

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

This is Newspaper in Education Week. This year's theme is "Navigating the Newspaper ... A Journey to the Extraordinaire!"

OUR POINT

The annual reading initiative is designed to instill in students a habit of daily reading.

Reading skill essential for informed citizenry

The Daily Journal

Reading is the most important skill students can learn. It is the key to success in every facet of education.

But once some students learn the basics, they never develop the habit of regular reading or appreciate the need to remain informed throughout their lives, not just in school.

These are two of the main reasons behind Newspaper in Education Week, which is being observed through Friday in many schools across Indiana.

The initiative is spearheaded by the Indiana State Reading Association. It's not designed to sell newspapers. Rather, it is to acquaint students with the information available every day in the newspaper.

This year's theme is "Navigating the Newspaper ... A Journey to the Extraordinaire!"

During the week students will be exposed to newspaper stories about news, sports and entertainment; business aspects; and the organization of the paper. They'll even read some of the comics, one part of the paper some students already look at often now.

The reading association has assembled an imaginative set of exercises and activities designed to make reading the newspaper fun and to teach students about news stories, editorials, letters to the editor, photographs, advertising and many other aspects of the newspaper.

Activities are organized around the language arts by grade clusters.

Suellen Reed, state superintendent of public instruction, stresses the importance of reading and the role of the newspaper.

She said, "We know reading is important to maintaining an educated populace. The habit of reading the newspaper needs to be developed while children are young and nurtured as they move to adulthood."

An informed populace is critical to effective government, not just at election time but throughout the year.

The newspaper offers the most effective ongoing source of information about government, but the effort is wasted if the material isn't read.

That's why the annual reading initiative is conducted. If students get in the habit of reading a newspaper regularly, it's much more likely they will continue the habit into adulthood. And thus they will be much more likely to be informed about what's going on in the community.

An investment in reading always pays dividends for the individual.

Investing time in reading the newspaper pays dividends for the entire community.

Focus: Detainees

Anti-torture clause puts some in legal limbo

Scrrips Howard News Service

Perversely, the Guantanamo Bay detainees may be worse off under a new law designed to protect them from abusive treatment.

The (John) McCain amendment to the Detainee Treatment Act quite rightly restates the longstanding American prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees in U.S. custody. In short, we don't torture.

But that same law limits the detainees' access to U.S. courts. They may challenge their enemy combatant status and appeal the verdicts of military tribunals, but they may not seek habeas corpus or protest their treatment.

This was the bill, opposed by the Bush administration, which the president signed on Dec. 30 with the caveat that he was not bound by it under his expansive view of his unfettered wartime powers.

There is also a dispute whether the provision limiting access to the courts applies to detainees who had cases in the civilian courts before the law was signed. Lawyers for the detainees say it does; the Justice department says it does not.

In effect just over two months, the Detainee Treatment Act now has the distinction of being tested at all three levels of federal court — Supreme, appeals and district.

Lawyers for detainee Mohammed Bawazir, a Yemeni who will have been in Guantanamo four years come May, charge that the prison authorities, to break a hunger strike, so roughly force-fed him through a large nasal tube that it amounted to torture.

The government says he wasn't tortured. District Judge Gladys Kessler says if Bawazir can prove his allegations, it is too torture and a violation of U.S. laws and treaties.

The Bush administration's answer is that even if Bawazir was tortured, the court can't do anything about it because of the Detainee Treatment Act. In other words, the law outlaws torture but the detainees have no right to have the law enforced.

Depending how the courts rule on the act, McCain and others may have to redraft the act, although it's hard to say what they had to do to make any clearer that "no torture" means "no torture." The legal limbo of the Guantanamo Bay detainees does our nation no credit.



BUSH



MCCAIN



Balance of manned, robotic flights important for NASA

Last week, NASA was forced to scrub a planned robotic space mission. The spacecraft, named Dawn, was set to orbit two asteroids. It was one of several science missions that have been canceled during the past few months.

Also last week, House Republicans touted a series of policy proposals that are supposed to enhance America's competitiveness in technology. The United States still leads the world in technological progress, but that lead has been slipping in recent years.

The Bush administration's science policy seems to be in a state of schizophrenia. On one hand, Bush goes on national television during his State of the Union address and promotes technology and manned space missions. At the same time, NASA's science missions are being cut or scaled back while Bush censors his top science advisers when the results of their science run contrary to the administration's party-line conservative agenda.

And while the president is touting a policy encouraging the advancement of technology, he is making statements to the media in support of including the pseudoscience of intelligent design in the science classroom.

