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## Other Viewpoints

# Offenders duck state registry law

When a sex offender in Kansas moves from the state and doesn't register his new address, he becomes the concern of the U.S. Marshals Service, which enforces sex-offender laws across state lines.

It's common for sex offenders to not re-register when they move, as a *Journal-World* investigation last September found. According to the report, more than 160 Kansas sex offenders did not register in their new state, and, depending on the state, that could be a federal or state crime.

The *Journal-World* provided the Marshals Service with the list it had compiled for Kansas, and over the past several months agents have been tracking down the sex offenders who have failed to register in their new state.

The Marshals Service found some of the offenders had died or moved to states with different registration laws that did not require them to register.

What is left is a list of 22 cases, four of which have led to arrests for other offenses, and the suspects could face additional failure-to-register charges. Two others are serving in the U.S. Army, which, according to the Marshals Service, is aware of both men's sex-offender status.

The Marshals Service is searching for several other offenders who have failed to register.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation, which is responsible for the Kansas Sex Offender Registry, sends letters to states notifying them that a registered sex offender is entering their state. But after that, it's up to the other state and the offender to make sure they comply with the new state's law. If there isn't any communication, neither the state nor the Marshals Service would be aware of the sex offender's status.

As Laura Ahearn, executive director of Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victims Center, a nonprofit organization that advocates for more accountability in sex offender registries nationwide, says, "We've established a law that requires society's most cunning of criminals to register on an honor system."

The Marshals Service spent valuable time tracking down the 160 names on the *Journal-World's* list, basically picking up the state's slack. The service should be commended for its work.

Now it's time for a national sex offender registry and a unified reporting system. Inconsistent laws among states make keeping track of sex offenders too complicated, which, in turn, endangers an uninformed public.

— Lawrence Journal-World, via the Associated Press

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roberts.senate.gov/public/

**U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran**, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax (202) 225-5124 moran.senate.gov/public/

**U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp**, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

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# Singer exits; song goes on

It's always a big let down when a musical act you like exits the stage.

It can happen for many reasons, be it a death, or the band breaking up or a favorite musician pursuing another career, but it's a sad realization that your favorite act isn't going to be cutting records anymore. Don McLean knew it; after all that's what "American Pie" is all about.

What brought it to my mind was the recent death of Adam "MCA" Yauch of the Beastie Boys. I was never a huge fan of the Beastie Boys, but they were on the radio quite a lot when I was in high school, and I've always enjoyed their song, "Sabotage," and the hilarious 1970s cop show parody video they made for it.

However, there have been plenty of bands over the years that I've been sorry to see go like Audioslave or A Perfect Circle. I seem to find bands far too late in their life cycle, so there's been quite a few times when I've started listening to bands after they broke up or after they lost a core member. I started listening to Alice in Chains years after the death of singer Layne Stanley, something I only discovered after researching the band on the Internet.

The one that really affected me though came about a year ago when I heard that singer Roy Khan had decided to leave Kamelot. Khan, a Norwegian singer whose full name is Roy Khantat, is a classically-trained opera singer, and had spent the last 14 years as the frontman for Kamelot, an American symphonic metal band. He is, to my mind, one of the world's most incredible singers, and Kamelot is one of my all-time favorite bands. Khan has an unparalleled ability to project emotion through his voice. He's also a favorite of mine, because I can sing along with most of songs, although he has a much larger range than I do.

So when I heard he was leaving the band due to health issues, it was a depressing moment. Will Kamelot be as great without him? I hope so, because it wasn't only him that made the band great. The rest of the musicians in the band are top notch, and I hope they find a new



**Kevin Bottrell**

• Simple tricks and nonsense

singer.

Some of you may be asking, what is symphonic metal? Well, it can mean a lot of different things, but in essence it means a metal band — loud, heavy guitars and hard driving drums — with classical music elements, and usually some kind of operatic singer, rather than the "death grunts" of some traditional metal bands. It isn't a style of metal that's prevalent in the United States, and it took me a while to discover it.

