

## LEADER-TELEGRAM

The Leader-Telegram is a division of the Eau Claire Press Co.

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## Kell was special on so many fronts

Leadership is a word bandied about often. There are books and seminars on the topic. Motivational speakers make their living teaching it. But true leadership comes from the heart. It requires effort. It means going to meetings when you'd maybe rather be somewhere else. It means stepping up because you know if you don't maybe no one else will either.

Such people are rare, and they also the ones all communities need to be more than average. And that's why the Chippewa Valley is going to miss John Kell, who was killed in an accident Friday night near Rice Lake at the much-too-young age of 54.

Kell was most known for his professional career at Kell Container, where he started working for his father in 1974, later become CEO and remained as president at the time of his death. For those who knew Kell it was no surprise the company is a great corporate citizen, supporting many worthy causes in Chippewa Falls and beyond.

Kell was personally involved in a number of boards and groups, most notably UW-Eau Claire, from which he graduated in 1974. He was slated to become chairman of the UW-Eau Claire Foundation Board this fall. He also served on the boards of the Eau Claire YMCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the First Congregational Church in Eau Claire.

It wasn't just what Kell did but how he did it that will be missed. He came across as a regular guy because that's what he was. People felt comfortable being around him. He embodied the qualities that we like to think define the Chippewa Valley: modest, hard-working, friendly and committed to making our communities better.

"He contributed to the richness of the community, but he really cherished his family," North High Principal and friend Tom Fiedler recalled of Kell. "He put that at the top of his priorities."

The Chippewa Valley has lost one of its best. Others who were inspired by Kell's commitment and energy hopefully will carry on his work.

UW-Eau Claire Foundation President Carole Halberg put it best: "Everyone is shocked and sad. We lost a great friend."

— Don Huebscher, editor



## Bush's two minds on science

When it comes to science, President Bush is of two minds, one of which is wrong.

Concerning the space shuttle program, he defers to the views of experts. In a conversation with Texas reporters, he said "the experts at NASA" will determine whether the shuttle should be retired before 2010.

But when it comes to science education, he unfortunately sees no need for experts. Answering a question about evolution vs. intelligent design, he said it was a question for local school districts, but he felt "both sides ought to be properly taught."

But among experts, there is no debate worth mentioning. The theory of evolution underpins all modern biology, and like any vibrant science it is constantly being expanded and modified as new lines of evidence appear. Thousands upon thousands of research scientists have contributed to it since Darwin proposed the mechanism of natural selection as an explanation for the relationships among species living and extinct.

Intelligent design, in contrast, proposes that the natural world is too complex to have been created by entirely natural processes, so there must be a designer of some kind. As to how the designer acts, or how scientists could study those actions, it has no answers. Intelligent design explains nothing and predicts nothing; it isn't even a theory. It has no place in science classrooms. ...

— Scripps Howard News Service

## OpinionLine

From a touch-tone phone, call 831-2000, Selection 1030 Or go online at www.leadertelegram.com

## Question of the Week: Should the city of Eau Claire ban pit bulls?

Comments from the previous week's question will be published each Wednesday.

## From Our Files

## 10 years ago — 1995

Soccer and baseball boosters both score as the Eau Claire City Council moves forward on plans to build soccer fields on the city's southwest side and improve the Carson Park baseball and football stadiums.

Eau Claire City Council members vote to spend \$95,000 for decorative lighting along the Fifth Avenue-Bellinger Street realignment project.

## 25 years ago — 1980

A new lava dome may be forming in the crater of Mount St. Helens just one day after the volcano erupted for the fifth time since it exploded May 18.

## 75 years ago — 1930

City officials consider the idea of connecting North and South Farwell street by a bridge across the Eau Claire River and making it a through street.



## Big brother no longer watching

I sat on a concrete wall by the riverbank, drinking a Diet Coke I had bought from a nearby vendor. Behind me was a boat launch for tourists. Disco music played over the loudspeakers. Women in halter tops and tight white pants paraded by me, holding hands with boyfriends.

It was a hot afternoon, in a busy city with zooming traffic, and if someone had taken a snapshot, you might have thought I was sipping my soda in Chicago or Miami.

