

Opinion



Monday's Salute

Thumbs to . . .

✓**Nick Wells** — and the Colby College Endowment Association for still another successful scholarship auction. “The Orient Express” really delivered!

✓**Voters** — don’t forget to do your thing Tuesday.

✓**Mark Schultz** — on your visit back to the old hometown.

✓**“Walk Kansas” Participants** — on your self-imposed dedication for a worthy cause — your health.

✓**Rhonda Riedel** — for your work in helping organize the “Memory Walk for Alzheimer’s” which was a Saturday event in Colby.

✓**To You** — if you heed the call to help deliver Meals on Wheels (contact Donna Schielke at the Senior Progress Center 460-2901).

✓**Doug Musick** — for the interesting story you shared with the *Free Press* readers.

✓**Courtney Ress** — on your exceptional showing at the recent state Technology Student Association conference.

✓**All Poll Workers** — on your important and continuing responsibility.

This column is prepared each Monday morning by the newspaper’s publisher. Your input of a name or names is solicited. Simply e-mail td@nwkansas.com, call the office at 462-3963, fax 462-7749 or drop in. -td

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124
State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorriso
State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
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freepress@nwkansas.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

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Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkansas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcox@nwkansas.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director

crystalr@nwkansas.com

Jasmine Crotinger - Advertising Sales

jasminec@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwkansas.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NOR’WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

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A conflict we hear little about

Iraq has taken a back seat to other news lately but I know it’s not far from the minds of many. But what may have been forgotten is what lies under Iraq’s deserts and it isn’t just oil.

The war on terrorism is growing strong but what people might not know is there’s a conflict raging on a global scale that originated in Iraq.

I’m not talking about war on terrorism. Instead, it’s the fight to stop international trafficking of stolen artifacts and the looting of some of the oldest cultural sites in the world that had the misfortune of ending up inside the borders of what became Iraq.

Looting for valuables during war is nothing new but the solidarity in the international community on the Iraq situation is, I think, unique. I’ve never heard of countries banding together so quickly to protect a country’s cultural heritage.

On the other hand, why didn’t they do this a long time ago in other situations?

Iraq was also the crescent of civilization with the Tigris-Euphrates river valley, the fabled Garden of Eden.

The country has many archaeological sites, many biblical, and Iraq was known in the ancient world as Babylon. It was the home of King Nebuchadnezzar and his hanging gardens of Babylon.

The country also has Ur of the Chaldees, one of the better-known sites, which was the cemetery of the royal families of Mesopotamia discovered by Sir Leonard Woolley in 1922.

I know people could say who cares? That it’s just Iraqi history and culture that’s being destroyed.

I beg to differ.

One of the first signs in the past few years that something was up in the Middle and Near East should’ve been the Taliban-ordered destruction of two statues of Buddha in Afghanistan.

In March, 2001 (BBC News site), the Bamiyan Buddhas were destroyed by the Taliban who was



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

still in power at the time. They felt the statues were “detrimental” to Islam so they blew them up.

Artifacts more than 1,500-years-old were destroyed because of one group’s fanatical views. In modern times, one would think most people would consider such behavior barbaric.

Afghanistan once had a healthy, thriving Buddhist population sometime in the past. How long ago doesn’t matter but what is the issue is that people will no longer be able to learn about that history because of one group’s fanatical bent.

In Iraq, the national museum in Baghdad was sacked during the first days of the invasion, prompting an international symposium that included the American Archaeological Institute.

Now, there is an effort to stop the sale of artifacts and other cultural items internationally, which is a problem world-wide and not just in Iraq.

Theology as history is also a nearly-forgotten problem in India and has the potential to cause trouble elsewhere.

The disputed location of a Hindu temple and an Muslim mosque in India has nearly been the cause of armed hostilities in the past two years. They’ve been trying to figure out who built on the site first.

Archaeologists working on the case have been reluctant to give either side an advantage and the work goes on.

Some countries that were once culturally and

historically non-Islamic have now become predominantly Islamic in faith, which in some cases has affected access to important and well-known sites.

