

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Giving thanks for Kansas' family

By Governor Kathleen Sebelius:

Like most Kansans, I celebrated Thanksgiving by sitting down for dinner with family.

Only, unlike most years, the family members I dined with weren't my husband and two sons.

Instead, they were our proud men and women in uniform — members of our Kansas military family — and we were 7,200 miles away from home.

There are nearly 2,000 Kansans serving overseas. I was honored to travel to the Middle East and personally thank them for their service to our nation. I also wanted to be certain they know how much all of us here at home support them and are praying for their safe return.

Though our state has a small population, there is no question Kansans are playing a vital role throughout the region.

I saw that from the moment I stepped off the plane in the nation of Qatar and was greeted by Kansans serving at the air base there, to the moment I left Pakistan after seeing how helicopter crews from Olathe are assisting with earthquake relief.

Kansas' own 891st Engineering Battalion is in Iraq clearing the roads of IEDs. Lt. Col. Lee Tafanelli and his soldiers said they are proud of what they've accomplished, and are also looking forward to coming home soon after nearly a year overseas.

The 2nd Battalion of the 137th Infantry recently arrived in Iraq. It had been an honor to see them off at their deployment ceremony in Manhattan, but it was an even greater honor to be greeted by them upon arrival in Baghdad.

There are Kansans in Afghanistan, too, helping hunt down terrorists and support that emerging democracy. And there are Kansans in Pakistan, helping tens of thousands of people rebuild their lives after the devastating earthquake there.

One experience I won't forget was meeting a small group of soldiers on the darkened tarmac of the Baghdad airport. They were holding up a Kansas flag, shining a flashlight on it so it could be seen through the darkness. Their actions and those of their fellow Kansans serving around the world are a shining example of why we should all be proud to call this state home.

When Kansans gathered around their tables for Thanksgiving, they no doubt felt an overwhelming gratitude for the blessings of family. That's exactly how I felt, sharing Thanksgiving with our troops: A profound gratitude for these extraordinary men and women who place themselves in harm's way to defend our freedom. They seemed pleased their Governor had joined them to celebrate Thanksgiving, but let me assure you: The honor and privilege was entirely mine.

About those letters . . .

The *Free Press* encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, if at all possible, and should include a telephone number and an address. Most importantly, all letters must include a signature. Unsigned letters cannot be published. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length, and, likewise, reserve the right to reject letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive or libelous.

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 jvannostrand@nwkansas.com or pdecker@nwkansas.com.

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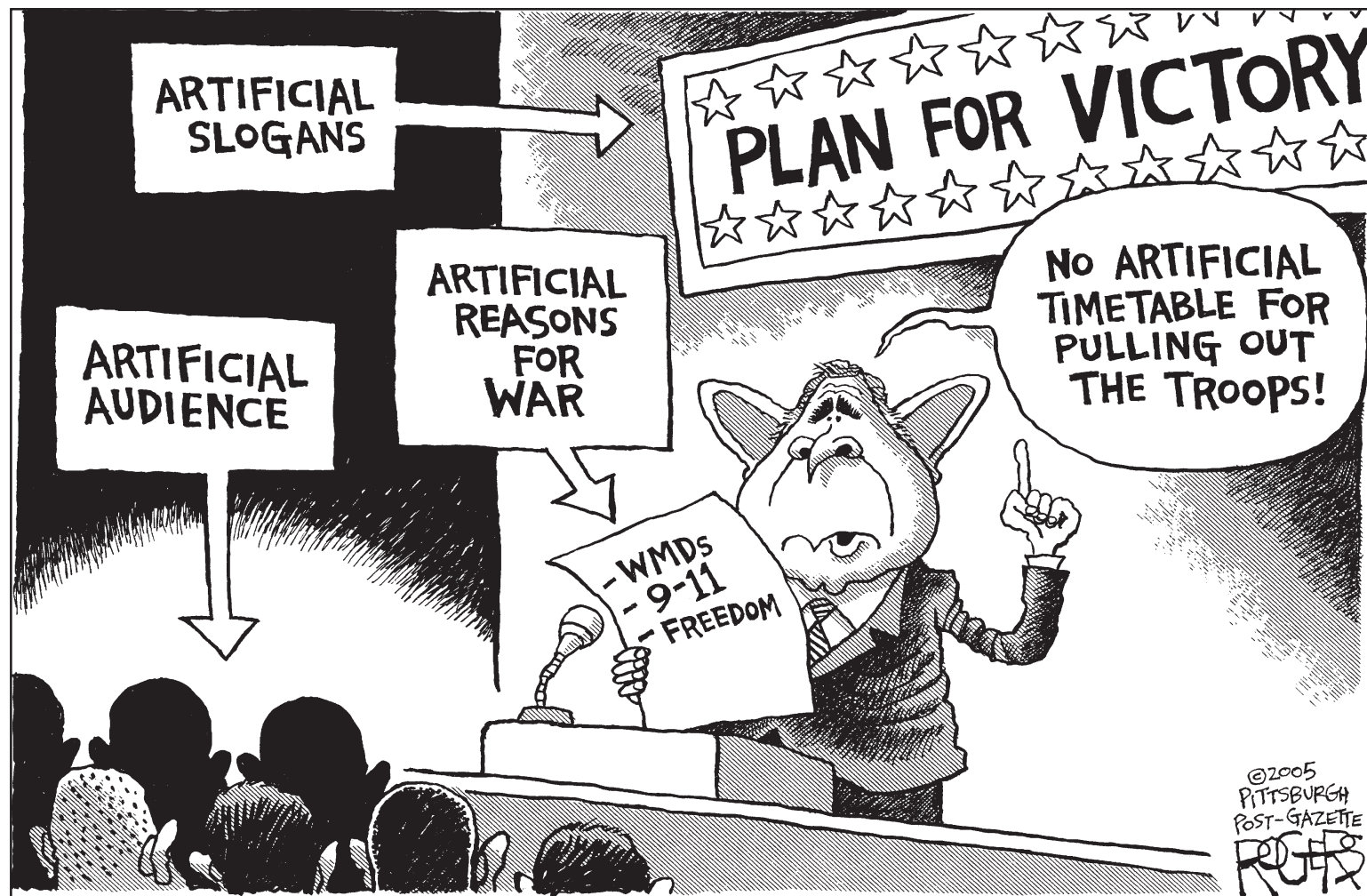
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My how the times have changed

