

from our viewpoint...

## Iowa sets tone as dance begins

The presidential selection process has begun with the Iowa caucuses, and New Hampshire steps up to the plate tonight.

News reports installed Sen. Barack Obama as the Democratic leader with his 5 percent win in Iowa, and former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee became the Republican leader with his win in Iowa.

Both men worked hard, and the members of their parties rewarded them with a majority of their state delegates to each party's national convention.

Iowa did not elect either man as President, nor did the results make either man the nominee of their party. This was simply the qualifying round — something like setting the pole position for the Indianapolis 500 car race.

On the Democratic side, Obama won the pole position with John Edwards and Hillary Clinton close behind. On the Republican side, the underdog Huckabee got the pole with Mitt Romney and John McCain staying close.

This was the first of many state primaries and caucuses that will be reported and dissected over the next month or two to see who gets what support where and from what groups.

The process is one of the fascinating things that makes the American political system fun to watch. Today, the television talk shows are already switching to New Hampshire and they will be moving onto Michigan (Jan. 15), Nevada (Jan. 19) and Florida (Jan. 29). South Carolina is splitting the limelight, holding a Republican primary on Jan. 19, and a Democratic primary a week later on Jan. 26.

The candidates are all pointing to Super Tuesday on Feb. 5, when 24 states — including the Kansas Democrats — will hold primaries or caucuses. The big ones on that day will be California and New York, but people will be watching states like Colorado, Georgia, Alabama and New Jersey to see which candidate appeals to the widest spectrum of people.

Again, none of these will in themselves elect anyone as President, nor will they automatically determine who the nominees will be in the fall.

For Democrats, the year will be interesting because the national convention is to be held in Denver for the first time in 100 years. It means a lot to Denver and Colorado to be selected as the convention sight, and the city is working hard to make it a something the delegates, alternates and all the myriad of press will enjoy and remember.

That is not until August, and despite the Iowa results, a lot of changes can happen in the next seven months. The Democrats might make history by nominating the first black or the first woman to represent a major party. Or maybe not.

For those who have never gotten involved in party politics, this is a rare year where there is no incumbent or vice president running and both parties are trying to find the right person to win in November.

Having watched the candidates for both parties in numerous debates over the past months, it is fun to see what people are thinking as they line up to show support for their favorite man or woman, as the case may be.

This race is a long way from over, and you can tell, the fat lady has not even begun to warm up. — *Tom Betz*

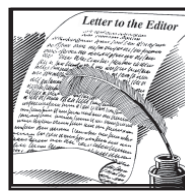


## Time is progressive revelation

To the Editor:  
Time is of short duration for the individual within the framework of aeons. For the Creator of time, it is the progressive revelation of Himself and His purpose. It is revelation which comes to life in the Old and New Testaments as He interacted with individuals, nomads, tribes and nations. It is progressive, as seen in His activity in the lives of believers down through the centuries up until today

The revelation began immediately after our ancestors separation from the pristine relationship they had with Him. He then promised He would send a Savior, born of a woman, who would ultimately defeat evil. The Savior would set people free from the powers of sin and death. (See Genesis 3:15) Those powers will continue in play on into the future until God brings down the curtain on human history

God's activity took place in Biblical prehistory, from Genesis to Abraham, which marked the beginning of Biblical history. This time includes the events of the Tower of Babel and Noah's Ark. People were at a high point in their



### from our readers

to the editor

rebellion against their Creator. God revealed His power and control by curbing their attempt to deny Him and rise to God-like status. It was also the time of oral tradition, when events were passed down from father to son.

On God's calendar, a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. The manifestation of the Genesis promise was kept alive through Israel's major and minor prophets, the Kings and Psalms.

