



Free Press Viewpoint

Shooting shows silly speculation

Early last Friday morning, a masked gunman came through an emergency exit at a theater in Aurora, dropped a tear gas grenade and opened fire. At least 12 people were killed and 71 more injured.

One of the frustrating parts of a tragedy like this is the tendency for politics to get involved and for people to overreact.

There's the usual media speculation. When you have so much airtime to fill and few facts to fill it with, you often get silly speculation, such as ABC News saying the suspect in custody had connections to the Tea Party – something for which they had only thin, circumstantial evidence. They have since retracted that comment.

There have been stories claiming liberal groups will turn this into an argument to ban guns, or movies, or comic books, or other things. There have also been claims that this is a conspiracy to swing things in favor of the United Nations small arms treaty.

There was speculation the gunman might be reenacting a scene from a Batman comic book from 1986, which included a shooting in a theater. At the time that article was posted, no one knew whether or not the gunman had any interest in comic books or Batman in general.

One blogger was outraged that before the movie there had been a trailer shown for the upcoming movie "Gangster Squad," which included a shot of several mafia gunmen shooting in a theater. The blogger complained to Warner Brothers, which has since pulled the trailer, as if the studio could have somehow known this would happen, and as if the trailer somehow contributed to the shooting.

We often bemoan violence in the press, movies, television or video games, as if we are sponges that soak up all the stimuli around us and regurgitate it with no control when squeezed. Many people are quick to blame these forms of entertainment and information dissemination.

While it's true we can be influenced by what we see and hear around us, at a certain point we decide to act or not. No talking head, no movie, no TV show, no video game can make you do something. Whatever his motives were, the Aurora gunman made his own decision to act. The Virginia Tech shooter made his own decision to act. The Columbine and Fort Hood and Norway shooters made their own decisions to act.

The blame begins and ends with them. Anyone who tells you different likely has an agenda.

Yes, there are questions that need to be asked. Did the shooter obtain all these weapons legally? Could the theater have better security? Why were there so many young children at a midnight showing of a movie that is not a children's movie?

However, the things posted on the Internet are just ridiculous. We need to temper our reactions and wait for the facts.

Above all, we must not give in to fear. Security is being tightened at theaters across the country and that's fine. But we should not let what was likely one lone act of terrorism by a disturbed individual stop us from liberty and the pursuit of happiness. When you start allowing terrorists to dictate your life, that's when they win. — Kevin Bottrell

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 colby.editor@nwkansan.com. Opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Free Press, its staff or the owners.

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.

Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander@nwkansan.com

NEWS

Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter
colby.sports@nwkansan.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansan.com

Sam Dieter - News Reporter
colby.editor@nwkansan.com

Christina Beringer - Society Reporter
colby.society@nwkansan.com

ADVERTISING

Kathryn Ballard
Advertising Representative
kballard@nwkansan.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter@nwkansan.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager
rschindler@nwkansan.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansan.com

NORWEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager
Jim Jackson, Jim Bowker, Gary Meyer, Pressmen

Lana Westfahl, Judy McKnight, Kris McCool, Stacy Brashear, Tracy Traxel, Mailing

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.

Duff duffpink.com



There's heartache in being a parent

The doctor took a deep breath before sharing the unwelcome news. "I'm afraid if you want to save her vision in the one eye, she will have to have surgery."

I looked at my sweet little daughter, Trissa, sitting so bravely on the big white bed, and my heart ached. We had tried everything to avoid this, but to no avail.

We had noticed when she was only 2 that her one eye didn't seem to focus on us. We had taken her to an ophthalmologist, and he had let us know that her one eye wasn't working with the dominant one. And as the dominant one took more and more of the work load, the other one tended to do less and less, until she was losing vision in it altogether.

To try to strengthen the weaker eye, the doctor had us put a patch over the stronger one. But she couldn't see well, and she would tear the patch off, so I sat down with her and explained why we had to leave it on.

Between our talk and a more permanent patch, she left it mostly alone. It was hard to watch her bump into things while her vision slowly returned to the weaker eye. But even harder was watching other children tease her. At Halloween, to help out, we dressed her as the cutest little pirate ever.

Finally, the day came that the patch was removed. We had great hope it had done the trick, but even though her vision had returned,

Other Opinions

Daris Howard Life's Outtakes

the minute the dominant eye started working again, the weaker one began to slide back into inactivity. That was when the doctor told us that surgery was likely the only option to permanently save her vision.

It was shortly thereafter that Trissa and I headed for an appointment at Primary Children's Hospital, a five hour drive away. Trying to make the trip fun, we stopped to eat at her favorite restaurant, and I played her favorite children's songs on the tape player as we traveled.

I steeled my heart for the specialist's prognosis, but could still not block the despair I felt in my heart when he told me that surgery had to be done right away.

Less than a week later, leaving our other three children with my brother's family, my wife and I took our little daughter to the hospital. I took Trissa on my lap and explained what would happen, and she seemed far braver at

3 years old than I, myself, felt. And nothing could prepare me for the dread I felt when she walked off with the nurse for the surgery.