Sometimes it amazes me how quickly time flies. What really drove home the point was when I realized Charlie Brown's Christmas first aired 40 years ago this month and the anniversary of John Lennon's death happened 25 years ago.

I know people say it a lot, but it's still unbelievable how events that happened so many years ago really do seem like yesterday.

Then a colleague was telling me about something she read on how things were 100 years ago.

Granted, I am not 100 years old yet — still — it's good to look back and see how far we have come. After reading this list, it will be interesting to see how things will have changed in 2105.

Of course, I won't be here to write about it, which also brings up the question of how communication will be transmitted in 100 years.

Before I get too carried away with science fiction, here are some statistics from 1905.

- The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years.
- Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.
- Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.
- A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.
- There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 144 miles of paved roads.
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California. (Wonder what happened with this? Maybe it had something to do with the dust bowl years.)
- With a mere 1.4 million people, California was only the 21st most populous state in the



Patty Decker

● Deep Thoughts

Union.

- The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.
- The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents per hour.
- The average U.S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year
- A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2,000 per year, a dentist \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year.
- More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home.
- Ninety percent of all U.S. doctors had no college education.
- Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."
- Sugar cost four cents a pound.
- Eggs were 14 cents a dozen.
- Coffee was 15 cents a pound.
- Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- Canada passed a law that prohibited poor

people from entering into their country for any reason.

- Five leading causes of death in the U.S. were: (1) Pneumonia and influenza; (2) Tuberculosis; (3) Diarrhea; (4) Heart disease; (5) Stroke.
- The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.
- The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 30.
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and ice tea hadn't been invented yet.
- There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.
- Two out of every 10 U.S. adults couldn't read or write.
- Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.
- Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner drugstores.
- Back then pharmacist said, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."
- Eighteen percent of households in the U.S. had at least one full-time servant or domestic help.
- There were about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.
- Hope this was enjoyable to readers. Many of the statistics I thought were shocking and I believe some things were changed for the better.

Decker is the editor of the Free Press.

Your turn

Jerry Moran is in touch with Kansas

Doyle D. Rahjes
Agra, Kan.

The citizens of the First Congressional District of Kansas are indeed fortunate and blessed to be represented in the U.S. House of Representatives by Jerry Moran.

He is a great and respected leader that leads by example and doesn't waste time seeking popularity among his colleagues. He tirelessly seeks to learn the needs of his constituents through personal contact with them and holding informal meetings literally in every county in the Big 1st District of Kansas.

Through this intense and continuing contact

and commitment Jerry understands the needs of our basically agrarian economy, its families and lifestyles and works tirelessly to effect changes that will improve the quality of life for all of us.

Jerry understands our conservative nature and lifestyles. His vote and remarks made on the floor of the House of Representatives on June 28, 2005 in opposition of the existing law that allows an automatic cost of living raise for members of Congress is an example of his leadership, honesty and integrity.

He left nothing to doubt as he addressed his colleagues by telling them, in part, "I rise to voice my opposition to the existing law that pro-

vides an automatic annual cost-of-living pay increase for members of Congress.... I object to the process and believe it should be reformed. Failure to allow an up or down vote on this issue only serves to increase cynicism towards the political process and confirms the feeling of many...that their representatives are out of touch. The American public deserves better..."

Jerry Moran is in touch. He is a voice of integrity in the U.S. House of Representatives. It was a great day for Kansas big first district, The State of Kansas and the United States of America when he decided to run again to represent our district.

Doonesbury

● Gary Trudeau

