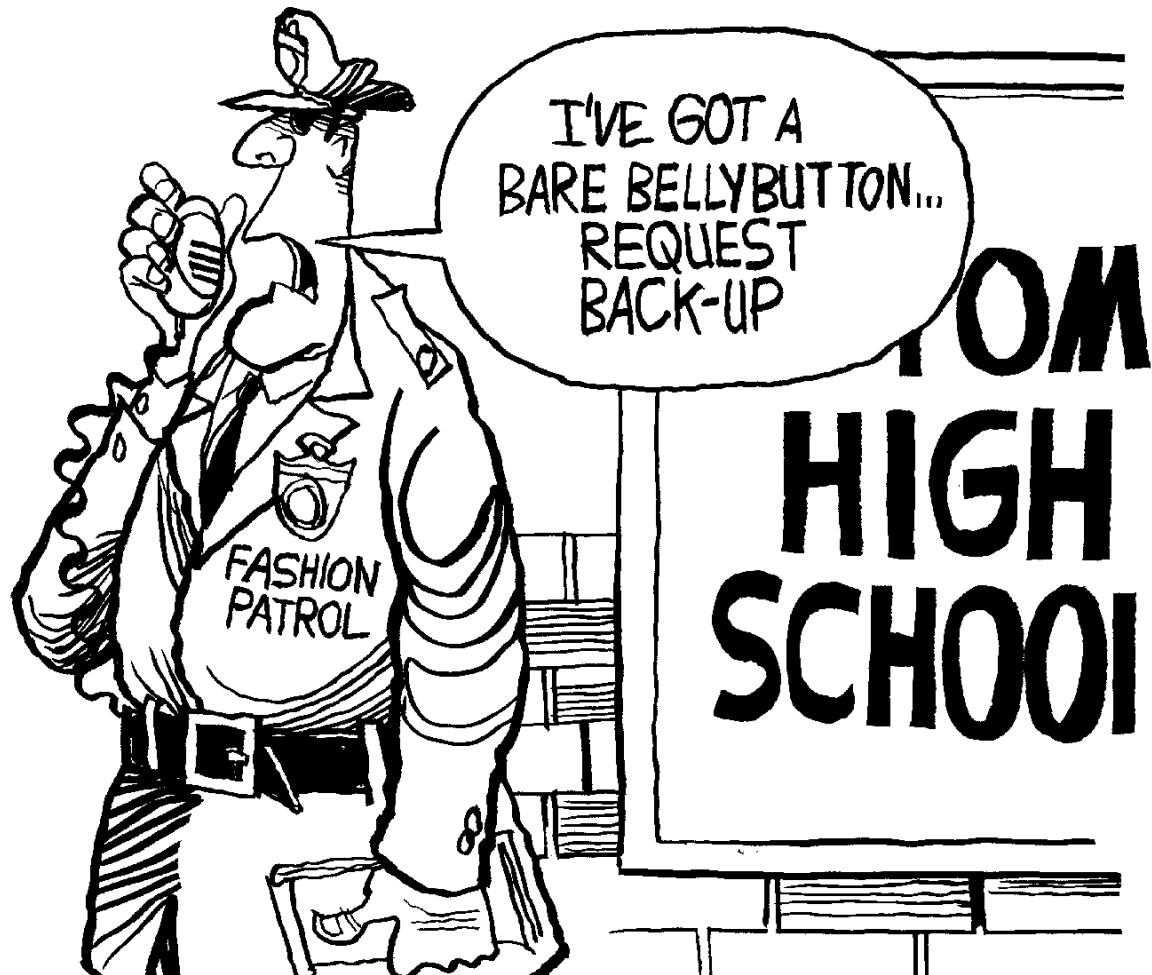


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commentary

from our viewpoint...

Expense of upgrade not worth trouble

The government wants cities and counties to spend million of dollars upgrading emergency telephone systems and cellular carriers to replace most of their equipment so phones can report *exactly* where they are being used.

Counties have spent thousands on street signs in rural areas that aren't required by any law, and phone users will be billed for millions more to pay for changes in 911 and cellular equipment.

No one can show a real need for all this expense, and it may not be such a hot idea to have our phones constantly informing on our location anyway.

Sure, there are stories that occasionally someone calls in an emergency, or is lost and hurt, and has no idea where to tell rescuers to go. It happens. Cellular 911 calls often wind up in the wrong county, since they generally go to the county where the tower is located, not necessarily where the caller is.

