



## Protest doesn't excuse acts to harm free speech

It's a scary thing that a lot of people, especially veterans, came to the support of a Marion man caught following members of a dissident Topeka church around Mulvane with a couple of guns.

At first, Ryan Newell, 26, who lost both legs in Afghanistan, told sheriff's officers he was providing security for members of the Westboro Baptist Church. They let him go. Then someone asked church members about their "security detail."

Later, Sedgwick County sheriff's officers found him parked headed-out in a garage across the street from where church members were meeting with Wichita police officials about security. He had guns and ammunition with him. Members of the church have a decades-long campaign against homosexuality that began with pickets of those they considered "enablers" of gay rights. Later, that morphed into protests at the funerals of more than 600 servicemen and women killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan. The church believes these deaths are God's punishment for America for tolerating homosexuals.

It goes without saying that this group is about as popular as mud with veterans, veterans groups and other patriotic organizations. Groups including the American Legion Riders have organized to peaceably block Westboro protests and keep them away from the family at funerals. Emotions run high.

After Mr. Newell was arrested and charged with misdemeanor counts including stalking, people across the country began to call and offer to pay his legal expenses. That's admirable, we suppose, but we hope these "patriots" weren't

in any way condoning his actions, planned or actual.

The ex-soldier was, after all, lying in wait for the Westboro group with three weapons, a combat rifle, a pistol and a revolver. We can only guess what he intended to do.

Worse yet, after state and federal officers searched his home, he was charged with a felony count of conspiracy, which implies that others helped him or put him up to whatever misdeeds he had planned.

No one in Kansas is proud of the Westboro gang or its cause. They are an obnoxious wart on the pretty face of our fair state. But nothing more.

They express an opinion that, while grossly unpopular, is theirs to hold. Few agree with them; fewer still support them. But under our Bill of Rights, they are allowed not only to have their weird thoughts, but to express them.

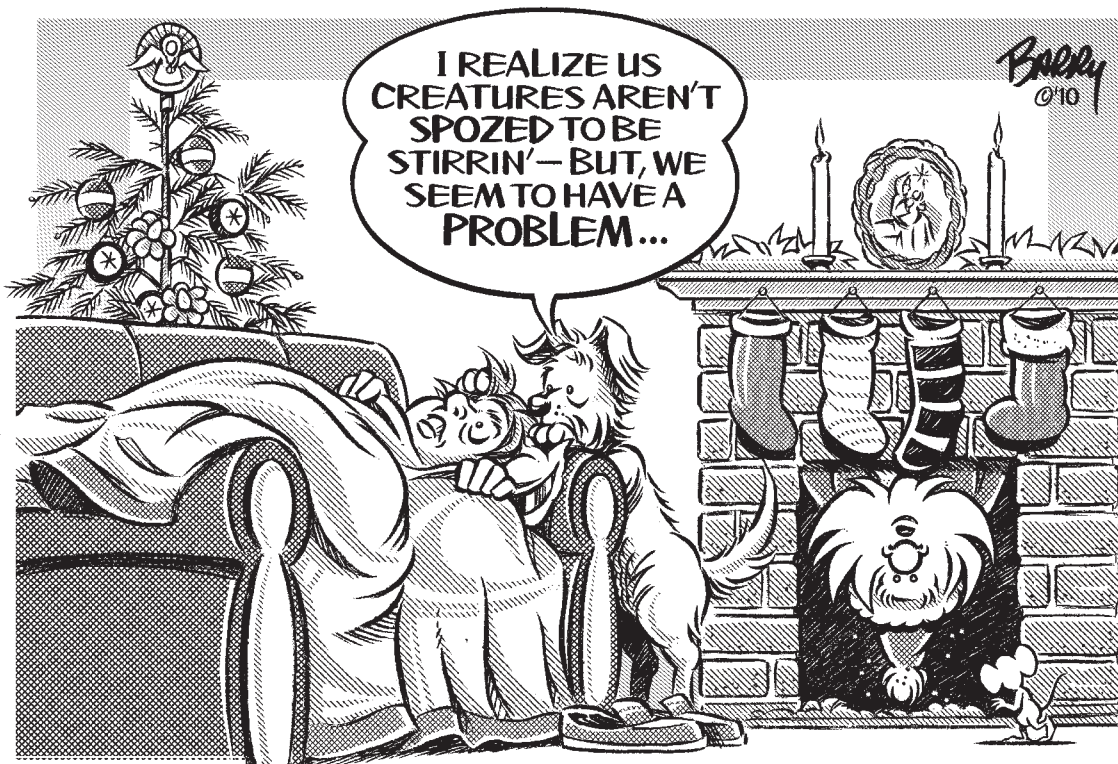
The right to freedom of speech and assembly, protected by the First Amendment, is among those we're told our veterans fight to protect. It's part of the American Way.

