

The death penalty should still be an option

If there was ever a case where the death penalty must be carefully considered, it is taking shape in Colorado right now.

Prosecutors are deciding whether to pursue the death penalty in the case of James Holmes, who is accused of 166 counts of murder and attempted murder in last year's theater shooting in Aurora.

Colorado has been on something of a liberal binge lately, passing laws legalizing marijuana and making movements toward allowing same-sex unions. However, the death penalty still exists in Colorado. The state has executed just one person (in 1997), and there are three people sitting on death row now, but it remains an option.

The death penalty is something that should never be imposed lightly. It is the extreme and final measure of punishment available under the law, and should only be enacted in the most extreme of cases and should be carefully considered in every case.

The problem in this case comes from the defense, which has said in court documents that it may plan to pursue an insanity defense. Most states as well as the federal courts have been reluctant to order executions for the mentally ill and are more likely to order treatment. However, the time when mental health treatment benefits society in cases like this is before something like the Aurora or Sandy Hook shootings occur. After the fact, it does little good. Even if Holmes were found insane by the court, can you imagine there were any circumstances where they would allow him back into society? What good would rehabilitation do.

This isn't Holmes' only method of defense. The prosecution has rejected an offer by the defendant to plead guilty and accept life in prison. They called it a tactic designed to generate publicity.

Society has a right to protect itself from those who would harm it. Crimes like mass shootings are incredibly harmful to society beyond the victims and their immediate families. How many people stayed away from the movies after Aurora? How many parents kept their kids home from school after Columbine? How many schools have tried to become fortresses after Sandy Hook. These terrorist acts rip at the very fabric of our way of life.

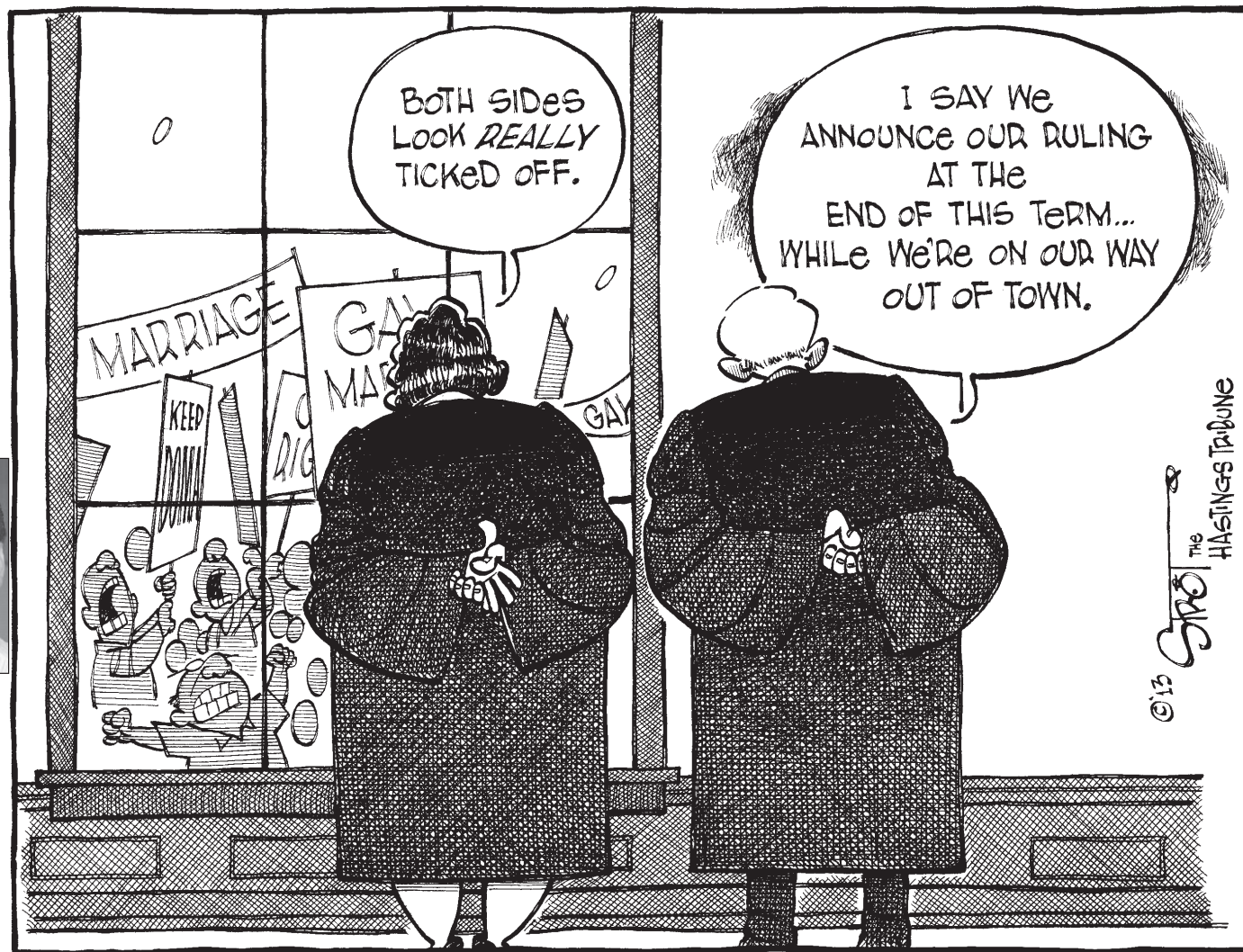
We must do all we can to try and prevent these crimes without infringing on the freedoms of law abiding citizens, but when one happens, what then? No punishment will bring back those who died, but society must still mete out punishment.

