in mass graves as "nothing but thieves."

Though his camp was armed and the dictator wore a sidearm, not a shot was fired as American troops swooped down on the huts of a sheep farm. They found the mighty Saddam in a hole under one of the huts. He had a quarter of a million American dollars, but few friends.

There was dancing in the streets of Baghdad, and more than a few smiles even in his nearby hometown of Tikrit, but Saddam's capture will not end the violence in Iraq.

That will take, as President Bush pointed out, months, perhaps years, as the country develops a new government and outside forces are hunted down and eliminated.

American troops are going to be there for a while, and yes, American blood will be shed.

Regardless of what Democratic partisans say, the U.S. is in this for the long haul. We are winning. Casualties have been light by any standard, both during the campaign to take Iraq and during the occupation.

No loss of life is good, but we have to accept when fighting a war that there will be some casualties. Opponents who crow happily at every American setback are not doing this country a service.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller was quick to pronounce Sunday that the fighting will continue because the terrorists "are not fighting for Saddam, but against the United States."

Of course they are. Some of these people are sworn enemies of this country and everything that we stand for. They hate the West, they hate democracy, they hate the idea of freedom for their countrymen.

But the U.S. has and will prevail.

We will win the war on terrorism.

Eventually, we'll find Osama bin Laden as well. Others will take his place.

We will defeat them as well.

But for now, there's cause to celebrate.

We got him. — *Steve Haynes*

Week of flu more than enough

The past week is a blur of mentholatum ointment, humidifiers, cough medicine with codeine and, ultimately, a trip to the doctor.

Jim has played "Nurse Nancy," but I'm afraid I was never awake long enough to appreciate his bedside manner.

I'm not entirely sure I had the flu, but if it wasn't, I don't want to get any closer to it. Whatever "it" was left me completely exhausted. I came home from work late last Monday night and fell asleep.

I scarcely roused for the next 24 hours. For days after, I had no strength, and couldn't stay awake for more than an hour or two at a time. My temperature would be 102 degrees one day and down to normal the next. All I drank was water and all I ate was rice.

This is the sickest I ever remember being. I tried to go in to work Thursday. Bad idea. I was trying to write an obituary for Friday's paper when it dawned on me that if I didn't take care of myself, someone would be writing my obituary.

Now that's a sobering thought. What would my obituary read like, anyway? Would the reporter know me well enough to give it that personal touch? Or would they just say, "She was a member of this club and that and will be greatly missed."

I've got a lot of living left to do, a lot of places to go and things to do. I'm not afraid to die, but I'm not in any hurry either.

For now, I'll tell "The Grim Reaper" to get to the back of the line. My number hasn't been called yet.

—ob—
Kara flew from Dallas to Washington on Saturday. She will be attending one of the White House



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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Christmas parties with her sister Halley, who works for the White House.

When we awoke Sunday morning to the news that Saddam Hussein had been captured, I had to call to see what Halley's "take" on the situation was. I should have known better. After all, it was still before noon.

I woke them up and told them the news. So much for my Washington "insider" perspective.

Watching the President give a news conference this morning, a reporter asked him what the procedure would be to bring Saddam to trial. Mr. Bush gave the appropriate response by saying the Iraqi government would be involved in those decisions, and the Iraqi people would decide his fate.

Then, almost as an aside, he said, "I know what I would personally like to do to him." He went on to say his personal feelings were not important at this point, it was to be the judgment of the Iraqis who had suffered at the hands of this dictator.

But everyone knew what he meant: "Give me ten minutes in a room alone with him." We all have our own idea of what justice we would mete out to Saddam.

