

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

There are things you can't remove

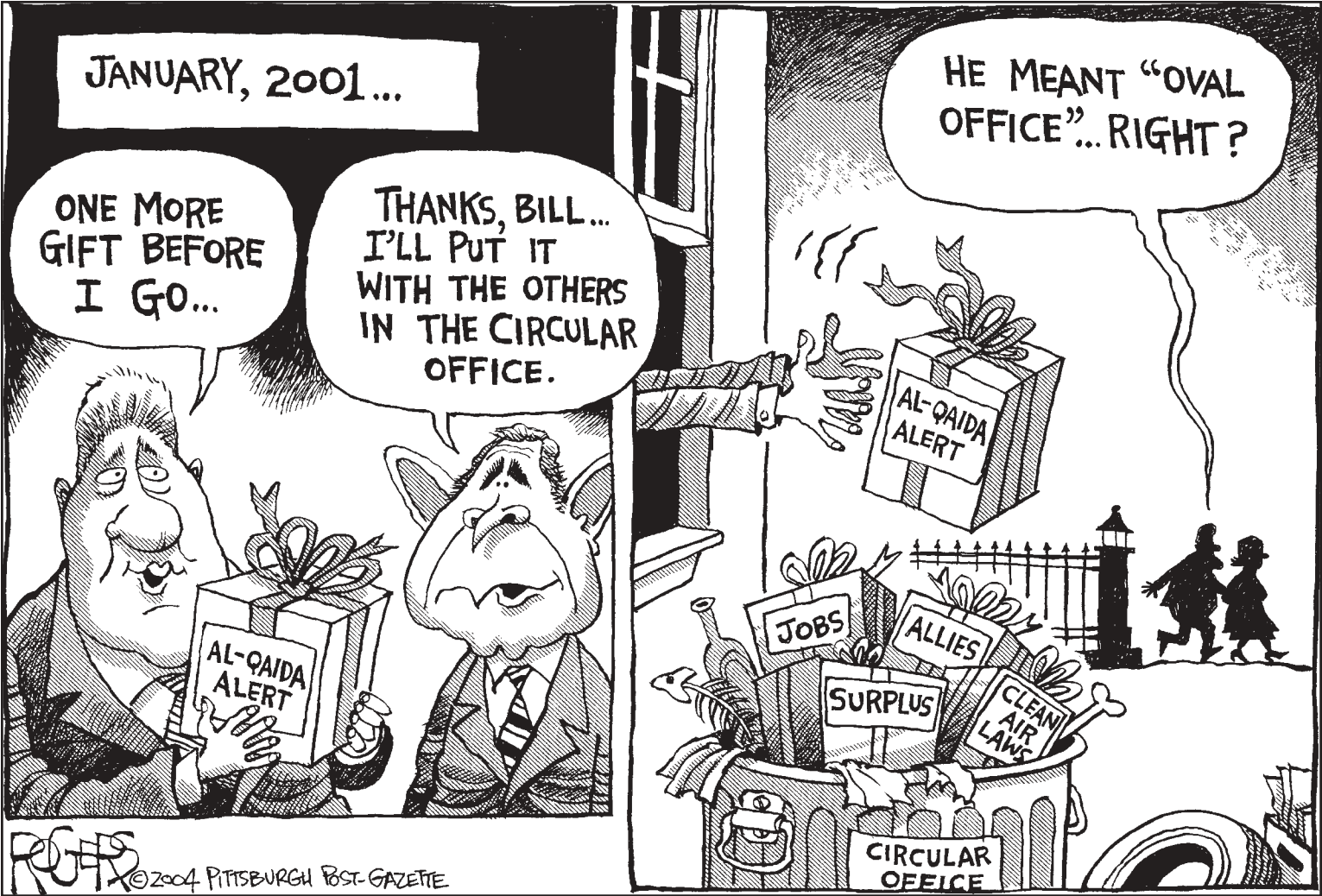
"...under God."
Boy, who would have ever thought those two words would end up in the lap of the Supreme Court of the United States of America.
"...under God."
Powerful.
"...under God."
Two words that appear in a pledge of allegiance to our country. It doesn't say a thing about a pledge of allegiance to a religious belief.
It's safe to say a vast majority of Americans have no problem with those two words appearing in the pledge. And those who do need not recite them when they place their hand over their heart. No law dictates that you *must* repeat "...under God." No jail threat. No fine.
Those two words have been in the pledge since 1954. Why all the pretzelizing these so many years later escapes reason.

