

Opinion

A Kansas Viewpoint

Always room for improvement

From The Garden City Telegram

Words can't capture the horror and grief families of school shooting victims experience.

The nation as a whole has been rocked by a trio of school shootings, the most recent when a man shot several young girls at an Amish school in Lancaster, Pa. Five students were killed, and five more remained hospitalized.

It was the third fatal school shooting in days. Before that, a gunman in Bailey, Colo., took several girls hostage at a high school before killing one of them, and a principal in Cazenovia, Wis., was shot and killed by a ninth-grader.

... It's worth noting that two of the recent shootings weren't carried out by students, but rather by disgruntled men who apparently had no ties to the schools they targeted.

That unstable individuals had access to guns is an obvious concern. Another is that the gunmen had easy access to the schools they victimized.

With that in mind, it's no surprise school districts are again reviewing safety strategies — plans that should include careful screenings of all adults who enter schools.

Parents understandably must wonder if enough is being done in their communities and schools to prevent such tragedies.

They should ask school officials about security and safety plans, and how often emergency drills are conducted. Parents at schools without safety committees should offer to form such groups.

Parents also should know how often teachers and staff receive crisis training. ...

School officials contacted in the wake of the recent shootings said they're considering extra security, with a look at such added measures as surveillance cameras, ID badges for students and staff, and new emergency-response drills.

School district officials and district patrons should never be satisfied with their crisis-response plan.

When it comes to keeping students and staff safe, even a good plan has room for improvement.

Comments to any opinions expressed on this page are encouraged. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. 5th St., Colby, Kan., 67701. Or e-mail jvannostrand@nwks.com or pdecker@nwks.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the *Free 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, 2443 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715 or Fax 202/225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 303 SW 10th St. Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e-mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol, 300 SW 10th St., Rm. 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, 785/296-7399 ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963 Colby, Kan. 67701

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

John Van Nostrand - Publisher
jvannostrand@nwks.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwks.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcx@nwks.com

Jan Katz Ackerman, Area Reporter
ackermanjk@ruraltel.net

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwks.com

Jasmine Crottinger - Advertising Sales
jasminec@nwks.com

Joe Hayes - Advertising Sales
jhayes@nwks.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager
lea@nwks.com

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwks.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwks.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

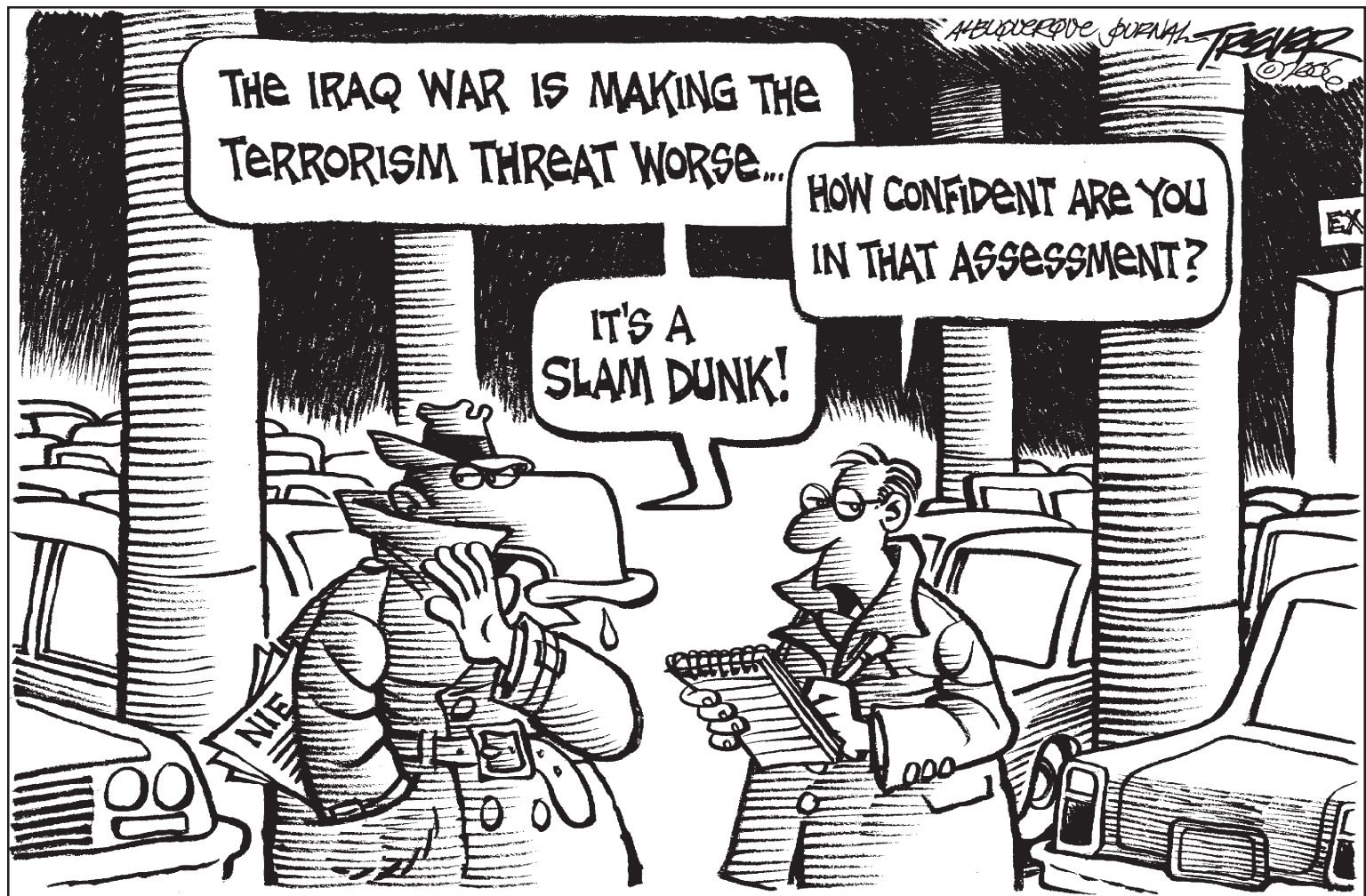
Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Judy McKnight

