

# commentary

from other pens...

## False anthrax alarms carry financial costs

**The Topeka Capital-Journal on hoaxes:**  
Topeka businesses have had to deal with bomb threats from time to time. More recently, they have received warnings about anthrax. Thankfully, none of the threats has proven to be true; however, they aren't without a cost.  
In addition to the anxiety that it causes employers and employees alike and their families, the false alarms carry financial costs as well. Workers lose time and companies lose production or business. There is a public cost as well as police and other public officials have to investigate the threats. ...  
In Kansas, such crimes are classified as aggravated criminal threats, and they are treated more like crimes against property than crimes against people. The punishment, therefore, is light. A defendant without a previous felony conviction would get probation rather than having to serve any time. The person convicted of the most serious offense would face three years and five months in prison. ...  
Of course, to even get that far someone first must be caught, and that doesn't often happen. However, with the possibility of such a light sentence if one is caught, the law does little to deter such activities. ...  
Given this new wave of threats, lawmakers may indeed want to re-examine the laws.

Most threats, whether they involve bombs or anthrax, are done more as pranks than malicious attacks, but that doesn't make them any less costly. After all, authorities and those threatened have to treat each as the real thing.

**Garden City Telegram on anthrax fears:**  
Health experts and officials in government are sending the same message to Americans nervous over the growing number of anthrax cases: Use common sense and be diligent in handling unknown materials.

Common sense is easier said than used in these uncommon times. So far, Kansans have been spared any direct contact with anthrax-tainted mail. ...  
Sen. Pat Roberts alluded to the need for heightened awareness given Kansas' vital role in feeding the world. Farmers and food processors in the state should take extra precautions to ensure the food chain isn't interrupted.

We may feel relatively safe in the Midwest, but such sentiment must come with understanding that we could be targets at any time. Precautionary steps to thwart dubious activity improves safety.  
Trust that any advisory to law enforcement to be on heightened awareness is an advisory to us all.  
Three Kansas middle-schoolers are learning the hard way that this is no time for practical jokes. They face felony charges for plotting an anthrax hoax at their Prairie Village school. ...  
Such silliness only adds to the anxiety we're all feeling. While we may feel safe, and say so on the outside, no doubt there is a hint of trepidation when we open the mail, or board a plane or train.  
Such fear at routine activities is the definition of terror.  
Diligence is our most important trait these days, because the world knows terror can strike at any place at any time.

### where to write

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**U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521  
**U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1217 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 225-2715  
**State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka, KS 66612. (785) 296-7676



## WHAT WE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE The gap between Islam and peace

When George W. Bush says "Islam is peace," and Tony Blair insists the war now begun "has nothing to do with Islam," some of us scratch our heads and try, brows furrowed, to reconcile their soothing words with our frightening vision: the dirty war on Western civilization waged by evil forces in the name of Islam.

The experts tell us militant Islamic fundamentalists, or "Islamists," represent a narrow, if murderous, fringe. They number no more than 10, maybe 15, percent of all Muslims. That estimate works out to somewhere between 100 million and 150 million people. Which is a lot of murderous fringe.

Meanwhile, where is that peaceable majority overflowing Islamdom? Are they filling the streets in unity with America's effort to eradicate Islamist terrorism, "marginal" though its supporters may be? Hardly. Only last week, UPI reported that Pakistan's Tahirul Qadri had become "the first prominent Muslim scholar to condemn Osama bin Laden and the Taliban so strongly in public." Even if the wire service missed a bin Laden-condemning cleric here or there, the singularity of Mr. Qadri's achievement is striking. Indeed, sampling some of the world's largest mosques, The New York Times recently found clerics from England to Pakistan denouncing America, saluting the Taliban, or even declaring solidarity with Osama bin Laden.

In Cairo, the paper reported, Friday prayers at the famous Al Azhar University mosque ended with a rousing chant of: "America is the enemy of Arabs and Muslims. Let us die in our war against America." In New Delhi's largest mosque, the imam urged "moral" support for Taliban jihad. In Nairobi, services progressed from attacking the United States to the parable: "Every Muslim is Osama bin Laden."



### diana west

- commentary

Every Muslim, of course, is not Osama bin Laden. But why don't more Muslims say so, quite loudly and very specifically? Muslim condolences after Sept. 11 very often came across as rather generic expressions of sympathy, equally as suitable for a natural disaster as for a terrorist act of war committed by co-religionists. Little sense of the magnitude of events is being communicated, and, thus, little recognition of the urgent need for civilized people of all faiths and nations to denounce this evil, vociferously and by name, and array themselves in warring solidarity against it.

