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OPINION

To Build A Better World, Start In Your Own Community

EDITORIAL

Celebrate Good Ol' Days in Lyons

Lyons is the place to be this weekend. Friday through Sunday evening, the town rolls out the red carpet for returning classmates, parade enthusiasts, square-dancers, softball players, those seeking a good used book, motorcycle lovers and all people who like fun.

This year, the annual Lyons Good Ol' Days also celebrates the 30th anniversary of the protection of the town's one-room school house, which was built in 1881.

After the junior-senior high school building was dedicated in 1974, the old school house (which had been added on to over the years) was slated to be destroyed, according to the town's Web site. Instead, the Lyons Historical Society fought to save the sandstone structure and later reopened it as a museum.

"They wanted to tear it down; our historical society saved it. It's been 30 years," said LaVern Johnson.

The effort to save the building, at 338 High St., should be remembered. If you attend the festivities this weekend, stop by the Redstone Museum for a little history.



Speaking out for women

By Bill Ellis
Special to the Daily Times-Call

Her name is long forgotten; her sadness unforgettable. I'll call her Mrs. Schmidt because I do remember her slight German accent and that she always wore gray wool suits like those I recall ladies wearing from my days stationed in Heidelberg. "Proper" would be a good catchall word to describe her.

She sat up straight, prim almost, and was punctual as one would expect from an upper-class Bavarian wife. Yet she never smiled, and our last encounter in a doctor's office would stay with me forever.

Our sons were being treated on a regular basis by the same orthopedist. My son played football; hers was an Olympic-caliber ski jumper destined to win a gold medal. The injuries both boys suffered were not significant, thus my brief visits with Mrs. Schmidt chatting in the waiting room took place over a short period of time.

Nevertheless, during our last conversation, I diplomatically inquired about what had made her so sad this time, so despondent that I believed her near tears.

It may seem forward to you that I asked such a personal question, but you might have done the same having come to know someone congenially and then found them so obviously desperate to control their emotions.

It seemed to me that she should have been ecstatic over her son's recent success in the Junior Olympics. He'd won and was headed for the big games in another winter. Her family — she, the son, and her husband — traveled all over the world. They lived in Cherry Hills, a wealthy suburb of Denver. They were rich! What could

possibly be wrong?

"I'm tired of being hit," she said. "I never know when he'll do it, and it hurts."

I was stunned, awfully surprised. What could I say? I probably muttered that I was sorry and then sat in shock until she left.

Over the years, I have rethought that event and wondered what I could have done. Nothing really. I'd seen this before, just hadn't realized how wide a swath male abuse toward women had taken.

Carol, her real name, was my project manager in Washington. She didn't show up for work one day, and before I could call the office to ask about her, our division director called me. Would I come back to the office to meet with him? There were some things better dealt with face to face. I would discover that Carol's disappearance was not that unusual. She and her husband worked for our agency. Both were brilliant analysts who competed for the top projects and achievement awards. Evidently, when the husband felt Carol had bettered him, well, he beat her and threw her out, literally.

For the rest of that project, I was told to meet with her in different locations around town, often taking several different buses, and always checking to make sure no one followed me — frankly, it was too much like a James Bond movie.

Carol always wore sunglasses to hide the bruises, the shame. Fortunately, this stupidity involving me personally stopped when her husband began calling my wife during the day to ask if Carol was hiding out there. I demanded it be stopped, and it was.

But I remember my director's words when he told me about this recurring scenario: "Bill, if you and I did this to our wives, we'd be

in jail. But Carol keeps going back no matter what." And within a couple of weeks, she did.

So it happens: men abusing women no matter the social class, or wealth or intelligence. It so disgusts me that I created the most putrid character ever in my first novel. He had no redeeming qualities. He was a bully and I figuratively "trashed" him at the end. He'd become a disgrace to his family: a beautiful wife, a daughter and son. He was controlling, secretive and kept another woman in another state who thought she was his lawful wife. He beat her too. Seething with the memory of Mrs. Schmidt and Carol, I tortured him more than a bit, and had the cops batter him around until I felt better. It is a very strong issue with me, you see, and, as a writer, I just have to write about it.

You must know that I've never hit anyone, man or woman, off the football field and off the written page.

Oh, and there is my upbringing in which I was taught to love and respect women, especially my mother.

