

# OPINION

“(Christmas) was meant to promise positive change and reflection, not chaos and greed.”

KARA CHRISTENSEN, *Guest Column*

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**A10**

OUR OPINION

## Strong response to threats a must

When Mount Horeb school officials found a “kill list” in a high school locker earlier this month, they called police and suspended the student.

The swift and strong response wasn’t just appropriate, it was necessary.

The murder of a Cazenovia school principal in late September has put every Wisconsin school on higher alert.

And just a couple of weeks before that, a Green Bay high school student was credited with preventing a violent plot. The student tipped off an associate principal at Green Bay East High School that two friends were amassing guns, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, bombs, camouflage clothing, gas masks and two-way radios.

**Mount Horeb school officials were right to call police and suspend the student accused of writing a ‘kill list’ found in his locker.**

“If someone hadn’t come forward, we’d be talking about funerals instead of charges,” Brown County District Attorney John Zakowski said at the time.

Mount Horeb school officials in recent days reportedly found a note in a boy’s locker that listed the names of four other students he wished were dead. Mount Horeb police dubbed the note a “kill list” and may still recommend charges.

School officials say they believe the note was written out of simple frustration. They don’t believe, after investigating, that the student is a threat to fellow students or staff.

Still, the boy was suspended for three days and has not returned to school at the request of his parents. A student named on the list also won a court injunction Friday against the boy, keeping him away from the student unless the student agrees in writing to see him.

The incident has been taken “very seriously,” according to Mount Horeb Police Chief Scott Sterland. Nothing less than that should be expected.

Wisconsin remains a relatively safe state with good schools and many promising young students. No one should walk the hallways in fear of deadly violence. School shootings are still rare, despite the long-lasting and intense fear they can trigger — especially for parents.

Yet it’s much better to overreact to such threats than to underreact. As the shooting death of Principal John Klang in rural Cazenovia reminded the nation, school violence can occur anywhere.

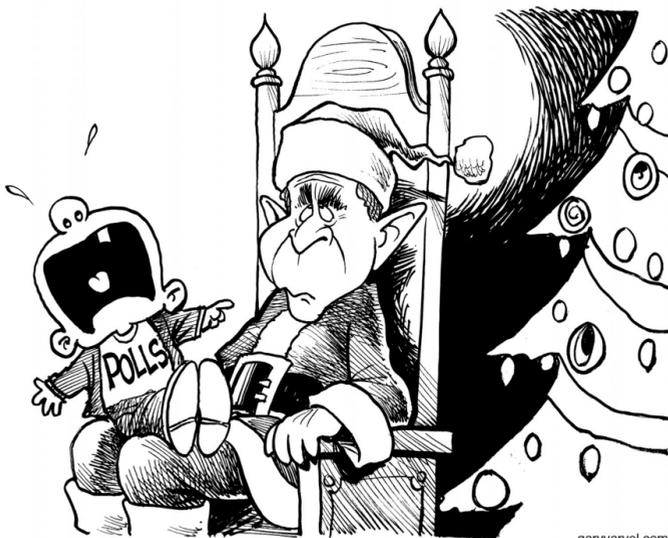
The Mount Horeb incident continues to unfold. School officials hope to work out a plan for the boy’s return through a process of one-on-one meetings with the parents of the students involved.

So far it appears school administrators and police are reacting with appropriate force and caution. It is painfully clear that the threat of school violence is nothing to take lightly.

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### YOUR VIEWS

## Christmas poem for politically correct

Hide your nativity scenes and bright lights too;  
Those who want to be offended, are watching you.  
Be careful how you greet people during this festive season;  
Those who want to be offended, are looking for a reason.  
Hide the gifts and Christmas trees too;  
Those who want to be offended, are looking for you.  
If you don’t think they will sue;  
Those who want to be offended, will make believers out of you.  
For those who want to be offended, my advice be;  
Wake up, get a life and let the majority live free.

— Vic Duesel, Stoughton

## Exxon’s Raymond is a poor choice for energy group

Last week the Washington Post described Exxon Mobil as, “the highest-profile corporate skeptic about global warming.” Not a big surprise. Exxon Mobil is known for its refusal to think beyond petroleum.

