

## Other Viewpoints

# Tornado aftermath didn't flatten town

Hats off to the citizens of Reading, who are among the latest collection of Kansans who have refused to submit to the worst that Mother Nature could throw at them.

Reading's story is not all that rare these days in Kansas — where residents of Greensburg offer a recent example of how to fight back in the face of adversity — but such a display of grit and determination is always worth recognizing.

It also is worth noting the collective will that picks up and breathes new life into a community that has been flattened by a tornado. The job is more than just a few stubborn residents can pull off. It requires the cooperative spirit that truly defines a community.

The collective will and a cooperative spirit existed in abundance in Reading, and that's why Reading still exists today in Lyon County.

Every individual and organization involved in the effort is to be lauded for their contribution.

The tornado that roared through Reading a year ago killed one person and destroyed 54 of the community's 101 homes, but only two families opted not to rebuild. Nearly all of the town's businesses were destroyed, as was its post office. Damage in the community was estimated at \$2.2 million.

Whether the post office will ever reopen still is questionable. The U.S. Postal Service recently backtracked on plans to close thousands of rural post offices across the country, but that doesn't mean it will rebuild and reopen one closed on the strength of an EF-3 tornado. The nearest post office requires a 27-mile round trip by Reading residents.

A bank has opened, the restaurant has been rebuilt, as has the grain elevator and related buildings.

Bill Paige, president of the Reading City Council, says a new community building will be constructed to replace one destroyed by the tornado.

Granted the city, its residents and businesses have received insurance money from several sources to help with the recovery and reconstruction, but a lot of people find it easy in such situations to take the insurance money and move on.

Not so in Reading, or Greensburg or other Kansas towns that have been devastated by a tornado in recent memory. Kansans choose to fight back rather than knuckle under to Mother Nature. We've been doing it since before Kansas was a state and are just stubborn enough to keep on doing it.

They also are compassionate enough to reach out to others who find themselves in similar circumstances.

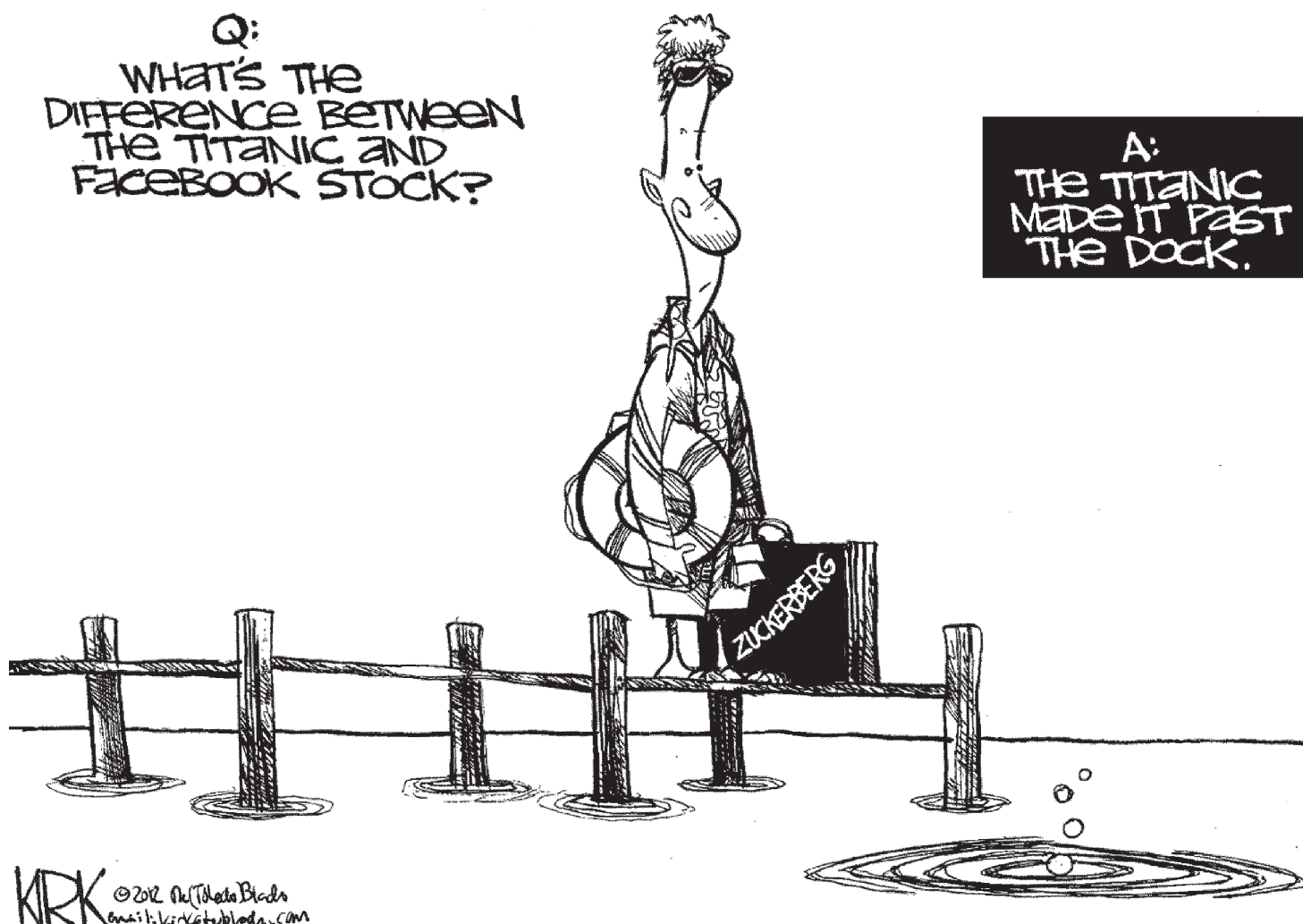
While the rebuilding continued in Reading, its residents found the time and resources to offer assistance to the people of Harveyville, a community of about 300 people in Wabaunsee County that was hit by an EF-2 tornado in February. One person was killed and about 40 percent of the town's structures sustained significant damage.