Dad never knew his mom; she'd died when he was an infant, and by golly he made sure I did right by my mother and, frankly, by all women.

Now men are being urged to speak out against violence against women.

I've found out in other areas there is little I can do to shift the whole pile. But I can act right and treat everyone like I want to be treated. I hope my sons have caught on to this; my daughters too.

Bill Ellis is a local author and president of the Longmont Writers' Club.

More information

2007 Good Ol' Days Celebration highlights

Friday: 8 to 11 p.m., live country rock music with Payne and Trouble, Bohn Park Main Stage

9 p.m., crowning of Mr./Mrs. Good Ol' Days, Bohn Park Main Stage

Saturday: 6 to 10 a.m., Firefighters Pancake Breakfast, Lyons Fire Station

10 a.m., Good Ol' Days Parade (awards immediately following parade)

10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Golden Gang Motorcycle show, Sandstone Park

10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Depot Library Book and Bake Sale, Fifth and Broadway

12:30 to 4:30 p.m., Redstone Museum open house, Redstone Museum
2 to 4 p.m., ceremony celebrating 30 years of the Lyons Redstone Museum

6 to 8 p.m., talent show, Bohn Park Main Stage

7:45 to 10:30 p.m., square dance with the Red Rock Ramblers Square Dance Club, Lyons Elementary School gym

Sunday: 8 a.m., Lyons 5K River Run, Fourth and Railroad Avenue

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God bless Dennis Kucinich

Dick Cheney has been proven to be the chief proponent of selling out our government and country to the corporations, and as a means to that end was the chief architect of the manipulations and lies that took us into the quagmire of Afghanistan and then Iraq.

Every day he stays in office, he continues to exert undue influence on the policies of our government. He has been, and continues to be, instrumental in further erosion of our national treasury and constitutional rights. These are truly impeachable offenses and should be prosecuted as criminal acts as well! May God bless and protect Mr. Kucinich and all others who raise their voices to stop this corrupt tyrant from further damaging our country.

ROBERT FERENC
Longmont

Evolution takes more faith than ID

Re: "Design not testable; evolution is science," June 13, Open Forum

In response to Marc Tanenbaum's letter, I'd like to recommend evolution believers read the book "The Case For A Creator" by Lee Strobel. Strobel, educated at Yale Law School and a former editor of the Chicago Tribune, gives a detailed account of his research and interviews with highly educated physicists, cosmologists and philosophers regarding evolution versus intelligent design.

Coincidentally, the same day I read Tanenbaum's letter was the same day I read in this book that design is testable!

Strobel writes that "many philosophers and scientists believe

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that a theory cannot truly be scientific unless there are potential ways to prove it false through experiments or other means."

As Strobel is interviewing Michael J. Behe, Ph.D., on this topic, Strobel says to Behe, "The National Academy of Sciences said: 'Intelligent Design... (is) not science because (it's) not testable by the methods of science.'" Behe responds, "Intelligent design's strong point is that it's falsifiable, just like a good scientific theory should be." Behe goes on, "My claim is that there is no unintelligent process that could produce the bacterial flagellum. To falsify that claim, all you would have to do would be to find one unintelligent process that could produce that system."

This book gives many compelling examples and explanations regarding the complexity and irreducibility of systems and functions such as blood clotting, bacterial flagellum and the complex machines within every cell — functions that can not be reduced to a single ingredient. Just try to explain how evolution can work without using your intelligence!

After reading this book, I am convinced it does take more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe an intelligent designer is the creator of our complex, creative, amazing world!

CHRISTI CARLISLE
Longmont

Who does Musgrave represent?

Re: "Setting Musgrave's record straight," June 13, Open Forum

It seems I must have hit a sensitive chord, when Marilyn's com-

munication director feels it necessary to respond to an opinion article. Mr. Johnson states that I must be out of touch with the political mainstream. I admit I am not privy to all the inner workings of the privileged clan called the U.S. Congress, but I do attest to the accuracy of Musgrave's positions in the previously mentioned bills.

The word limitation for an opinion article requires that I respond to only one of the bills mentioned by Johnson.

It was assumed that when the voters of the 4th CD hired Musgrave, she was obligated to represent the majority of the constituents in her district, not just special interests.