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the day observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Haynes Publishing Co., 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE is paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to The Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth, Colby, Kan., 67701. THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news credited to it or not otherwise herein. Member Kansas Press Association, Inland Press Association and National Newspaper Association. **SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** In Colby by carrier: 4 months \$40, 8 months \$56, 12 months \$74. By mail with in Colby and the nine-county region of Thomas, Sheridan, Decatur, Rawlins, Cheyenne, Sherman, Wallace, Logan and Gove counties: 4 months \$53, 8 months \$65, 12 months \$82. Other Kansas counties: 4 months \$60, 8 months \$70, 12 months \$85. All other states, \$85, 12 months.

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company



Monday is National Boss Day

I am one of those inquisitive people who likes to know how certain days of the year gain recognition. For example, Monday is National Boss Day, but how many of us know the reason for this designation?

In researching the subject, it appears the day was a commemoration in 1958 by an employee of State Farm Insurance Company in Deerfield, Ill. Apparently, all she had to do was register the holiday with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce asking to designate Oct. 16 as the date because it was her father's birthday.

Within the holiday guidelines it was also determined that when the date falls on a weekend, the celebration would be the closest date to the 16th. As I went on reading about this special day, I ran across a book "Never Beat the Boss at Horseshoes," which caught my attention for many reasons. First and foremost, any boss has the power to make or break an employee's career and that means the person in charge has an awesome responsibility.

There's no room for petty personality differences or holding grudges when mistakes are made. Obviously, there are some things that cannot be overlooked when illegal behavior or major insubordination issues occur.

As a manager myself, but also with someone managing me, it's a tough job.

Many years ago, I remember a woman who worked for me who made no bones about the fact that she didn't like me or the company.

No matter how hard I tried to "warm" up to this person and help her understand the management philosophy of the company, she refused to bend



Patty Decker

• Deep Thoughts

even a little.

The last straw for me was when I questioned her about something I felt she was doing that was totally unethical in the workplace.

When I approached her about it, she said, "This company has never done anything for its employees and as far as I am concerned I am going to take whatever I think is owed to me."

Suffice to say, I had to let her go and that wasn't easy for me since I felt like I failed in helping this employee adjust. Still, she had gone too far and was fired.

Many years ago and when I was a young boss, another incident involved a woman who needed a job and came in for an interview.

She started telling me about her abusive husband and how much she needed to get out from under her horrible circumstances.

Instead of looking at her qualifications; however, I used my heart to guide my decision instead of my head and what a nightmare that ended up being.

I hired her on a Monday and fired her on a Wednesday. In talking with the vice-president of the corporation I worked for at that time, he agreed that I goofed, but chalked it up to experience.

It was a mistake I didn't repeat, thankfully.

Many times I have heard employees say they are not appreciated or their own hard work is ignored. I can remember saying too.

I was about 22 or so and griping to my father about my job and how I felt taken advantage of. He responded simply by saying, "Do you get a paycheck?"

Dumbfounded, I said, "yes."

"Well, then that's your thank you," he said.

At the time, I remember thinking my dad just didn't understand, but looking back, in some ways I must agree with him.

Like employees who are busy, a boss can get busy too. Each of us may have our own set of complaints, but we are privy to what our boss goes through on a day-to-day basis.

