

Other Viewpoints

No thanks offered for concealed carry

As if local governments didn't have enough to do this summer, they also must deal with the Legislature's meddling, unfunded mandate meant to expand concealed-carry of firearms in the state.

During the legislative debate, lawmakers seemed mostly indifferent to the real-world costs and consequences of the legislation, which requires counties, cities and other public entities to allow concealed guns in any of their buildings that do not have "adequate security measures." The final version passed the House and Senate with 104-16 and 32-7 votes, respectively, before Gov. Sam Brownback signed it April 16. It went into effect this month.

Indeed, the proponents' goal seemed simple: to make it too expensive and burdensome for local governments to continue to keep concealed guns out.

But the mandate is not playing well among the policymakers and facility directors directly responsible for public safety. More than 400 cities, counties, libraries, hospitals and other organizations have applied for the six-month exemption, according to records obtained by the *Lawrence Journal-World*. The bill also allows for a four-year exemption, if locals file a security plan with the Attorney General's Office. Public universities, colleges, community mental health centers and public health care facilities are entitled for a four-year exemption right away.

For public schools, the question has been whether to allow concealed-carry permit holders on staff to bring firearms to work.

And news reports from around the state find counties, cities and public facilities doing the depressing math: Adding security at one door of the Finney County Courthouse will cost \$180,000. Neosho County is looking at more than \$50,000 to hire private security. For the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, it would mean nearly \$100,000 for renovations and metal detectors, and perhaps another \$150,000 a year for added security.

"As we are a small, rural medical care facility with limited funds, we cannot afford to employ either a security company or additional staff nor purchase expensive metal detection equipment," wrote the chairman of the board of Mankato's Jewell County Hospital in its exemption request.

For school districts, the consequences may include insurance problems. EMC Insurance Companies, the liability coverage provider for 90 percent of the state's schools, has said it won't cover districts that let employees carry concealed guns.

"What will happen is the market will take care of this. Other companies are going to do the dollars and cents," state Sen. Forrest Knox, R-Altoona, told the *New York Times*.

Perhaps. But the Legislature should have spared the school districts and other local entities all the trouble and respected local control, instead of dictating from the gun-free Statehouse that more local buildings across the state welcome guns.

- *The Wichita Eagle*, 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 and to the point. They must be signed and carry an address and phone number.