However, there is hope.

Egypt is a country that has changed over the years but despite politics, culture and religion, it is still able to recognize the importance of its past.

That progressive attitude is a significant step forward and a good example for other countries to follow. They’re doing everything they can to protect their heritage, a history that almost everyone knows about because of the ancient Egyptian mummies and giant monuments to the dead.

Islam in itself isn’t a violent or fundamental religion. It’s only the extremists who make the headlines but it certainly seems to have more of them than the average faith.

Some people are willing to destroy anything to get their way, including wiping out entire cultures and histories.

It happened 60 years ago with the Holocaust during W.W.II.

As I said, there is hope. Re-writing history doesn’t do anyone any good but right now, history is being made for future generations.

I hope one small legacy of the war in Iraq is that it teaches people that some good, no matter how small, can come out of the direst of situations.

And in Afghanistan, rumor has it there are still remnants of Buddhism, including a large statue of a reclining Buddha that was found.

It just goes to show there is more to history on planet earth than we can ever hope to discover in our lifetimes.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. tcox@nwkansas.com.

Monkeying around with science

I attended a seminar in Scott City with Dr. Bert Thompson on the evolution/creation debate. Dr. Thompson has a Ph.D. in microbiology and taught at Texas A&M before becoming the executive director of Apologetics Press in Montgomery, Ala.

Dr. Thompson is also a creationist who believes the six days in Genesis were exactly that — six days.

No, I’m not going to try to prove creation. It would take more than this 650-word column to present the evidence properly. Nor am I going to claim one can prove the God of the Bible exists without using the Bible.

The points I want to make are twofold.

First, the evolution/creation debate is both a scientific and philosophical dispute and it properly belongs in the realms of science and philosophy. Second, it is a debate we should be having.

While there is scientific evidence for evolutionary theory, much of it is also evidence for creation.

Human footprints that in places dated so far back that no humans should exist and prehistoric creatures which should be millions of years older than the fossilized human footprints in which they are embedded lead us to believe perhaps evolutionary theory has some serious kinks in it.

No, they don’t prove creation, either, but it is a plausible explanation and deserves a hearing.

Some claim teaching creation allows religion to supplant science. Others say there is room in Christianity for evolution and creation. Both are



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

wrong.

Creation theory doesn’t have to be about religion and evolutionary theory can be a religion. I’ve read books by men who were agnostic at best who couldn’t accept evolutionary theory because it can’t account for things like irreducible complexity.

As for the philosophical debate, some say Christianity has room for evolution, but that opens a whole new can of worms. You see, six literal days of creation are not only found in Genesis, but also in the reason for the Sabbath of Exodus. Even Jesus accepted creation in six literal days as fact.

If those writers were wrong, what other mistakes did they make? If we cannot trust the whole Bible, how can we trust any of it? Fortunately, we have a plethora of texts — all of which are in agreement on all but the minutest scribal slips and can safely say that the Bible has been passed down entirely intact and inerrant.

We can also make a case for the accuracy of the Bible in geography, medical science and history. While it was not written for the purpose of

teaching us such things, the Divine Inspiration of its authors has been proven in each and every case where the evidence was presented.

As such it only makes sense to trust it in matters which have not yet been proven or even matters, such as the origins of man, which may never be proven.

Around 500 years ago, Galileo, Copernicus and a host of others were persecuted because their scientific discoveries did not fit the religion of the day. Had the religionists of that time actually read the Bible, however, they would have found that many of the scientific discoveries they were trying to silence had already been revealed.

Isaiah knew the earth was round, Job knew it was suspended in space and Moses knew it was in nebular form before creation.

God prevailed in that earlier time using the science He invented and others discovered. Much of the evolution/creation debate is simply another attempt to suppress scientific knowledge which doesn’t fit a popular religion.

Once again, we have a scientific debate with philosophical underpinnings and once again the philosophers are afraid of any science which doesn’t fit their beliefs.

This time, however, the philosophy is called evolution.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelley@st-tel.net. He is a member of the Colby Free Press Writer’s Club.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

