

It's the rules that make our army the best it can be

Let's put this whole Iraqi-jail-fun-and-games thing in some sort of perspective:

The jail incidents, and the Army trials that will keep them in the news into next year, are news because in this country, we care. Some armies would laugh at the things American prison guards were caught doing. In some armies, it's perfectly acceptable to shoot civilians or humiliate, rape and pillage.

Ours is not one of them. We have rules. We expect our soldiers to abide by them, and most of them do. So it's news when a few don't.

Many countries would try to sweep the whole thing under the rug. The government would deny it happened, reporters would be shooed off or arrested, the guilty would either be transferred or just disappear.

The whole thing would go away.

Not in America. We are free and open. We put the culprits on public trial, and then have to listen to defense charges that somehow the Pentagon and President Bush planned the whole thing. The guilty parties were "only following orders."

Sure, that's likely. The president and Donald Rumsfeld are sitting around the Oval Office, and Mr. Bush says, "Say, Rummy, let's have some of our prison guards sexually harass some Iraqi prisoners, raise an uproar in world opinion, and lose me thousands of votes at the same time.

"Oh, and be sure they are dumb enough to record the whole thing on video tape."

"Yes, Mr. President. Do you want us to send them a selection of sex toys for the show?"

Right.

No, the point is, Americans won't put up with this kind of thing. In World War II, we prosecuted prison guards for smashing the mouths of Japanese prisoners to steal their gold fillings. In Vietnam, we prosecuted soldiers for everything from theft to drug charges to murder.

In our own country, we've managed over the last 50 years to do away with a great deal of police violence and abuse through better training and public pressure. Rodney King may have taken a beating, but in the end, he won the war.

But it's because we believe in the rules and take great pride in our Bill of Rights and our sense of decency that we have the specter of public trials in the Iraq jail abuse scandal.

Some would say that what the prison guards did was not that big a deal. They posed the prisoners in sexually embarrassing positions and made them do things most of us would not want to do. As far as we can tell, no one was injured, but the treatment was psychologically brutal. It was done for no good reason but the entertainment of bored guards.

So it's not a murder case? Still, the guards need to be punished, as do any higher ups who knew about and either condoned the treatment or looked the other way.

There's no doubt, the way the army works, that some careers will be ruined. Some guards will go to jail. That is as it should be.

This week, it's Pfc. Lynndie England, a West Virginia reservist, who is in the dock. An army investigator said he thought combat stress and a jail riot a few days before had contributed to the lack of discipline among the guards, all reservists called to active duty.

