

# OPINION

DAILY JOURNAL

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"The Daily Journal is dedicated to community service, to defense of individual rights and to providing those checks upon government which no constitution can ensure."

SCOTT ALEXANDER  
founding editor, 1963

## AT ISSUE

Center Grove swimmer Michelle McKeehan's two state titles were an impressive accomplishment.

## OUR POINT

She came immeasurably close to setting state records, yet she swam with a cold that surely robbed her of some of her strength.

## Center Grove champion builds swimming legacy

The Daily Journal

Michelle McKeehan of Center Grove High School won the state title in the 200-yard individual medley in 2:00.99, two-thirds of a second short of the state record.

That's a substantial time difference for swimmers the caliber of McKeehan. Yet she finished four full seconds in front of her closest challenger. That's huge.

It's like an Indy 500 racer finishing almost a full straightaway ahead of the next car in a four-lap race.

But like the perfectionist competitors of her caliber almost always are, she said after the race: "There were areas where I could have improved. I was nervous going into that race because everyone was making a big deal about being a defending state champion."

"I don't normally like to focus on that; I'd prefer to focus on my times, but that's all people talked about." In her other event, the 100 breaststroke, she finished in 1:02.07, just .09 off the state record. That's less than a tenth of a second, a time few of us can even imagine.

Her double titles are a repeat of last year's twin triumphs in the finals.

Almost as an oh-by-the-way, McKeehan helped the Trojans set two school records in relay events, for a seventh-place team finish, the team's best standing in six years.

But this year's accomplishments are especially notable because McKeehan had a cold.

Center Grove coach Jim Todd said, "She was so sick last week, she probably shouldn't have been in school. That tells you what kind of heart she has."

McKeehan, though, already has turned her attention to the future. Shortly after the meet Feb. 11 at the IU Natatorium at IUPUI, she said, "It's kind of frustrating knowing you're so close to the records, but at the same time it's exciting the more I think about it."

"Now I have even more to shoot for next year. I can concentrate less on winning the events and more on my times and the state records because there's plenty of work to do."

Todd said of her illness and a disruption to her training regimen: "Those aren't excuses, but they're two circumstances that make you think she can do even better. ... She's the best swimmer in the state of Indiana right now on the girls' side. There's no question."

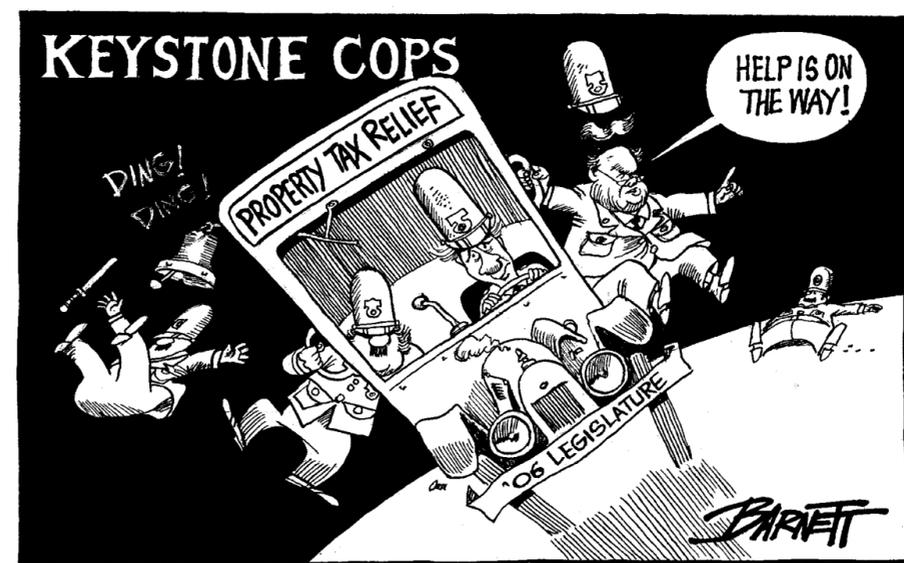
Watching the Winter Olympics this week is a reminder that the Summer Games are only two years away.

What a thrill it will be watching McKeehan compete for a spot on the U.S. team that will compete in Beijing.



DAILY JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

Center Grove sophomore Michelle McKeehan receives her first-place medal for the 200-yard individual medley at the girls state championships Feb. 11 at the IU Natatorium in Indianapolis.



## With closing of Ayres store, link to local past will be lost

Those of us who have lived in Greenwood all of our lives are saddened when we hear a relatively long list of stores, restaurants and other places that are leaving us. We certainly don't get the opportunity to help make any of those decisions, but we are disturbed by why it is happening.

For example, when we heard that L.S. Ayres was planning to close, we knew it would certainly be missed. As a child, my mother and I went to L.S. Ayres in Indianapolis. That was a place where we could find what we needed, especially clothing and shoes.

Because we did not have much money, we could even go into the basement there and find things on sale that were less expensive than items that were upstairs. Calling it the basement was a normal thing in those days, but, of course, that word hasn't been used in many years now.

