

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

Hearts and Darts

The Daily Journal

EDITOR'S NOTE — *Hearts and Darts* is published as space is available and each Monday in the Daily Journal. To submit an item, please e-mail Editorial Assistant Kelly Boggs at kboggs@thejournalnet.com. Items can also be submitted by fax to 736-2766, by phone to 736-2712 or by mail to *Hearts and Darts*, P.O. Box 699, Franklin, IN 46131. Items should include the writer's full name, street address and telephone number and the full names of all people mentioned in the item. Readers are asked to name no more than 10 individuals and/or five businesses in hearts and to not name specific individuals in darts.

Hearts

• A big thank you to a group of nice people who gave me a warm winter and a wonderful Christmas: Garden Christian Church, Sandy Adams of the Tree of Caring, Dan Brown Tree Trimming and Donna Jessee.

Regina Ponsart
Nineveh

• The Desk of Santa Claus would like to thank the community for its support over the Christmas season. We hope we made a lot of little ones smile. We will be back next year.

The Desk of Santa Claus

• Hearts to all my friends and neighbors who did so much to help me through the holidays.

Thanks to my neighbors Jenni Lancer and Julia Oel-schlager for bringing children from their church to sing for me. Their shining eyes and smiling faces were beautiful.

To everyone who came and spent time with me, brought cookies, fruit baskets and flowers, sent cards, called or took me out to lunch and shopping, it made a very different time a little brighter.

To my grandson, Matt Barker, who was always so willing to help his papaw and me through papaw's illness and passing and for all he does every day to help me, you are one of God's greatest blessings to me.

I wish you all a happy new year. May God bless each and every one.

Betty Sneed
Franklin

• Hearts to Larry Bender at Custer Baker Middle School for always going above and beyond his job description to cut out blocks for my students to use for math projects.

My students really enjoy completing the projects, and it would be impossible for me to provide blocks for them without his hard work. Thanks for going the extra mile.

Karen Funk
Custer Baker Middle School

• We would like to send a gigantic, heartfelt hug to Townhouse Gifts for their generous support. Thank you for your continuous support and belief in our organization.

Girls Inc. of Franklin/Johnson County

• We would like to say a huge thank you to all the participants of our 2006 annual campaign. Your donations are greatly appreciated and will help to keep our organization up and running at the caliber of excellence our community desires.

Thank you for your support of young women in our community and our mission of inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.

Staff, members and board of directors,
Girls Inc. of Franklin/Johnson County

• Whiteland Elementary third grade would like to thank Bradley Chevrolet for helping us support our military troops by mailing our care packages to soldiers.

Third-grade classes,
Whiteland Elementary School

• Hearts to Union Federal (now SkyBank) for their excellent job of "recycling" the old restaurant on North Main Street in Franklin into a showpiece branch.

Gary Moody
Franklin

Darts

• Darts to whoever stole my little girl's rings from the Kroger bathroom about 7 p.m. Jan. 7.

She simply forgot to put her rings back on after washing her hands. Within a few minutes, they were gone.

Shame on you for not turning them in to lost and found. Those rings have special meaning to her, not you. The silver one with the purple stone she picked out because it reminded her of her late great-grandmother.

You'll never know how much you broke a little girl's heart. Please return them to Kroger so a little girl can be happy again.

Lisa Csikos
Franklin

• Darts to the student at Franklin Community High School who stole my son's red iPod shortly before Christmas break. He listened to it on the bus before and after school each day. A \$50 reward will be given to the person who helps us get the iPod home again.

Maureen Hoffman-Wehmeier
Franklin

• A big dart to the appointed mayor of Franklin for delivering the State of the City address to Franklin Chamber of Commerce members only.

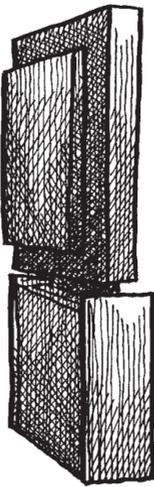
I ask you, who pays your salary? Hopefully the next mayor of Franklin will be a mayor of all the people.

C. Bill Harmening
Franklin

• Darts to those drivers on U.S. 31 in Franklin who felt it necessary to cut through a funeral procession Thursday in order to get to the Wal-Mart turn lane. I hope you got a rock-bottom price. Show some respect, people.

Michael Pankey
Edinburgh

STAHLER
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH
2007



President fails to see folly in prolonging Iraq involvement

President Bush's so-called speech of a lifetime laying out the next chapter in the demoralizing Iraqi saga was the gastronomic equivalent of a mashed-potato sandwich: serviceable but not appetizing.

Inexplicably standing before a bookcase of gauzily colored books (so we couldn't be distracted by reading the titles?), he laid out a mea-culpa strategy that seems like the status quo in drag.

