



Other Viewpoints

Beyond injuries, carp pose problems

It sounds like a clip from “America’s Funniest Home Videos”: A kayaker had to drop out of a race last month in Kansas City, Kansas, after he was hit in the head by a 30-pound Asian silver carp.

But the flying fish pose serious problems beyond potential head injuries: They are consuming the food supply in rivers, pushing out native species and threatening Kansas’ \$250 million sport fishing economy.

Houston resident Brad Pennington was competing in the Missouri River 340, an annual canoe and kayak race, and was considered one of the favorites – until the carp leaped out of the water and hit him in the head.

“It felt like a brick hit me,” Pennington told the Associated Press.

Such accidents are a growing concern on the Missouri and Kansas rivers, as well as rivers in other states.

“It’s extremely serious. Those things can kill you,” one U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee said.

Just as serious is the damage these fish are doing to ecosystems — and the risk that they could spread to other rivers and lakes in Kansas.

The fish were first introduced in the United States in the 1970s to control plankton and algae on ponds and to be raised as fish food. But some of the carp escaped and worked their way up rivers and streams.

Then in the 1990s, their population exploded and they began taking over some rivers, particularly the Illinois.

Asian carp first showed up in the Kansas River in 2006. Now, an estimated 1 million or more just-hatched Asian carp live in the Kansas and Missouri rivers and their tributaries.

Fortunately, the Arkansas River is currently free of Asian carp, but a few of the fish have been found in the Verdigris and Neosho rivers of south central Kansas, and biologists fear that anglers could help spread them by using young carp as bait.

State wildlife officials are trying to educate people not to transport the fish, and there are hefty fines for doing so. But as with Zebra mussels, which are also spreading across Kansas, the fish are difficult to contain.

The problems the fish are causing are yet another lesson in the dangers of introducing non-native species: you just don’t know what can happen.

In the meantime, if you go boating on the Kansas or Missouri rivers, be ready to duck.

– The Wichita Eagle, via The Associated Press

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Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day, by Nor’West Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72



Response to troubles reveals who we are

The ninth anniversary of Sept. 11 came and went this weekend.

We once again remembered the inhuman attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. We also remembered the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania after the passengers tried to take it back from the hijackers.

President Barack Obama gave a speech on Saturday and declared Sept. 11 a day of service and remembrance. He praised the American soldiers fighting terrorists and Islamic militants overseas and talked about the people who gave their own lives trying to save others trapped in the burning remains of the Twin Towers.

“Some never saw the danger,” the president said. “Others saw the peril and rushed to save others – up those stairwells, into the flames, into the cockpit.”

He said America will stay true to our tradition as a diverse and tolerant nation.

After Obama’s speech, Republican Whip Jon Kyl, senator from Arizona, gave his reply. He encouraged the country to recapture the unity we had after the terrorist attack. Kyl said this task is not a Republican or Democratic challenge, but an American challenge. He finished the speech by discouraging people from treating Muslims and Islamic militants as one and the same.

Both speeches were impressive, classy. They offered a much needed respite from the hatred and hostility that has defined politics lately. While it would be naive to believe this respectful atmosphere will continue in the coming months, this shouldn’t stop Americans from voicing their support for more civility in politics.

The third annual 5K awareness walk/ run for Celebrate Recovery Month and the fourth annual World’s Largest Truck Convoy both took place on Saturday, providing a mix of selflessness and renewal that seemed like an appropriate antidote to the hatred and fanaticism of the 9/11 terrorists and their followers.

The 5K run, sponsored by the Thomas County Coalition, was done to build awareness of substance abuse and addiction disorders. It was followed by a Celebration Block Party at Fike Park.

The convoy involved 34 trucks rumbling into Colby to help raise money for the Special Olympics. Joe Mentlick, director and coordinator of the convoy, said the best part of the event is seeing the smiles on the faces of the Special Olympians. These events reflect the better part of human nature that has somehow survived all the wars, natural disasters and terrorist attacks over the years.

Terrorists are capable of doing dangerous things, but behind their violence is nothing more than a group of medieval characters who have forfeited their ability to think. And we shouldn’t harbor any illusions that Muslims are the only ones who are tempted surrender



Andy Heintz

- Wildcat Ramblings

their minds to an extremist ideology.

