

Opinion



Your Views Count

- Letters

Resident seeks answers

The following letter to the Kansas Secretary of State was written by a local resident who provided the Free Press with a copy. It deals is a hot potato issue.

July 8, 2005
1591 County Road H
Colby, Kansas 67701

Secretary of State
Mr. Ron Thornburgh
120 S.W. 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Phone: (785) 296-4564

Dear Mr. Secretary:

After a phone call to your office this morning, which ended up with me advising myself to just write a letter, the party answering agreed also, so...

Please send me a copy of the Constitutional Change voted on by Kansans about forty years ago which delegated authority to the Kansas Supreme Court in the final say in financing public schools.

If memory is correct, it inserted one or two words such as adequate or sufficient funding. At the time, my father insisted it was an unconstitutional change to the Constitution. It is now a proven fact.

Additional information requested:

Year of the change.

Name of the Secretary of State.

Governor.

Attorney General.

House of Representatives (names).

Senate (names).

Last but not least, who was responsible for the driving force to make this change?

Was it the old Kansas Teachers' Association?

Was it the National Education Association?

Thank you,

Respectfully,
Lloyd E. Theimer

Colby
(Letter #57)

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail td@nwkansans.com.

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: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison

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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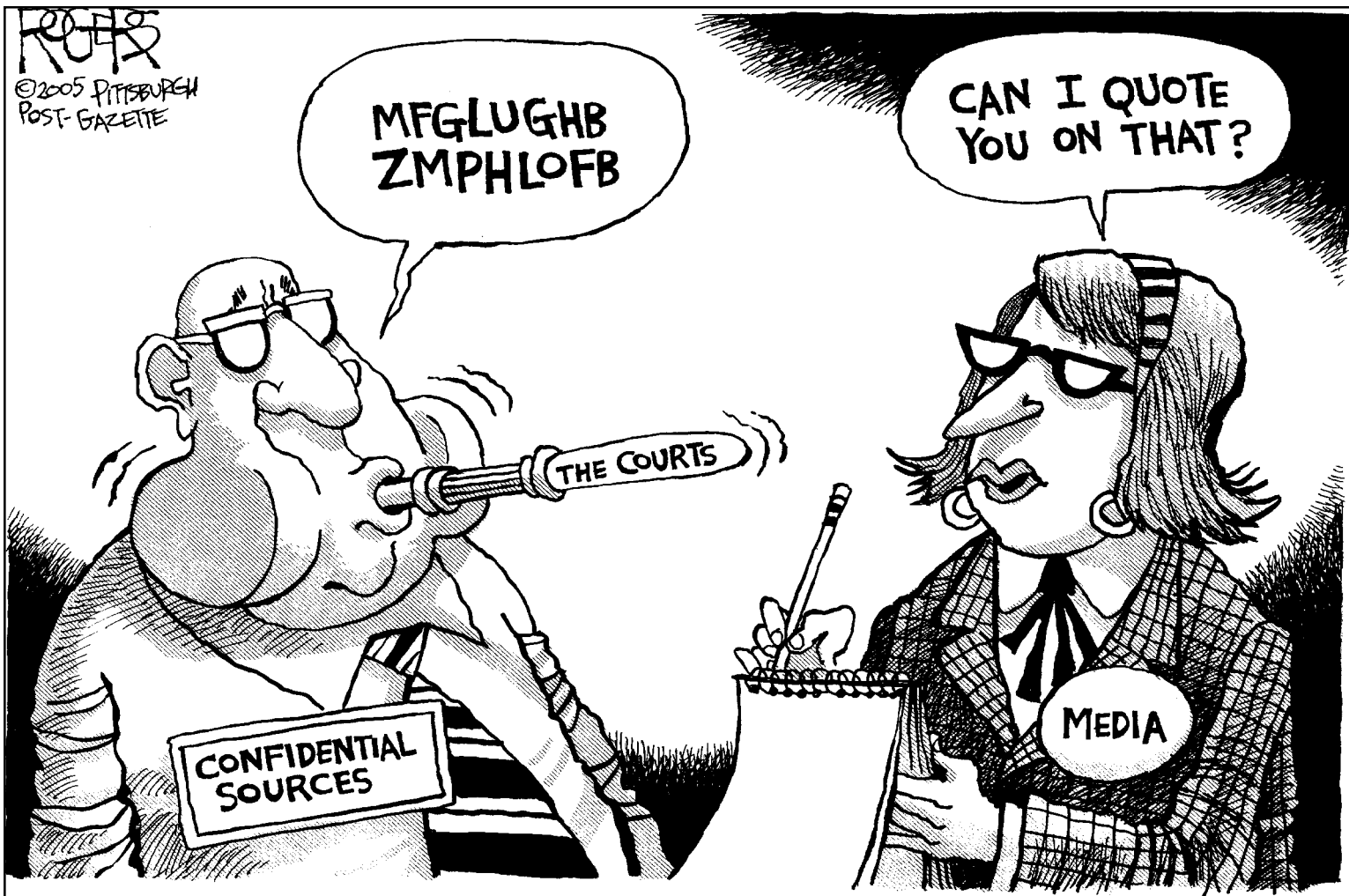
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The problem with NASA