Despite the "surge" of 21,500 more soldiers and Marines, we still won't have as many troops in Iraq as were there for the Iraqi elections, but there will be more dangerous street fights, more deaths and more injuries. The payoff, the president hopes, would be more self-imposed responsibility from the Iraqi government in dealing with its intensifying civil war.

The play-it-safe president is now taking the gamble of a generation and putting the credibility of the entire country on the line as well as the lives of more American troops and diplomats.

Bush insists he has no trouble sleeping at night. But the fact that 83 percent of Americans, the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group and many military leaders think he is wrong in refusing to cut our losses should keep him awake, at least until 11 p.m. instead of 9, his preferred bedtime.

The president has now admitted for the first time that his strategy for "winning" in Iraq, a term he has yet to explain, was wrong. But making Americans ever more visible in violence-prone Baghdad begs the questions of how what did not work before will now, suddenly, succeed. Also, Bush did not

will be wary of cutting funds the administration will insist are vital for the 132,000 military people there right now. Lawmakers can pass resolution after resolution and put some strings on tax dollars, but Bush will not leave Iraq willingly, and Democrats are unable to force him to leave.

Bush may well be correct in assuming that given the alternative of pulling out of Iraq and leaving it and the entire region in chaos after the investment of the past four years, Americans will reluctantly follow his lead, spend at least \$6 billion more this year for Iraq and let their sons and daughters continue to be sent into combat.

But they will come to hate him. Already it is hard to find even among his closest Republican friends any enthusiasm for the argument that this time his fuzzy plan for "democracy" in Iraq will succeed. The cynical view is that he psychologically cannot admit defeat and intends to leave the mess for his successor, knowing that Middle East stability is not on the horizon and that he will not change his mind and talk to Iran or Syria.

Bush thinks history will prove him right. How, he does not know. But his speech of a lifetime will go down among the vital speeches of history as one of the least factual, least inspiring and saddest ever given by an American president during a war. We left Vietnam long after we should have, and we're going to do the same thing in Iraq.

Scripps Howard columnist Ann McFeatters has covered the White House and national politics since 1986. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

Under our system of government, Congress is virtually powerless to stop Bush. He can send as many troops to Iraq as he can muster, which is now not enough. For all their bravado in criticizing Bush's plan, Democrats

to all, this did not mean that all those same Americans were racists or had caused the problem to begin with.

The responsibility for fixing these problems came, rather, with being the beneficiaries of a country whose destiny and identity was fundamentally linked with the enterprise of freedom.

In King's words, white Americans "have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom."

He appealed to blacks not to allow suffering to translate into bitterness nor into categorical hate of white Americans. "Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred."

Instead, King exhorted black Americans to "continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive."

So King accomplished a lot of business that August day in 1963. He recognized the universal truth of human liberty. He recognized our country as a unique vessel of that truth.

He appealed to Americans with power to assume their responsibilities as the beneficiaries of liberty to make this a better and freer country. And he appealed to black Americans to assume a different kind of responsibility: to not allow themselves to be destroyed by unearned suffering but to be redeemed by it.

Although the responsibility clearly was in the hands of those Americans with power, overwhelmingly white Americans, to fix the problems in the country that limited the availability of freedom



Ann
McFeatters

wave a stick at the weak Iraqi government or explain how it is to quell attacks on its citizens. If it could do that, wouldn't it? And Bush set no timetable for reducing America's combat role in Iraq.

No president wants to lose a war. This president is hoping that despite the November shellacking he took at the polls, the American people will accept his assurance that if they give him another chance, this time he will get it right. A president staring at the waning months of his term of office begins thinking of his legacy. Bush's last-ditch plan, which he admits may not work and will be long and bloody, smacks of sheer desperation and stubbornness.

The bottom line is there is no end in sight for America's involvement in Iraq. The president says we don't have an open-ended commitment, but his actions say otherwise. He will leave office in two years with U.S. troops still on patrol in Iraq, trying to arbitrate a no-win sectarian war with no clear mission or timetable for withdrawal.

Under our system of government, Congress is virtually powerless to stop Bush. He can send as many troops to Iraq as he can muster, which is now not enough. For all their bravado in criticizing Bush's plan, Democrats

Civil rights leader's dream for freedom has lessons that can be applied today

The characteristic of greatness — whether we are talking about a great man or great art — is that it transcends time and place. It dips into that which is universally and eternally true and applies those truths to a particular moment and a particular place.

Rereading, after many reads, the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. of Aug. 28, 1963, the famous "I Have a Dream" speech, his greatness rings clearer than ever.

Because King did indeed touch the heavens on that day and pull down kernels of eternal truths about freedom and the condition of man, those words of 40-plus years ago have relevance to our struggles today.