But the expense of replacing every cell phone in the country with models that can report their location by using Global Positioning Satellite service will be enormous. Then we still will have to pay for new equipment at cellular towers and at emergency dispatch stations, let alone the switching gear needed by phone companies.

Emergency officials have their eyes on extending the "911" tax now collected on land-line phones to cellular service. Evidence in the Kansas Legislature the last few years, however, showed that many cities and counties had plenty of 911 gear and were spending the money on buildings, portable laptop computers for police officers and other frills not related to actual 911 service.

Now they want more.

We have even mentioned the implications of having computer records of where each and every call a person makes came from. It would be a whole new field for law enforcement to delve into, at the expense of our privacy.

And while there are some reports of real problems when people do not know where they are when calling 911, even a few sound bad. But does that justify spending billions of dollars and compromising our basic freedoms a little more?

It sounds like a boondoggle of the first order to me.

— Steve Haynes

Annual Arkansas trek turns into minor miracle

My sister and mother and I took our annual trek to Arkansas to visit relatives last week. It turned out to be more of a religious experience than I had thought.

We had an uneventful trip down, leaving at 8 a.m. Thursday morning. On Friday we visited my 87-year-old aunt, mother's only living sister, who just got out of the hospital.

We then went to visit a cousin. Judy is just a year older than I am, but she has no immediate family, only aunts, uncles and cousins. A single woman, she has never had children and was an only child herself. She spent much of her life in the service (Army and Navy) and retired to Dardanelle, Ark., a dozen years ago to care for her widowed mother, who died last year.

Now Judy lives alone with a couple of aged basset hounds. She is down to a pair of dogs from four a few years ago. She is as bad about dogs as I am about cats. Actually, she loves all animals and would be a vegetarian if her doctor would let her.

An uncle and aunt, who live near Little Rock, came to visit. They had been to Branson, Mo., and came by to say hi.

We had a great time visiting everyone, but by Saturday we figured it was time to do a little touring.

Judy took us to Subiaco, Ark., where the



cynthia haynes

• open season

Benedictine abbey was having its annual arts and crafts fair. While Judy isn't Catholic, she loves the peanut brittle one of the monks makes for Christmas every year and was hoping to get some. The rest of us were just out to see the sights and maybe tour the abbey, which was founded in 1878.

The abbey was beautiful and we ended up with some nice keepsakes to take home — some homemade bread and some prayer cards.

Judy picked up one with a picture of St. Francis of Assisi (as I said, she loves all animals and feels an affinity with the little monk who talked to birds and fish.)

I got St. Francis and a card with a picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a beautiful painting of Mary comforting the child Jesus. It is also the name of the church where I was baptized, confirmed and married.

We returned to Judy's house and said our good-byes to her and to mother's sister and a couple of

cousins who dropped by to say hello, and hit the road for home with plans to stop by a winery.

The winery was fun and we got to taste a couple of the new vintages, including one called Cynthia. At \$23.50 a bottle, we decided we liked the name better than the wine and bought a cookbook instead.

As we started onward, Mom said a little prayer to Our Lady, asking for help finding a church on our way home so we could go to Mass either on Saturday night or Sunday morning.

We immediately spotted a sign directing us to St. Mary's Catholic Church. I figured the chances were pretty slim that a little, out-of-the-way church in the Ozark Mountains would have services on Saturday night, and if it did it would probably already be done or not start for several hours.

We pulled into the parking lot at 5 p.m. and read the sign. Mass — 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. Sunday.

Mother poked me in the ribs and smiled. Inside the church, the usher handed Mom a bulletin. As we sat down my ribs got another surprise. St. Mary's had another name — Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Mom considers this a minor miracle. I'm not arguing. It's never done me any good to argue with my mother or with God. Sometimes, it's better just to shut up and kneel down.

We should stop praying and prepare for war

"They counted on America to be passive...they counted wrong," President Ronald Reagan said in 1986 after Libyan terrorist attacks on American military personnel in Europe.

"We didn't journey this far because we're made of sugar candy," Winston Churchill said in 1942 during the Blitz of London.



mitch hixson

• the soundgarden

It is sad what is done in the name of religion. Osama bin Laden's blinded followers are just like some of my former students. They are suckers for peer pressure. Bin Laden promises them a trip to heaven if they kill themselves in a "mission" for their god...they agree.

In the fundamentalist Islamic religion, heaven is NOT where most people go when they die. Only if you participate in some vital "mission" for your god do you actually "earn" a trip to paradise. So these despicable acts were done all in the name of religion. Bin Laden and his followers despise the U.S. because we are a predominantly Christian society. Our beliefs make us "infidels" to them.