So I suppose it’s also no surprise that the Bush administration has chosen Lee Raymond, Exxon Mobil’s recently retired CEO, to lead a major study to determine America’s energy future.

The oil and gas study is supposed to examine the viability of alternative energy such as wind, solar and biomass — something Lee Raymond and his cronies at Exxon know little, and care less, about. Is Lee Raymond the best visionary Bush’s Energy Department could come up with to help steer our nation into a new energy future? If so, I’m worried.

— Margaret J. Welke, Madison

## Open action at executive sessions to public, too

Your Dec. 1 editorial supports the change proposed by Sen. Judy Robson, D-Beloit, to prohibit Senate committees from voting by mail or e-mail.

The purpose of the change is to open the voting to public view. This change will do little good unless an additional change is made. Currently, public hearings of the committees are posted on the legislative Web site, but executive sessions are not. These sessions are where the votes are taken. Perhaps they

post the executive sessions somewhere at the Capitol, so they meet the letter of the open records law. But they should also post them at [committeeschedule.legis.state.wi.us/](http://committeeschedule.legis.state.wi.us/) so citizens can easily keep track of legislative actions.

— Paul Malischke, Madison

## Why not charge grandmother?

Let me see if I read this correctly. The grandmother of a previously convicted juvenile — who shot a man during a drug robbery in 2001 at the age of 15 and who was AWOL from the juvenile program for which she was sent — attempted to obstruct and cover up the fact that her granddaughter, who is now 20 and who allegedly shot and killed a man on Nov. 21 over money and drugs, will not be charged with a crime.

Am I living in an alternative universe? I was always under the impression that harboring a criminal, obstructing justice and covering up a crime was a serious offense, regardless of who you might be.

Is leniency the remedy in this case, or has previous leniency from the family members of this criminal juvenile and now allegedly criminal adult the reason this story came to this inevitable conclusion?

If what District Attorney Brian Blanchard is saying is that adult family members are not responsible for attempting to conceal a crime and obstruct the investigation into that crime by discarding evidence, then what message does it send?

— Randy Brown, Madison

# It just another Ho-Ho-Horowitz Christmas

There’s something about being here in the holiday season that puts a song in your heart. Actually, lots of songs. Yes indeed, boys and girls: it’s time for a Capital Edition of a Ho-Ho-Horowitz Christmas!

And-a-one, and-a-two, and-a...

Jingle Bells,  
Baker yells,  
“Time to make some moves.”  
Tries to push,  
But he can’t sway Bush  
Long as Barney still approves.  
Jingle Bells,  
Mideast hells,  
We’ll be there for years,  
Blown to bits  
While the prez just sits  
With his fingers in his ears.

Here comes Hillary,  
Here comes Hillary,  
Right down Candidate Lane,  
Riding momentum — here comes Obama  
Slowing down her train.  
Folks nostalgic for Willie’s magic  
Find they’re having to choose,  
Quite a shock but they like Barack,  
So Hillary’s feeling the blues.



**RICK HOROWITZ**

It’s beginning to look a lot like Frist missed,  
Ev’rywhere you go,  
Take a glance at the latest poll,  
He’s gone right down the hole,  
Couldn’t get his duckies in a row...  
It’s beginning to look a lot like Frist missed,  
Swaying to and fro,  
But the moment he came undone —  
Diagnosis on the run —  
Was the fatal blow.

Frosty the conman  
Who puts all his loot on ice,  
He’s content to play the New Orleans way,  
And his voters don’t think twice.

He’s re-elected:  
William Jefferson once more,  
Don’t you wonder how?  
It was ninety thou!  
But the country knows the score.

Voters retching, pundits kvetching,  
Filled with pain and disgust,  
In the air there’s a feeling of failure.  
Say “Macaca,”  
“Hey, Macaca!”  
And it all turns to dust,  
And in ev’ry new survey you hear:  
Hang it up,  
Hang it up,  
George stuck his foot in it big-time,  
Had a chance,  
Racist rants  
Made Allen’s dreams fly away.