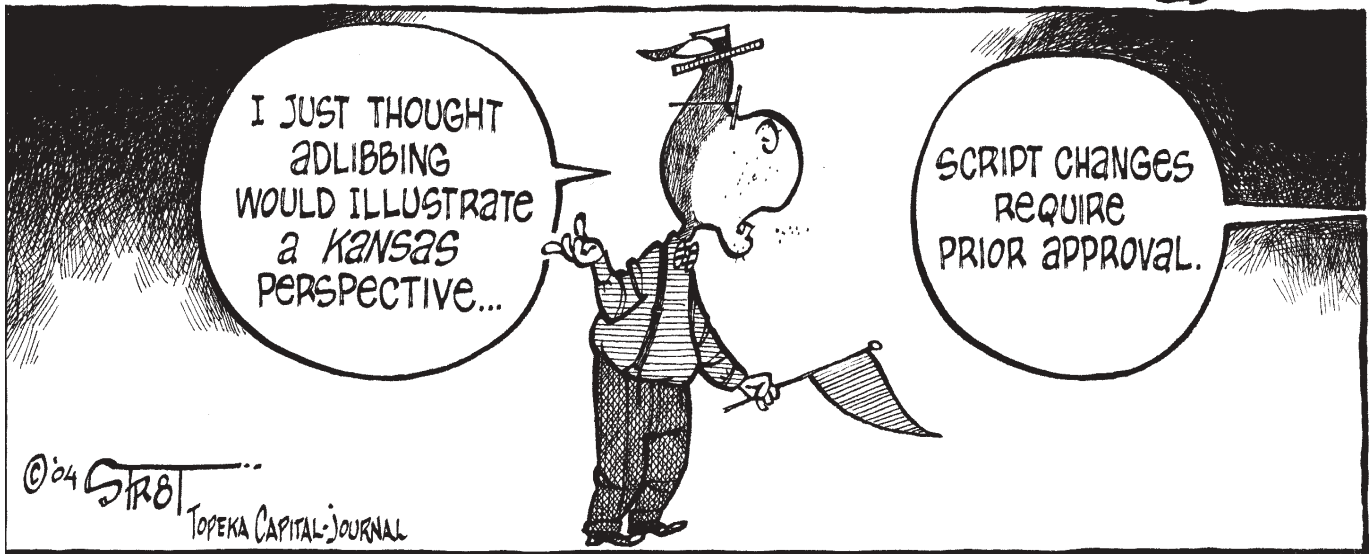
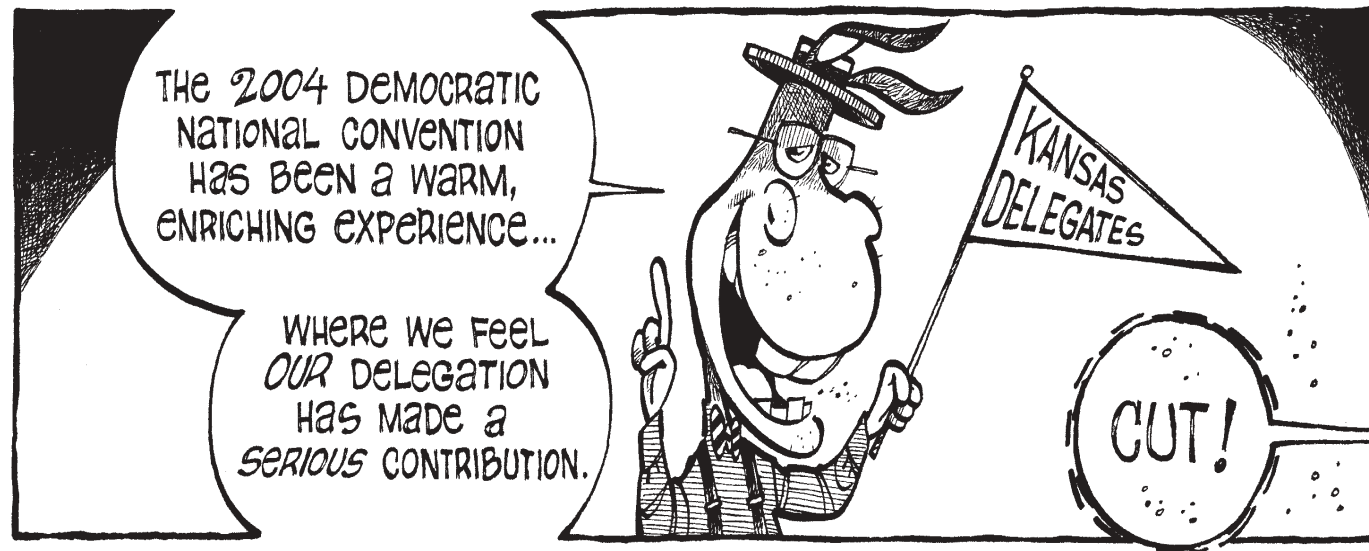
But Pvt. England, he said, she just seemed to be bored and looking for some fun.

Some fun, indeed.

This is not our way. This is not how we expect our army to behave. And it's American to do something about it, openly, before the world.

That is a good thing.

— Steve Haynes



It's a shame next week never comes

It was with sadness I learned this week of a family moving from Norton. It makes me sad and a bit ashamed.

They were one of those couples I had put on my list of "someday for dinner". Now, it is over a year since they moved here, they're moving away and I have lost out on meeting someone new.

There is no one to blame but myself.

I always use the excuse, "This week is too busy, but I'll do it next week."

But next week never comes.

I say, "I'll do it when I get the house clean."

And Jack always responds, "If it is a clean house they are coming to see they probably aren't our kind of people."