So now we await the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court as to whether these two words violate the separation of church and state.
If the tribunal ultimately rules that they do, don't expect those two words to suddenly disappear. We have been reciting them — most of the population — since we began to talk. They come naturally.
And if the Supreme Court rules against the majority, how do we handle that situation? Will a federal unfunded mandate be issued threatening jail time and fines for those caught uttering those two words? If that's the case, we doubt there is enough money in existence to assign "voice cops" for each and every person assembled in a public place reciting the pledge.
See, this is how silly this whole thing is.
Some things just won't go away.
Put "...under God" in that category
Tom (TD) Dreiling
Free Press Publisher

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Firefighters are for who?

BONNIE King of Goodland, a regular reader of the *Free Press*, came across some rather interesting information that she would like to share with readers of this column. I won't try to sum it up in a word or two because that would be impossible. I'll just let her tell it in her own words. Here goes:

I was sent a link to a site that you might find interesting. The National News Departments (news media) have made a big deal about the Firefighters Union backing Kerry (Sen. John, Democratic presidential nominee-to-be). After checking out the information on this site, you can see this is not actually true. A few at the top of the union may be for Kerry but the majority of the real firefighters support President Bush.
I read many of the comments in the guest book and found where the Colby Fire Chief also voiced his opinion on the matter. At the time I read his, he was about the 50th on down on the list.
This website was started as a grassroots way for the firefighters to get their real opinions out to the public. It would be nice if you could mention this website in your column to help get the truth out to the people.
I personally was glad to find this because I couldn't understand how firefighters were supposedly so against Bush. It was nice to see that many are against the idea and upset with the way their union has said they support Kerry....all without ever asking the union members.
Thanks for your time in considering if this is worth mentioning in your column.
<http://www.firefightersforbush.com/>http://www.firefightersforbush.com/
A Goodland Reader,
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YOU won't want to miss the big 2004 Better Home & Living Show at the Colby Community Building. Show hours are 4-8 p.m. today, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday. No admission charge. Stop by, visit with the exhibitors and see what's new for you. Oh, make it a family affair as this is one of those attractions that's geared for the family — rated "G."
A WOMAN awakes during the night to find



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

that her husband was not in their bed. She puts on her robe and goes downstairs to look for him. She sees him sitting at the kitchen table with a hot cup of coffee in front of him. He appears to be in deep thought, just staring at the wall. She watches as he wiped a tear from his eye and takes a sip of his coffee.
"What's the matter, dear?" she whispers as she steps into the room. The husband looks up from his coffee, "Do you remember 20 years ago when we were dating, and you were only 16?" he asks solemnly.
"Yes I do" she replies. The husband paused. The words were not coming easily. "Do you remember when your father caught us in the back seat of my car making love?"
"Yes, I remember" said the wife, lowering herself into a chair beside him. The husband continued. "Do you remember when he shoved the shotgun in my face and said, 'Either you marry my daughter, or I will send you to jail for 20 years?'"
"I remember that too" she replied softly.
He wiped another tear from his cheek and said, "You know, I would have gotten out of jail today."
I SEE where some high school basketball player back east is suing her coach because he suggested it would be in her and the team's best interest if shed a few pounds. Verbal abuse, I guess. Another one of those mounting frivolous lawsuits that are jamming up the nation's court system. The politically correct crowd has really turned society upside down. Be careful what you do and what you say and how you do it and how you say it because someone will be watching and listening and before you know it — bam! — you're in court. I was particularly careful about how I unlocked my car door this morning for fear