We have plenty of Christians in this country who hold views eerily similar to the people we are at war with. While many of the people currently helping stoke anti-Islam propaganda probably genuinely think of themselves as patriots or Christian soldiers, their actions prove they share many of the same traits as the terrorists.

We should fear what both these groups are capable of, but it would be an injustice to fear these pathetic figures themselves. And we should never try to group all Muslims or all Christians with the extremists.

While some Islamic militants are most likely nothing more than sadists, I’m sure many of these weak-minded people think their actions are justified. Politicians like to call Islamic terrorists evil nihilists, but nihilists don’t blow themselves up in the name of God.

These people are fanatics, and fanaticism is more dangerous than nihilism because at least nihilists have not given up their ability to think freely. These people are filled with a moral certainty that provides all of us with an example of how dangerous absolutism can be.

The war against terrorism is real, but it would inaccurate to call it a battle for freedom. The terrorists forfeited their chance to be free when they stopped thinking for themselves.

As long as people continue to try to love, tolerate and understand each other, though, the terrorists will never win.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.

Food for Peace started right here

Television, newspapers, magazines and the web are filled with images of starving children – skeleton-like figures crouched like dogs on their haunches while their mothers wail in anguish.

Sometimes these pictures from such far-away places as Mozambique, Ethiopia or Angola also include children eating bread, bowls of rice and other staples that may have come from food produced on the fertile land of Kansas farmers and their counterparts across the United States.

Food aid for these hungry people started nearly 60 years ago right here in Kansas. Named Food for Peace, this program was an outgrowth of this country’s foreign-aid policy.

A few years after the conclusion of World War II, the United States implemented plans to help countries devastated by the war. The Marshall Plan in Western Europe became the cornerstone of this newly emerging program.

While some of the money was used for reconstruction, most was used to help feed starving people left homeless and unemployed by the war. During this same period, the United States enjoyed bumper crops and began stockpiling huge commodity surpluses.

In September 1953, Cheyenne County Farm Bureau in northwestern Kansas held a county-wide policy development meeting. In that meeting, Peter O’Brien, a young farmer and rancher, suggested that it would make more sense to give aid in the form of food items rather than money.

Cheyenne County Farm Bureau drafted a foreign-aid resolution that called for exporting grain to other countries. The northwestern



John Schlageck

- Insights
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Kansas farm leaders believed that if under-developed countries were able to secure food – once they became more prosperous – they would become major buyers of U.S. commodities.

The Kansas farmers also saw this as a “sure-fire” method to help reduce grain inventories and realized that increased shipments of U.S. agricultural products could generate more business for American processors, packers, shippers, railroads and ocean vessels.

The county Farm Bureau resolution became a state resolution at the Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting and later part of the official policy of the American Farm Bureau Federation at the national level. In ’54, Kansas Sen. Andy Schoepel sponsored legislation known as “Food for Peace” that passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law by Kansas’ native son, President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Since its early beginning in Cheyenne County, Public Law 480 has gone through many changes. Today it remains a key ingredient in our overseas plan to aid countries with food rather than money.

Using food for humanitarian relief programs helps everyone. This program helps feed hungry people around the world while helping

American farmers reduce surpluses.

While there have been many new laws and farm bills introduced during this period, not many have been as significant to agriculture and feeding the world’s hungry people as Food for Peace. Without this humanitarian vehicle and the output of Kansas producers and their counterparts across the nation, millions of people continue to go hungry.

Each year, millions of people need millions of tons of food to fill their hungry bellies. In 2008, an estimated 963 million people remained undernourished.

That same year, more than \$2.8 billion was donated worldwide from U.S. aid programs to developing countries, reaching tens of millions of people. This aid is essential in emergency, which included drought in the Horn of Africa, wars in Sudan and Congo, hurricanes in Haiti and drought in Afghanistan. About 43 million people in 38 countries benefited from emergency food aid provided through Food for Peace.

At the same time, nonemergency programs continued to focus on increasing agricultural production and supporting programs to address health, nutrition, HIV and others needs. More than 7.2 million people in 28 countries benefited from American nonemergency food assistance.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Mallard Fillmore

- Bruce Tinsley

