

# Opinion

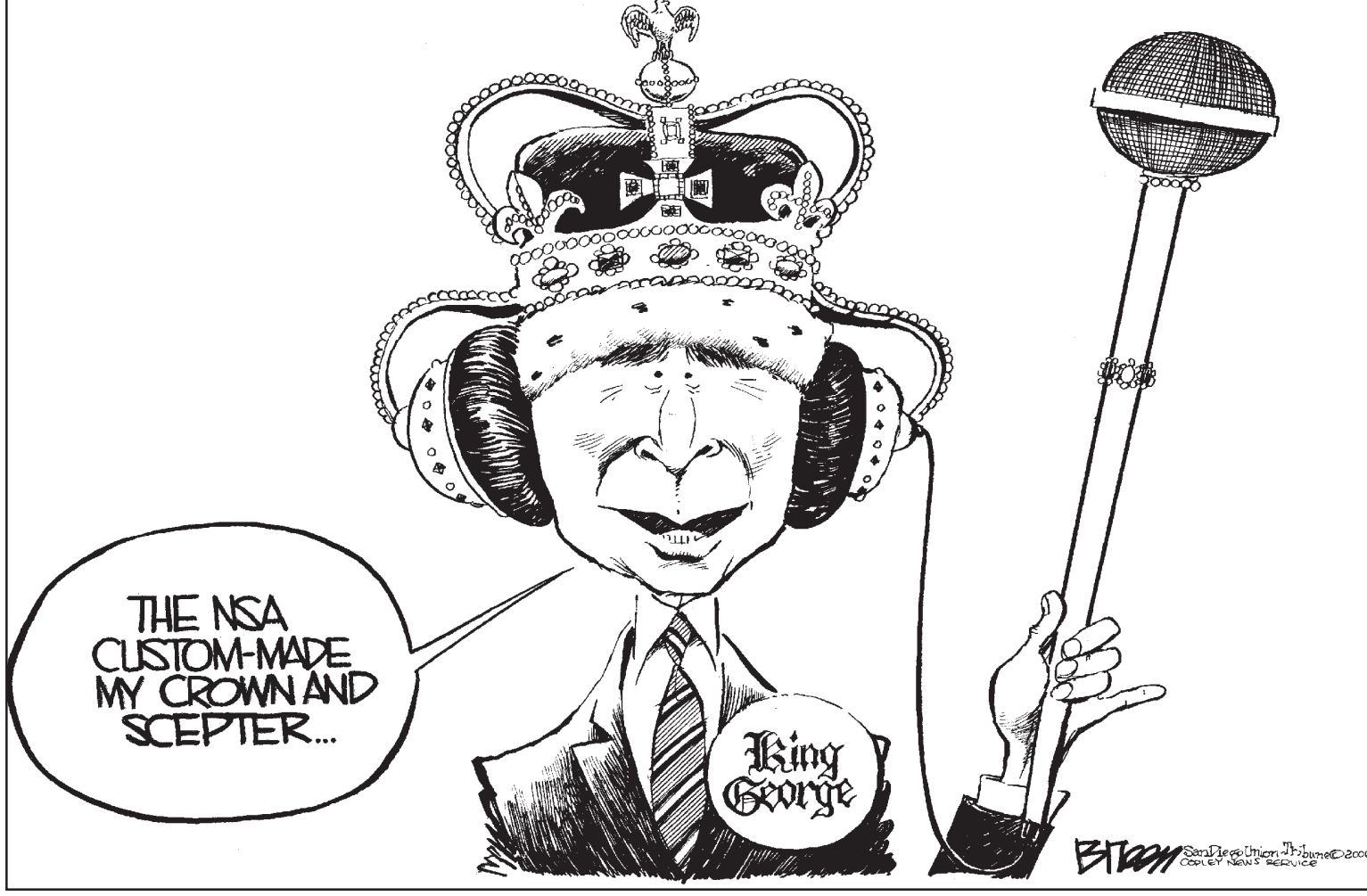


## Another Viewpoint

### Wage ethic needed

**By Holly Sklar**  
Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on the brink of the Great Depression and died fighting for the right of workers to earn a decent living.  
On March 18, 1968, days before his murder, King told striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn., "It is criminal to have people working on a full-time basis getting part-time income." King said, "We are tired of working our hands off and laboring every day and not even making a wage adequate with daily basic necessities of life."  
Two years earlier on March 18, 1966, King had called for Congress to boost the minimum wage.  
"We know of no more crucial civil rights issue facing Congress today than the need to increase the federal minimum wage and extend its coverage," he said. "A living wage should be the right of all working Americans."  
King did not dream that in the year 2006, he would be remembered with a national holiday, but the value of the minimum wage would be lower than it was in the 1950s and '60s. At \$5.15 an hour, today's minimum wage is nearly \$4 less than it was in 1968, when it reached its historic high of \$9.09, adjusted for inflation.  
The minimum wage has become a poverty wage instead of an anti-poverty wage. A full-time worker at minimum wage makes just \$10,712 a year — less than \$900 a month — to cover housing, food, health care, transportation and other expenses.  
As Congressional Quarterly observed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, "In the Lower Ninth Ward and other impoverished neighborhoods of New Orleans, people have long waged battle to make ends meet... That was a nearly unattainable goal in a city where many of the jobs were in hotels and restaurants that paid around the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour."  
A low minimum wage is also a green light for miserly employers to pay poverty wages to a growing share of the workforce — not just workers at the minimum, but above it. In its 2005 Hunger and Homelessness Survey, the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that 40 percent of the adults requesting emergency food assistance were employed, as were 15 percent of the homeless.  
A low minimum wage is a green light for greed. Between 1968 and 2004, domestic corporate profits rose 85 percent while the minimum wage fell 41 percent and the average hourly wage fell 4 percent, adjusted for inflation. In the retail sector, which employs large numbers of workers at or near minimum wage, profits skyrocketed 159 percent.  
With the federal minimum wage stuck in quicksand, a growing number of states have raised their state minimums above \$5.15 — Oregon and Washington are highest at \$7.50 and \$7.63 respectively. Studies by the Fiscal Policy Institute and others have shown that states with minimum wages above the federal level have had better employment trends than the other states, including for retail businesses and small businesses.  