We never felt that mayhem or murder were among the rights veterans fought for. You have to believe in this case, those could have been the outcome had not a few sheriff's officers asked some pointed questions.

One thing we do believe in is that Mr. Newell is innocent until proven guilty. Anyone who wants to help him defend himself, that is their right.

We hope just none of them means to endorse his actions, which pretty clearly go beyond the call.

— Steve Haynes



## News From the Past

### 10 years ago - 2000

The St. Francis seventh and eighth grade girls will take to the stage on Dec. 12 to present their annual musical. This year's production, "Charleston!" will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

Four vocalists from the St. Francis high school music department performed with the Kansas Music Educators Association District Honor Choir in Hays on Saturday. Students participating were Amber Lyons and Amy Rieger, seniors; Tara Neitzel, sophomore and Tyler Howard, freshman.

After 22 years, St. Francis City Clerk Deanna Forsythe turned in her resignation, effective on Dec. 29. Clerk Forsythe was sworn in September 1980, after working with Clerk Paul Clapper for 10 months. Prior

to that, she had worked as the deputy county treasurer with Gladys Confer for 16 years.

Dr. Ryan Unger purchased Fair Chiropractic from Dr. Douglas Fair early this year and is now completing the transition process. Dr. Fair's last day of active chiropractic care in the Cheyenne County area is Dec. 20.

One of the projects discussed at the St. Francis Board of Education meeting was football bleachers added on the west side of the field which would then be the home side. They would be placed in between the 30-yard lines.

Scott City won the St. Francis Invitational Wrestling Tournament this year. The highest ranking Indian was Jeremiah Wiley, who placed second at 171 pounds.

Fourteen Indian football players were honored at the end of the season. They include Dustin Dunn, Mike Walker, Darren Workman Rayn Culwell, Tim Neitzel, Jared Sowers, Brian Holzwarth, Kevin Trembly, Brett Peterson, Ty Long, Uriah Williamsm Carl Keller, Mike Wolters and team manager Ryan Weeks.

Adam Jones of St. Francis has qualified for the Bronze, a Silver Awards of the National Junior Angus Association. They are the first level of the association's recognition program.

### 20 years ago - 1990

After 58 years of farming, Joe Neilan has decided to put his drill to rest and turn the farming over to someone else. Joe moved from South Dakota to Cheyenne County in 1927.

## Hangin' With Marge

More about the vacation

By Margaret Bucholtz



margeb@cityofstfrancis.net We finally made it to Salisbury, Mass., and got settled in our camping spot. Then we set out to see the sights.

The weather was cool and a bit chilly as we walked along the ocean. We could see Plum Island and found that this was where the early settlers kept their hogs. The hogs would eat the salt marsh and it kept them safe from the other animals that would want to kill them.

The next day it was time to go to the Morse Society convention. As I got dressed that day I took special care to check my makeup and hair and we were off to meet the people that had read the newsletters I have written for the past

two years. Things went well, but the one lady that I had so wanted to meet wasn't going to be there until the next day.

The next day I again got up early and tried my best to look decent. Anyone that really knows me can tell you that I am very shy, and so unsure of myself that being around people isn't easy.

At the big meeting a couple came and asked if they could sit with Kurt and I and of course we were happy to have someone to visit with, and they were a delightful couple from Vermont.

At the break I excused myself and went out to find my friend, Lisa. When she greeted me she said, "Gee, you clean up well."

(She had seen pictures of me riding my bicycle). We both laughed and visited a little and then I headed back to the table.

As I got there I could tell that the lady had been asking Kurt something and I had the feeling it was about me. When I got the chance I asked Kurt what they had been talking about, and he told me that she had wondered what I done for a living. He told her I had fixed hair for years and she said, "That's why she presents herself so well."

Needless to say I allowed myself to feel very vain as I left the meeting and rode home. I went into the bathroom to get ready for bed and was still thinking how nice it was that that these people had liked me.

Well, I have to say pride does come before a fall. How do I know this? When I took that last look at myself in the mirror, with the words still going through my head "presenting myself well" it was at that moment I saw this long white coarse hair about an inch in length, growing out of my chin. So much for the vanity!!!