I can't think of a better example of representing special interest than her vote to repeal the Estate Tax. The vast majority of the residents of the 4th CD (rural or urban) will go to their death without worrying about the Estate Tax.

The average voter in the 4th CD has a net worth far too small to be affected by the Estate Tax.

So who was Musgrave representing with her vote? The Economic Growth and Tax Reconciliation Act of 2001 provided for 10 years of increasing exemptions from Estate Taxes. The 2007 exemption is \$2 million per individual and \$4 million for married couples. It expands to \$7 million in 2009 and total repeal for 2010.

According to the IRS, most estates (98 percent) were never subject to any estate taxes, and very few of that other 2 percent were farmers or ranchers in the 4th CD!

The term "death tax" is only rhetoric to gain popular support.

RICHARD HANSEN
Longmont

Congressional ethics reform commitment?

By Tom Fitton
Judicial Watch

How committed are the Democrats to congressional ethics reform? Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Mass.), who leads the Special Task Force on Ethics Enforcement, was hoping to send his ethics reform package to the floor for a vote last week, but was met with stiff resistance from members of his own party.

According to the Congressional Quarterly on June 14: "Facing push back from their rank and file, House Democratic leaders decided Monday to take more time before trying to change House rules to create an outside ethics commission. Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from California, plans to meet with her caucus ... to help assuage the fears of a sizable group of Democrats who believe that allowing non-members to file complaints will open a floodgate of politically motivated attacks."

Apparently, there is a competing ethics "reform" package that has gained some momentum on the Hill, garnering the support of 53 members so far, according to Congressional Quarterly. Crafted by Baron P. Hill, a Democrat from Indiana, the bill would establish a panel of 12 former members of Congress to investigate complaints, but — and this is a big but — only members of Congress could file the complaints. Outside groups and citizens would be shut out of the process completely.

(Members of Congress are also said to be considering a proposal that would force any outside group that files a complaint to publicly identify its donors. This is merely an attempt to intimidate citizens' groups such as Judicial Watch from filing complaints in the first place.)

For the past six months, I have been working with the House Ethics Task Force as it considers ethics reform. As I told members during private meetings and in my public testimony, any ethics reform package that denies citizens and outside groups the opportunity to file ethics complaints would be, in a word, useless.

How do I know? Because this is the system that is in place right now. The same system that let Reps. John Conyers, Duke Cunningham, Mark Foley, Gary Condit, Cynthia McKinney, Jim McDermott, Patrick Kennedy and William Jefferson — to name a few — off the hook without serious punishment for their crimes and transgressions.

Are we supposed to trust that members of Congress have had a sudden change of heart and will now take their ethics enforcement duties seriously? The slow pace of reform in the face of voter disgust with congressional corruption is one more sign of a Congress out of touch with the average voter.

Moreover, the idea of an ethics panel consisting of former members of Congress and investigating complaints against current members is laughable. Most of the former members of Congress were (and likely still are) part of the rampant corruption on Capitol Hill. Also, having more members of the congressional "club" involved in the ethics process does little to restore the appearance of independence and accountability to the process. The bipartisan Capuano reform package, by contrast, was to stipulate that no former members or lobbyists can sit on the independent ethics commission.

Clearly, some members of Congress do not want any "outsiders" interfering with their business. But it has little to do with the fear that frivolous political attacks will gain serious consideration by an independent ethics commission. What members truly fear is serious and credible allegations made by outside groups and citizens will merit investigation and lead to accountability.

The Capuano reform package is no panacea for corruption. The ethics commission proposed by Capuano may have no subpoena power. And the House Ethics Committee (the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct) would still have the final say on whether charges would be pursued. But it is a step in the right direction. The proposal would establish an independent entity to consider complaints. It would provide outside groups the ability to file complaints. And the House Ethics Committee would have to publicly disclose how the complaint was handled within 45 days of receiving a recommendation from the independent ethics entity. All of these are sound measures.

The Democrats promised to take ethics reform seriously during the last election cycle, and they were rewarded with control of both Houses of Congress. Will they make good on this promise? We should know much in the next couple of weeks.

Tom Fitton is president of Judicial Watch, a nonpartisan educational foundation that fights government corruption. Visit www.judicialwatch.org for more information on Judicial Watch's legal campaigns and programs.