Dan Gardner, commissioner of Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries, says, "Overall most low-wage workers pump every dollar of their paychecks directly into the local economy by spending their money in their neighborhood stores, local pharmacies, and corner markets. When the minimum wage increases, local economies benefit from the increased purchasing power."  
In the words of Joel Marks, national director of the American Small Business Alliance, "Fair wages are good for business." Congress has taken eight pay raises since 1997, while denying fair pay for minimum wage workers. On Jan. 1, congressional pay quietly rose to \$165,200 — up \$31,600 since 1997. And unlike minimum wage workers, members of Congress have good health benefits, pensions and perks.  
Wages are a bedrock moral issue. It is immoral that workers who put food on our table can't afford food for their own. It is immoral that workers who care for our children, ill and elderly can't afford to care for their own. It is immoral that the minimum wage keeps people in poverty instead of out of poverty.  
King would tell Congress to value workers and raise the minimum wage. We need a wage ethic to go with our work ethic.

Holly Sklar is co-author of "A Just Minimum Wage: Good for Workers, Business and Our Future" (www.letjusticeroll.org) and "Raise the Floor: Wages and Policies That Work for All Of Us" (www.raise-thefloor.org) — hsklar@aol.com



### Lessons learned

I know I've said before that my year without hockey was a much-needed learning experience. However, now that I've had a chance to reflect on life without hockey, I would like to share the things I have gained from hockey.  
Most of the lessons learned have all been from watching the game. A few were gained from playing street hockey with my sister. Like remembering to get her full body armor and neck padding so the next time she decides to be Patrick Roy, she won't take a slap shot right in the middle of her throat.  
Also, pucks hurt. When you get hit with them. Especially when the feline who shares its name with said piece of vulcanized rubber decides clawing its human is a suitable and fun diversion.  
Hockey isn't all it appears to be. It's more than hits, fights and chasing the puck.  
It's also more than a game.  
Take for instance the international flavor of hockey. Canadians and Americans dominate, but there are also Russians, Swedes, Czechs, Slovaks, Finns and even an Irishman and Swiss in the league.  
Part of the international flair is the names. Most American and Canadian players have normal names, and speak English.  
French Canadians have alternate versions of English names (like Martin Brodeur — Martin is pronounced Mar-tan). Jose Theodore, etc.  
Russian names are easy, Czech and Slovak are a bit of a challenge, but leaving them all behind in the dust are the Finns.  
Names like Esa Tikkanen (known affectionately to fans as "Tiki"), Jari Kurri, Teemu Selanne, Riku Hahl, Saku Koivu are just a few examples.



