

commentary

from other pens...

Media role a concern, but not a problem

The Topeka Capital-Journal on media's role:
Some are concerned that America's omnipresent media may be giving aid and comfort to the enemy. It's absolutely a valid concern. But at this point, it's probably not a problem. Not that it hasn't been. Remember Somalia? The big joke at the time was that the news media were waiting on the beach when American troops landed to restore order to that African country. Still, government officials have learned how to deal with the media. You can rest assured that even the most aggressive national reporters won't ferret out information from the likes of Colin Powell that he doesn't want out. Indeed, it's a good bet that our leaders aren't saying anything they don't want America's enemies to know. ... At the same time, you wonder what the heck some of these reporters are thinking. They ask questions that they simply have to know in their hearts shouldn't be answered. ... Don't they realize some of their questions, if answered, would endanger U.S. service men and women? America's freedom allows such questions. But democracy's need for a certain amount of security requires that sometimes such questions not even be asked. For the most part, the news media have handled this tragedy and its aftermath with unprecedented dexterity and sensitivity. But they need to be careful right now. A total lack of restraint will not only give the media a bad name, it could also get someone killed.

The Iola Register on fearing foreigners:
The Register reported ... that two young Polish men stopped by the Allen County Airport the day before to buy fuel for a small airplane they were flying. ... Wednesday a couple of people called the Register and asked whether the FBI had been notified of the Polish pilots being in Iola, particularly since Iola was so close to the Wolf Creek nuclear power plant. ... There's no good reason why federal authorities, or those at any other level, should have been notified. Whenever foreign nationals come to the United States for something other than a governmental visit, they must have a passport and obtain a visa. When a visa is issued authorities are expected to make whatever investigations are warranted. ... The reason for the concern about the Poles occurred because of the terrorist attacks in New York City and at the Pentagon. None of us should permit those attacks to create a police state mentality. That is among the aims of terrorists — to destroy the open-mindedness and freedom of movement that long have been hallmarks of American society. In today's overt and covert law enforcement and intelligence environment, there probably is less reason to be fearful of someone from a foreign land traveling in the U.S. than ever before. As FDR cautioned us at the depth of the Great Recession, the main thing we have to fear, is fear itself.

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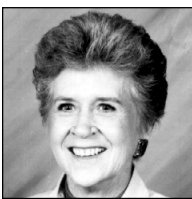
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HULME



I am an American, and I am sad

I don't know about you, but I feel sure you join me in sorrow over the tragedies of September 11th. More things have suddenly changed than we can possibly yet know. Not only our nation, but the whole world feels the loss. As Americans, we have lost a great deal. Much has been lost that will never be recovered, but the loss is not just ours alone. There were deaths which were not American. What can I possibly say that you haven't already said, or thought, or felt — or heard said better by someone else? I have mourned these past weeks personally, but also have mourned over feelings of inadequacy to help. I am an American. I am outraged by what has happened. I want the guilty to be punished. But — I also want no more deaths. The President says war has been declared on America. But just who is the enemy? Who would you have America declare war on? Terrorism, yes. But who are the terrorists, and what makes them as they are? What about us and our lifestyle or our politics makes them hate us so? I am an American. I am sad that some of you have



lorna g. t.
• commentary

lived to see another Pearl Harbor-type attack. You know what that event triggered, and have more of an idea of what might follow. You know the sacrifices you and others made then and that Americans might be called on to make again. Many loved ones died, but America survived. I am an American who had a military husband and three sons in the military. I asked my husband once how he felt about believing that killing was a sin while he daily trained to protect and possibly kill. His reply was, "We train while constantly praying we'll never have to use our training." He taught me the best defense is a strong deterrent. When dealing with people of differing ideolo-

gies, it is important to remain strong to discourage aggression. We have learned this week the importance of a strong military. I am an American, and for many years, I believed our way of life was so superior and appealing, that things like this could never happen in our country. Senseless genocide and centuries-old disputes were news stories that happened other places to people who weren't educated or sensible enough to stop fighting. I became complacent and smug and proud to be a sensible American. Now I know how hated we are in the world and marvel at how we escaped for so long. But we have finally been touched on our own soil by the world's insanity. We have become vulnerable — no longer isolated and immune. It can happen here; it can happen to us. We are still in shock. I am an American, but more important than that, I am a Christian. I am human, and I have, and will continue to have, a wide range of emotion and thoughts whenever injustice happens. But as a Christian, it is important that I put my faith in God above all thoughts of panic or revenge.

