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August 7, 2009 Friday

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**BODY:**

**Community can help watch parking lot**

I have been following the Finlay Park parking lot issue and would like to make these suggestions and observations.

It is not right to restrict activities so that a few affluent residents can live in a pocket of a poor neighborhood. It also taxes the resources of our already-strained police department.

My proposal is for the residents to get with the Columbia Police Department, set up a neighborhood watch group and be the eyes and ears of what goes on in their area and call 911 to report suspicious activity. The police cannot be everywhere all the time. We have to reach out to them and make the effort to regain control of our neighborhoods by taking these steps.

RICHARD STEINER

Columbia

**National PASS ID is still too intrusive**

The Cato Institute reveals that the PASS ID is virtually the same as the REAL ID that Gov. Mark Sanford was successful in keeping our state from having to implement. Unless you like the prospect of having the high-tech equivalent of the national identity papers, it is time to join with Gov. Sanford in fighting the PASS ID encroachment on our personal freedom.

Remember, Thomas Jefferson said that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

MARK SYVERSON

Friday's letters to the editor The State (Columbia, South Carolina) August 7, 2009 Friday

Columbia

**Many lend hand for community event**

The National Night Out was a success, in my community and in others.

Thanks to Columbia City Councilwoman Belinda Gergel, who is committed to strengthening neighborhoods, Jerry Lynn Hall, liaison between the city and neighborhoods, other city officials who attended, and to all the neighbors who came out to meet.

SUSAN H. HAMM

President, Bradley Community Council

Columbia

**The right to die belongs to each of us**

I do not agree with Cal Thomas ("A right to die?" Aug. 4). I and many others believe that as human beings we absolutely have the right to decide when to end our own life and existence, if we feel that it is necessary due to extreme illness, pain, etc.

His column is nothing but a scare tactic.

Further he has put religion in his article. I do not believe in his god or any others, and I do not want any god making decisions for me. I am outraged by anyone who uses this total fake thought process.

JOHN COPELAND

Columbia

**Military medical needs not being met**

It is sad but not surprising to find out that our government is unable to provide proper and timely medical treatment to our courageous military veterans both young and old.

A nationally distributed newspaper reported last week the lack of care at Army medical centers.

Sixteen percent of the Army patients and their family members cannot get appointments with their primary care physicians and are, after much delay, being sent off to a private practice doctor.

These are people who have given their all for our country and who should be ranked at the top of our society.

Is it any wonder so many Americans are horrified at the thought of the federal government running a national health care program? This plan of the Obama administration and Congress must be stopped now.

BILL DIELO

Columbia

**Drivers must watch out for children**

As the first day of school approaches, I am asking all drivers to be extra careful so that our children will arrive safely at their schools. Many times students are so excited about the first day that they do not notice traffic as they

should.

It is up to all drivers to watch out for South Carolina's greatest asset: our children. As you approach school zones, please slow down and help protect all of our precious children. They are South Carolina's future.

RAY JAMES

Coward

**Insurance firms corrupt health care**

Anyone who believes the health reform bill being debated is some detrimental conspiracy designed to destroy private insurance companies has "DeMintia." The editorial cartoon in The State on Aug. 4 illustrates best what is happening to the people of this country where health care is concerned. The insurance companies are not only emptying out our pockets and our bank accounts, they are corrupting the health industry in the process.

THOMAS KOLB

West Columbia

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