Not Russia.

But it was Russia, St. Petersburg, to be exact. This was a few weeks ago, although time is a funny thing in what used to be called the Soviet Union. For example, here I was, across the street from the Hermitage Museum, which once was the winter palace of Catherine the Great, whose love of art in the 1700s led to one of the largest collections in the world — a collection that now is so overwhelming it is being shared with a new museum in Amsterdam, which, in case you haven't noticed, isn't in Russia.

Such is life in this strangely transitional country. Communism has collapsed. Some sort of grab bag society has emerged. You see statues of former czars, and a few blocks away, you see pirated DVDs of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." I'm not kidding. I saw one in a record shop. It cost 120 rubles, or about \$4. Had Johnny Depp's picture on the cover.

Once, American movies were forbidden. Now they're selling bootlegs.

And that's hardly the biggest change. The last time I was in Russia, during the '80s, people were afraid to talk. Their eyes shot left and right. Everything — and everyone — was suspicious. Once, on a bus ride, a translator nodded to a man reading a newspaper, then whispered in my ear, "KGB."

In those days, they went through your bags at the airport. Any Western literature might be confiscated. Same for Western music.

Now, here I was, passing bookshops that sold

the Russian language versions of John Grisham books, and browsing through a record shop that sold the Black Eyed Peas.

On my last Russian trip, if you ate out, you ate in an officially sanctioned place, which might — might — have had a sign out front with the word "Restaurant" in block letters.

This time we ate in a vegetarian spot called The Idiot, which celebrated Dostoyevsky. The menus were in English.

Do you remember when going to Russia would have been like going to the moon? Do you remember, not so long ago, when we thought all Russians wanted us dead?

I find myself thinking about that more and more these days. I think about how Israel, in a few weeks, is planning to pull out of the Gaza Strip, perhaps beginning the blueprint of a new country on its borders. I think about how Iraq, under a dictator's thumb a few years ago, is now writing its own constitution.

I think about how quickly the world changes. And how angry and vigilant we get about "us" and "them," yet how relatively quickly "us" and "them" can transform, how quickly enemies once as foreign as space creatures — remember "Commies" or "pinkos" or "Russkies"? — can be watching Adam Sandler in "The Longest Yard" in a theater on Nevsky Street.

I think about sitting on that riverbank in St. Petersburg, which used to be called Leningrad, after the father of the Russian Revolution. His name is gone now. So are a lot of other things. The truth is, the world is an ever-changing place, and whatever hateful beliefs we might have about this country or that, you never know when you might find yourself sipping a diet soda across from one of their palaces.

Albom, a columnist for the Detroit Free Press, can be reached at albom@freepress.com.

Knight Ridder News Service



Mitch Albom

## Voice of the People

## Patriot Act protects U.S.

As a true American, everyone should be supporting that the Patriot Act become permanent law. Because of this act, I truly believe a terrorist attack has been spared.

I am glad to see that lawmakers this past week renewed the Act until 2010, but it should be permanent.

In regards to the medical records and library records part of the act, that section is up for a vote next summer. It is absolutely ridiculous that those two sections are not permanent law.

If someone is reading about making bombs, enticing children on the Internet, logging on to terrorist support sites, etc., I want to know about it and have the ability to check the person out and clear them as a potential threat.

We need to quit being so naive and stuck up about these issues threatening our civil liberties. By the way, the ACLU is worthless and should never be listened to on terrorism issues.

The small things we take for granted such as grilling in your backyard, not being shot at while grocery shopping and just hopping in your car for a Sunday drive with the top down all would not be possible without the most powerful military in the world and well-trained law enforcement officers.

Law enforcement needs all the tools of the Patriot Act to beat these extremists.

Bottom line is that the Act should be permanent law and everyone should have nothing to hide.

ANDREW KJELSTAD

Altoona

## State lakes need protecting

Wisconsin lakes are the most precious and beloved resource we have. As state residents, we are not protecting them.

The Department of Natural Resources proposed update to NR-115, Wisconsin's Shoreland Management Program, is needed to reflect new science and respond to a rate of shoreline development never anticipated when the rules first were approved in 1968.