Later, when L.S. Ayres came to the Greenwood Park Mall, we often went there to look for things on sale so we didn't have to travel to Indianapolis. We would almost always be able to make the purchase we needed.

When I became a mother, my husband said that I could stay home and give up my job as a teacher. He was a teacher, too, and took two additional part-time jobs so I could take care of our children.

Then, I found out that I was able to earn at least a little more money for our family by working



Marya Jo Butler

at L.S. Ayres in the evening after my husband got home and on the weekends. I worked in the children's clothing area and enjoyed helping parents purchase outfits for their children.

When I went back to teaching, one of our daughters went to work at L.S. Ayres selling purses and other things. She did a great job and had an especially good eye for helping people find items that were just right.

Therefore, as a family of both former employees and loyal customers, it came as a shock when we heard that the store was closing its doors. When we think about how long the company has been in the state of Indiana, we are not happy that it will soon be just a memory.

Oh, yes, it will now be called Macy's, but it will be different for those of us who knew it early on in our lives.

Several faithful employees have worked there for many, many years but could now be on a list to be laid off. Throughout Indiana, there could be as many as 765 employees

who will be affected. I am one of many southside residents who watched when Greenwood Park Mall was first being built on what used to be farmland.

Originally it was an open mall and later became larger and covered. It certainly is interesting to go there and see the difference from how it looked at the beginning.

When my dad retired, he was the Santa in a small house in the center of that open mall. He would arrive the day after Thanksgiving and listen to holiday wishes until Christmas.

Our daughters would go to the mall when they were young and speak to Santa, just as children continue to do today.

They would sit on his lap and give him the list of what they wanted for Christmas. They would later laugh about how they hadn't recognized his true identity.

After visiting Santa, we would go to L.S. Ayres and begin our Christmas shopping. It was exciting for us to be able to go to that store and make purchases for family and friends.

Well, officially, we can't do that anymore. Oh, yes, we can go to other stores, and we'll certainly be able to make our purchases, but it won't be the same. We'll definitely miss L.S. Ayres.

*Daily Journal Board of Contributors columnist Marya Jo Butler is a former teacher and counselor. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.*

## West's secularity, conservative Islam represent extremes of both cultures

In 1993, Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" predicted a frightening global future where cultures, and especially Islam and the West, would increasingly descend into conflict in the post-Cold War era.

At the time, many viewed his scenario as too pessimistic. Even after Sept. 11, when Huntington's dire predictions were repeated, world leaders were quick to deny that a clash of civilizations was occurring. British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush seemed to be reading off the same cue card in insisting that Islam is a religion of peace and not the enemy of the West.

That statement was more than politically smart. It was also truthful. Al-Qaida is a perversion of Islam. To condemn Islam because of al-Qaida is like condemning Christianity because of the Waco cult of David Koresh.

To underscore global solidarity against terrorism, our media treated us to numerous photos after Sept. 11 of religious leaders of all persuasions praying together. We took comfort in the knowledge that people of good will, no matter what religion, have more in common than they have differences.

Events of the past few weeks, however, should cause us to be less optimistic. The world does not seem to be healing, but rather rupturing even further.

There is, first of all, Hamas' stunning victory in the Palestinian elections. For those who believe that free elections will automatically lead to a more peaceful world, the results in Palestine were a wake-up call. Blair and Bush's "road map to peace" seems suddenly to lead nowhere.

Perhaps even more serious is the cartoon that has sparked riots, embassy burnings, and death threats in the Middle East. History may record that a satirical drawing from tiny Denmark was the clearest indicator that the present world community is dangerously out of sync.

Take the phrases "personal freedom" and "freedom of the press," which we esteem so highly in the West. It now seems clear that the Danish paper published the cartoon of Muhammad as a terrorist in order to highlight these very freedoms. The publisher wanted Europe and no doubt the rest of the



David Carlson

world to ask this question: In the wake of Sept. 11, the Madrid and London bombings, and the continued violence from Iraq to Israel, has the West become afraid to freely express its views, especially its rising frustration with Islamic terrorism? Have we in the West been bullied by Islamic extremists?

The Danish publisher clearly expected a reaction, and, wow, did he get one. Islamic Middle Eastern countries erupted, but not because they saw the cartoon as a mocking of the prophet Muhammad. This is what the Danish and the West in general don't yet understand.

Any drawing of Muhammad is considered a violation of God's law as expressed in the Quran. To them, the cartoon was a deliberate attack on God.

What kind of society, traditional Islamic cultures are asking, gives people the freedom to sin, to insult the Almighty? What remains holy in the West, they wonder, what is the god of the West, except their concept of personal freedom?

And so the gap of understanding is widening, not narrowing. What one culture celebrates, the other considers blasphemy, sin, an affront to Holy God. We've traveled a long way from that catchy Disney ditty of the '70s — "It's a Small World After All." It is a small world after all, but it seems to be breaking apart.

There is a temptation to say that Huntington's prediction of cultures at war has come true. One small ray of hope in this mess comes from remembering our own quite recent history in the West.

In the late 1770s, H.S. Reimarus asked that his skeptical book about Jesus not be published until after his death. Reimarus knew that his book would be labeled as blasphemy, leading to the loss of his job if not his arrest.