As for America's space program, it seems to be in the early stages of a reversal. Back in the 1960s and early '70s, NASA's missions were almost exclusively manned.

Sending humans to explore space is extremely costly and dangerous. But, because of the



Jerry Wilson

space race with the Soviets, robotic missions to the moon were just not high-profile enough. Humans had to go up.

We learned a lot in those days. A huge number of modern consumer goods and services have come into being as a direct or indirect result of the manned space program of the 1960s. Robotic missions are much cheaper and entirely safe. They can teach us a great deal about whatever they were designed to measure. But there are far fewer spin-offs that directly benefit society.

Many of the NASA scientists who made the early manned space program possible were disappointed when President Richard Nixon decided to cut NASA's budget, which effectively brought to an end to manned missions to the moon. Even orbital missions were all but halted.

In place of the manned missions, NASA turned its attention and smaller budget to unmanned scientific missions. The Viking missions to Mars and Voyager missions to the outer Solar System were spectacular successes. These missions led to great discoveries that excited not only the planetary scientists involved but

the general public, as well.

In 1981, humans went back into space in the space shuttle, but the missions were all in close Earth orbit and were nowhere near as spectacular as the earlier moon missions. Basically, the space shuttle was a truck with Earth's orbit as its highway.

There were some infamous failures along the way, too. Two shuttle missions resulted in disastrous loss of life. And some robotic missions to the planets ended in failure as well.

Lately, however, the unmanned missions have been successes, resulting in increased scientific knowledge of Mars, comets and asteroids.

So, as the pendulum swings back the other way, toward manned scientific missions, it is with a similar sort of melancholy that permeated NASA when its early manned missions were cut.

If Bush's initiative is successful, it will mean the space program will get more expensive and, at the same time, more impressive. Sending men and women to the moon, and ultimately to Mars and other planets, will get the space program back on the track it should never have left in 1974.

The sad part is that it is at the expense of losing valuable unmanned science missions. These missions cost so little it's a pity we can't afford to keep them even as we ramp up the manned space program again.

Jerry Wilson writes this weekly opinion column for the Daily Journal. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

From health to housing and incomes, America has changed in past decade

We're not the same nation we were just a decade ago. While a lot of what the federal government does drives a lot of people bananas, the statistics it compiles about demographic trends are insightful.

We know that Latinos, the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population, are now the largest minority group. By mid-century, one out of every four people in America will be Hispanic.

But a new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that coming to America has a downside for many.

In the past decade, the rates of obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes have risen significantly for Latinos. The longer they are here, the higher the rates of all those diseases are among them. Not a good trend in a country with 47 million uninsured people.

(It is not surprising that the Americanized version of increasingly popular Mexican food has as much as five times more calories than the traditional version in Mexico.)

We all know that more mothers work outside the home than ever before in U.S. history. But the Bureau of Labor Statistics has found that in the past 10 years the growth in the percent of women working has stalled.

As reported by The New York Times, the number of married women trying to balance children and jobs has slipped as more women in their 30s deal with children ages 6 and younger.

Basically, women are marrying and having babies later and finding that having it all is hard. On the other hand, changes in welfare rules have forced more single mothers to struggle to do it all. Their participation in the labor force has increased significantly since the 1996 welfare law changes.

For a while, family incomes were rising as more couples had two-earner incomes. That is slowing,



Ann McFeatters

And young people entering the work force are not doing as well as their parents did or are doing.

Workers 35 and younger are earning much less, adjusted for inflation, than their counterparts did in 1970.

The median income for men 44 and younger is less than it was in 1997. The Census Bureau found that those between the ages 14 and 25 account for 40 percent of the U.S. homeless population.

Some adults used to bemoan what they took to be a weak work ethic among young workers; that is no longer true. Nearly every study shows that the trend is for young, educated people with jobs to work longer, harder, under more stress and to move from job to job more frequently.

With only 8 percent of private workers covered by union contracts, far fewer Americans now stay in jobs where they started, accruing income, stature, seniority and increasing responsibility. Former President Bill Clinton warns young Americans that they need to develop job-hunting skills because they will change jobs at least eight times during their working years.

That means workers increasingly need a cash cushion, yet economists all fret about the savings rate, which is zilch. Americans simply choose not to save. Personal consumption takes up an amazing 70 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product.

American homeowners have been counting themselves wealthy because of the appreciation in the value of their houses. That is changing, according to

White House economists.

The economists who compiled the annual White House report on the economy last month say that while homes have increased on average 9 percent a year for the past five years, that rate is slowing.