Which team should I start this week?

I'm an addict. Admitting it is the first step I hope to overcoming my addiction. I always start to think that my addiction isn't that big a deal. I mean it's just fantasy football. It's a stupid game that I can't even actually play. I can't control any of the players. I can't call any audibles at the line of scrimmage. I can't make a game saving tackle. But as soon as I let my guard down, BAM! I'm thinking again, obsessing again, over whether to start the New Orleans Saints' defense or the San Diego Chargers defense this week. Hmmm. Let's see, the Saints play at home against Minnesota. The Chargers play at Cleveland. Hmmm. Who would have the advantage? AAARRRRGGGHH!! My addiction began a couple of years ago when I stumbled upon a web site advertising a fantasy football league. Sounds like fun I thought, and it's so easy to sign up and organize a team. So why not? After signing up, giving my team its own nickname, and picking some good football colors for my squad, black and blue, I was ready to draft actual National Football League players to be on my team. My downfall had begun right under my nose. So is Terrell Davis really healthy? That LaDanian Tomlinson can't be good enough to draft. He's just a rookie. In my fantasy league, I draft 13 offensive players and two defensive teams. Each week I choose a starting lineup consisting of one quarterback, three wide receivers, two running backs, one tight end, one kicker, and one defensive team. The other players and defensive team are on my bench for the week. Points are awarded to my starting players based on how well they do in actual NFL games on Sundays and Monday nights. As an owner, you want your offensive players to score



mitch hixson
• the soundgarden

touchdowns, and your defensive team to cause many turnovers and to give up as few points as possible. Each week my team is matched against another team from my 10-team league. Whichever team has the most points after that weekend's games is the winner of that week's "game." Over the course of a 14 game season my league is whittled down to the top four teams, which advance to the playoffs. Everyone else goes home for a long cold winter of second-guessing. So do I start Elvis Grbac or Trent Green at quarterback this week? What was I thinking when I started Eddie Kennison at wide receiver? Now this may seem to you to be just a silly little vice that doesn't really bite. But I warn you that this fantasy football league stuff should have a warning label on the package. "Use only if you don't mind having your mind drift off into lala land during an important business meeting." Fantasy football bites! One minute I'm making a list of comparable real estate properties, and the next I'm trying to decide if Stacey Mack of Jacksonville is just a one-week wonder or if he's the next Marshall Faulk. Watching football on Sundays is not the same either. Instead of rooting for one NFL team over another, I find myself yelling for individual players. "Throw #85 the ball. Pleeceeeeeease throw #85 the ball!" This insidious addiction makes you break those

special bonds you've always had with your favorite team. My favorite NFL team since I was a wee-little tot has been the Dallas Cowboys. Today fantasy football has started to erode that bond by actually making me yell for a Cowboys' opponent. More specifically yelling for a player from a Cowboys' opponent. Hideous. The ingenious aspect of fantasy football is that once they gave me the opportunity to name my team, come up with my team colors, and draft my own players, the team became mine. It became more than just a list of players on a computer screen. I was responsible for helping this team be successful. I had a responsibility to put my team in the best possible position to win. While I haven't had much success in my two previous years, I'm still an eternal optimist. My team will get 'em next week. It's a little life lesson I guess. You never fail until you quit trying, and patience is a virtue. Don't worry Isaac even though you stunk it up Sunday I'm going to start you again this week. At least I think I am. Would Marty be better than Isaac because Marty plays the Cowboys? ARRRRRRH! There it goes again. That insidious addiction called the fantasy world of life or football. I guess we all need a little fantasy place to sneak off to now and then, especially since 9-11. Fantasy football is great stress reliever for me, but I'm not a doctor, so remember you play at your own risk. You might wake up one day and actually start rooting for a player from the Oakland Raiders. Wow what a disaster that little fantasy football pill can cause. Or maybe it's just the diversion we all need right now.

berry's world

HERE WE ARE SITTING IN HORRENDOUS TRAFFIC. AS SOON AS WE SAW THE "LEFT LANE ENDS" SIGN, I GOT INTO THE RIGHT LANE. NOW, CARS ARE ZOOMING ALONG THE LEFT LANE AND CUTTING IN LINE WAY AHEAD OF US. LOOK! THERE GOES SOMEBODY TO THE RIGHT BARRELING DOWN THE BREAKDOWN LANE AND HE'S CUTTING IN, TOO.



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