pinion



Other **Viewpoints**

Violent action is disturbing trend in passionate causes

It's very unlikely that two men charged with fatal shootings recently in Wichita and Little Rock, Ark., have ever met, but they may spend a long time in prison for much the same rea-

Each may have let his passion for a cause rise to a level that overrode logic and demanded violent action.

Scott Roeder has been charged with first-degree murder in connection with the shooting of abortion provider George Tiller in Wichita. Abdulhakim Muhammad, a U.S. citizen converted to Islam, has been charged with capital murder in connection with the ... shooting of a soldier, Pvt. William Long, who was standing outside an Army recruiting office in Arkansas.

Roeder's cause was the fight against abortion rights. Muhammad's cause was that of radical Islamic terrorists, who have determined the United States is the root of all evil and it is their duty to destroy it.

There is no overlap of those two causes, and neither man has been convicted. But that hasn't kept some people from comparing the cases and attributing the violence to an unyielding belief in a cause fueled by the enabling rhetoric of extrem-

Anyone who thinks we're just talking about religion and abortion should take a closer look at the country's two major political parties and contemplate the demise of civility in Washington, or consider the rhetoric dominating the debate over global warming. The relationship, if it can be called that, between opposing

camps on several issues our country is grappling with today is ugly and often dominated by extremists on both sides who give little thought to controlling their inflammatory rhetoric.

In such an environment, it isn't surprising that some followers could come to the conclusion that forceful action is required.

If those at the forefront of their respective causes can't acknowledge that, and aren't willing to recognize others have the right to disagree, Tiller and Long won't be the last to die at the hands of someone convinced extreme violence is justified.

—Topeka Capital-Journal, via The Associated Press

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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Kevin Bottrell - News Editor kbottrell @ nwkansas.com

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ADVERTISING

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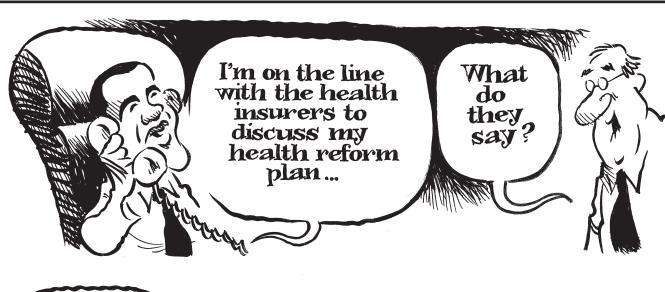
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THANK YOU FOR



Bird feeders are for the ... squirrels?

The cut was neat, professionally chiseled, like a bank job done by someone who knew what he was doing.

And the thief cleaned out the vault — in this case, the bottom of one of Cynthia's bird feed-

The "door" we found in the grass below, as neat as if it'd been blown.

The perp, we haven't spotted him yet, but we've got a description: about a foot long, bushy, 12-inch tail, red fur, and sharp, sharp teeth.

That's what gave him away. The cut in the plastic around the feeder hatch was just way too neat. No bird could do that. And the seed inside, it was gone, gone, gone, even the two inches at the bottom that the birds never get

I'm not sure what Cynthia is going to do. She says she was ready to shut off the two feeders out back for the summer. They hang in the ash tree, and the leaves are just too thick to see through right now.

Bird feeders are her latest addiction. She started with a pair last summer in Colorado, and by fall, she had dozens of finches, sparrows, wrens, bluebirds and jays hooked on her

Step out the front door, and a cloud of birds would rise off the lawn and trees.



Then last fall, feeders started to appear in the yard here. First a couple with trays below to catch the seed the big birds spill, then an iron brace and a pair with no trays.

Sappa

Those, I had to mount on the south, so she could watch feeders morning, noon and night.

At first things were slow. She feared the birds here had plenty to eat and she'd never see any. Then came spring. We had to start hosing down the brick patio, the birds were making such a mess.

