



Other Viewpoints

Gag orders attempt to turn back clock

When accused killer James Holmes appeared Monday in district court in Arapahoe County to be formally charged with murder and attempted murder, there were no cameras to film the orange-haired suspect, as there had been a week ago. There were not supposed to be any cellphones, audio recorders, laptop computers or iPads at Monday's hearing for the man accused of killing 12 people and injuring 58 at an Aurora movie theater July 20. Judge William Sylvester has apparently decided to turn back the clock on technology in hopes he can prevent Holmes' case from turning into the kind of media circus that other high-profile cases have unfortunately become. But he should rethink that strategy and look for ways to deal with today's technology. Sylvester issued a gag order for those involved in the case and rejected media requests under Colorado's Open Records Act for University of Colorado documents related to Holmes' time at CU. Concerns about a media barrage related to the case are not without merit. Cases such as the O.J. Simpson and Casey Anthony murder trials demonstrate how excessive media coverage – in which legal and law enforcement participants, defendants and witnesses all play to the camera – can change the trajectory of a criminal case. More recently, there was the Trayvon Martin killing in Florida, in which politicians, pundits and talk-show hosts have already convicted or exonerated suspect George Zimmerman, even though the case has not proceeded beyond bond hearings. The courts in Arapahoe County, we suspect, are like most throughout the country. They are well-equipped to deal with day-to-day criminal cases and even a big murder case that draws statewide news coverage. But few are prepared to deal with the media firestorm that accompanies a case which has garnered sensational international attention, as the Holmes case has. Sylvester's gag order and other attempts to clamp down on news reporting won't halt the sort of rampant speculation that accompanies cases such as that of Holmes. Witness the reports that came from several news organizations last week saying Holmes had sent e-mails shortly before the Aurora killings to a University of Colorado psychologist, allegedly detailing much of his plan for committing mass murder. There has been no official word that such e-mails exist, even as authorities scramble to find where the leak came from. Attempting to retreat into a 19th century world through gag orders, technology bans and limited access to public documents won't prevent the 21st century from intruding. Judge Sylvester, and our judicial system in general, would do better if they looked for ways to accommodate current technology while protecting defendants' rights and the integrity of the courts. We don't pretend to know the magic fix, but we do know transparency always serves the public best. – *The Grand Junction (Colo.) Daily Sentinel via the Associated Press*

www.gjsentinel.com/opinion/articles/judicial-system-must-accommodate-public

We encourage comments on opinions expressed on this page. Mail them to the *Colby Free Press*, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

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@nwkanssas.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.