In 1843, John Henry Newman's conversion to Catholicism cost him his teaching position at

Oxford. A faculty member who could not subscribe to Anglican creedal statements in the mid-19th century could not teach at that pre-eminent university.

As recently as the 1960s, some states had "blue laws" that meant that stores and theaters were closed on Sunday, the Lord's Day. It wasn't that long ago, then, that the West also curtailed personal freedom out of respect for religion.

That is obviously not where our culture is today. Sunday is just another work day. And fearing religious authoritarianism, we allow all kinds of matters to be published or put on canvas, the Internet and the stage. If religious people in the West find such matters blasphemous, they generally agree to let God take care of the matter in the age to come.

Does this mean that, given time, traditional Islamic societies will catch up with our more advanced and secular view? I doubt it. The cartoon crisis reveals very clearly that we have chosen one path; they are choosing another.

Traditional Islam sees reverence for the holy as optional in the West, God being a belief to be held individually or voiced communally behind the doors of our houses of worship. To many Middle Easterners, what remains sacred in the West is our concept of personal freedom. As a current TV commercial expresses it, "Be free to do what you want when you want."

The most dangerous aspect of our present crisis is that both sides cast the issue in black-and-white terms. Each side believes the other is completely wrong, crazy, or demonic, while it is completely right. The West wants Middle Eastern Muslims to lighten up; after all, it's only a cartoon. They want us to serious up; after all, is nothing sacred?

There is a third path that few are talking about. I'm not surprised. Whoever recommends this path will surely be attacked from both sides. But that path begins with these two questions: What if the secular West and conservative Islam are both too extreme? And what if each side has a truth the other should consider?

*David Carlson is a professor of philosophy and religion at Franklin College. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### Effort seeks to publicize ways to prevent burns

To the editor:

Burn injuries are increasing among young children, and common culprits causing the most painful, life-altering burn injuries include microwave usage, cooking accidents, scalding liquids and hot foods.

Scalds have been the leading cause of burn injuries for the past two decades with the majority of survivors younger than 5, some less than a year old. A significant number of children in burn units are there because of scald injuries, not fire.

During Burn Prevention Month in February, the People's Burn Foundation of Indianapolis has launched a campaign to increase awareness of burn injuries and how to prevent them. Two-thirds of burn injuries are preventable simply by raising awareness about the common causes of burns.

Central Indiana restaurants, retailers, fire departments, churches and civic organizations have joined with the People's Burn Foundation to increase awareness of burn injuries and prevention.

The foundation is asking Hoosiers to "have a heart" this month by purchasing a heart for \$1 through a participating campaign partner. "Hearts" were designed to be signed and dedicated to those "closest to one's heart" and proudly displayed at participating establishments.

All proceeds from the Heart Campaign benefit People's Burn Foundation burn safety education programs offered throughout Central Indiana.

Shawn Longereich  
Executive director

People's Burn Foundation

### Toll road deal to pay for new-terrain route of I-69

To the editor:

After consistently attacking former Gov. Joe Kernan for outsourcing state contracts during his campaign, Gov. Mitch Daniels has flip-flopped by proposing perhaps the largest outsourcing project in U.S. history.

He has turned to deep-pocketed special interests for advertising money in an attempt to make Hoosier taxpayers and our legislators believe that his Major Moves transportation bill (House Bill 1008) has popular support and is good for Indiana. These impressions could not be further from reality:

- 62 percent of respondents in a poll on Jan. 6 by Inside Indiana Business oppose privatizing the Indiana Toll Road.

- 60 percent of respondents in a poll on Dec. 4 by Inside Indiana Business poll thought privatization of some state functions was a bad idea.

- In a Jan. 20 e-mail, the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association asked its members to contact the governor and their legislators to oppose privatizing the Indiana Toll Road.

A primary reason for pushing House Bill 1008 is to raise funds for the onerously expensive "new terrain" Interstate 69 by selling off our highways to companies who will profit by charging us to drive on them.

We already pay a gas tax, but we will now pay a second tax disguised in tolls that we otherwise would not have paid, just so that the most expensive and destructive route of I-69 can be built.

Those who've commented on this highway prefer upgrading U.S. 41, which saves at least \$1 billion to build and \$2.7 million per year to maintain, according to an Indiana Department of Transportation study:

- 94 percent of the more than 22,000 respondents during the public comment period opposed the new-terrain route for the proposed I-69.

- 90 percent of the Farm Bureau members in Daviess, Gibson and Knox counties, and the Indiana Hardwood Lumbermen's Association, oppose the preferred new-terrain route for the proposed I-69 extension in favor of upgrading U.S. 41.

- In an unprecedented act of political activism, the Daviess County Amish community petitioned in opposition to the new-terrain route because it will divide their land in two.

These are a few of many examples of the overwhelming majority of Hoosiers who are opposed to Major Moves. Average working Hoosiers simply do not have the money to compete with Daniels' special-interest media blitz. Please contact your legislators and ask them to stand firm and vote "no" to House Bill 1008.

Jeffrey Stant  
Indianapolis

## WRITE A LETTER

SEND IT

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