I have grown up enjoying many different lakes across the state. However, today I do not

want to fish or swim in these lakes because of their unhealthy condition.

On many lakes more houses than trees can be found. More than 80 percent of Wisconsin lakes contain unsafe levels of phosphorous, leading to algae blooms and excessive weed growth.

Fish, bird and other wildlife populations are diminishing substantially. The state needs to act to protect our lakes from overcrowding and pollution.

I urge the DNR Board and Legislature to support stronger protections for our lakes against the dangers of overdevelopment.

MICHELLE MADSEN

Eau Claire

## More Washington frustration

I do not fear the terrorists; however, I do fear our government and what it is doing to our country. Having traveled in several European countries, Central America, Mexico and Canada in the past eight years, I've become aware that the U.S. is not looked upon as a country to be respected anymore.

I'm amazed that the present president made it into his second term when I'm constantly reading anti-president/Washington, D.C. letters.

My question is: What can be done, and how do we go about it? Impeachment is out of the question because the same party is controlling both the White House and Congress.

Mid-term elections are coming up in 2006 — not that far away. I urge everyone to listen, watch, ask questions, discuss, think deeply as to what is going on now and how it's affecting you and will affect your children/grandchildren.

It seems the love of money/power is now our god, and we are more concerned with oil, getting in office again, having the biggest house on the block, having the vehicle with the most gadgets on it and becoming millionaires at any cost.

I wonder, is it true that the man/woman with the most toys wins in the end?

If we are a Christian nation, should we and our leaders not be following Jesus — in being compassionate and working for justice?

LOIS H. FADNESS

Chippewa Falls

## Restrict spreading of manure

Wells contaminated by unsafe practices

By Andrew Hanson

This summer, the DNR is proposing new regulations to deal with a pressing public health and environmental hazard — liquid manure from Wisconsin's largest livestock operations.

These operations come by many names — factory farms, livestock factories, mega-farms, or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations — and they make up a tiny fraction of the state's livestock farms but account for about 10 percent of all the livestock raised here. And, they all have one thing in common: they produce millions of gallons of liquid manure and tons of solid manure as a waste byproduct of Wisconsin's livestock industry.

That means fewer farms with

more cattle — and more manure that needs to be disposed of more often.

There is no doubt manure can be a natural and environmentally beneficial source of fertilizer for growing crops when it is applied under the right conditions. But it makes sense, environmentally and economically, to apply manure when it is likely to stay on the field, not when the ground is frozen and snow-covered, which is when the risk of runoff is highest.

The DNR has documented more than 59 manure spills in the past year alone, 12 of which polluted private wells used by Wisconsin families and 12 more that caused fish kills.

The fish are not the only ones hurting. Wisconsin's kids and families are suffering too. This past spring, the DNR documented four private wells that were contaminated in Dodge County by the application of manure on frozen and snow-covered ground, likely by a nearby livestock factory. More wells in Brown County also appeared to be contaminated with manure spread during the early spring. And, in 2004, a Kewaunee County family, including a 7-month-old baby, got sick when a livestock factory spread liquid manure on frozen and snow-covered ground near their home.

The bottom line is that winter manure spreading is an all-too-common but very dangerous practice. The risk to our children's health and to our prized rivers and creeks is too great to allow it to continue.

Fortunately, the DNR is proposing to prohibit the surface application of liquid manure from Feb. 1 to March 31 of each year, and during other times in winter when the ground is frozen or covered with more than four inches of snow.

Coupled with the spreading restrictions, the DNR is proposing to require at least six months of liquid manure storage for all DNR-permitted livestock factories by 2010. This storage requirement will help prevent the need for spreading liquid manure during these vulnerable times in the winter and early spring.

This is a very modest and reasonable proposal that will make sure livestock factories do not spread liquid manure at times when the risk of manure runoff is the greatest. The DNR proposal should help prevent kids from getting sick from contaminated water and stop fish kills by keeping manure out of our wells and streams. The DNR should finalize these rules to protect children and trout alike.

Hanson, an attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates, can be reached at ahanson@midwestadvocates.org.