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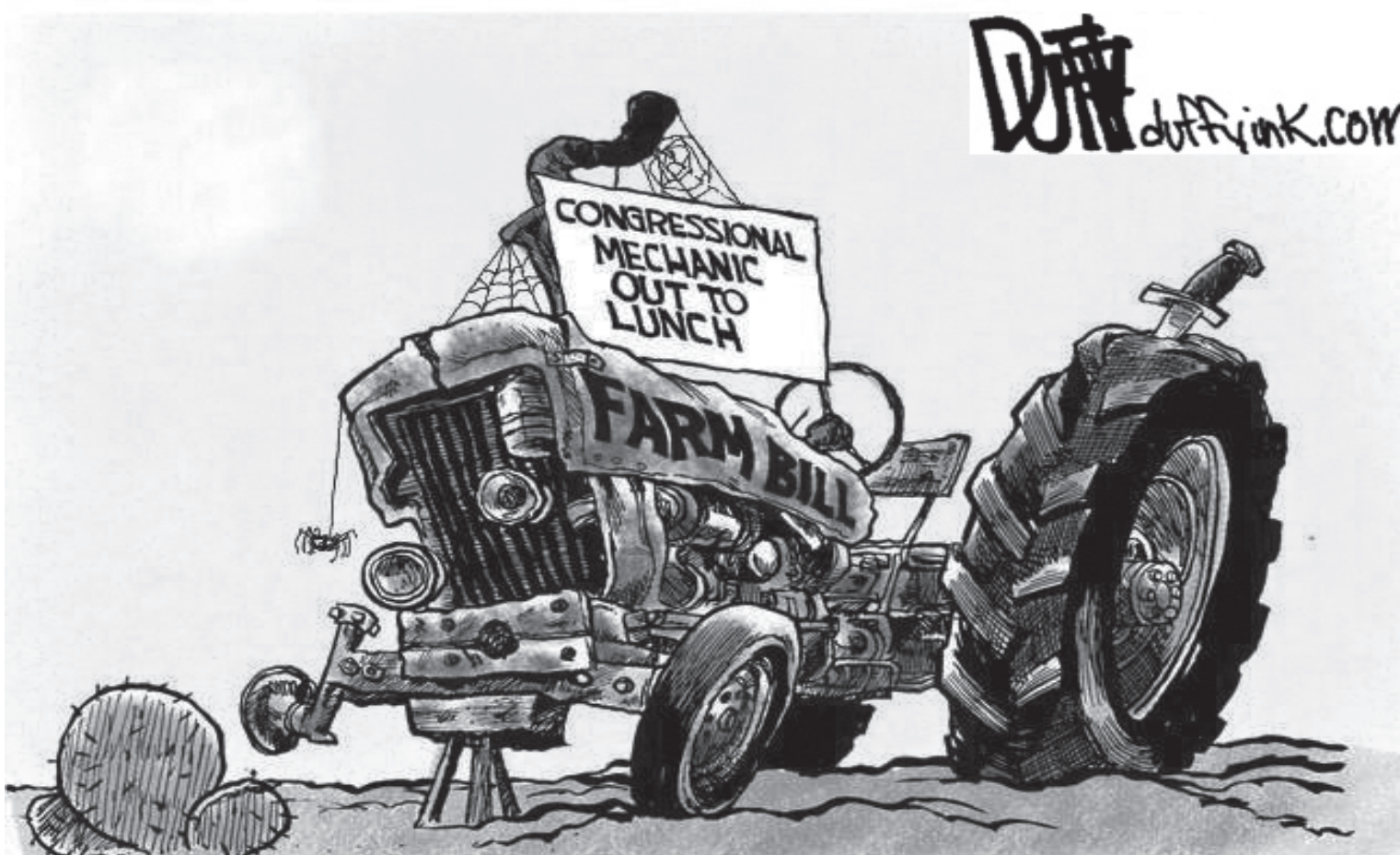
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THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by Nor'West Newspaper, 155 W.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



2012 Farm Bill Progress Show

Farmers and ranchers need to be leaders

While farmers and ranchers continue to fill our plates with food, their plates are filled with an ever-increasing number of issues. These include escalating production costs, tightening use of water, continuing drought in some western Kansas counties, the ongoing search for new markets for agricultural crops and increasing government oversight and regulation, to mention a few.

And while these are good times for some in production agriculture, they are very trying times for others. Living out on the land in the rural areas of our state, farmers sometimes experience feelings of isolation – that I'm only one voice, one person, one family and one small enterprise in an age of dwindling farming populations, coupled with a continuing exodus to larger, regional urban centers.

That said, membership and leadership roles in farm and commodity organizations are more critical today than ever before. There is strength in like-minded people. There is strength in numbers. There is also credibility when farmers and ranchers tell their own story with a common thread and a common purpose.

Even though the hired spokesmen for this vital industry continue to advocate on behalf of agriculture, farmers and ranchers still speak best for themselves. There is no substitute for farmers and ranchers telling the agricultural story.

You begin at sun up and work until sunset during spring planting. You put in 16-hour days during harvest. You bundle up and head into a fierce snowstorm to help a heifer calve.



John Schlageck

• Insights
Kansas Farm Bureau

You must demonstrate the same courage and conviction when telling your story.

Make time. Take time. Those outside our profession aren't going to defend us and tell our side. If our story is to be told, we must make sure the job is done. It is up to you. It is up to me.