Said the right wing to the mini-cam:  
Do you see Pelosi? (Do you see Pelosi?)  
Teeth that never stop, mini-cam,  
Do you see Pelosi? (Do you see Pelosi?)

A purge, a purge,  
Can’t resist the urge,  
So Ms. Harman just had to go:  
Once a rival, always a foe...

Deck is stacked against Mitt Romney,  
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la,  
Mass. produce a Grand Old nom’nee?  
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la!  
Time to do some heavy lifting,  
Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la,  
Watch his views — Guess what? They’re shifting!  
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la!

Have yourself a Kerry little Christmas,  
If it’s not too late,  
From now on,  
You’re better off to play it straight.  
Have yourself a Kerry little Christmas,  
Take your share of pokes,  
From now on, though,  
Better stay away from jokes...

O Foley Nights  
The pages are in danger!

He’s coming on now  
For all he is worth.  
O Foley Nights,  
Some know and even stranger,  
They let this smooth pile of sleaze  
Stalk the earth...

Happy Holidays!  
Happy Holidays!  
Don’t forget about your door-men,  
When gratuities are due.  
Happy Holidays!  
Ritzzy-Carlton ways!  
Harry Reid will not ignore men,  
With the cash that came from you...

He said, “Let’s go to war,”  
He’s Rummy-tum-tum,  
He didn’t do much more,  
He’s Rummy-tum-tum.  
He should have sent more troops,  
Rum-Rummy-tum-tum,  
And still he won’t say “Oops!”  
He’s Rummy-tum-tum,  
Start as they come,  
Boy, was that dumb.

Horowitz is a Milwaukee columnist; [rickhorowitz@execpc.com](http://rickhorowitz@execpc.com).

GUEST COLUMN

## Meaning of holiday has been warped

By KARA CHRISTENSEN

I consider myself a Christian. However, I am not writing to you as one. I am simply writing as a promoter of a more meaningful holiday season.

My belief that the promise of the holiday season has been ridiculously warped is relevant here. My belief in God is not.

This year, Black Friday weekend — also known as the weekend after Thanksgiving — attracted more than 140 million shoppers, says the National Retail Federation and BIG research.

Shoppers spent an average of \$360.15, up 18.9 percent from last year. Some stores even dared to open at 5 a.m.

If these statistics aren’t proof that Christmas has become another Hallmark holiday, I’m not sure what is.

While the monetary value of Christmas is rising, its traditional value continues to decrease. I am not preaching a belief in God and the celebration of the birth of his son.

I am simply saying that as Christmas promises rising profits to retailers, it seems to have simultaneously twisted its meaning among families.

They too have started to believe in the monetary promises of Christmas — believing in the spending of money and the receipt of expensive gifts.

It has become a time of expectation instead of gratification, craving instead of satisfaction. The mere idea that so many families have resorted to such feelings is rather despicable.

It would be wonderful if everyone in the world was thankful and contented. However, I am aware that some men despise their mother-in-laws, some people don’t have enough money for food and simple gifts, and others can’t even stand the thought of a family gathering without a large bottle of booze at hand.

Even so, this does not mean that Christmas promises them nothing. In fact, they are the ones that can be given the biggest promise of all, if only they could realize it.

Christmas presents the promise of possibilities. The classic meaning of the holiday evolved around the possibilities that arose when a tiny baby was brought into the world.

Even if you don’t believe in God and the story of baby Jesus, Christmas can still be a time of much potential. It represents hope for new beginnings and a time to leave behind regrets for the upcoming year.

Even the season’s decorations can be a reminder of new beginnings. There are lights everywhere that shine through the darkness of the cold winter.

So, between wish lists and shopping, the roast beef and the stuffing, and the stresses and family complaints, don’t forget to appreciate the true spirit of Christmas.

It was meant to promise positive change and reflection, not chaos and greed. If Americans could take a moment to remember these values this Christmas, I think it would put everyone a bit more into the true holiday season.

My wish to you all is a time of great love, peace, and giving and a very merry Christmas.

Christensen, of Madison, is a student at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn.

### SEND US YOUR VIEWS

What’s on your mind? We welcome your views of 200 words or less. Submissions may be edited; not all can be published.

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