

There is no excuse for torture

Here's one where John McCain is right and the White House is just plain wrong.

The administration finally gave in and agreed to McCain's language barring any use of torture by the U.S. government. Well it should have. There's no conceivable circumstance where torture by U.S. officials or military personnel should be sanctioned.

Sen. McCain ought to know. As a Navy pilot, shot down over Vietnam, he spent nearly seven years as a prisoner of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese.

Few Washington decision makers can say they've been tortured, unless you count having to sit through innumerable committee hearings and floor debate in the Capitol.

McCain knows whereof he speaks. He thinks America should set a higher standard.

It's scary that, in a recent Associated Press poll, a majority of Americans (61 percent) said it might be OK "sometimes" for U.S. officials to torture suspected terrorists. Of all the allies polled, in fact, only South Korea had a higher tolerance for torture. Ninety percent of Koreans thought torture might sometimes be OK.

What are we thinking about, folks?

Torture is not just wrong. It's poor policy. It seldom produces the desired information. It can harden a victim, or make them say anything to stop the humiliation and pain. Either way, the nation that uses torture never wins.

While President Bush maintains torture is not U.S. policy, Vice President Dick Cheney argued that it might be necessary in extreme cases. There's a lot of that "what-if" stuff, "what if a terrorist knew the location of a nuclear device in a U.S. city, and the only way to save millions of lives was to torture him?"

It's not good.

A devoted terrorist likely would die rather than tell.

Or lie to stave off the inquisition until it was too late.

These are people, after all, who are willing to blow themselves up for some demented idea of God and country.

In most of Europe, a majority is firmly opposed to torture in any form, any time. We should join that union.

Fortunately, there's no credible evidence so far that the U.S. government in fact uses torture against prisoners, even terrorists.

The midnight follies at that Iraqi prison, though wrong and stupid, hardly rise to the level of torture. The same can be said for treatment of some prisoners held in Cuba.

We need to make clear, though, what the President says already is U.S. policy. This is one time we need to take the high road.

Thanks to the administration's agreement with Sen. McCain, that'll soon be written into federal law.

And that is no loss to our effort in the war against terrorism, or any other war.

— Steve Haynes



Christmas is more than presents

I had a reminder Sunday of the true meaning of Christmas. Jim and I were in chapel services at the prison where we minister, and one of the inmates got up to give testimony. He said he was able to make a phone call that day, and that was his present.

Later, a visitor leaving the prison at the same time we were asked us where she could get something to eat in town. I told her the only places open were convenience stores. I said, "I'm sorry, a bologna sandwich isn't much of a Christmas dinner."

"That's all right," she said. "Just getting to visit my husband was more than enough."

Kind of puts things in perspective, doesn't it?

—ob—

Part of my Christmas presents this year were homemade. I came across my old 4-H Master Mix recipe and decided the kids would like it. We bought 50 pounds of flour, 25 pounds of sugar, two large cans of shortening, four cans of baking powder

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



a spiral-cut ham, and between the two of us, we had all the trimmings.

I can admit it now, but I forgot to take the deviled eggs. I found them the next day, pushed to the back of a refrigerator shelf. Jim's not complaining, though. He loves deviled eggs. And we sure didn't miss them during the meal.

Of course, we all ate too much. Couple that with the fact that the week leading up to Christmas had been a real "cruncher," and you have exhaustion written all over it.

Our granddaughter, Alexandria, wanted to play Uno after the meal and we agreed. It sounded like a good idea at the time, but after an hour of play, and no end in sight, I nodded off, sitting straight up. That's tired.

—ob—

In less than a week, it will be a new year. I know it's cliché but, "Where has the time gone?"

Used to be, I thought only old people talked about how the older you got, the faster time passed. Now, I am one.

WRITE:

The Norton Telegram encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

★ U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; fax (202) 224-3514

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

★ U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2443 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; fax (202) 225-5124

★ State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, Room 128-S, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7399

★ State Rep. John Faber, 181 W. Capitol Building, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7500

Fridge and home fill up together

You'd think that when the children come home, the refrigerator would empty out.

Not so at our house. No, when the kids come home, our fridge gets so full you have to maneuver the milk past the extra salad dressings and the orange juice just to pour a glass.

If one child comes home, a couple of shelves will fill up.

If two come home, the whole thing is jammed.

When all three get here—not a frequent occurrence these days, thank God—we have to rent space in the walk-in down at the grocery.

It's not the kids who fill the shelves, not mostly anyway. The girls will cook, especially Lindsay, but that's not what causes the ice-cold traffic jam.

It's their mother.

Obeying Nature's command to feed her offspring, Cynthia starts hoarding food and squirreling away supplies a week or two in advance. She plans menus and asked the kids what they want to eat.

"Food" is the usual reply, so she stocks up.

Even in their 20s and 30s, or especially in their 20s and 30s, kids like mom's home cooking.

On the Prairie Dog

Steve Haynes



steak and swiss steak and brisket and ham, but most of it was either frozen and stored or shipped out by the end of the week. Lacy hadn't been gone a day, and you could find room next to the butter for the cream cheese.

Cynthia sorted out the freezers, counting one bowl of chili for us and one for Lacy, one serving of swiss steak for us and one for him, and so on, until she had everything neat and cataloged and in its place, with plenty of room for brisket and a few leftovers from this week.

I think she set some kind of modern-era record for organizing the fridge after a visit, which was good, because it had been mighty full.

It helped, I like to think, that I found and dumped the blue-spotted green chili she had left in there, along with the extra dressing from Thanksgiving, the old turkey wings and the old slice of lime, which looked quite, ah, tangy.

That made some space. So Lacy left with a couple of coolers full of soup and beans and chicken and steak and goodies. We got space in the refrigerator, with still an ample supply of leftovers and sandwiches frozen for the long winter to come.

Until the next visit, at least.

Congressman works to fight methamphetamines

Congressman Jerry Moran announced House passage of legislation to combat methamphetamine, commonly called meth, production, trafficking and use.

"The fight against meth has been on the Kansas radar for years," Mr. Moran said. "But the meth epidemic knows no state boundaries. It is time for a comprehensive federal approach."

The legislation increases restrictions on obtaining the major ingredients used to produce meth, toughens criminal penalties, provides assistance to state and local agencies and helps protect children from

the harmful environment of meth use and production.

"Meth has been identified as the leading drug-related law enforcement problem in the country," Mr. Moran said. "Kansans are working hard to combat this drug and its production, but the majority of meth comes from across the border. By addressing the international supply, we will ultimately help efforts in communities across the nation."

To bring attention to meth on a national level, Mr. Moran joined other members of Congress earlier this year in asking Presi-

dent Bush to take action. He has also sponsored legislation that provides money for law enforcement, makes ingredients used in the production harder to obtain and helps local officials in the clean up of meth labs.

In 2005, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation reported law enforcement officials seized 337 meth labs. Kansas has historically been among the top states in the nation in number of meth lab seizures.

Mr. Moran is a member of the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine, which is comprised of lawmakers dedicated to combating the spread of meth.

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

Office hours:
8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732
E-mail: telegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X
215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

STAFF

Cynthia Haynes editor and publisher
Veronica Monier staff reporter
Dick Boyd Blue Jay sports
Carolyn Plotts society editor
Sherry Hickman circulation
Vicki Henderson computer production
Susie Marble computer production
Sonya Montgomery bookkeeping

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas, Norton, Kan. 67654
Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers

Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002
Incorporating the Norton County Champion
Marion R. Krehbiel, editor