They can serve as guidance in these difficult times.

The power of King's message, the unquestionable reason that the movement he led was successful, was his appeal to the truth of freedom and its universal applicability to all men.

By identifying and appealing to the freedom of man as a universal and eternal truth, and going on to make clear that this truth defined what this great country is about, then King's conclusion — the intolerability of conditions that denied any American full participation in this freedom — could not be denied.

Beyond this central message, King made other very important points in this speech.

One of key importance was that responsibility for solving a problem does not necessarily imply direct responsibility in having caused that problem.

Although the responsibility clearly was in the hands of those Americans with power, overwhelmingly white Americans, to fix the problems in the country that limited the availability of freedom



Star
Parker

The prophet is a lonely man because he brings a message that people do not want to hear.

King's activism was not welcomed by most whites and a good many blacks.

There is natural appeal in the inertia of the status quo. Change and assumption of new responsibilities and challenges are welcomed by few.

Turmoil tells us that something is wrong, and we have no choice but to open our eyes and ears and assume the responsibilities that are cast upon us.

I am, of course, not a military tactician and am in no position to speculate about how best to use American troops to midwife a portion of the world that clearly needs help in becoming more modern, more civil and freer.

However, I can say that I am in complete sympathy with our president who senses that America has a unique and special role to play in this world. We cannot shirk responsibilities that are clearly ours.

I cannot help but think that it is not an accident that the United States stands so alone, despite many other nations that claim to have similar commitments to and stakes in civility and liberty. The way they act makes clear that they don't.

The truths that King articulated in so crystal clear a way in 1963 continue to resound today. Freedom is what this country is about. We have no choice. It is our heritage. We thrive and prosper from it.

And we cannot avoid the responsibilities that come with it in our engagement with the rest of the world.

Star Parker is president of Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education. Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.

YOUR VIEWS

King taught us value of working together

To the editor:

Today, Americans of all backgrounds — black and white, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican — will gather in their homes, schools and houses of worship across this country to celebrate the life, legacy and work of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

In the midst of one of our nation's greatest internal struggles, King taught us how to create a better America by reminding us of the greater bonds that connect us all and told us that a brighter future was possible if we all worked together.

King's work in the civil rights movement exemplified the power that one individual has to change and improve the nation.

He once said, "Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve." Whether in a jail cell or on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King showed that one man can make a difference in the lives of many.

On this day and throughout the year, it is important to remember that the same potential that enabled King to inspire millions of other Americans to rise up and challenge our nation's status quo lies within each of us.

Each year in Indiana we host a Service Leader's Summit to share the lessons of King's legacy and encourage young Hoosiers to make service a part of their lives.

Hundreds of them have been recognized for their countless contributions to their community and to our nation through volunteerism and service.

They have helped build homes to provide families with a new beginning, raised money for cancer research, helped feed the hungry and mentored students to help them succeed in school and life. I commend them for their effort and applaud their invaluable contribution to our state and country.

King said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" It is a question we should all ask ourselves.

Together we have the opportunity to reforge our nation's character through service to our country and make it a better place for future generations. By working together, we can honor his legacy not just today, but every day, by giving back to the community and country that has given so much to us.

King never lost sight of the promise our country could offer when it was able to overcome the differences that threatened to tear it apart.

His calls for unity helped America rise to the challenges of his time, and they will serve us equally well in the challenges before us today.

U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh

Smokers who litter should bear brunt of cigarette tax

To the editor:

I have an idea. Let's increase the sales tax on cigarettes by another \$2 a pack. The tax money collected will be restitution to the public from careless, slovenly smokers for all the cigarette butts they have thrown all over our streets, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, lawns, waterways and everywhere else you can imagine — for decades. I say tax their coughing, hacking heads off. They deserve it.

But what about the tiny minority of smokers who don't think the world is their ashtray and who actually dispose of their cigarette butts like clean, civilized people? Why should they have to pay the exorbitant tax I propose? They shouldn't.

I suggest we pass a law that any cigarette smoker can go to his or her local law enforcement agency and submit to a lie detector test. The smoker must assert that they have never, ever thrown a cigarette butt on the ground. If the machine indicates no deception, the smoker gets a pass that allows him or her to have the sales tax waived.

That way the slob who trash our state pay for their years of polluting. And the clean, decent people who have respect for others aren't punished for the acts of the vast majority of smokers.

Vernon Peterson
Franklin

Let Hoosiers adapt to daylight-saving time

To the editor:

Daylight-saving time only makes sense. Spring ahead and fall back. The summer sun later into the evening gives us more time to enjoy the summer.

I beg that our lawmakers give it a chance for a few years before making another change.

Let the people of Indiana try it out for a while first and then make a decision.

Lori Le Sage
Greenwood