Through time, God had to relate to people on their level where they were in their given time. In the days of Abraham, a covenant was made and sealed by sacrificing an animal, placing it on an altar, burning parts of it while the parties involved verified their commitment. In like manner, God commanded Abraham to offer a sacrifice. He entered a covenant with Abraham

and substituted a ram for the sacrifice. (see Genesis 22:9-14) God connected with him in a way he understood at his time in history. He continued to relate to people in their time until the advent of Christ.

On God's schedule, Jesus was born of the woman Mary, conceived of the Holy Spirit. Some 30 years later John the Baptist appeared out of the wilderness and announced that the promised Savior was to begin His public ministry. By His life, death and resurrection, the Savior declared the dignity, worth and eternal value of all humans.

Christ fulfilled His Father's purpose of redemption for all. He gave the apostles, early disciples and the church the authority and responsibility to proclaim the good news of the Gospel, teach, and baptize. The church, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, will carry out the progressive revelation until the end as recorded in the final Book of Revelation.

Earl Martell  
Retired Lutheran minister  
Goodland

## Nature lessons



### tom purcell

commentary

I was so determined to hit that kid in the knees with my toboggan, I didn't notice the pond.

Maybe I better explain.  
It's winter. The snow is falling. And when the snow falls, there's only one place a kid should be: out in the elements whipping snowballs, building snowmen and riding sleds down steep hills.

Too few kids are doing that anymore. Thus, they're suffering from Nature Deficit Disorder, a term coined by journalist Richard Louv in his book "Last Child in the Woods."

Louv spent 10 years traveling around America interviewing parents, kids, teachers, researchers and others to learn about children's experiences with nature. His findings: During the last 30 years our sensationalist media have "scared children straight out of the woods and fields." Parents are afraid to let kids out of their sight — afraid their kids might get hurt.

Add to that the advent of television, video games and the Internet and the result is this: Kids aren't getting out much anymore. And because they're not getting out, they're withdrawing from nature — the chief place where they use all five of their senses at once.

"We don't yet know why it happens, but when all five of a child's senses come alive, a child is at an optimum state of learning," Louv told me. "Creativity and cognitive functioning go way up."

The consequences of withdrawing from nature are not good. Kids lose their sense of being rooted in the world. They're more likely to experience stress, hyperactivity, attention-deficit disorder and other modern maladies.

That's why more kids should enjoy winter as I did as a kid. Which brings us back to the pond incident.

One Sunday afternoon, after a fast run down

the hill, I picked up my plastic toboggan and began to climb the hillside for another run. That's when a kid on a sled hit me.

Unlike most kids, who rode sleds solely for the thrill of whipping down the hill, this kid got his kicks out of knocking other kids off their feet. He hit me just below the knees, causing me to go posterior over tin cups.

I spent the rest of that day with vengeance on my mind. I made several runs looking to hit that kid back. I finally saw my opportunity. Just after he jumped on his sled and took a run, I jumped onto my plastic toboggan just behind him.

My timing was exquisite. As he finished his run and got on his feet, I hit him square in the shins, causing him to go posterior over tin cups. So delighted was I with my success, I didn't notice the pond at the bottom of the hill.

Mr. Ayres had dammed up the creek that ran through his yard to form a small pond. Just after

I hit the kid, I hit the mound of earth surrounding the pond and was suddenly floating through the air. I landed in the center of the pond on a patch of ice. The ice quickly broke, sending me and my plastic toboggan to the bottom.

Unlike too many of today's kids, I spent my childhood out in the elements. I was free to play and roam and discover. There was certainly the risk of injury and all the other things parents worry about today, but such things didn't concern us in the '70s — all to my benefit.

When it snowed, 30 or 40 kids could be found on our neighborhood hillside. We had to figure things out on our own — had to figure out how to deal with risk and danger and ruffians who liked to take your legs out with their sleds.

It was a boneheaded move by me to tag him right in front of the pond, but, boy, was I immersed in nature that day. I certainly didn't suffer from Nature Deficit Disorder.

If we have any sense, we'll do one thing this winter: encourage our kids to turn off their video games and go outside for a sled ride the next time it snows.

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