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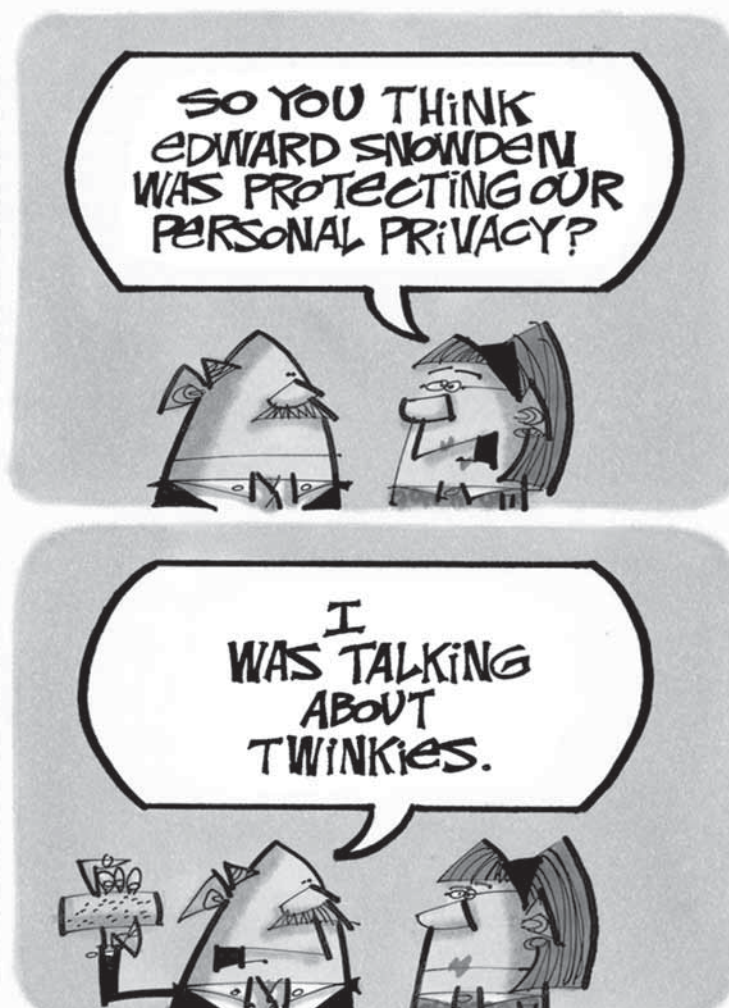
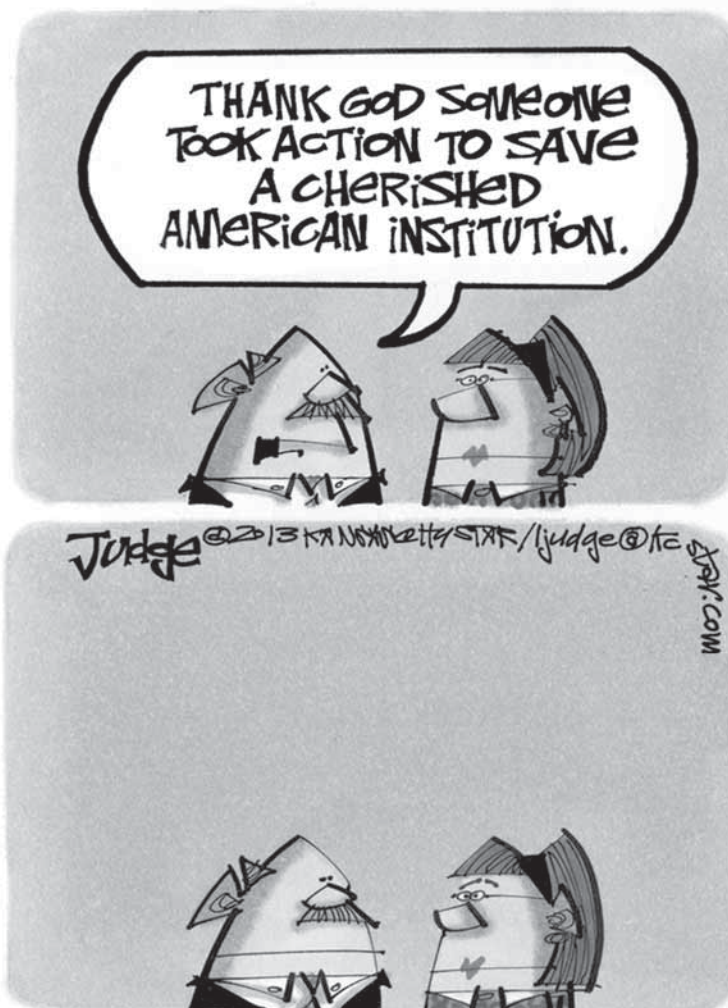
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Trees in new park grew too fast

This is the third segment on the History of Fike Park. Information was gathered by Opal Linville at Prairie Museum of Art and History.



Marj Brown

• Marj's Snippets

Finally, Carp Lake was drained and trees were planted. Now there was another problem. According to the Historical Society's "Thomas County, Yesterday and Today" booklet, since the trees were planted in such fertile soil, they grew so well that they soon had to be thinned out. Also, a larger storm sewer was constructed to carry off the water and to eliminate the mud that was always a problem.

Evidently it took several years to name the park, because on July 31, 1919, an editorial in the *Colby Free Press-Tribune* by J.B. Connelly suggested that the park be named for former mayor J.N. Fike. Connelly pointed out that many Colby mayors before Fike had talked about creating a park, but it was Fike who actually got the ball rolling and saw that the area was drained and the trees were planted. Others must have agreed with Connelly, because the park was christened Fike Park that year.

According to another article in paper on Aug. 24, 1922, William Weldorn, a landscape artist from the agriculture college, who was hired by the city to survey Fike Park and give his suggestions for changes to bring the park up to what they wanted it to be, had submitted his report.

He made several suggestions such as build-

ing a community house in the center of the streets in the park. He said it should have a large porch opening to the park to be used as a band porch. He said, "It might be used to house a library - making it more useful in the winter."

He also suggested that a swimming pool be considered in the future. He felt that the streets should be open for traffic and parking but that through business traffic should be stopped at once so that the area would be safe for children. He said, "The drives should be 18 inches and be gravel." He felt that they should do more thinning of the trees at once and that they should consider more proper drainage.

When it came to policing the park, he said that, "Strict policing is necessary in every city park. You have an added difficulty with the harvest hands. There is only one way to meet it, and that is to double or triple your police force in the park." I wonder what our chief of police would say today if we asked him to keep three policemen in Fike Park at all times?