The death penalty is not the only option in this or any other case, but it should remain one of the options.

—Kevin Bottrell

Simple tricks and nonsense

Kevin Bottrell



There is no place like home, the United States

Over the years we have been involved with about 30 house building mission trips. Each one is special in its own way. Certainly the poverty that precipitated the need is universal.

Our first trip to Guatemala, however, will always hold many special memories. The tears of happiness of the recipient families; the tears of happiness of fellow team members; the feeling of purpose you have when helping someone else. One man on our team was overwhelmed by the emotion he felt when little eight-year old Flori wrapped her arms around his neck and wouldn't let go. I had made such a connection with her mother, Flora, that I hung back to be the last to say, "Goodbye."

We hugged like two sisters who knew they may never see each other again.

—ob—

The difference between driving across the U.S./Mexican border and flying over a couple of different countries is like night and day. For one thing, nobody ever searched our luggage driving into

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



Mexico.

We were going through customs in Mexico City when my carry-on bag was set aside for inspection. The agent said, "You have tools?"

I answered, "No. No tools."

"Yes," she said, "You have tools."

I denied having any tools right up until the time she pulled a rusty pair of pliers out of the bottom of my bag. Probably left there from a previous trip. Oops! All I could do was apologize and look sheepish.

Another difference was knowing that in Mexico we were only 20 minutes away from a modern U.S. city. In Guatemala, we were two hours away from the nearest airport and a day's travel from "home."

I remember on the return flight Jim looking out the plane's window and announcing, "We're over the United States; the roads are all straight." At that moment it almost felt like we were "home."

—ob—

We spent Easter in San Antonio with our daughter, Jennifer, and her two girls, Alexandria, 18, and Ani, 6. The Easter Bunny delivered his basket right on time (after a midnight run to WalMart), and for Ani's benefit, we hid and re-hid colored eggs all morning. Bad news is we forgot to count how many eggs we hid and now we don't know if we found them all. It might take a hot summer day to know if we did or not.

—ob—

After almost a month "on the road" our own bed will feel mighty nice. We love what we do and are always eager to go again. But just like Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz," there's no place like home, there's no place like home.

The need to replace soda with healthy beverage choices

One alarming trend in our society today is the prevalence of junk food in our diets—and more importantly in those of our children. While the selection of junk foods continues to grow and the enormity is mind boggling, let's focus on just one, soft drinks.

They have wigged their way into nearly every venue in our society. About the only public place I haven't seen them is in the back vestibules of our nation's churches.

Soft drinks have no place in this nation's schools. Soft drinks have little, if any nutritional value whatsoever. Look at the ingredients in a soft drink the next time you pick one up. Most people wouldn't have a clue what these ingredients are, myself included.

To be part of a balanced diet, a food product must have nutritional value. Unlike water, soft drinks won't even quench your thirst. They leave you longing for a tall, cool glass of water.

And that's what we should have in all our public places — water, lots of it and other healthy drink alternatives.

Talk to a nutritionist or physician and what is the ingredient we're supposed to drink at least eight glasses of?

That's right nature's own liquid — water.

What about that wonderful white liquid chock full of calcium we call milk? Where does it fit in our daily diet?

Insight

John Schlageck



highly processed food products — are essential to our youngsters' diets. We owe it to them and their good health.

Vegetable drinks made from tomatoes, carrots, celery and other vegetables are loaded with vitamins, minerals and fiber. Vegetable drinks also belong as part of our daily diets. Have a V-8 instead.

But let's return to soft drinks. As a youngster my parents only allowed us to drink them on special occasions. Dentists and nutritionists contend these products can cause tooth decay. While I know genetics and proper daily oral hygiene play a major role, I didn't have my first filling until about six years ago, and I'm somewhere in the half century club age wise.

Coincidence?

I think not.

Selling soft drinks is about one thing only — making money. I don't have a problem with anyone making a profit. It's the American way. I just believe that food products should have plenty of nutritional value.

So if you need to treat yourself, add chocolate to the milk. Mix a couple of the fruit juices together or just drink water. You'll be doing yourself a favor and you'll be supporting farmers and ranchers who supply these fresh, tasty, nutritious drinks.

Make mine chocolate milk. Bottoms up.

CITY OF NORTON ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor: David Corns
785-877-2990
dcorns@ruraltel.net

WARD I

Jerry Jones
785-877-2170
Harriett Gill
785-877-3051

WARD II

Roberta Ryan
785-877-2182
Donna Foley
785-877-3585
rocknomm_43@hotmail.com

WARD III

Ron Briery
785-877-3807
Jerry Moritz
785-877-3104

Looking for change? Did you vote today?

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

E-mail: nortontelegram@nwkansas.com

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

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

OFFICE HOURS:
8 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Mon.-Thur.
8 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday
Phone: (785) 877-3361
Fax: (785) 877-3732

STAFF

Dana Paxton..... General Manager
Advertising Director/Managing Editor
email: dpaxton@nwkansas.com
Dick Boyd..... Blue Jay Sports
nortontelegram@nwkansas.com
Michael Stephens..... Reporter
Society Editor/Area Sports
mstephens@nwkansas.com
Vicki Henderson..... Computer Production
Marcia Shelton..... Office Manager

Nor'West Newspapers
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd
Publishers, 1970-2002



Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:
e-mail dpaxton@nwkansas.com
or to write 215 S. Kansas Ave.