That doesn't sound as damaging as the experience Reading went through, but it's a significant burden for those whose homes or businesses resembled a pile of rubble after the storm.

Rebuilding in Harveyville continues.

That job isn't done yet in Reading, but it's a job being done well.

— *The Topeka Capital-Journal, via the Associated Press*



# Memorial Day keeps sacrifice alive

Nearly 150 years ago, at a solemn ceremony held in Gettysburg, Pa., in November of 1863, President Lincoln called on all Americans to never forget those who laid down their lives so that this "nation might live."

Since the Civil War, Americans have gathered each year on Memorial Day to remember those courageous souls who answered the call to serve. We gather together to remind our children and grandchildren that because of their sacrifice, we have the opportunity to live in the strongest, freest and greatest nation in the world.

One such soldier, Father Emil Kapaun, was born in Pilsen in 1916 and served our country in the Korean War battlefields as a chaplain for the 8th Calvary Regiment of the First Army Division.

Father Kapaun's courageous actions in Korea saved countless lives as he ran under enemy fire to rescue wounded soldiers. When he was taken as a prisoner in 1950, he continued to live out the Army chaplain motto — "for God and Country." In the bitter cold of winter, Father Kapaun carried injured comrades on his back during forced marches through the snow and ice, gave away his meager food rations and cared for the sick who were suffering alongside him in the prison camp.

When all else looked hopeless, he rallied his comrades to persevere — until his own death as a prisoner in 1951. This good man distinguished himself by laying down his life for the sake of others.

Last year, Sen. Pat Roberts and I introduced legislation in the U.S. Senate to award the



**U.S. Senator Jerry Moran**

## • Moran's Memo

Medal of Honor to Father Kapaun. The legislation was approved in December and had the support of the Secretary of the Army. Earlier this year, I joined members of the Kansas delegation in urging President Obama and Secretary of Defense Panetta to bestow this great honor upon Father Kapaun, a man who is most deserving of one of our nation's most distinguished awards.

Today, our nation's young men and women are still risking their lives for the sake of others and fighting for those principles we hold most dear — freedom and justice.

As this new generation of troops returns home, they are facing a new challenge: timely access to care. Many veterans must often travel significant distances to receive care through the Department of Veterans Affairs, especially veterans living in rural states like Kansas.

To help our veterans receive care closer to home, I introduced legislation that would allow them to receive primary care from their local health care providers. The VA incorporated this legislation in a new pilot program that launched last year in several locations across our nation — including Pratt. Not only will our veterans' level of care be enhanced, but they

will have shorter appointment wait times and shorter distances to travel, which is especially important for our most senior veterans.

Our servicemen and women have sacrificed for the freedoms we enjoy today and caring for them is our nation's utmost responsibility. As a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, I will continue to make certain our nation's veterans and their families receive the care they deserve.

As citizens, we have a duty to preserve those freedoms and liberties that generations of Americans gave their lives to establish and protect.

The heroes we pay tribute to on Memorial Day have shown us the way, and it is our turn to follow them in service to our country. So when the parades have concluded and the flags have been taken down, let our commitment to good citizenship be our lasting tribute and our living tribute to our service members.