A lot of the flock were blackbirds: regular blackbirds, redwings, starlings, you name it. They eat a lot and they relieve themselves a lot. They are, in a word, a mess.

But there were robins, finches, jays, wrens, sparrows, little brown birds with fuzzy reddish heads that I can't find in the bird book. Lots

Most of them are fun. The blackbirds just eat everything – the quinoa, the millet, the sun- is, he like to ride and watch trains.

flower seeds - everything. They even steal the corn off the cob we put up on the back fence to feed the squirrels.

That's OK, I guess, because the squirrels soon figured out there was food in the bird feeders. We'd see the boss squirrel hanging on the feeder upside down, trying to figure out how to break the bank. Little did we know.

You've seen these feeders: a plastic cylinder with a hanger and little doors to go in holes in the side with perches, adjustable to favor larger or smaller birds. The manufacturer says they're squirrel proof, but those guys haven't met our squirrels.

Anyway, the one with the door cut out of it is toast. I don't see any point in buying another one of those, at least not one with the tray the squirrel can work on while blowing the vault.

I hate to punish the birds for the squirrel's sins, though, so maybe we'll look for one that's got better security: thick wood construction, maybe, or steel grates, something even a squirrel can't just gnaw through.

I'll file a report later. Right now, the score is squirrels 1, Cynthia 0.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of The Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that

Think about who breathes smoke

To the Editor:

Plain and simple, secondhand smoke is a major health threat to us all. At least 38,000 nonsmokers die every year from heart disease and lung cancer caused by exposure to secondhand smoke.

It's not just people who live with a smoker who are at risk. Even occasional exposure to secondhand smoke, in the office or in a restaurant, for example, can be fatal.

The recent surgeon general's report indicated there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and that exposure of adults has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer.

There is no "safe" amount of secondhand smoke. The only way to truly protect the health of our loved ones is through smoke-free work places, homes, restaurants and other public places. Secondhand smoke isn't just an annoyance; it's a dangerous to the health of us all.

Diane Stithem, advocacy chair Thomas County Relay for Life Committee

Who's spin doctor?

To the Editor:

In response to the May 15 column by Andy



Free Press **Letter Drop**

• Our readers sound off

opinion and express it is due to the conservative values of the Founding Fathers of this nation some 200-plus years ago. I'm sure we can find issue with any spin doctor whose objective is to plant seeds according to the way he or she has been programmed.

Conservatism isn't a new thing. Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck, Karl Rove, etc., didn't think it up. Conservatism was more conservative in the beginning of this nation than it is now. This past century, the world had a historical

lesson taught by Germany, a nation that was in financial chaos in the early 1930s. A man came on the scene by the name of Adolf Hitler who was not unanimously accepted by the majority of the people. By 1940, he was considered a genius and a savior to this socialist nation.

How did this happen? Those in power took control of all propaganda. All resistance to the Heintz, I have to say that his right to have an Nazi government was put down, anyone who

spoke against it was snuffed out. Fear to speak out was common because of reprisal. Anybody with a differing view point was considered a traitor to the Nazi regime and had to be dealt

Is it possible that these Fox News broadcasters are saying what some common-sense people agree with in regards to freedoms and having a voice in how their money is used? Why should they be made to look like they are out of the mainstream of this nation's heartbeat and be called hostile if they have an opposing view which happens to be conservative? Who's the spin doctor?

A great principle is found in an old movie called "Hud," where Paul Newman played the title character, whom his nephew admired. Hud took his nephew out on the town. The grandpa didn't agree with Hud's wild lifestyle and philosophy of life. He knew his grandson would be home late that night and waited up for him and upon his arrival told him, "Little by little, a nation changes according to the people it admires."

What a true statement. This country has only to look at where it's at and where it's going in accordance to whom it admires. A man once said, "If man will not be governed by God, by god, it will be governed.

Mike Pinkelman, Brewster

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Mallard **Fillmore**

Bruce Tinsley