I was being watched and if I handled the situation incorrectly — whatever that would entail — someone would be offended and I would be involved in a car door abusive situation. Sound nutty? It is, like so many other cases moving through the courts.
Lord, I pray that you bring back the simpler days and times.
RECENTLY, in a distant city, a routine police patrol parked outside a local neighborhood bar. Late in the evening the officer noticed a man leaving the bar so intoxicated that he could barely walk. The man stumbled around the parking lot for a few minutes with the officer quietly observing. After what seemed an eternity and trying his keys on five different vehicles, the man managed to find his own car which he fell into.
He was there for a few minutes as a number of other patrons left the bar and drove off. Finally he started the car, switched the wipers on and off (it was a dry night), flicked the hazard flasher on and off, tooted the horn and then switched on the lights. He moved the vehicle forward a few inches, reversed a little and then remained stationary for a few more minutes as more patrons left in their vehicles. At last he pulled out of the parking lot and started to drive slowly down the street.
The police officer, having patiently waited all this time, now started up his patrol car, put on the flashing lights, promptly pulled the man over and carried out a Breathalyzer test.
To his amazement the breathalyzer indicated no evidence of the man having consumed alcohol at all!
Dumbfounded, the officer said "I'll have to ask you to accompany me to the police station, this Breathalyzer equipment must be broken."
"I doubt it," said the man, "tonight I'm the designated decoy."

HAVE a good evening and a good weekend! And pencil in a little time at the church of your choice this weekend.

Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays. td@nwkansan.com. Or you can call him at (785) 462-3963.

As the guy said, 'This is good'

Reader interest continues to pick up for this Friday evening column. At least half dozen submissions were received this week, and the first one I'll share with you today came from several folks.

Let's simply call this first one...
THIS IS GOOD
The story is told of a king in Africa who had a close friend with whom he grew up. The friend had a habit of looking at every situation that ever occurred in his life (positive or negative) and remarking, "This is good!"
One day the king and his friend were out on a hunting expedition. The friend would load and prepare the guns for the king. The friend had apparently done something wrong in preparing one of the guns, for after taking the gun from his friend, the king fired it and his own thumb was blown off.
Examining the situation the friend remarked as usual, "This is good!"
To which the king replied, "No, this is NOT good!" and proceeded to send his friend to jail. About a year later, the king was hunting in a "shamba" that he should have known to stay clear of. Cannibals captured him and took him to their village. They tied his hands, stacked some wood, set up a stake and bound him to the stake. As they came near to set fire to the wood, they noticed that the king was missing a thumb. Being superstitious, they never ate anyone that was less than whole. So untying the king, they sent him on his way.
As he returned home, he was reminded of the event that had taken his thumb and felt remorse for his treatment of his friend. He went to the jail

T D

• At Week's End

to speak with his friend. "You were right," he said, "it was good that my thumb was blown off. And he proceeded to tell the friend all that had happened. "And so I am very sorry for sending you to jail for so long. It was bad of me to do this."
"No" his friend replied, "This is good!"
"What do you mean, 'This is good?'" How could it be good that I sent my friend to jail for a year?"
His friend replied, "If I had NOT been in jail, I would have been with you in the cannibal's shamba..."
You'll like this one, called...
THE TRIAL
During a trial in a small town, the local prosecuting attorney called his first witness to the stand. She was sworn in, asked if she would "tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help her God," she said "yes." The witness was a proper well-dressed elderly lady, the grandmother type, well spoken and poised. The prosecuting attorney approached the woman and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know me?" She responded, "Why, yes I do know you. I've known you since you were a young boy and

frankly, you've been a big disappointment to me. You lie, cheat on your wife, manipulate people and talk badly about them behind their backs. You think you're a rising big shot when you haven't the sense to realize you never will amount to anything more than a two-bit paper-pushing no good. Yes, I know you quite well."
The lawyer was stunned. He couldn't even think for a few minutes. Then, slowly he backed away, fearing the looks on the judge and jurors' faces, not to mention the court reporter who documented every word. Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know the defense attorney?" She again replied, "Why, yes, I do. I've known him since he was a youngster, too. He's lazy, bigoted, has a bad drinking problem. The man can't build or keep a normal relationship with anyone and his law practice is one of the worst in the entire state. Not to mention he cheated on his wife with three different women. Yes, I know him."
The defense attorney almost fainted and was seen slipping downward in his chair, looking at the floor. Laughter mixed with gasps, thundered throughout the courtroom and the audience was on the verge of chaos.
At this point, the judge brought the courtroom to silence, called both counselors to the bench, and in a very quiet voice said, "If either of you morons asks her if she knows me, you're going to jail."

Got something for "At Week's End?" Simply e-mail it to td@nwkansan.com, fax it to (785) 462-7749, regular mail to 155 W. 5th, or hand deliver it. Thanks!