

**Free Press** Viewpoint

# Trial shaping up as three-ring circus

The trial of Scott Roeder, who's admitted killing abortion doctor George Tiller in Wichita, is shaping up to be the best circus trial since the year-long O.J. Simpson fiasco.

This week alone saw Roeder confessing the murder, and proclaiming a defense tactic that doesn't exist in U.S. law; his own lawyer refuting that defense' and a motion for a change of venue to move the trial out of Sedgwick County.

The confession is interesting. Roeder made it to reporters from The Kansas City Star and the Associated Press, not a police officer or a judge. He has a history of talking to reporters from his jail cell, having called the Associated Press just after his arrest.

A confession at this stage, well before jury selection, isn't going to help his case, especially when his attorneys put in a not-guilty plea. It might have helped with a plea bargain down to a lesser charge, but only if he had pled guilty. What he said in the confession is that his killing of Tiller was justified to protect unborn infants, and that he planned to use a "necessity defense" at trial.

That leads to the second interesting development this week. Right after the confession went public, Roeder's public defender came out saying there is no necessity defense in Kansas trial law. His own lawyer, albeit one assigned to him, just shot down his defense. Talk about shooting yourself in the foot.

The third interesting thing this week was the change-ofvenue motion. This motion is typically used when the lawyer believes the defendant won't receive a fair trial in the district where the crime was committed. Roeder's lawyer alleged that because of the media coverage, saying the story had been a top headline for 11 days in a row in the Wichita Eagle.

He has a point, but not the one he thinks he has. Sure, the media coverage was huge, but people are already biased in this case one way or the other. There will be plenty of prolife and prochoice advocates in the jury pool, but a lot of them, no matter what they think, will be in favor of a fair trial.

In the weeks to come, we'll see a lot more interesting things come out of this trial. We'll see the defense come up with a solid plan of action, hopefully one that's an actual defense and not something just seen on television. We'll see the prosecution try the case based on hard evidence and testimony. With the eyes of the nation watching, the last thing they want to do is screw up. And we'll see more bizarre behavior from Roeder.

Whatever each of us might think of this man's action, he clearly believes he's a saint and that no jury could possibly convict him. His lawyer isn't so confident, and if this lack of confidence comes through at trial, Roeder doesn't stand a chance no matter whether the trial is moved or not.

The outcome of all this is the focus of the trial. If Roeder succeeds in focusing the trial on the morality of abortion, he may have a chance to avoid a lot of jail time. If the trial focuses on the murder, he's going away for a long, long time.

In the end, it's all up the jury and where their opinions end *Kevin Bottrell* 



## Big government should behave responsibly

As an American who tends to lean to the left on political issues, I'm going to attempt to explain to conservatives why we liberals think the way we do.

I think this is important, because the Sean Hannity's and Bill O'Reilly's of the world will tell you I'm a socialist, anti-American elitist.

Hopefully this column will convince conservatives that my goal isn't to cause the destruction of the American culture or to secularize the country.

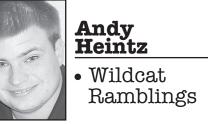
Conservatives tend to depict liberals and progressives as in favor of big government. This is true if intervention in the economy is considered the only form of big government.

I do believe there are circumstances where the government should step in and provide for those left out of the free-market system.

I do believe the government should play a role in our health-care system. Health care should be treated like a human right, not a commodity. An article in the American Journal of Public Health recently found that 45,000 people die each year because they have no insurance.

In an Op-Ed column in The New York Times, Nicholas Kristof said this means one needless death every 12 minutes.

Kristof writes, "America made a priority to provide tax breaks, largely to the wealthy, in the Bush years, at a 10-year cost including interest of \$2.4 trillion. Allocating less than half ing big government as long as they mean all that much to assure equal access to health care forms of big government. isn't deemed a priority.



I also think the government should occasionally step in and break up monopolies so we don't have banks that are deemed too big to fail. I think these large banks should be regulated to prevent another economic meltdown like the one that occurred not too long ago.

The forms of big government I'm not in favor of is jailing people without a fair trial, subsidizing shady companies like Halliburton and wealthy oil companies, torturing detainees, claiming executive privilege on issues that should be available to the public, locking up nonviolent drug offenders for a inordinate amount of time, cherry picking national intelligence and covertly financing extremist groups in Iran and warlords in Somalia. I think these are big government policies because they cost taxpayer dollars or they are done without the knowledge or consent of the American people.

These were all policies supported by George W. Bush. I'm fine with conservatives denounc-

I know conservatives are leave of environ-Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate

environmentalist. But an environmentalist is simply someone who cares about the environment.

Are there some radical groups claiming to be part of the environmental movement? Sure. But what movements don't have a few radical members? These people don't reflect the views of the movement as a whole.

Scientists and the overwhelming majority of environmental groups should not be viewed with mistrust just because of the actions of a few fringe groups.

Investments in clean energy technology like wind, solar, biofuels and geothermal have the potential to bring needed jobs to people in this country. Many of these jobs will not be exportable, which would be a big help for workers who have had their jobs exported to China and other countries over the years. Making current materials more energy-efficient will also create a lot of new jobs in this country.

Americans should be working together to make our country competitive in the green technology market. It should be considered a patriotic duty to help create a country that's proud to be red, white, blue and green.

The liberal and conservative divide doesn't have to be as hostile as it is today. We will always disagree on some things, but this doesn't mean there won't be times when we should try to meet in the middle and work together for the good of the country.