Or I say, "I can't think of anything to

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



this and I'd like to think this experience would force me to be more vigilant.

You would think someone who had moved as much as I have would be the first on the Welcome Wagon.

I know what it is like to be new in town, I've been that in several cities.

But in a small town it is almost worse, because everyone knows you are new to the area and you feel the isolation.

I can only hope that lack of friends and acceptance did not play a role in this couple's decision to leave. But if it did I know I have to accept a certain amount of responsibility for not being a good neighbor and not providing the groundwork for a friendship to grow.

fix."

And Jack answers, "Just fix dessert, we don't need to invite them for a whole meal."

Or "What if they don't want to come?" His response, "They'll say no."

So I have only myself to blame, he is a willing partner.

I suspect I'm not the only one guilty of

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Religious organization takes part in politics and elections

To the Editor:

Today I read articles in the online editions of the Denver Post and the New York Times about our faith and our voting. They are taking notice of their interconnectedness.

Locally, some have asked about the Christian Coalition and their participation in politics. Who are they?

The Christian Coalition was founded in 1989. They represent millions of people of faith and enable them to have a unified voice in our democracy. They believe that people of faith have a right and a responsibility to be involved in community, social and political action. The coalition is dedicated to equipping and educating people with resources and information to battle for pro-family legislation.

Their 5-fold mission is to:

- Represent the pro-family point of view before local councils, school boards, state legislatures and Congress

- Speak out in the public arena and in the media
- Train leaders for effective social and political action;
- Inform pro-family voters about timely issues and legislation
- Protest anti-Christian bigotry and defend the rights of people of faith.

Their goals include:

- Strengthening the family
- Protecting innocent human life
- Returning education to local and parental control
- Easing the tax burden on families
- Punishing criminals and defending victims' rights
- Protecting young people and our communities from the pollution of pornography
- Defending the institution of marriage
- Protecting religious freedom

The Christian Coalition takes action on the above goals by actively lobbying Con-

gress and the White House on numerous issues, holding grassroots training schools around the country, hosting events that draw thousands of pro-family supporters from around the nation, and organizing community activists regarding issues facing local government.

The hallmark work of the coalition lies in voter education.

Prior to the 2000 November election the Christian Coalition of America distributed a record 70 million voter guides throughout all 50 states. They have been publishing the guides for primaries and elections for 15 years.

The guides come from candidate surveys that the candidates fill out, sign and return. The guides are non-partisan and are designed to give voters a clear understanding of where candidates stand on the issues important to them.

Jeff Nielsen
Norton Christian Church

Parent concerned with child's theft

Dear Plain Sense: My 4-year-old frequently steals things from other family members. I'm worried he is on his way to becoming a petty thief. What should I do?

Parents naturally become concerned about a child who takes things that don't belong to them. This should not be regarded as "stealing" until the child is capable of understanding the consequences of such behavior, which is usually between ages 3-5.

Parents should consider why their child has stolen; is it for more attention, or showing off to a friend, to have something to give to someone else, or to get something they don't want to ask for.

Parents should teach children about property rights and consideration of oth-

High Plains Mental Health

Karen D. Berry,
consultation and education

ers. Parents must also serve as positive role models. If adults bring home items from their place of work, or allow a mistake at the supermarket checkout to occur in their favor, it will be harder for a child to understand the concept of honesty.

In most cases, stealing will stop as the child grows older if parents take proper measures.

Teach your child that stealing is wrong

and is not acceptable within the family or the community. Guide him or her in returning the stolen object to the proper owner; if for some reason it cannot be returned then help the child in arranging to pay for or replace the item. When the item has been returned or paid for, give the child praise for their effort and work.

If stealing is persistent or accompanied by other problem behaviors, it may be a sign of more serious emotional problems that both child and parents need help with. Distrust can develop quickly in such family situations. Your local mental health professional can assist in evaluating the causes for the behavior, and work with those involved to re-establish better relationships and more healthy behaviors.

WRITE:

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to

the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Kristen Brands reporter
Carol Erlenbusch advertising rep.
Bill Eckhart advertising rep.
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Sonya Montgomery bookkeeping

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654
Published each Wednesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.
Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor

