



Life in Balance

Value Speak

A weekly column by Joseph Walker



Celebrating A Great Notion

OK, here's what we know: in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

What we don't know is this: was the man a hero or a scoundrel?

When I was growing up, Christopher Columbus was right up there with Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Willie Mays among the all-time greats. He was strong and courageous, faithful and true; a scholar, a statesman, a pioneer and, probably, a swell dancer.

In other words, First Class Hero. Larger-than-life.

But times - and heroes - have changed. Contemporary historians insist that Lincoln was moody, Washington was a philanderer and Willie Mays once promised a critically ill child that he'd hit a home run for him - and then he struck out.

As for Columbus . . . well, I don't think there is a creepy, cruel thing that he hasn't been accused of. During the past decade or so we've heard enough bad stuff about Captain Chris to make the good folks of Columbus, Ohio, seriously consider a name change to something more respectable. You know, like maybe Hitlerville.

In other words, First Class Jerk. Smaller-than-life.

Which sort of leaves us in a bind come Columbus Day next week. I mean, who wants to celebrate the life of a man whose life may have been so . . . you know . . . UNcelebratory? On the other hand, what if historians are wrong (hey, it could happen) and Columbus really IS a hero? Do we want to dump an entire holiday just because a bunch of Ph.D.s don't like the view from 520 years away? What about Columbus Day parades? What about Columbus Day school programs? What, for Pete's sake, about Columbus Day furniture sales?

Thankfully, I have a solution (you knew this was coming, didn't you?). From now on, we don't celebrate The Man on Columbus Day; we celebrate The Notion. Think about it: what other

day do we have to pay tribute to the bold, adventurous, pioneering spirit that led to America's emergence among the nations of the world? And what better day than Columbus Day to honor the brave men and women throughout history who dared to open exciting new doors by going places no one has ever gone and doing things no one has ever done?

Sure, we could still call it Columbus Day. But it would also be Lewis and Clark Day. And Henry Ford Day. And Thomas Edison Day. And Susan B. Anthony Day. It could be Jackie Robinson Day. And Charles Lindbergh Day. And Neil Armstrong Day. And Chris Baker Day.

What? You never heard of Chris Baker? According to my crack research staff (which consists of a bored teenager, a laptop on Google and a bag of Doritos), Chris Baker was a member of the Oxford University Dangerous Sports Club back in 1979. On April 1 of that year (is it coincidental that this happened on April Fool's Day? I think not), Baker was the first person ever to wrap a bungee cord around his ankles and jump off a bridge (in this case, the 250-foot Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, England).

Some think of Chris as a visionary, while others think of him as whacko. Regardless, you've got to admit that what Chris did was bold. Daring. Adventurous. And kind of exciting.

Which is not to say that I want my children to grow up to be just like Chris Baker any more than I want them to grow up to be just like Christopher Columbus. But I find in both Chrises admirable traits and characteristics that are worthy of emulation: the faith to dream, the tenacity to plan and the courage to see the plan through to the end of the dream. And that's what I'm celebrating this Columbus Day: the notion, not the man. Because the notion was heroic.

Even if the man wasn't.

Read any good books lately?

What was the last book you read? What are you reading now?

Would you recommend it? Why or why not?

If you are always asking friends for book recommendations, the Morgan County Library is pleased announce something new at the library. We will now be featuring the Top Ten Favorite Books of a member of our community with a new list each month.

This month, the library staff and volunteers have shared with us some of their favorite books. They are:

- In a Heartbeat: Sharing the Power of Cheerful Giving by Leigh Anne Touhy
- The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls
- Goose Girl by Shannon Hale
- Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society by Mary Anne Shaffer
- Founding Mothers by Cokie Roberts
- The Last Lecture by Randy Pausch
- The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom
- My sisters Keeper by Jodi Picoult
- The Tale of Despereaux by Kate DiCamillo
- Jane Austen books

Come see us at the Morgan County Library to check out their suggestions.

Vote for SCOTT BRADLEY, THE Constitutional Candidate for US Senate

Scott Bradley; A man who knows the Constitution, who has studied the Constitution, and taught the Constitution. He is willing to give his all to preserve our priceless US Constitution and the God-given Freedoms it protects. Mr. Bradley has stated, "Your nation is in a CRISIS! Powerful forces seek to fundamentally alter our Americanist foundation. The Soul of our Nation is at risk. Thankfully, we still have the United States Constitution. In that document lies the miraculous solution to America's problems. By applying those timeless Founding Principles as vigorously and purely as the Founders of this Nation did, we will again become the Freest, Most Happy, Most Prosperous, Most Respected Nation on Earth."

We urge you to come hear Mr. Bradley speak on October 19 at 10AM at The Family Tree Assisted Living Center, 862E. Mahogany Ridge Road in North Morgan. You should also visit his website ScottBradleyForSenate.com and his Facebook page.

Paid for by Leo Gordon and Betty Olsen, 801-876-2646.

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Issue Surfacing Meeting For Farm Bureau

On Wednesday, October 13 at 7:00 p.m., the Morgan County Farm Bureau will hold their annual issue surfacing meeting at the Morgan County Courthouse.

This meeting will identify issues of importance to Morgan County that will then be forwarded to the State Farm Bureau organization for further discussion. Discussions may lead to actions here in Morgan County or passed to the State Farm Bureau that may lead to lobbying efforts or drafting of legislation on issues of state or national interest.

All interested citizens of Morgan County are invited to attend.

Contact person for Farm Bureau
Randy Sessions 801-876-3123

The Beehive Archive, This Week The Escalante-Dominguez Expedition of 1776

The First Known Expedition of Europeans Into What is Now Utah County

Two hundred and thirty four years ago this week, in the same year the Declaration of Independence was signed, a group of Spanish explorers entered present-day Utah Valley. Led by two Franciscan friars named Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Francisco Dominguez, the expedition was launched to find a northern path from New Mexico to one of Spain's newest colonies, California.

Dominguez and Escalante left Santa Fe in July 1776, traveling north. By the time they reached what is now Colorado, they'd recruited twelve other Spaniards and two Ute men, members of the Timpanogots band that lived on the shores of Utah Lake, to join them. The two Native Americans agreed to guide the Spanish to Utah Valley. Their trail from Colorado took them near what is now Dinosaur National Monument, up the Strawberry River, and down Spanish Fork Canyon. On September 23, they climbed a hill near the present-day Spanish Oaks Golf Course, and were treated to a panoramic view of the pristine valley below them, with its sparkling emerald lake and ring of steep mountains. Intending to push on to California, the Spaniards recruited a new Timpanogots guide and turned southwest. But their guide didn't stick around for long and by October they were marching through snow, so they

revised their plans and headed back to New Mexico.

The Dominguez-Escalante expedition illuminates the competing claims people made to the land we now know as Utah. The territory remained on the fringes of the Spanish Empire even after word of the expedition got out. Occasional trading, trapping, and slaving expeditions made their way through the region, but few if any Spaniards chose to settle here. Still, the Spanish and the Mexicans—who won independence from Spain in 1821—claimed the area as theirs. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war between the United States and Mexico in 1848, legally turned the region over to the American government, but older traditions and claims still remain. When Mexican immigrants talk about crossing the border into the United States, they often don't refer to the name of the nation they're moving into. Instead they call the land "El Norte"—the North—or the piece of the American West that was once part of the old Spanish and Mexican empires.

"Beehive Archive is a production of the Utah Humanities Council. Sources consulted in the creation of the Beehive Archive and past episodes may be found at www.utahhumanities.org/BeehiveArchive.htm."

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