

NSP OPINION: Ours, yours, theirs

CROWD CHEERS IDEA OF DICTATOR

Can this really be happening in America?

Years ago, Sports Illustrated had a section called "Signs that the Apocalypse is Upon Us." (Apocalypse is a Biblical reference to the end times.) It was filled with head spinners. Some were merely tongue-in-cheek, but all were things we never thought could happen – but they did.



Impressions
by Bill Tubbs

I am herewith inaugurating "Impressions" own version of "Signs that the Apocalypse is Upon Us." This week it includes the screen shots below. The year is 2019, but these things are actually happening. And this is not tongue-in-cheek. These are serious threats to our way of life.

Just because our political discourse has devolved to new lows doesn't mean they should be ignored. When an elected congressman makes jokes about the Civil War, and a citizen says she would give up democracy for a dictator as long as the dictator was a certain person – and the crowd cheers – those are warning signs not to be ignored.

Letters of peace from 1931

Last week my friend in Rotary from Keokuk, Tony Conn, gave me a book that he and others have compiled of 596 letters initiated by Keokuk Rotarians in 1931 with members of Rotary clubs around the world with the general theme of peace, as symbolized by the peace pipe of Chief Keokuk, his city's namesake.

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that war are estimated at 50-56 million people – plus an additional estimated 19 to 28 million deaths from war-related disease and famine. And millions more lives forever changed.

That war was precipitated with words that people were too busy to hear, or didn't take seriously. That is the message of Bernd Wollschlaeger, the medical doctor I met in 2016 who grew up in the Third Reich where his dad was a tank commander who received the Silver Cross from Hitler. "Words matter," he said.

The price of freedom

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." That is a quote that has been attributed to many, from Jefferson to Jackson to Lincoln to George Marshall.

For decades, Rep. Steve King has been rewarded at the polls after saying outrageous things that mock our most vulnerable people – which says as much about the voters of northwest Iowa as it says about King.

I'll give the benefit of the doubt to the woman in Cincinnati. I suspect she is a good person who meant well, but she wasn't thinking clearly. Or was she? The scary thing is that the crowd cheered! The idea of Americans welcoming a dictator is surely a sign that the Apocalypse is upon us. Can this really be happening in America?

We take democracy for granted at our peril when we pretend these things don't matter. Which is why I feel compelled to speak.

History will judge how we respond.



1) U.S. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) posted a meme with red states and blue states dueling, with these words: "Wonder who would win ... Folks keep talking about another Civil War. One side has about a trillion bullets, while the other side doesn't know which bathroom to use."



2) At a political rally in Cincinnati, Ohio, the crowd erupted with cheers when a woman pronounced, "Never in my life did I want to see a dictator – but if there is to be one, I want it to be Trump."



A Cy-Hawk rematch in the national semis won't happen

It wasn't supposed to be like this. The heading on Jim Turley's cartoon (above) which features the state of Iowa's two great stars of collegiate women's basketball – Iowa Hawkeye center Megan Gustafson and Iowa State Cyclones guard Bridget Carleton – read, "Iowa and Iowa State advance to the Sweet Sixteen."

I was counting my chickens before they hatched. The Cyclone women laid an egg Monday night and lost at home to Missouri State. Now I have to rewrite this column as the Bears of the Missouri Valley Conference – and not the Big 12 runners-up Cyclones – will be playing No. 2 seed Stanford in the round of 16 in Chicago on Saturday.

Monday's loss was a disappointing ending to a great season (26-8) by coach Bill Fennelly's Cyclones and their All-American Carleton, who scored 31 of State's 60 points in the loss.

The first draft of this column talked about a rematch of Iowa and Iowa State in the national semi-finals. The Hawks upheld their end of the bargain and they're dancing in Iowa City, where coach Lisa Bluder's Hawkeyes and their All-American center, Megan Gustafson, a 6-foot-5 center, escaped a near upset to No. 15-seeded Mercer in the first round, but took care of business with a convincing win over the Missouri Tigers on Sunday.

They will play North Carolina State Saturday in Raleigh, N.C., with a chance to advance to the round of eight and then the Final Four.

Fan following of the Iowa women has picked up dramatically this year, as the Hawks compiled a record of 28-6 and won the Big 10 tournament. They are a No. 2 seed in the NAAs. Gustafson, who is a candidate for national player of the year, is a big part of it. More than 12,000 attended Sunday's game, so from an attendance standpoint, the Hawks are catching up with the Cyclones, who have averaged 10,000 fans – third in the nation – for all games since Coach Fennelly, a Davenport native, built the program to national prominence 20 years ago.

Fewer people around here may have been paying attention to Iowa State (26-8), but Fennelly's team was clicking on all cylinders until Monday night. They even gave Baylor, the No. 1 ranked team in the nation, a scare in the Big 12 tournament championship. Carleton, the Big 12's player of the year who hails from Canada, was a big part of it. Like Gustafson, who comes from a small town in Wisconsin, the things Carleton can do with a basketball and her joy of the game, are magnetic.

The Hawkeyes and Cyclones played each other on Dec. 4 in the Cy-Hawk game at Iowa City. The Hawks won,

73-70, on a last second three-pointer by Tania Davis.

I have high regard for both coaches and the integrity of their programs. Fennelly, whose brother, Mike, is our new Scott County Treasurer, is in his 24th year with the Cyclones and has been a constant presence, as coaches have come and gone. In that same period, the Cyclones have had six men's coaches: Tim Floyd, Larry Eustachy, Wayne Morgan, Greg McDermott, Fred Hoiberg and Steve Prohm. On the Hawkeye side of the ledger, Bluder, a native of Marion who coached at St. Ambrose and Drake before arriving at Iowa in 2000, has overlapped with three men's basketball coaches: Steve Alford, Todd Lickliter and Fran McCaffery.

The stability has benefitted both programs, which have won two-thirds of their games while playing against the best competition.

Coaching carousel

The other news this week was that Fred Hoiberg, the Ames native and Iowa State legend, will be the top pick for head coach at Nebraska if they fire their current coach, Tim Miles, whose team is playing in the NIT. That would be a hard pill to swallow for fans who admire Fred as "Clone to the Bone."

The writing was on the wall when the Chicago Bulls lured him away from Ames in 2015. It was the second time our coach was hired by the Bulls, and the second time the Bulls let that coach go. Tim Floyd left Iowa State after the 1998 season. He was dumped three years later and finished his career at USC and UTEP. He is now retired.

ISU's current coach, Steve Prohm, was rumored for coach at Alabama, but said he will stay at Iowa State, which ends the speculation that Hoiberg would return to Ames. That was wishful thinking anyway, as Prohm has a bevy of young talent. Nebraska is a better fit for Hoiberg than other jobs that were rumored (UCLA), and his family has roots in Lincoln. He was born there, and his grandfather, Jerry Bush, coached the Cornhuskers' basketball team from 1954-63.

Fred's dad was an ISU professor. His parents live in Ames and he's still "The Mayor" in our hearts. That's why it hurts to think that he might be coaching Nebraska and recruiting the best players from Iowa.

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