I'm sort of strange when it comes to music. I've never really followed what was popular at the time. When I was a kid, my parents listened to "oldies" on the radio, so that's what I listened to. My CD case was full of Beatles albums or the soundtrack to *Forrest Gump*, which remains a favorite. I could sing along with the Rolling Stones or Herman's Hermits or Credence Clearwater Revival, while at that time all my friends were listening to Tupac or Nirvana or Britney Spears.

When I got into high school, I played in the jazz band and in the salsa band that our percussion instructor put together. So I listened to a lot of Miles Davis, Tito Puente and Arturo Sandoval.

It was only very late in high school that I started listening to "modern" rock bands. I was attracted to sort of dark, heavy sounds, but I didn't like the kind who just yelled as loud as they could into the mic. Of course by that time the only thing any suburban white teenager listened to was gangster rap, so I was still "out of touch."

Then I heard a new (at the time) band called Evanescence. They're old hat now, having been overplayed on the radio in the extreme,

but when I first heard them I was floored. A beautiful, clear female voice backed up by heavy distorted guitars. To me it sounded like a match made in heaven. You see I liked heavy metal, but I often couldn't listen to it because the singers had no sense of, well, music. A lot of them pretty much just scream, and for someone with a musical background like me (modest as it is), that just didn't fly.

Once I'd listened to Evanescence so much I could recite their songs from memory, I went looking for similar bands, but in America, there really aren't any. It took me years to learn this, but the female-fronted metal band has actually been a staple of the music scene in Europe for decades. Why it hasn't caught on here, I don't really know. But once I stumbled on bands like Lacuna Coil, Nightwish and Epica, I knew I'd found my music heaven, and they call it symphonic metal. Kamelot was one of the few to have a male lead singer, which made it all the better because I could sing along without having to try and match from a lower octave, something I can do though thanks to my high school band teacher, who insisted we be able to sing any music we played.

I'm always looking for more interesting music. I recently discovered folk metal, an amazing blend of Celtic or northern European folk music and metal. There's really an endless number of metal genres, but I don't like most of them. And it's not just metal either. I find songs I like everywhere, be it bluegrass, 80s hair bands, classical or 60s music. Just another chapter in my eclectic musical tastes that are rarely, if ever, in tune with what's popular.

But one thing is certain: none of these bands or artists will be around forever. The silver lining is that new musicians always step up to take their place.

Kevin Bottrell, editor of the Goodland Star-News, is a Colorado State University graduate who believes that the middle road is often the high one. Contact him at kbottrell@nwkansas.com

# Extension agents irreplaceable

To the Editor:

Referring to the story, "K-State Extension, county weigh district options," in the May 9 issue of the *Colby Free Press*, I am a big believer in Kansas State University county Extension agents.

A lot of farmers use private crop consultants today, but where do they get their information? Why, from K-State! Area farmers are doubly blessed because we have The Northwest Kansas Extension and Research station located in Colby.

Why do counties merge their Extension operations into a district? To SAVE money ... not to spend more. Typically, K-State pays half a county agent's salary while the county pays the other half and provides office space.

In my opinion, merging county Extension



## Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

operations into districts is penny wise and pound foolish. Each county should have its own county agent. The test plots alone are worth the money ... not to mention their help with our youth in 4-H. More than once, I have had to have the county Extension agent come out to solve a problem that my crop consultant couldn't.

I was against Sheridan County merging with Decatur and Norton counties to form the Twin Creeks Extension District.

Rawlins County had the option to merge with the Sunflower, Golden Prairie and Twin Creeks districts. I suspect that didn't happen because Rawlins is "in a hole."

Thomas County has a well-funded and excellent Extension program. The taxpayers here have no obligation to bail out Rawlins County, no matter how many of their residents shop and work here.

I am not in favor of merging Extension districts to save money. I am definitely not in favor of Thomas County merging with Rawlins to spend MORE money.

Gary Davis, Rexford

## 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.

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## Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