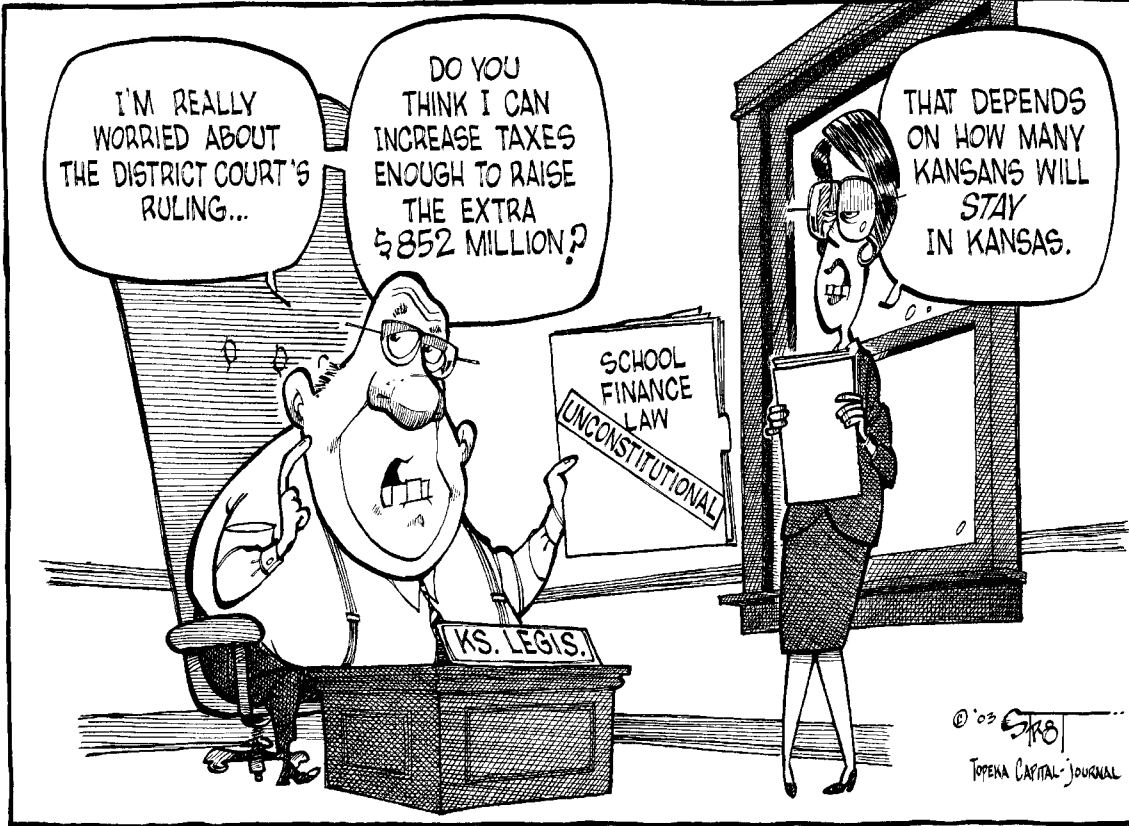
But how can you punish a person like him? Execution seems too swift and easy. Yet, civilized people

couldn't do to him the things he did to people. He enjoyed inflicting pain. Mostly, in my opinion, he enjoyed the power. Power over people's lives.

Perhaps the best punishment of all would be to make him spend the rest of his life with absolutely no power over anything. And a television set tuned to cover the politics of a democratic Iraq.

From the Bible

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 1: 18-20



Twins kitties just double the fun

They're cute as the dickens. They're fuzzy, warm, cuddly and lovey.

And, they're driving Molly Monster crazy.

Ever since we brought the kittens home last week, Molly, who thinks of herself as our chief cat, has had her tail out of joint.

She really doesn't like cats to begin with, and she especially dislikes kittens, which have no fear of her or appreciation for her sense of dignity.

Molly still hasn't forgiven us for bringing home April Alice more than a year ago. She considers the well-mannered April as an invader. April's five kittens last year drove Molly nuts. She hated each and every one of them, and couldn't wait for them to leave.

About the only animal that Molly tolerates is Annie, the dog. Molly likes Annie and will get into her pen whenever she can. In fact, I think, Molly thinks she's a dog and that's why she doesn't like other cats.

As for the newcomers, they are just beautiful and I really wish I could keep both of them.

They are a matched set — twin sisters. It took me almost a week to tell them apart.

I'm sure their various white, black



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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and brown splotches are not totally the same, but they don't stay still long enough to tell. I tell them apart by their noses, and that's how I call them.

I won't name them, since I'm not keeping them, but I have to differentiate. So they are Brown Nose and White Nose.

Steve claims there is significant differences in the colors on their tails, also, but I haven't bothered to check. All I have to do is check noses and, since I count cat noses every morning and evening anyway to make sure everyone is here, that's easy.

It took most of a week for April Alice to warm up to the newcomers. The first couple of nights, she slunk under the ottoman in the reading room to get away from the little nui-

sances. However, since one of the kittens played patty cake with her for almost an hour the second night, she decided they aren't so bad. I think she would bond with one if the other left.