In response to Weldorn's report, there must not have been much done for a while, because a 1924 Colby newspaper article stated that the Colby citizens were not getting sufficient use out of their park. The article said that the only people getting any use out of the park were harvest hands (what's with these harvest hands anyway?) and a little boy who obviously liked to kill birds since many dead birds were found there.

"Because of that," the article said, "they were offering a first prize of a 48-pound sack of Bell of the Plains Flour from the Colby Milling Company and a second prize of a 24-pound sack for the best suggestions as to how to make better use of the park."

There must not have been many suggestions submitted, because Linville's information jumped from there to Oct. 19, 1932, when the paper announced that the government, in an effort to furnish employment, was giving Colby a first installment of \$2,577 for the improvement of Fike Park and to sand city streets.

The history of Fike Park will be continued in my next column. Please look for it.

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.

Take down the bird feeder

I am disturbed by a news report that shows one out of every three persons in the United States is fed by the other two. This means that in the grocery line before I get to the checkout I pick up the bill of either the person in front of me or the one behind.

This news brings to mind a script "Take Down the Bird Feeder," source unknown, that I read some time ago. Most have shared this experience sometime in their life.

It goes like this: "I bought a bird feeder. I hung it on my back porch and filled it with seed. Within a week we had hundreds of birds taking advantage of the continuous flow of free and easily accessible food.

"But then the birds started building nests in the boards of the patio, above the table, and next to the barbecue. Then came the poop. It was everywhere: on the patio tile, the chairs, the table - everywhere.

"Then some of the birds turned mean. They would dive bomb me and try to peck me even though I had fed them out of my own pocket. Others birds were boisterous and loud. They sat on the feeder and squawked at all hours of the day and night and demanded that I fill it. After a while, I couldn't even sit on my own back porch.

"So I took down the bird feeder and in three days the birds were gone. I cleaned up their mess and took down the nests. Soon, the back yard was like it used to be - quiet, serene - and no one demands rights to a free meal.

Our free enterprise system, stimulated by our Constitution which limited the government's power over us so enterprise could blossom, has made it possible to eradicate poverty for anyone who really wanted to work. I know because I was once poor. I watched those who had some measure of wealth (I knew no one wealthy) and I learned early that education

Other Opinions

• Harold Pease Liberty Under Fire

and industry could save anyone who wished to use them. Others took the course that led to dependency.

Every person in America has the same choice. It has always been so. How, like the birds depicted above, have so many of our people become.

One of the poorest men I ever knew refused the dole and worked till the day he died. His legs were virtually worthless. Vastly overweight, he could only get off the couch or a chair by first rocking until he had momentum to shift the weight to his legs. A fall drastically limited any meaningful use of his arms. He made no excuses. He found a job answering the telephone where he scheduled help for the "real" disadvantaged, those broken down on the highway.

I tell my students the folk tale of the old man who came to the Florida Everglades to catch some wild hogs reputed to be uncatchable. No one took him seriously when he inquired where they might be. "Just point me in the right direction," he said. They did. He placed in his old, battered pickup truck a few ears of corn, found a clearing, and left them, driving away. Day after day he did the same thing. No hog ever came forth to partake. They were too smart. Nor did the younger hogs, for the old sages were quick to remind them that humans were to be avoided at all costs.

Ultimately the younger hogs began to nibble, ever so watchful. There were no negatives, no consequences - only fools would reject this heaven-sent meal. The old hogs would still remind them there is no free lunch. "If it is free to you someone else is always picking up the tab," they said.

The little nibbles turned in to feasts and the old man left even more corn. With time, the older hogs joined in one by one. The old man did not go so far away. In fact, eventually he did not leave at all and enjoyed watching all feast without concern. After several months of this, not even the wiser hogs noticed the old man dig a hole and insert a single pole; eventually another, then another, and wire in between. Nor did they notice when he attached the only gate. He had captured them all.

So what happens to the "birds" and the "hogs?" If the practice goes on long enough they no longer know how to do things necessary to preserve themselves. They vote for the politicians that continue the practice and begin to believe that the freebies - food stamps, subsidized housing, socialized medicine - were actually owed them. They eventually lose their freedom. When the economy collapses, because the freebies cannot be sustained, the new rulers end all welfare practices.

For those who are healthy enough to take care of themselves, let's take down the bird feeder before it comes down on its own.

Dr. Harold Pease has dedicated his career to studying the writings of the Founding Fathers and applying that knowledge to current events. He has taught history and political science from this perspective for over 25 years at Taft College. To read more of his weekly articles, go to www.LibertyUnderFire.org.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