That leads me to the following question: have you ever asked yourself, "Why should I serve?"

Each day, people ponder and anguish over this question. These same people wring their hands and spend sleepless nights trying to decide.

One of the strongest reasons for serving hinges on the personal satisfaction an individual derives from giving of him or herself. John Ruskin once said, "The highest reward for men's toil is not what he gets for it but what he becomes by it."

Before you decide to serve on a board or committee, evaluate the organization's position. If you believe in the ultimate goal but disagree on how it's being implemented, it should be a challenge to serve and redirect the methods used to achieve this goal.

Some people hesitate to serve because they

are unsure how the board or organization operates. No one enjoys appearing foolish or uninformed, yet each group has its unique procedures. Everyone must serve as a novice while learning the procedures.

Never feel embarrassed because you do not know all the answers. You will not be alone when asking questions.

Perhaps you are uncomfortable about serving and the thought overwhelms you. In that case, don't bite off more than you can chew.

Participate on a small scale until you become comfortable and confident. Begin by serving on a committee. Next expand your sights and serve a local organization. Continue stepping up your involvement to include county, district, state and national organizations.

Once you have committed your time and effort to serving, be dependable, prompt, prepared and contribute to that committee, organization or board.

"Leadership is that intangible quality in an individual which makes men do better than themselves, which makes men dream greater dreams and perform braver deeds." This quotation embodies the spirit of people working together for the betterment of their industries and communities. It comes from an address to Congress by Sam Rayburn of Bonham, Texas, who served as speaker of the House under eight American presidents.

John Schlageck of the Kansas Farm Bureau is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. He grew up on a diversified farm near Seguin, and his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Doctor was best medicine

To the Editor:

Thank you, Vernon Wranosky, for saying what I and numerous former patients of Dr. Victor Hildyard should have written to the *Colby Free Press*.

My friend and doctor, Vic Hildyard, saw me through numerous medical problems, the most recent being a life-changing stroke. Being an exacting person, I tend to expect the same of others. Of all people in our lives, we were blessed to have Vic and the staff he established in his clinic. He dealt with our lives with the perfection we needed, and he expected the same from others. But he himself was our best medicine.

In the weeks before his death, Vic kept encouraging me to visit my neurologist in Kansas City.

"Show him what you can do now," he said. Notice he wasn't saying show the doctor what Vic Hildyard had done for Nancy Sanders. No, he wanted me to show what I have achieved.

Vic was also telling me I should have a colonoscopy – not my favorite test!

Well, Vic, I saw Dr. B., my neurologist, last



Free Press Letter Drop

• Our readers sound off

week, and he was pleased. And I will have my colonoscopy test in the next few days.

So, here's to you, Dr. Vic. You are sorely missed.

Nancy Larsen Sanders, Colby

Death leaves medical void

To the Editor: I am so glad that Vernon Wranosky spoke up on behalf of Dr. Hildyard in his letter in the Thursday paper.

I totally agree with his letter regarding Dr. Vic Hildyard's practice, attitude and death, which leaves a huge void in our medical service. This became more than a "gap" long

before Dr. Hildyard became ill. Not allowing him to be on staff at the Colby hospital caused much inconvenience, danger and even harm to the people in Colby who could not see their Colby doctor in a Colby hospital.

My husband Jim and I moved to Colby primarily because we knew we would need medical care and expected Colby to become the major regional center for that. Shortly after we moved here, the dispute between Dr. Hildyard and the Colby hospital began. During my husband's illness, we made many trips to Oakley during the night, during a blizzard and considerable ice and snow. In my opinion, this vendetta has been carried way too far because of the Citizens Medical Center's total lack of concern for patients of Dr. Hildyard.

The stockholders and board of the "citizens" hospital need to take a long look at the amount of harm they have caused to Dr. Hildyard, his employees, patients and the entire town. However, we are so divided that conversation cannot even take place.

Judie Withers, Colby

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