**Tisha Cox**  
● Off The Beaten Path

Because of the sport, my I have acquired somewhat dubious language skills.  
I can now recognize swear words in seven languages.  
"Icing" isn't something on a cake.  
Don't malign Wayne Gretzky for any reason. And I do mean ANY, even though yes, during that stint with the Rangers, there were plenty of reasons to do so.  
Buy a player a beer and he will follow you anywhere. (This I do not know because of personal experience.)  
Canadian hockey players don't look at you when you're talking. They look away. When they talk, they'll look at you.  
Hockey was better before the lockout, but like pizza, cold or otherwise, hockey is hockey.  
"Red light district" is not an appropriate nickname for the crease, even when it's only used to describe the crease when inhabited by the goalie from your least favorite team.  
Referees/on-ice officials tend to be easily frightened (justifiably so) by large groups of hockey fans.  
The metal plate in Scotty Bowman's head didn't pick up radio signals or otherwise. You know this, but still deny the truth anyway.

The height in a player's bio isn't always true. First hand experience has rendered most of those facts indeed false.  
Lobbing the chili dog at David Aebischer (Colorado Avalanche goalie) that day on Colfax would have been a good thing. But as they say, hindsight is 20/20. (He deserved it then, and even more so now.)  
A garbage goal is better than no goal at all.  
Hard and gritty is better than pretty any day. (More honest, too.)  
Swearing at the man wearing the zebra stripes (or the blue Pepsi Center shirt) isn't a good idea.  
Nothing short of a miracle from God will remove Gary Bettman from his post as NHL commissioner.  
Puck bunnies are a dime a dozen.  
Pepsi Center lemonades make excellent projectiles. (This I have witnessed, and didn't actually participate in.)  
In some cases, following the herd is a good idea. Especially when it comes to getting an autograph.  
The "neutral zone" in hockey has nothing to do with the "Neutral Zone" in "Star Trek."  
"Slashing" isn't just something done in a horror flick. In this case, it usually involves a short, fast whack with a hockey stick to a member of the opposing team.  
Swiss goalies have as many holes as a slice of Swiss cheese.

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### Your turn

### It's not human interpretation

**Tim Peterson Monument, Kan.**  
The Vatican has recently reaffirmed its support for evolution and stated that "intelligent design does not belong to science and there is no justification for the demand it be taught as a scientific theory alongside the Darwinian explanation." For students of theology this rejection of intelligent design should not be much of a surprise. In 1943, Pope Pius XII's Encyclical Divino Afflante Spiritu on biblical studies stated.  
"For the ancient peoples of the East, in order to express their ideas, did not always employ those forms of kinds of speech which we use

today; but rather those used by men of their time and centuries.  
The Bible was not written to be a scientific document. Unfortunately, the proponents of intelligent design want to introduce their interpretation of the Bible as a scientific fact. To scientifically test such an expression of faith is not only impossible, it is also wrong.  
The Bible can stand alone. It does not need scientific justification. Feeble attempts such as intelligent design to provide that justification are misguided. A Holy and most powerful God who can breath life into dry bones can most certainly use a process we called evolution to do the same

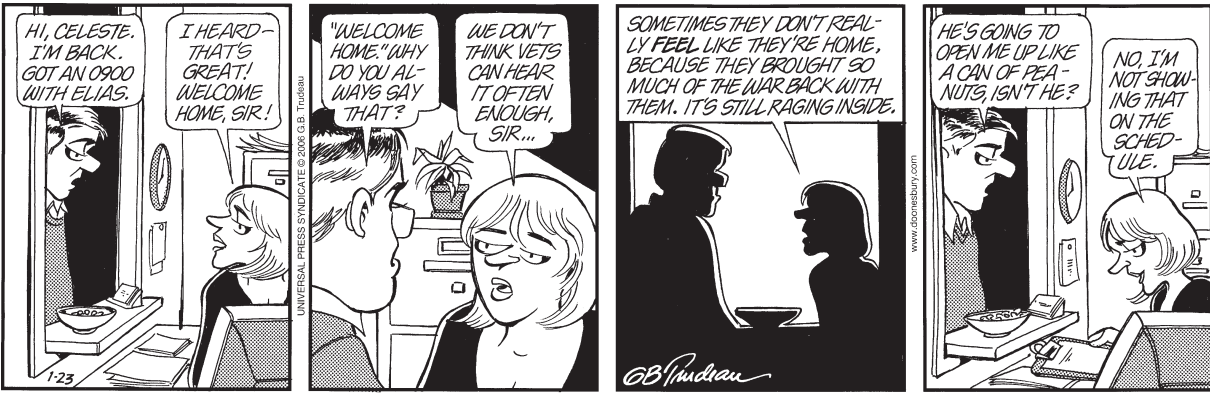
thing.  
Any vain attempt to scientifically prove statements of Christian faith can only place a barrier between people and Christ. As St. Paul wrote in the epistle to the Romans, "Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. (Romans 14:13).  
Intelligent design is an unnecessary stumbling that undermines the spread of Christianity. We are saved by Gods' grace and not by human interpretation of His world.

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### Doonesbury

● Gary Trudeau



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