

Other Viewpoints

Early salvos flying in judges' election

A full-page ad that ran in a Topeka newspaper last week is just a taste of what may be in store for the state as it heads toward a retention vote for its top judges in November.

The ad placed by a Lenexa businessman focused on Kansas Supreme Court Justice Carol Beier's participation as a judge for a moot court competition in California. The competition was sponsored by the Williams Institute, which is part of the UCLA School of Law.

Judging moot court presentations is common practice for judges, who see it as part of their professional duty to help train the next generation of attorneys. The competition isn't judged in the same way as a trial. The winners are chosen on the basis of how well they present their case, not its legal merits. In moot court, judges are more like teachers than judges.

Nonetheless, Doug Johnson thought it was worth buying a full page ad to inform voters of Beier's participation in the event. Not coincidentally, Beier faces a retention vote in November, and Johnson has run three other ads attacking her for the Kansas Supreme Court's 2005 school funding decision.

In last week's ad, Johnson concentrated on the fact that the Williams Institute focuses on sexual orientation law and public policy and that the case argued in the moot court competition concerned medical treatment of transgendered individuals. Johnson told a Topeka newspaper that he wasn't saying Beier did anything wrong. "I just think the public has a right to know that."

So he ran a full page ad filled with innuendo. His is the only name on the ad, but others could have contributed money to pay for the ad — and, according to current state law, people who run ads targeting Beier or any other Supreme Court or Court of Appeals judge facing a retention vote will never have to report where the money came from or how it was spent.

The gap in state campaign finance laws was discovered after Kansans for Life, an anti-abortion group, launched its "Fire Beier" campaign targeting the justice for the court's handling of abortion-related cases. It had gone largely unnoticed because judicial retention elections had never attracted this kind of attention or publicity.

It's bad enough that state laws allow unlimited spending for "issue" ads not paid for by a candidate's campaign. The loophole that leaves judge retention votes out of campaign finance reporting laws means that voters also will never know who was contributing money — or why — to try to influence votes in those races.

That is, unless state legislators act quickly to close the legal gap. Legislation that would do that has been introduced in the Senate and shouldn't be lost in the shuffle as the session winds down. The fact that Beier's retention vote has drawn so much attention and money so early in the election cycle makes it imperative that donors — on both sides — be held accountable for their expenditures and positions in retention elections.

— Lawrence Journal-World, via The Associated Press

Write us

The Colby Free Press encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of general interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor @ nwkansan.com

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 @ nwkansan.com

NEWS

Kevin Bottrell - News Editor
kbottrell @ nwkansan.com

Andy Heintz - Sports Reporter
aheintz @ nwkansan.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard @ nwkansan.com

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

ADVERTISING

Heather Woolfer - Advertising Representative
hwoolfer @ nwkansan.com

Andrea Miller - Advertising Representative
a.miller @ nwkansan.com

Shaly Niemeyer - Advertising Representative
sniemeyer @ nwkansan.com

Kathryn Ballard - Graphic Design
kballard @ nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Robin Tubbs - Office Manager
rtubbs @ nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support @ nwkansan.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager

Lana Westfahl, Jim Jackson, Betty Morris, Jim Bowker, Judy McKnight, Barbara Ornelas, 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

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD
KOERBA



Ancient practices form Easter traditions

Last night I read one of the Easter meditations from Millie Horlacher's new book, "Seasons of Salt." I read the entire book just after I received it, but Millie has arranged the book in a fashion that each chapter can be used as a daily meditation, so I chose to use the last several chapters for my Easter meditations.

After I finished reading and laid the book aside, I noticed a catalog lying on the table beside me that I received in the mail that day. It showed pictures of Easter gifts featuring baskets, bunnies, chicks, and, of course, Easter eggs. That set me to wondering how we started using such images to celebrate such a religious season of the year.

Therefore, as I often do now days, I went to the computer to see what kind of information I could find about such items. This is what I discovered after surfing the net on inventors.about.com. They state, "In one way or another all the customs are a 'salute to spring' marking rebirth."

We use the Easter lily as the Easter flower because it is named after Eastre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and a festival used to be held in her honor every year at the vernal equinox, the beginning of spring.

The Easter bunny used to be called the "Easter Hare," and because hares and rabbits have frequent multiple births, they became a symbol of fertility. The children believed that hares laid eggs in the grass, and that started the first Easter egg hunts. The Romans believed that "All life comes from an egg." Christians consider eggs to be "the seed of life" and so



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

they are symbolic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

According to the reference, in ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and Persia eggs were dyed for spring festivals, and in medieval Europe, beautifully decorated eggs were given as gifts.