That's bad news for many homeowners, but the White House insists it's good news in the long run because it will permit the incomes of non-homeowners to "catch up with the home price appreciation so that affordability of homes comes back closer to historical levels."

Incidentally, the Census Bureau says there are more Americans choosing to live in gated or exclusive communities that restrict outsiders. Some think that gated developments now make up 10 percent of the new-home market.

But the middle class may be slipping away, because of skyrocketing health-care costs and disappearing middle-income jobs.

From 1980 to 2003, the government says, there was a 7 percent decline in the percentage of households with middle-class incomes.

By 2004, there were 1.1 million more people living below the poverty line. This means retailers that target the middle class are in trouble.

But there is some good news for the "sandwich generation," the baby-boom generation with young children and aging parents to support. The National Center for Health Statistics is reporting the first decline in the actual number of cancer deaths in more than 70 years.

This is just a peek at the iceberg of data showing how we have subtly changed in just a few years. Slogging along, trying to survive, we don't see trends. And then, one day, we wake up, and our world is no longer the same, for good and ill.

Ann McFeatters is Washington bureau chief of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and The Toledo Blade. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

YOUR VIEWS

Tobacco-control treaty should be sent to Senate

To the editor:

As Greenwood residents celebrate their increasing smoke-free lifestyle, and join the hundreds of communities and states across the nation going smoke-free, our federal government is ignoring this worldwide problem.

One year ago, the world's first public health treaty on tobacco control became law. The treaty offers the world a chance to avoid millions of deaths caused by tobacco use.

To date, 120 countries have ratified the treaty, making it one of the most rapidly embraced treaties in history. Sadly, the United States is not among these 120 nations.

After signing the treaty the president has failed to send it to the Senate for ratification.

President Bush needs to hear that his constituents want this treaty ratified. Call the White House at (800) NOW-I-CAN and leave a message for the president to send the Tobacco Treaty to the Senate for ratification.

Currently tobacco kills 5 million people a year throughout the world, and in the United States is the leading cause of preventable death.

Paul C. Messplay, Convener
Smoke Free Communities Team
Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition
Indianapolis

Accepting cigarette tax shows double standard

To the editor:

First of all, I am a smoker and feel that I am a considerate smoker. I have resided in Johnson County for 10 years, having moved here from Marion County, where I lived for 20-plus years.

I have voted in every election in this county since I moved here.

I thought it was a reasonable idea when smokers were segregated from nonsmokers in restaurants and public places. That seemed fair and just to me. Everybody could coexist and be happy.

Now the nonsmokers and local government have gone to the next level, where they want absolute control about where I smoke.

I pay the same county and local taxes as the nonsmoker, and even more considering I pay taxes on my cigarettes. Also, I am empathetic toward the private business owners, who feel they should have the right to make their own decisions regarding this issue, as they should.

There seems to be an extreme contradiction here to me. The local government is getting ready to ban smoking; however, they gladly accept the tax revenue generated on the cigarettes I buy.

This simply does not make sense to me.

I feel as though my rights have been impinged upon. If smoking is so bad for smokers, nonsmokers and local government, then why isn't it against the law?

I sincerely hope that all of our elected officials will consider the rights and opinions of all their constituents before voting on this issue.

Jeanette Teltoe
Trafalgar

Goal of smoking rules is to protect health

To the editor:

I am writing to express my full support for a county-wide smoking ban.

I find it frustrating when going into a place to eat and asking for the nonsmoking section only to find the smoke wanders over. There is no nonsmoking section, and it ruins my meal.

I know the Johnson County Board of Health unanimously signed and support a smoke-free workplace ordinance (even bars, only exempting private clubs) to be submitted to the county commissioners. I am in full support of this ban.

However, I think it should be emphasized that the goal is not to run business or bar owners out of business. The goal is to protect the employees' or customers' health, whichever may be more at risk. If you see fit for this ban, please pass it with or without bars included.

I know the concern is that government is interfering. I would like for all of you to step back and think of all the things the government regulates when dealing with restaurants.

Government already monitors the suitability of the water, food and cleanliness. Why should the air quality be different? Especially for those places that allow small kids who don't have the opportunity to make choices for themselves.

We ask that people be of a specific age in order to buy cigarettes; underage kids in restaurants are inhaling smoke.

Please work to adopt this smoking ban as it is the best for the health of Johnson County and patrons visiting Johnson County. Please show the Greenwood City Council they are not the only ones who have what it takes to help the health of individuals.

Lance Fischer
Whiteland