

from our viewpoint...

## Tech massacre sets tragic killing record

Last week's Virginia Tech massacre set a record for a gunman run amok, 32 innocent lives.

The nation reeled in shock and horror, but the incident — as many do — revealed both the worst and the best about our society.

Seung-Hui Cho showed again what a demented gunman can do. Others emerged as heroes, taking action and saving lives while the carnage progressed.

In one classroom, senior Zach Petkewicz and his fellows in his class in Norris Hall barricaded the door, saving their lives and perhaps others. When the gunman tried to shove his way in, they shoved back, working together and thinking on their feet.

In another classroom, Liviu Librescu, who had survived the holocaust as a young man, blocked the door to give his students time to escape. All lived — except the professor.

Mr. Librescu was buried Friday in Israel, hailed as a hero. And he was.

There will be much second guessing, but no one yet has explained why people sometimes go crazy and decide to kill innocent people. Mass murder is nothing new, but these crazed gunmen seem to become more lethal with every try.

Seung-Hui Cho was not particularly heavily armed. He carried just a couple of pistols — not the shotguns and machine guns sometimes favored by the criminally insane — but he used them with great effect.

As usual, he did not stick around to answer for his crimes.

Gun control advocates will call for new laws, but most people seem to see the futility of that.

University officials and security forces will take a beating for not sounding the alarm sooner, but the first shooting, involving just one victim and a dormitory resident assistant who investigated, hardly seemed cause for a campus-wide lockdown.

Others are second guessing NBC's decision to air photos and tapes sent in the mail between the two sets of shootings.

Some say the networks should have held back, ditched the tapes, turned them over to the police or buried them.

That's foolish. The images are disturbing, that is certain. But we need to see them. People need to know how crazy some of us can be.

No purpose would be served by censoring the tapes. It would not bring one person back to life.

If society can learn from them, from the senseless killings, from the fact that many saw this man as deranged and possibly dangerous, but still authorities did nothing, then perhaps all is not in vain. Perhaps.

Society has a difficult time dealing with the issue of people who might be crazy. How can we predict who will be next to "go postal?" And if we could, would we be able to lock them up, change them, protect ourselves?

There are no easy answers here, but there's no benefit to sticking our heads in the sand. We need to look for those answers. And pray. — *Steve Haynes*



## Cat finally has a name, by default

Well, I've finally named the new cat.

Not intentionally, but by default, she's now Pretty Thing.

By moving the food bowl up from the basement and making her come into the kitchen for food and water, we've forced her to spend a little time closer to the center of the house.

This doesn't mean that she is starting to interact much with the family. It just means that she sneaks upstairs and hides under Steve's desk in the kitchen until the coast is clear and she can get to the food.

Many times lately as she has slunk closer and closer to the source of all cat food, I've seen her and talked to her saying something like, "Good morning, pretty thing." or "Hi, pretty thing, how are you today?"

Of all the ways of naming a cat, this seems to be the oddest. But this is the weirdest cat I've ever had, and I've had some strange ones.

There was Spazo. He was, well spastic. He had been brought into the clinic at K-State to be put to sleep because his front legs and back legs didn't work together. My brother-in-law, a vet student, adopted and named him. When he graduated and moved to California, we in-



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

herited Spazo. (We picked him over the pregnant dog, which my other brother-in-law got.)

We got Kubla Khan's name from a National Geographic article about Genghis Khan. We knew we would have trouble with Genghis so we chose an easier khan.

April Alice got her name because we got her in April and I knew her name began with an "A" but I couldn't remember what it was, so after several months of calling her April, Ann and Alice we settled on a two-name moniker.

Molly was named by my son-in-law, who picked her up at a construction site. She got the Monster part of her name because she terrorizes every other cat in the house. People, too.

Jezebel, my daughter named. I don't know why and I'm not asking. Some things you just don't want to know.

I think that Pretty Thing would like to join

the family — she's just too scared.

First, people are big — really big — and they probably eat cats for breakfast.

Then there's Molly Monster. She's mean. She beats up on poor little defenseless kitties. Of course, Mollie has been declawed and Pretty Thing hasn't, but with cats it's mostly growl and bluff and Molly would make a great poker player. She's full of growl and bluff.

April Alice is also a little intimidating. She growls when Pretty Thing gets too close. She's not as mean or as big as Molly, but she's a full-grown adult cat, who's learned to hold her own ground around the Monster.

Jez is the only cat in the place that Pretty Thing doesn't seem afraid of. Probably because Jez is mostly a basement cat herself and probably showed the newcomer all the best hiding places.

I'm still not sure that Pretty Thing is here to stay and I'm going to have to catch her one way or the other real soon. She's almost six months old and hasn't been to see the vet. I really don't need or want a basement full of kittens, even if they are all pretty little things.

One is more than enough, thank you.

## Bearing witness to genocide

Fellow Kansan Dwight Eisenhower served our country during a time when human dignity and human life needed defending.

After visiting a concentration camp at the end of World War II he said, "The things I saw beggar description ... the visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were so overpowering."

Last week was "Days of Remembrance," a time designated by Congress to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. I visited the Holocaust Museum in Washington to see the collection of images and read the stories of death and dehumanization that took place 60 years ago.

I returned to hear President Bush speak about how the Jewish people suffered and about the importance of addressing genocide and death today in Darfur, Sudan.

As co-chair of the House Hunger Caucus, I recently joined the House majority leader in a visit to Darfur. While there, we met with government officials and relief workers and saw the conditions that human beings are living in today.

Since the beginning of this conflict in Feb-



**jerry moran**

• in Congress

ruary 2003, 450,000 people have been killed and more than 2 million citizens displaced from their homes and villages. Thousands are without food and water and depend relief organizations for survival.

This trip made me aware of a level of human suffering as no meeting, no television news story and no book could. One cannot visit Darfur and not be changed by seeing the results of a government that allows violence, hunger, disease and dislocation to be used as a weapon against its own people.

It was an opportunity to see that we all have a cause to make sure that life prevails and justice endures. It is something that demands our attention. We as a country and we as a world must come together to bring death and destruction, inhumanity, hunger and violence to an end.

At the Holocaust Museum, I saw the quote

from Isaiah 43:10 that says, "You are my witness."

Today we are witnessing a new genocide. As I reflected on the past and considered the future of Africans in Darfur, I have to ask — are we going to wait until the proportions of death are similar to the Holocaust before we take action?

The exhibit that moved me the most was the list of 10,000 individuals who took action during the Holocaust. They have been identified by the Israelis as "the Righteous Among the Nations," those who risked their lives to save innocent Jews during Nazi rule.

When the conflict in Darfur has ended, everyone will feel sorrow for the unnecessary loss of life. But will we as individuals and we as a nation be among those who feel shame for inaction or pride for standing up for justice in Darfur?

Today, we must rise up to be a new righteous force so that our children and grandchildren remember us not as a generation that turned their heads, but one that banded together to bring an end to the senseless pain and suffering afflicted upon the people of Darfur.

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Thank you so much for your contribution toward the Endowment Association at the Reverse Giveaway 2007. These money raised for scholarships will greatly help students throughout their time here at Northwest Kansas Technical College.

Your support helped make this fund raiser a huge success. Thank you for your continued support.

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