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701, or e-mail s.haynes @ nwkansas.com or colby.editor @ nwkansas. com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Free Press.

### COLBY FREE PRESS

(USPS 120-920)

155 W. Fifth St. Colby, Kan. 67701

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansas.com

(785) 462-3963

fax (785) 462-7749

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

> Steve Haynes - Publisher s.haynes @ nwkansas.com **NEWS**

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor kbottrell @ nwkansas.com

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor ballard @ nwkansa

Vera Sloan and Aubrey Spencer - Society Editors colby.society @ nwkansas.com

**ADVERTISING** 

Jasmine Stewart - Advertising Manager .stewart @ nwkansas.co

Heather Woofter - Advertising Representative hwoofter @ nwkansas

Andrea Miller - Advertising Representative

Shaly Niemeyer - Advertising Representative niemeyer @ nwkansa

Kathryn Ballard - Graphic Design kballard @ nwkansas.com

**BUSINESS OFFICE** 

Robin Tubbs - Office Manager rtubbs @ nwkansas.con

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator support @ nwkansas.com

#### NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, Jim Bowker, Judy McKnight, Barbara Ornelas, Tasha Shores, Kris McCool

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

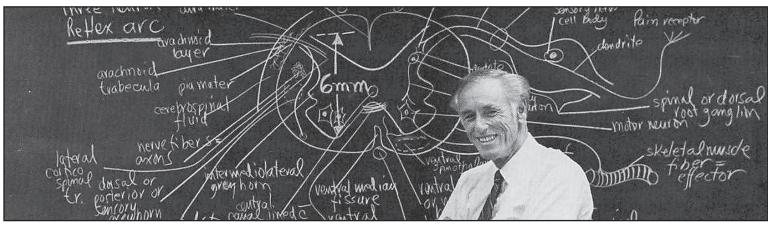
PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 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 herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95. Student rate, nine months, in Colby, Thomas County and Oakley, \$64; mailed once per week elsewhere in the U.S. \$72

system.

Conservatives have every right to oppose mental groups and the role they play in in- is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. health-care reform, but they should be will-fluencing our energy policies. I have talked He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, ing to accept the needs created by the current to people who love nature and hunting, but sports and opinion writing. would be appalled if someone labeled them an



The late Dr. Leland Keller presented a step-by-step chalk board illustration of spinal cord anatomy for one of his classes at Pittsburg State University in this photo provided by his wife.

### Chalkboard can outdo PowerPoint

Old-fashioned. Outmoded. Traditional. You would be hard pressed to find a real chalkboard in some schools. No more white stripes on the back of the teacher's trousers or dress. Chalk, blackboards and erasers are out.

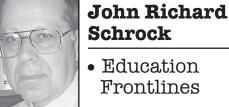
Well, maybe not.

Computer presentations have been standard in many classrooms for a decade. They are often duplicated in handouts or made available on the teacher's website. But many students' heads are hitting their desks as they drop off into sleep.

More and more college students ask their advisors to enroll them in non-computer classes if available. And some colleges have yanked the electronics to go back to face-to-face explanation and discussion.

The reasons are simple. Look at the above chalk board presentation by the legendary late Dr. Leland Keller of Pittsburg State University. Keller was a master lecturer. Medical Center faculty could spot a "Keller student" in a few weeks because of the student's command of detail and measurements. We see in this chalkboard the summation of a class hour where students built an understanding of spinal cord anatomy and the reflex arc. It is all there. But you know it started with a simple line at the beginning and built in complexity, mind-to-mind with the student.

If you examined each student's notebook, you would find this same complex drawing as they followed him from that simple beginning.



Well beyond what they would have done on their own, they have filled their pages with this complex drawing and when they look back at it later, they recall the construction.

We teachers sometimes joke that the learning goes on between the hand and the shoulder when notes are taken. But of course, it is the process of systematically drawing out this complexity that impresses it upon the brain.

Now compare that with an equivalent slide, either projected in full complete complexity on-screen, or snapped together by mouse clicks in textbook-perfect pieces. Students drop their pencils. Their notebooks remain blank. The teacher didn't draw it, and they aren't going to either.

With chalk, the attentive student is following the teacher's mind. A math teacher discovers that a class of students has not understood the math problems assigned the day before. The teacher turns to the board, and carefully works through the steps of the math problem in chalk. The student puts his or her mind in the perspective of the teacher and follows the

logic of the solution as it is silently written out. This can be exactly the same example given in the textbook, but now the student follows and understands what was not evident from the cold page.

Chalk is good because it takes time to write it out. It gives time the students need to think and transcribe into their notebooks. Zipping in a new line on the screen, or uncovering another line on an overhead is not the same. With chalk, you are thinking through the ideas, word by word and line-by-line with your students. And if a new class enters to cover the same topic, you erase it all and begin thinking through it again with the next class.

Of course, I use videos and presentations when necessary. And I teach my student teachers the appropriate use, expensive as it is. But when a class is involved enough to ask questions and carry the subject beyond the predictable, that is when you grab the chalk and journey together.

No batteries. No energy costs. No updates for compatibility.

"Chalk 1.0" remains one of the most effective means of helping the student understand what is in the mind of the teacher, as ut has been for over two centuries.

John Richard Schrock, a professor of biology and department chair at a leading teacher's college, lives in Emporia. He emphasizes that his opinions are strictly his own.

۲