Tisha Cox

• Off The Beaten Path

This past week, I was looking forward to the launch of the space shuttle Discovery. She was supposed to be launched at 2:51 p.m. Central Time on Wednesday, but as everyone knows by now, she didn't get off the launch pad.

NASA's idea of safety is really redundancy. Which, after the scrubbed launch of Discovery on Wednesday, actually proved to be a boon.

A faulty fuel gauge on the main tank was the reason for the mission abort.

The simplest way I heard it explained was like this: the sensors work like the fuel gauge on a car, except the fuel gauges on the shuttle would cause the engines to cut out too soon when indeed there was actually fuel left in the tank.

And that would be bad.

However, there are four of these sensors on the shuttle, so if one goes out, there's another to take its place., also known as redundancy.

As Sen. John Kerry said after the mission was scrubbed, it was probably a good thing because it will give NASA engineers time to figure out what was causing the malfunction and fix it.

After more than two years, the mission was touted as "the return to flight."

Met with enthusiasm and trepidation, it would have been the first launch since the Columbia accident on Feb. 1, 2003.

Space travel is not and has never been "safe" or "routine."

People got used to ignoring the launches and didn't pay any attention but they did when something went wrong.

If anyone is to blame, it's NASA's culture of denial and complacency.

And it was the Russians who saved the collective behind of the American space program. During the past almost two and a half years the shuttle fleet was grounded, it was only through the Russians have we kept the International

Space Station manned and supplied. Russian Soyuz capsules were used to put up new crews and supplies.

We may have the inside track on reusable spacecraft but it's the Russians who have the track record when it comes to long-term human habitation in space.

We made them scuttle Mir because we thought we knew better. We thought our nice, new shiny space station was the answer. A space station that could only be put up by our aging fleet of shuttles.

That arrogance certainly didn't mean anything good for the American space program.

The shuttle fleet was never meant to be the solution. The three shuttles left are the newest in the fleet, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavor, in that order. Discovery was delivered to NASA in 1983; Atlantis, 1985 and Endeavor, 1991. According to wikipedia.com, she was built as a replacement for the Challenger, which was lost seconds after launch in 1986.

Instead of finding another better, cheaper way to get into space, NASA sat back and did nothing. They decided to stake two decades' worth of American presence in space on the shuttle and nothing more.

In the 25 years since the original development of the shuttle fleet, NASA hasn't trotted out one new launch vehicle. However, the private sec-

tor, during the shuttle hiatus, managed to develop the first private suborbital flight.

An investigation that took more than two years yielded the brilliant idea to dock with the ISS for a safety inspection before returning to Earth. I call that paranoid and ignorant.

If an accident is going to happen, nothing will prevent it.

So now, NASA is going to sacrifice Hubble for the shuttle because the shuttle can't dock with both on the same mission. Something about different orbital distances.