I may walk in with what I think is an important concern that I need to speak with my boss about right away. Of course, what I don't know is how many other people have already walked into that office already complaining about something they thought was important?

I suppose the point I am trying to make is that we all have a job to do — whether we are the manager or the employee.

All-in-all, it's a tough job and why the boss makes the big bucks. But seriously, I think recognizing the good in all of us at an office is a win-win situation, which begs the question — gosh, I wonder what we are going to get our boss Monday? I guess we will just cross that bridge when we get to it.

Decker is editor of the Free Press.

Ride of a lifetime

By Steve Haynes
Wow!

I can't think of any other word to describe our ride on the USS Nebraska.

It's a little like being in a Tom Clancy movie, from the chatter of the watch standers in the control room to the covered shed at the docks, where warheads can be loaded and missiles changed out away from the prying eyes of Russian satellites, to the stone-faced Marine guards at the gate.

Crewmen sleep among the missile tubes, nine to a room, the lucky ones at least. Junior sailors bunk between compressors, under torpedoes or wherever there's space for a mattress and a curtain.

Our day started early, 0615 hours, at the motel near the Sea Tac airport where 23 of us, mostly Nebraskans, had gathered for a tour sponsored by the Big Red Sub Club. Drivers from the Gold Crew (a Trident submarine has two full crews, who rotate two or three times a year) drove us clear around Puget Sound to Naval Base Kitsap, where we got a lecture from the public affairs officer and transferred to a bus for another hour's drive north.

At the John Wayne Marina, we boarded the Olympic Venture, a Navy patrol boat (PTB-951) for an hour's ride to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, near the Canadian border, where we met Nebraska.

The day dawned gray and wet, a Seattle morning if there ever was one. Most of us braved the open deck, though some crowded near the wheel house or below decks in the tiny galley to get out of the mist.

Out in the strait, the weather warmed, the sea calmed and ahead, a gray hump loomed between four escorts — two armed Coast Guard cutters

and two small container ships loaded with — get this — boxes of rocks.

Sometimes, said the captain, Cmdr. Jeff de Beauclair, an armed helicopter joins the parade. The cutters can ward off any approaching surface vessel and the container ships, one to either side, manned by civilians, are there to take a hit from any missile fired at the sub.

With 24 nuclear-tipped Tridents and dozens of warheads, Nebraska is way to valuable to risk coming into port.

The patrol boat swings a gangway across to the sub and we walk over. In glass-like seas, it's easy transfer. An armed guard — another post-9/11 precaution — checks our ID against the list, and down the hatch we go.

A submarine, even one big enough to house standing Trident missiles, is cramped. To get anywhere, you go up and down ladders, some big enough to be stairways on land, some (like the one leading to the hatch) just vertical.

First we had lunch in the crew's mess, which lived up to the reputation of sub food stretching back to my dad's days on a submarine tender in World War II. He always talked about how the subs got steaks and A-1 while his crew got potatoes and hamburger.

We had a couple of old submariners with us, and they couldn't stop talking about the differences between Nebraska and the old diesel boats. Those were tiny, cramped, one-level tubes, while an SSBN is more than 40 foot — a four-story behemoth loaded with death.

We got to see nearly everything onboard, from the control room to the missile control panel, where Cynthia got to "fire" a test Trident. (The real trigger is locked in a safe, awaiting the president's order, which except for tests, has never come. Thank God.)

From the torpedo room to the auxiliary diesel engine to the control room, with the wheel, diving plane controls and periscopes, we missed only the sonar room and engine room, both still too classified for public view. We got to take pictures of most anything, from the crew bunks in among the missiles to the pharmacy (sick bay) to the galley.

Then it was to the bridge, 30 foot straight up a ladder through the sail, really more of a crow's nest than a command station on a modern submarine. The captain has a cushion on top of the sail, the officer of the deck stands by a computer display and sailors man watch holes behind them.

But what a view.

Cmdr. John Carter, the Blue crew captain, was in his element.

The captain let us ride on deck going down the sound and through the floating bridge, then stowed us below for the actual docking — some things there are still secret, it seems.

We'd been warned not to rile the Marine guards on the dock with cameras, and the Navy sprinted us out and back to Seattle by ferry. We got home about 2200 hours — a long day.

Someone asked what the best thing about the ride was — the electronic gear, the missiles primed to wipe out a quarter of the earth's surface, the fantastic design and awesome size of the sub — but hands down, it was the crew, serious, friendly, polite, studious, highly trained and motivated.

It's an elite unit, yes, but a shining example of the U.S. military, very impressive from top to bottom.

It was, as they say, the ride of a lifetime.

Wow.

— Steve Haynes is owner of Nor'West Newspapers including the Colby Free Press.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