## Honor Roll

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: Kendra Hoffman, Bison; Stacie Wenzl, Phillipsburg; Howard Poulignot, St. Francis; Neala Carmichael, St. Francis; Mildred Stute, Haigler, Neb.; Zaidine Elliott, Akron, Colo.; Gary Pittman, St. Francis; Lavern Schauer, Fremont, Neb.; Kenneth Bandel, Arvada, Colo.; Roger and Connie Brenner, Kirk, Colo.; Fred Isernhagen, Centennial, Colo.; Mike Rogers, St. Francis; Mike Grover, St. Francis; Laura Pugh, St. Francis; Bill Pugh, Steamboat Springs, Colo.;

Maurice Barnhart, Colby; Sandra Ward, Lorton, Okla.; Brenda Behower, Angola, Ind.; Chas Oldenburg, Flower Mound, Texas; Mike Petitjean, Hutchinson; Carol

Weems, Gladstone, Mo.; Ryan Weeks, Wamego; Brian Draper, St. Francis; Brooke Lohr, St. Francis; Milton Lampe, St. Francis; Jacquelin Lutz, Benkelman, Neb.; Rodney Bracelin, St. Francis; Victor Zweygardt, St. Francis, Dorla Mae Rose, St. Francis;

GOD SAYS He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Proverbs 13:20

## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



By Casey McCormick scmcormick@nwkansan.com While everyone is geared up for an exciting Christmas holiday, it is also the perfect time of year to reflect on an American hero. Personally, I believe it's always time to remember the men and women who have allowed us the freedom to worship and celebrate as we wish.

For baseball fans, most know of the great Cleveland Indian's pitcher Bob Feller. Over 18 seasons he threw three no-hitters and 12 one-hitters with a career ERA of 3.25.

What most might not know is that Feller was one of many who volunteered to leave pro sports to fight in World War II.

Feller was considered the best pitcher in the majors when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Two days later he walked into a

Navy recruiting office to enlist. Although he could have spent his naval career teaching physical training and competing on Navy baseball teams, Feller wanted to be in the action. He transferred to Naval Gunnery School, graduated and was placed on the USS Alabama.

A South Dakota class battle ship, the Alabama first saw action in the north Atlantic before being sent to the Pacific Theater. The ship took part in almost every major naval engagement there.

Feller commanded an anti-aircraft crew during amphibious assaults on New Guinea, Guam, Kwajalein and Peleliu. His men played an important roll defending the Alabama against kamikaze attacks during the campaigns of the Philippines and Okinawa.

He was discharged in the sum-

mer of 1945 with the rank of chief petty officer and received all three of the military's campaign medals as well as eight bronze battle stars.

After retiring from baseball, Feller was asked if he ever regretted the decision to serve rather than add to his baseball numbers.

"I have no regrets," Feller said. "The only win I wanted was to win World War II. This country is what it is today because of our victory in that war."

What beautiful words from a true American patriot.

Bob Feller died on Wednesday, Dec. 15, at the age of 92.

Enjoy your Christmas and thank a vet since you can worship freely. It's quite a gift.

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Church of Christ 332-2380, Pars. 332-3424 502 W. Spencer Norman Morrow - Minister Bible Class 11 a.m. Morning Worship 10 a.m. Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m. United Methodist Church Office 332-2292, Church 332-2254, 512 S. Scott Pastor Morita Truman Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m. Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Seventh-Day Adventist Church 785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams Pastor Jerry Nowack Sabbath School 9:30 Morning Worship 10:45 St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church 625 S. River • 332-2680 Fr. Roger Meitl Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m. Weekday Mass 8:30 a.m. Confessions Sat. 4-4:30 Salem Lutheran Church 332-3002 Pastor Chris Farmer Morning Worship 10:30 a.m. Communion 3rd Sunday Solid Rock Baptist Church 412 S. Denison Welcomes You! Pastor Allen Coon Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m. First Christian Church Pastor Jeff Landers 332-2956 • 118 E. Webster Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m. Church Service 10:15 a.m. First Baptist Church 2nd & Scott • 332-3921 J.W. Glidewell, Pastor Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m., Wed. AWANA Club, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. St. Francis Community Church 332-3150 204 N. Quincy Street www.sfccfamily.com Pastor: David Butler Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Potluck & Communion - Every 2nd Sunday Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m. Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC 202 N. College Pastor Ken Hart 332-2928 Pars. 332-2312 Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Communion 1st Sunday of the Month St. Francis Equity St. Francis Herald