Hubble has paid for itself already. It has proven one of the more useful, prolific and inspiring missions of the space agency and without the loss of human life.

Go online and you can find literally thousands of images taken by Hubble, most of which show off the magnificence and glory of the cosmos.

The space-bound telescope has also helped bring about more of an understanding of how the universe works and how many of the bodies that occupy it were formed while posing even more questions at the same time.

While I do have my opinion of NASA and the space program, I will say this — space exploration is important.

Here on Earth people take for granted all of the everyday conveniences that were originally developed in conjunction with the space program.

And if we don't continue to push the envelope, we may never know what's waiting out there.

Tisha Cox is a general assignment reporter/photographer for the Free Press. Her column appears on Mondays. Her e-mail is tc Cox@nwkansans.com.

Don't buy into this guy's stuff

Ken

Poland

• Ken's World

Donald E. Wildmon, Founder and Chairman of American Family Association, frequently publishes bulletins filled with half truths and insinuations. He wraps his opinions in a package of emotional cliché aimed at persons who are content to trust anything from his self proclaimed voice of God.

Rev. Wildmon took from context of Senator Durbin's speech and said he compared the American troops to Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot because of alleged mistreatment of prisoners held at Guantanamo. What earned these American troops the disparaging remarks by Sen. Durbin? He said that some prisoner's air conditioners were turned down too low, some had their air conditioners turned off making the room hot, and loud rap music was played in a room where there were prisoners.

What Sen. Durbin read was from an FBI Agent's report:

"— Let me read to you what one FBI agent saw. And I quote from his report: On a couple of occasions, I entered interview rooms to find a detainee chained hand and foot in a fetal position to the floor, with no chair, food or water. Most times they urinated or defecated on themselves, and had been left there for 18-24 hours or more. On one occasion, the air conditioning had been turned down so far and the temperature was so cold in the room, that the barefooted detainee was shaking with cold. On another occasion, the [air conditioner] had been turned off, making the temperature in the unventilated room well over 100 degrees. The detainee was almost unconscious on the floor, with a pile of hair next

to him. He had apparently been literally pulling his hair out throughout the night. On another occasion, not only was the temperature unbearably hot, but extremely loud rap music was being played in the room, and had been since the day before, with the detainee chained hand and foot in the fetal position on the tile floor. —"

There is considerable evidence that our military, with the blessings of the Administration, have exceeded the bounds of decency. The treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo and Iraq is comparable to what the U.S. has encountered when trying to find citizens who have disappeared in the prisons and court systems of other countries. Our cover ups and lying to Red Cross workers cannot be justified. We, supposedly, have championed fair and equitable treatment and open trials, but that is very questionable, now. It is one thing to deal with emergency situations in the field, but another thing to deal with prisoners in a secure and stable environment of permanent prisons.

The arrogance of this administration does very little to calm the fears of the world. What are the fears of the world? The world fears the

United States' massive military might and economic power. They fear the evidence of the U.S. buildup of weapons of mass destruction and the absolute repression of their own development of defensive weapons. For instance, we ship F16s to some countries, but we destroy a regime because we thought they had missiles that could exceed 100 miles to find a target.

Why should they trust the integrity of our agenda? We have made it very clear that we will act unilaterally, in defiance of the U.N. or even our closest allies. Our past is filled with supporting dictatorships that benefit our nation, regardless of their domestic policies. The world sees hypocrisy in our claim of Christianity! The world sees the open political and religious warfare in our nation over morality and religious freedom. We claim to champion the right to life, but we ignore the pain and suffering of, even our own elderly, children, and disenfranchised. The world sees and feels the ability of the U.S. to, literally, destroy communities and even entire cities.

As for Mr. Wildmon and his "American Family Association," I have a hard time reconciling his agenda with true Christianity. He has resorted to demagoguery with false evidence and grossly overblown concern for the freedom of religious expression. He is a skilled fiddler, with his tin cup, soliciting your nickels and dimes.

Ken Poland is a Gem farmer and member of the Colby Free Press Writers Club. Comments can be sent to his e-mail address at rcwinc@cheerful.com.

Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau

