

VICTORY IS SWEET FOR FLOOD PLAINTIFFS

There should be no mistaking what just transpired in a federal court in Washington, D.C.: The little guys won.

In the process, hundreds of regional plaintiffs in an important case against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have helped sharpen the legal interpretation of what amounts to "illegal taking" of property and livelihoods, and made clear the Constitution still provides protections for average citizens.

They also have brought hope that the Corps will be compelled in coming years to change its management practices and do much more to limit flooding along the Missouri River.

This victory announced Wednesday is cause for celebration on both sides of the river in Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa. This is the region that suffered damages estimated at more than \$300 million from Corps river-management decisions dating to 2004.

The plaintiffs — farmers, landowners, business owners — won on claims involving devastating flooding in five separate years. They successfully argued the Corps, to their detriment, had de-emphasized flood control while giving greater priority to restoring and creating habitat and ecosystems to support threatened or endangered species.

We join with the plaintiffs, led by R. Dan Boulware, lead counsel with the Polsinelli law firm, in marking this moment as a potential turning point in how the Missouri River will be managed in the future. At the same time, we are disappointed the flood claims from one year, 2011, were disallowed and are hopeful the judge will reconsider that ruling.

This fits with what people in this region have experienced. After all, in 2011, as well as each flood year that it was determined the Corps contributed to our heartache and financial loss, the flooding damaged land, homes and other property across our region while those living farther north were spared.

This wave of flooding followed a period of more than 60 years when longstanding flood control practices had made life along the river much more predictable.

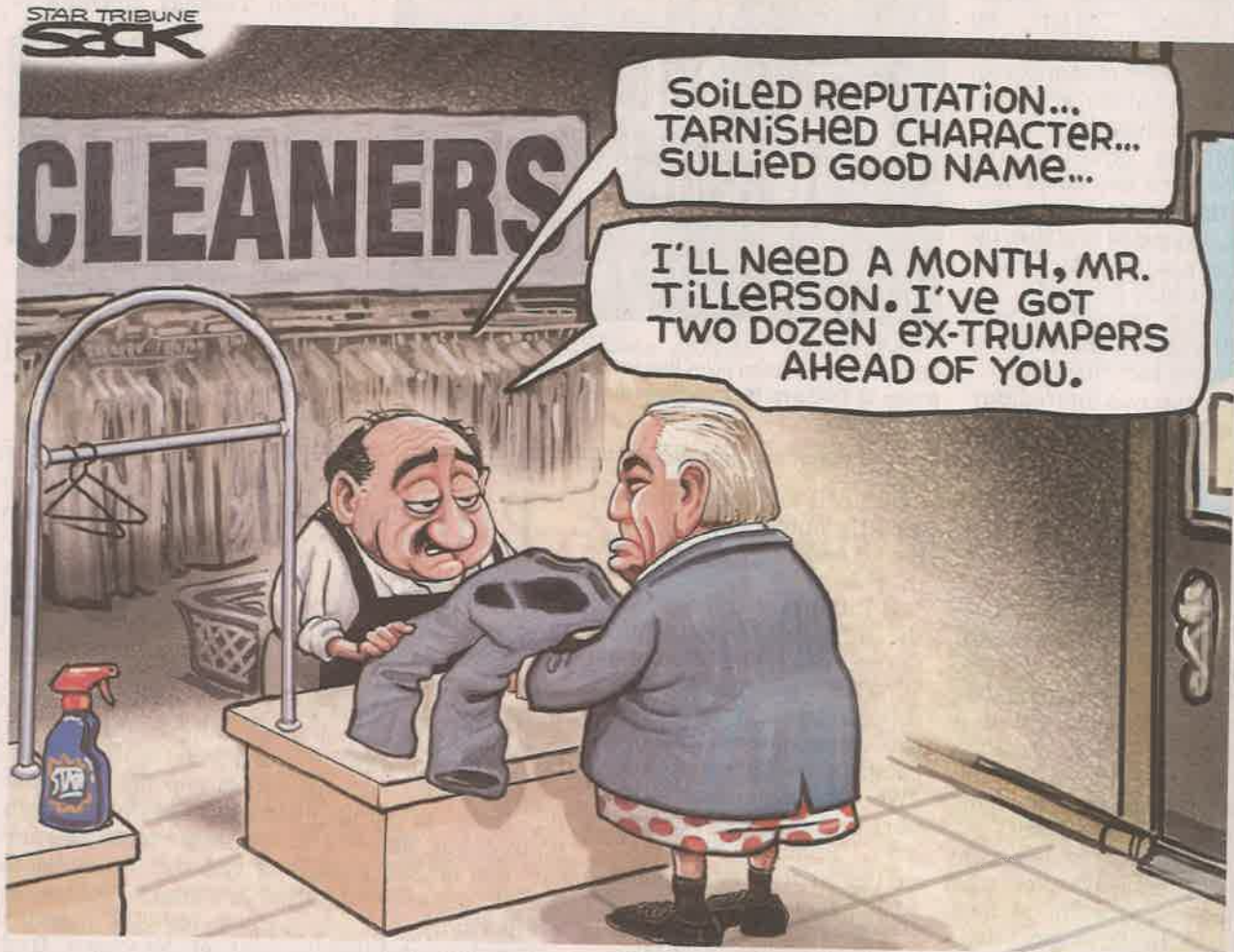
"For decades, these Missouri River residents invested their fortunes and futures in developing farms, businesses and communities on this land in reliance on the Corps managing the river in a way that would deter flooding," Boulware argued heading into the trial. "Valuable farm ground is being permanently destroyed and a way of life is now threatened."

That way of life is fundamental to the Midland Empire. Without this successful defense of our interests, life as we experience it today indeed would be imperiled for future generations.

BIBLE VERSE | For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
| 2 PETER 1:5-8

DEBATE

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Your letters

Do violent video games change how players view others?

There are pictures that stay in our minds, "Oh, the humanity" of the Hindenburg, the mass graves at Buschenwald, the napalm-burned girl in Vietnam, the twin towers burning in New York. The images of these horrors come readily to mind, and although we have seen these images several times, most of us have not viewed them daily.

Many of us watch horror shows and violent movies and TV and many participate in the violence playing video games daily.

We recoil when watching the Hindenburg or Buchenwald, or the burned girl or the burning twin towers. Why is our reaction less when watching a TV series that depicts a shooting or beating between each commercial? We are never spared seeing the beheaded, stabbed, burnt to a crisp, shot through the heart (and here is where the bullet exited) corpse. We view more corpses than undertakers.

Do we look as rubber-neckers when they pass a bad car wreck, secure in knowing it cannot touch us? There is no personal threat. We watch like peeping Toms, and the fleetingness of the images makes them seem unreal. In real life we would rather do almost anything other than pay our respects at the funeral home.

Playing video games is different. The player participates. If the player doesn't slash, stab, behead, burn or blow up his opponent, the player gets annihilated and the game is over. The question is, does a video game change the way players view others, especially those people they view as a threat?

The participation in the video game is real. It didn't not happen. The violence happened in the real time of the player.

It is hard to believe, as makers of violent shows and video games would like us to believe, that vicarious viewing or participating in violent video games doesn't have a detrimental impact. At the very least, like eating doughnuts, it is probably not good for us.

CAROL CORNELIUS
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The school district is using the city's tactics

Does anyone else see a problem with the St. Joseph School District paying a new superintendent \$210,000 per year while closing schools and laying off teachers, claiming these cuts are needed to balance their budget?

Beware that the school district's tactics are the same as the city of St. Joseph over the years. The city, in the past, has threatened to close fire stations and lay off firefighters if a certain tax isn't passed, all the time knowing that this town loves their firefighters as much as their teachers.

Turns out, babies are all too human

CHICAGO — For a while there, it seemed like you couldn't get away from headlines wailing about "baby geniuses," the "Tao of babies, or that special "baby wisdom."

Nonsense.

It always seemed to me that the people who go on and on about how great babies are have never had to get through the night with one.

Though it's true that happy, smiling babies are 99 percent worthy of the endless-joy hype, it turns out that, alas, babies are people, too.

A new paper published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* posits that when babies sense that resources are scarce, they're just as tribal and merciless as adults.

Researchers from Stanford University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign tested prior research showing that infants understand loyalty and fairness.

In the test, researchers showed infants a scene in which a monkey puppet presented a tray of identical cookies to two other puppets: one that looked like a monkey and another that looked like a giraffe. When there were more cookies than puppets, the infants expected all of the puppets — regardless of species — to receive equal cookies.

But when there was the same number of cookies and puppets, the infants expected the distributing puppet to give all the cookies to its own social group — and they noticed when the distributor gave any of the cookies to the outgroup puppet. This indicated to researchers that the infants' group loyalty overrode their innate sense of fairness.

Perhaps that special baby wisdom we've heard so much about is actually just plain-old sectarian self-interest. Though not a pleasant aphorism that could be stitched on a pink or blue pillow, these innate preferences for "our own kind" might be indicative of the sort of primal survival instincts that have allowed our species to thrive, even as some members of the species claim supremacy over others.

A separate study published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* busted the myth that people overeat and get fat primarily because marketing, and other environmental factors such as a glut of cheap calories, have overwritten their natural instincts for self-regulation.

Wrong again.

In a clinical trial carried out in New Zealand, women were trained to interpret their baby's signals and encourage them to take charge of their own food consumption — yet lots of babies still ate too much.

Ten percent of the infants in the intervention group, who were encouraged to self-feed instead of strictly relying on spoon-feeding, were overweight by age 2.

In fact, the study found no statistically significant differences in Body Mass Index between the self-feeding



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