I'm supposed to find them a home together, since they've never been apart. I think I could give away half of the pair, but who knows. The one left here would be fine with April to play with, but the one that was given away could be lost.

I gotta find a home for two beautiful, soft, cuddly almost cats.

They'd be a great Christmas present, but I wouldn't try to put bows on them — putting ribbons, strings and yarn around cats is just asking for trouble.

If someone wants them, I'll throw in a mostly full box of kitty litter.

Train could beat I-70 drive

Life seems too fast these days. There's no time to relax, too many places to go, too many things to do.

And then the pace doubles for the holidays....

There's no time to stroll the streets and enjoy just living here. We managed that in October and the first half of November, though ... six glorious weeks of staying home, walking in the country, lounging around the house, getting some work done.

And then the travel started. Thanksgiving in Lawrence and Concordia. Business meetings in Columbia, Mo., and Kansas City, with a side trip to Salina to send Cynthia home, and an overnight in Emporia with my brother and sister.

When I got home, I was beat, but there was still a meeting in Topeka and dinner in Kansas City the next day.

By the time I got back, my elbows were sore from the arm rests of my truck, and my exercise program was in denial.

The long ride home had me dreaming of the days when fast streamliners crossed the state day and night and a Pullman berth could be your ticket to civilized travel to the city — and beyond.

You can still travel by train, of course. Amtrak streamliners call at McCook and Holdrege in Nebraska, with berths for Lincoln, Omaha and Chicago east, and to Denver and the west. The Chief still stops at Garden City and Dodge, but it's a little far to drive.

Those trains are not much help in northwest Kansas, unless you happen to be going where they go, but once, you could travel the state in style on the Union Pacific.

Kansas City? Leaving Oakley at 10:42 p.m., the white-jacketed porter would show you to an old-fash-



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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ioned open section berth. You'd wake up in time for breakfast on the domeliner City of St. Louis, unless you had to get off at Lawrence at 6:04 a.m. Kansas City arrival was 7 a.m. sharp, with the cars continuing on to St. Louis on the Wabash well into the 1960s.

The train didn't go to Columbia, by the way, but the stop in Centralia, at 10:08 a.m., was only 21 miles away, with connecting trains both ways.

Wherever you got off, you'd be refreshed, but you'd need a shower. You could check into a hotel on arrival.

Getting back, the domeliner left Kansas City Union Station at 9:40 p.m., but arrival in Oakley was 3:40 a.m., a little too middle-of-the night for me.

Better to spend the night in the city — you already have the room — and take a coach seat on the 8:30 Portland Rose for the West. That allowed time for breakfast and lunch in the diner and a long, relaxing ride across the state. Have a beer, take a nap, relax a little before hitting Oakley at 2:20 p.m.

The Portland streamliner actually made the trip 10 minutes faster than the City. And instead of sore elbows, you'd have read a book on the way home.

For the hardy, or the late, mail train No. 69 left Union Station at 11 p.m. and continued west of Salina as

a mixed train, making all stops. It struggled into Oakley at 9:50 a.m., 10 hours, 50 minutes from Kansas City. The Rose made it in 5:50.

The exceptionally hardy might book passage on the Missouri Pacific train from Downs, which left at 12:45 p.m. and arrived in Kansas City at 11:55 p.m. that night. There was no food or sleeper, but the coach was comfortable and the mail got through.

The Rock Island ran its Rocky Mountain Rocket right through here — Norton, a flag stop at Colby, and Goodland — but the westbound times were for the bats, and the train went to Omaha on the way to Chicago.

Westbound, the connection to Denver was a little better than the Burlington out of McCook, though. If you had a ride, you could go west on the Rocket and come back on the Zephyr. The Rock once had a connection to Kansas City, through Belleville and McFarland, but that was long gone by the 1950s and tenuous at best when it did run.

Those days are gone, and more's the pity. Today we have I-70 to contend with, with its trucks and snow and slush and white-knuckled gloom.

But there was a time when you could sit in a plush chair and watch the state go by while you relaxed your way across Kansas.

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Restaurant will close

To the Editor:
After nearly a year-and-a-half, the Meadowlark Grill will close its doors permanently on Dec. 27 at 9 p.m.

This is due to two common problems. First, I failed to provide the local community what it wanted in a restaurant. Secondly, I was severely undercapitalized.

I would like to thank my loyal customers for their support. Thanks

Letter to the Editor

to Decatur Co-op for providing the opportunity.

Steve Stacy, owner Oberlin

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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