In England, Germany and some other countries, children rolled eggs down hills on Easter morning, a game which has been connected to the rolling away of the rock from Jesus Christ's tomb when he was resurrected. British settlers brought this custom to the New World, and that is where First Lady Dolly Madison, wife of the fourth U.S. president, got the idea to organize the first egg rolling at the nation's capital for the area children. This has continued throughout the years except on occasions such as during times of war.

I also discovered from my research that the tradition of holding Easter parades stemmed from the tradition of people buying new spring clothes for Easter church services, when everyone would walk around the town showing off their clothes. This led to the American custom of Easter parades; the most famous is along Fifth Avenue in New York City.

However, my favorite story is the one by Stephanie Williams Hope that I read to my children when they were small from the *Ideals Magazine*. She tells that on the day Jesus was crucified there was a loud noise heard coming from the city with some people crying, some shouting, some laughing, and then the thunder started and the sky turned dark and the animals of the forest became frightened.

All of the animal ran to their meeting place in the center of the forest, where they decided, since the rabbit was so small and brown and would blend into the crowd so that he wouldn't be noticed, he should go to the city and report back what he could find out.

When the rabbit came to the city, he saw three strange trees with only one branch across the top and people had been nailed to them. The bunny ran to the middle tree and looked up and saw a man with gentleness and sadness in his eyes. The bunny felt the wrongness of what was happening and he felt sad because he couldn't help. When he looked up again to the gentle man's gaze, his fur began to lighten as he felt the peace and love coming from the eyes of Jesus. Soon the bunny's fur was as white and pure as snow as he became a reminder throughout all the centuries to come of man's ignorance and helplessness and the forgiveness of God.

Marj Brown has lived in Colby for 62 years and has spent a good deal of that time writing about people and places here. She says it's one of her favorite things to do.

'Euthanasia wrong,' responds reader

To the Editor:

Euthanasia is always wrong.

A letter to the editor, "Is euthanasia always wrong?" in the Friday, Feb. 26, issue of the *Colby Free Press* stirred a host of emotions in me. First of all, lest anything think that I am unsympathetic to the plight of a suffering animal, I grew up on a farm and currently own a pet. I do feel compassion for anyone that has to make the unenviable life and death decision for their pet. In the letter, the author compared human beings in Haiti suffering traumatic, life-changing injuries to an old epileptic, blind cat. The letter proposed that euthanizing the cat and euthanizing injured people were equal acts of mercy; even going to far as to attempt to prove that God would endorse such a misdirected facade.

"People are created in the image of God; body, mind and spirit (Genesis 1:27) and given dominion over creation (Genesis 1:28)." Placing people and animals on the same par reduces the image of God to the status of an animal. To do such a thing is the worst sort of blasphemy against God.

God has reserved for Himself the power over life and death. "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39). Both euthanasia and abortion are murder of innocent human beings. As a matter of fact, God has declared that anyone that takes a human life must forfeit his own life (Leviticus 24:17).

Whatever can be done should be done to alleviate or eliminate the pain associated with the types of injuries suffered by the Haiti



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

earthquake victims. Human suffering on any level is something that pulls on the heart of any person with the slightest bit of compassion. My question for the author of that letter is, "What person or entity has the discernment and authority to make life and death decisions for another?" We certainly can't trust the government and authority to make such decisions. The government cannot put together a health care plan for reasonably healthy people to receive medical care for common curable illnesses. I vehemently oppose allowing the government to make life and death decisions for me or anyone else.

Using the theory proposed by the author of the letter; the states of Kansas and Louisiana should have euthanized some of the victims of the Greensburg tornado and Hurricane Katrina because they had limited resources, no family, severe injuries, required prolonged health care and could no longer function according to some arbitrary quality of life standard. One cannot even imagine the anger of God nor the public outcry toward such an egregious policy. The victims of the Haiti earthquakes have no less value in the eyes of God than any other person in any other place on earth. It saddens me that there are people living in our commu-

nity who have so little regard for human life. The answer to the question posed in the article "Is euthanasia always wrong?" in regards to a human being is yes, euthanasia is always wrong.

Pastor Bernard Heinz
Colby

Value school music

To the Editor:

I would like to thank you for the insert last week about "Music in Our Schools Week." How nice it was to read about various music organizations in our schools. When I was teaching music many years ago and the board was contemplating music cuts, I told them that everybody expected the band to play at football and basketball games, and yet, I had never seen football and basketball players entertain at band or vocal concerts. We didn't get the anticipated cuts!

Music is the oldest of the arts and the curriculum — the angels were singing in heaven before we humans came into being. In early caves, many pictures were found drawn on the walls, thus showing art was apparent even then. During the Middle Ages, music was considered one of the basic subjects in the curriculum. I'm glad it is still going strong in our schools. I applaud all of our teachers who work so diligently to teach our youth how to read, listen and perform individually and as a group. They are to be highly commended.

Joan Albers,

Retired Colby Music Teacher

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