It seemed like forever before they told us she was coming out of the anesthesia and invited us into the recovery room. It was almost more than I could bear to see our little daughter with both eyes bandaged. She was crying from the pain, and I was allowed to take her into my arms. Once she knew it was me, she snuggled in tightly, as if seeking safety, and her cries turned to sniffing and whimpering.

When the doctor came to give us the report, he informed us they had been able to do quite a bit, but it would most likely take two more surgeries. With my daughter still curled up in my arms whimpering, I told him I wasn't sure I could watch her go through any more.

He looked at me with great understanding as he spoke. "Yes you can. As a parent, the hardest thing you will ever do is endure the heartache of watching your child suffer. But there is one thing stronger than your desire to remove the suffering, and that is your love. And since you know it will help her, you will endure it."

And I did.

Daris Howard, award-winning, syndicated columnist, playwright, and author, can be contacted at daris@darishoward.com; or visit his website at www.darishoward.com.

House candidate gets strong support

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in support of Ward Cassidy to be the state representative from the 120th District. With the new redistricting, Colby is now in the 120th district and I strongly support Ward. I have worked with Ward for many years and I know his commitment to education and to Northwest Kansas.

Over the last two years, Mr. Cassidy has been very successful in the legislature. He saved school districts thousands of dollars by challenging citations issued by the State Fire Marshal's office. He fought to get the head of the Board of Healing Arts to come to his district to help area hospital administrators deal with the concerns of getting quality health care professionals to Northwest Kansas. His work on the Education Budget committee was a big help in schools receiving more money to the base state aide. He also carried the bill in the House to save Western Kansas home-owned carnivals.

Ward worked hard in his first term to position himself for future success as well. He was appointed to the all-important Appropriations Committee which runs virtually everything the Kansas Legislature does. He is also recognized as one of the most knowledgeable legislators in school finance. He has always been a strong supporter of Colby Community College.

The primary for this, and other, positions is Aug. 7. Please vote. In summary, northwest Kansas needs a strong voice in the legislature and I believe Ward Cassidy provides that.

Larry B. Gabel, Colby

Peter's robbed, Paul's paid

To the Editor:

I know you've all heard the phrase "robbing Peter to pay Paul." A lot of us have to do that in order to make ends meet each month. It's what you have to do if something unexpected/un-



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

planned comes up, but needs immediate attention. Believe it or not, it is how many people survive in this economy.

I'm sure many of you don't know the first thing about Keynesian economics. Me either. It was explained to me this way: "The government should spend in times of recession and cut spending in times of a good economy. Basically government needs to replace private sector spending."

All well and good, but where is the government getting their money when government is nearly \$16 trillion in debt? It's called borrowing. Government is borrowing from China – Peter – to pay government debts – Paul.

I'm no economist, but isn't that why the Great Depression lasted so long? Didn't government take the place of family, friends, communities and churches? The aforementioned always took care of their own, didn't they? From stories my grandparents told over the years, yes, they did. We have up to five or six generations now that rely on the government for something or everything.

This country we call America was founded on the blood, sweat and tears of generations long gone. Generations of people too proud to be beholden to someone, anyone for anything, without paying that someone back, somehow, someday.

Generations of Americans have become complacent about protecting our freedom. They depend entirely too much on the benevo-

lence of a too far-reaching, far too intrusive government. The American government wants to be like the "great and powerful Oz" and give everything to everybody; all they have to do is ask and it will be given to them in exchange for a little paperwork and a lot less freedom. Hmm, sounds to me like what happened in Nazi Germany before World War II began.

Now back to Keynesian Economics 101: Obama is all about getting more people on the dole. Right now, approximately one in seven people get government help of one type or another. There are ads being run to get even more people onto food stamps and welfare.

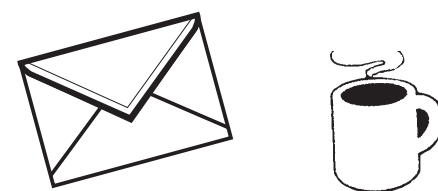
And yet there are not enough taxes being funneled to Washington, because there is no worry for fear of Obamacare. So the Prez sez "Raise taxes." All I have to say is "Dammit, sir, don't we already pay enough?"

Some taxes not figured into federal income taxes withheld from your paycheck: gasoline tax, alcohol tax, cigarette tax, property tax, real estate tax, road tax – a hidden tax figured in gas tax, death tax, inheritance tax, farm tax – paid by the acre, ranching tax – paid by the head. There are scads more, but I'll stop.

When my bank account shows a low or negative balance, by golly, I quit spending. What does government do? They spend and spend like there's no tomorrow.

My dad told me 25 years or so ago that the time would come when Americans are once again going to have to fight for their freedom. I think that the time is coming very soon. In November. In the voting booth.

Jari Skiles, Colby



Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