My thoughts, as every Americans', are with the victims and their families. Where do these victims get their retribution?

First, we need to go after the states that sponsor terrorism.

Bin Laden is known to live in Afghanistan because he can bribe the Afghan government to ignore international requests for his capture. Afghanistan's leaders should therefore be targeted. An Islamic fundamentalist group called the

Taliban controls the Afghan government. They are so extreme in their views that they actually believe the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979 didn't go far enough. The Taliban has said as late as two months ago that they want to see evidence bin Laden is guilty before they attempt to capture him. I guess we need to send videotape or a newspaper picture to these corrupt puppets of hate and death.

The victims are powerless to stop the cowardly acts that ended their lives.

We as the United States are NOT powerless. As Japanese Admiral Tojo said after the attack on Pearl Harbor, "I'm afraid we have awakened a sleeping giant."

A sleeping giant has been awakened. The war that we are about to embark on will not have easy targets or an easy way to know we have won. Terrorist "free agents" can make a bomb the size of a ballpoint pen out of a plastic explosive called sinter. This pen-sized explosive could bring down an airliner.

We as Americans have to be prepared for a long, tough and at times frustrating war with these terrorist cells that push chaos on the world. We can't just identify one country, one city, one neighbor-

hood or one building on a map and expect dropping one bomb will settle it. The cowards who attacked our freedom and liberty yesterday obviously have great command, control and reconnaissance. They are talented. There will not be a white flag waved by any of them.

We have a debt of honor to the victims of the September 11 attacks. We owe those victims. Nobody just gave us the rights we cherish as Americans. People fought and died for them. The victims died for them too.

Our place in the world is based on just a few simple ideas, and if we turn our backs on those ideas, and the victims, everything we say we stand for as a country is a lie.

Americans were murdered by cowards. Some people say these terrorist cells don't represent the threat to freedom and the American way of life that the Nazis and Imperial Japan did. I disagree. How many people need to be killed by these cowardly people to represent a threat?

In America, we can be afraid, but we can never be fearful. We are not made of sugar candy. We must raise our heads from prayer and lock our gaze onto the challenges ahead.

This war may not have a clean ending, but we must go after those countries that support these terrorist groups, because it is only then that we can attack those terrorist groups on their home turf.

Libya, Syria, Cyprus, Palestine, Afghanistan, and all the rest...beware the giant was awakened on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a date which will live in infamy.

Pastor thankful to be in Goodland in tragic times

To the Editor:
How thankful I am to be in this city, of all cities, during these tragic times!

In times such as these, it is a comfort to be around those of great faith, those with both spirit and conviction. This community has all of the above.

The senseless death and devastation that was visited upon our largest of sister cities may just as well have happened here.

People of this community immediately began to come together in an effort to show solidarity with those who are suffering.

Although our church building was used to manufacture the thousands of ribbons that are being distributed throughout our city, the workers, the materials, the equipment, the funds, and the spirit came from the many churches and businesses throughout northwest Kansas.

Our effort to show support and love for those who have suffered personal loss in this tragedy, seems so trivial and petty compared to what are enduring today and will have to continue to endure tomorrow.



from our readers

• to the editor

We must remember to continue our prayers long after the headlines shrink again to normal size, and the story becomes history. Their grief will never fully diminish and their horrible memories will continue to endure. Our prayers for them should endure as well.

My heart right now is tugged in so many directions.

Goodland in particular tugs with a vengeance. This city, known for its enduring patriotism and family values, genuinely feels the grief and confusion that New Yorkers and the rest of the nation are experiencing.

As a city, we will mourn with them, we will pray for them, and we hurt greatly for them. Although it

was only about six years ago that I discovered that Goodland is located in the heart of America, it was not until after I moved here, that I made the discovery that the heart of America is truly found in Goodland.

We as a city and hopefully as a nation will continue to draw together in prayer; after all, we claim to be "one nation, under God, indivisible." From my experience, this fine city, Goodland, Kan., embodies and embraces these principles particularly in times such as these.

Thank you, Goodland, for your faithfulness and patriotism in supporting our countrymen in these trying times. Let's continue with the flags, the reds, the whites and the blues, and most importantly, the prayers.

Let's ask that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard the hearts and minds of those who now suffer.

John Coumerilh, pastor
Word of Life Foursquare Church
Goodland

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