On Memorial Day, we honor our fallen servicemen and women who laid down their lives for our country and we thank God for giving us these heroes. Let us commit our lives to preserving this nation for the sake of the next generation — so they too can pursue the American dream with freedom and liberty. We are indebted to our veterans to do nothing less.

*Jerry Moran of Hays is the junior U.S. senator from Kansas. His committee appointments include Appropriations; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Veterans Affairs; Small Business and Entrepreneurship; and the Special Committee on Aging.*

# Hate-watching takes TV to new level

By Frazier Moore

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All this time I've been hate-watching and I never even knew it.

Turns out, "hate-watch" is a fancy term for watching shows you don't like but get perverse satisfaction from.

Hate-watching is a sport that used to fall under the broad term "guilty pleasure," but now seems retrofitted for the age of social media. It goes something like this: You watch a show you wouldn't choose to watch for any reason other than to mock it for its awfulness — say, by sharing snide Twitter exchanges with like-minded hate-watchers when the program airs.

Lately, hate-watching seems to have flourished at the expense of NBC's drama-focused-on-a-Broadway-musical, "Smash."

But as I think back through my years in front of the TV, I can't recall a more pleasurable experience of hate-watching than the long-ago Fox prime-time soap, "Melrose Place."

Just consider the following circa-1994 gem of dialogue, as Michael confesses sheepishly to Kimberly, "I don't know how to say this, but ... um ... when I heard that you had died — y'know, grief and confusion — well, it's just ... um ... I got MARRIED!"

Classic hate-watching content! And even back in those dial-up, pre-Web days when "Melrose Place" was on the air, a howler like this line of dialogue could be savored communally, thanks to an innovative form of proto-social media: Mere hours after "Melrose Place" had aired, "The 'Melrose Place' Update" was ready and e-mailed to fellow fans by a visionary in Bellevue, Wash., named Ian Ferrell.

"I think they're making something cool," Ferrell explained to me at the time, referring to the "Melrose" production team. "But I don't think they have any idea what they're doing."

That, of course, is what makes hate-watching so delicious: An awfulness, and hence an inadvertent coolness, the program doesn't know it has.

It was left to Ferrell to deconstruct each episode, cataloguing its meaningful glances, its tearful "I'm sorry" confessions and all the scenes that culminated with sex — not to mention shining a light into its plot holes.

Ferrell (who today works at Microsoft) also welcomed other viewers' thoughts on the show, such as this satisfied assessment from one "Melrose" regular: "It's badly written, not very well-acted, and irresistible."

These days, it's "Smash" that's winning similar hate-love. A spirited discussion on a recent edition of Slate magazine's "Culture Gabfest" podcast explored the term "hate-watch," with "Smash" singled out as a glaring example. On Twitter, (hash)hatewatching became a trending topic.

A scathing review on the New Yorker.com website was headlined, "Hate-Watching 'Smash.'"

And on The Huffington Post, critic Maureen Ryan wrote, "When it comes to group hate-watching, 'Smash' is the gift that keeps on giving."

I must quickly add that I disagree with this particular position. I watched the entire first season of "Smash," but never in hate-watching mode. I am pleased to say I love "Smash," minority voice though I may be.

Even so, I'm all for taking a new look at ap-

preciating TV — if that's what it is.

But what exactly is hate-watching?

Definitions vary, but "Culture Gabfest" framed the phenomenon as "celebratory" viewing "in an aggressive, nasty way."

And among definitions by its listeners, this one sounds solid: "Hate-watching provokes feelings of outrage, indignation, contempt or loathing so intense they become pleasurable."

But where, I wonder, is the hate in hate-watching directed? Toward the characters on the show? To the show overall? To the people who created it or put it on the air? To the wide-eyed viewers who truly like it and watch with no ulterior motives?

The answer is unclear. But the essence of hate-watching seems to take its cue from a wisecrack once made about newspapers: TV shows are never good enough, but a bad one is a joy forever. Hate-watching can redeem a multitude of sins.

This arms me with a new way to approach my TV consumption. And possibly a fresh way to find pleasure in shows I might otherwise scorn or avoid altogether.

So I wonder if I told myself I was hate-watching the fourth hour of "The Today Show," not simply watching it, could I stomach its pink slime of news and information?

If I convinced myself I was hate-watching "Grey's Anatomy," would I be entertained by its sappiness, instead of fighting the urge to claw my face into ribbons?

Or would I fall short in my effort to find TV pleasure in TV pain? Odds are, I'd surrender long before the show is over, hobbled by this thought: No matter if it hurts so good to watch, its awfulness will always still be awfulness.

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

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## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