What accounts for this weakness? And what is a reflexively tolerant, post-multicultural Westerner to make of it? Our dauntless leaders may repeat that the Islamist threat has nothing to do with Islam, but, frankly, their mantra is getting a little ridiculous. Writing in the Wall Street Journal, Amir Taheri, an Iranian author and journalist, recently declared that "to claim the attacks had nothing to do with Islam amounts to a whitewash." It's also, he wrote, a "dis-service to Muslims, who need to cast a critical glance at the way their faith is taught, lived and practiced."

Mr. Taheri, frank as he was, did not offer how-to specifics. But with reporters mining Islam for information previously limited to specialists, it's clear how important this call for Islamic reform really is. As the horrors of our Taliban enemy have become common knowledge, we also learn, for example, that a similar strain of Islam, Wahabbism,

is practiced and exported by our so-called ally Saudi Arabia. Examining a textbook for one of five compulsory religion classes for Saudi 10th-graders, The New York Times quoted a lesson regarding whom "good Muslims" should befriend. "After examining a number of scriptures which warn of the dangers of having Christian and Jewish friends, the lesson concludes: `It is compulsory for the Muslims to be loyal to each other and to consider infidels their enemy.'"

This comes straight from the Quran. "O believers," the Quran says (Sura 5, Verse 50), "do not hold Jews and Christians as your allies. They are the allies of one another; and anyone who makes them his friends is surely one of them." As historian Paul Johnson noted in National Review, such "canonical commands" — along with "slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them" (Sura 9, Verse 5) — "cannot be explained away or softened by modern theological exegesis, because there is no such science in Islam." Mr. Johnson goes on to explain that contrary to the evolving nature of both Christianity and Judaism, Islam has never undergone any update, reformation or enlightenment since its inception in the seventh century. "Islam," he wrote, "remains a religion of the Dark Ages. The seventh-century Quran is still taught as the immutable word of God, any teaching of which is literally true. In other words, mainstream Islam is essentially akin to the most extreme form of Biblical fundamentalism."

This stagnation is a key to the problem. The solution, however, is beyond the grasp of non-Muslims. This most critical, internal challenge falls to those Muslims around the world who desire to live and worship in peace.

Diana West is a columnist and editorial writer for The Washington Times. She can be contacted via dwest@washingtontimes.com.

## Is consulting firm practicing law?

Dear Attorney General Stovall:  
I have seen advertisements in various newspapers for a consulting group offering to manage claims for homeowners against a siding manufacturer. The manufacturer is involved in a class action lawsuit, and it is giving reimbursements to homeowners who had this siding installed on their homes. Is it proper, though, for a consulting firm to handle this claim for someone, or should an attorney be the one to represent a consumer in a class action suit or claim?

Dear Kansas Consumer:  
When someone is seeking legal advice, or needs to be represented in a court of law or in a legal matter, they must be represented by an attorney. If a person or business, such as this consulting firm, offers to help a person obtain a refund, this is not necessarily considered an unauthorized practice of law (UPL).

My Consumer Protection Division contacted the company you mentioned and asked for a list of the specific services it provides to clients. The consulting group explained it helps clients make the decision if the siding they have on their homes was



### carla j. stovall

- consumer corner

produced by the company involved in the class action lawsuit. This decision is not a legal question, and the consumers make the final decision as to whether to make a claim to the siding manufacturer. If the client decides to make a claim, the consulting group assists him or her in filling out the claim forms. These forms are not contracts, and do not require the consulting firm to make legal judgments. If the claim is denied to a homeowner, the fee to the consulting firm is refunded.

However, making a claim and completing the forms is something consumers are able to do on their own behalf, without incurring a fee. The consulting group just offers a service that provides assistance if the consumer chooses to use its help.

The unauthorized practice of law occurs when

## Setting the record straight

To the Editor:  
Now for what it's worth.  
To set the record straight the Chamber did not arrange for my family to sell Kettle corn at another event. All the Chamber did was suggest that they set up at the local stock car races instead.

But guess what, my family had already arranged this themselves and had been selling at the local stock car races all summer.

Now it turns out my family is really glad they weren't allowed in our hometown event as they have moved on west to much bigger and more profitable events.

So much for supporting our hometown event. Does that seem fair and reasonable to you?  
Donice Monhollon  
Goodland



### from our readers

- to the editor

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The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten, and must include a telephone number and a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: <daily@nwkansas.com>.

a person gives legal advice, drafts legal documents, or represents a client in a process in which legal rights are involved when he or she is not licensed by the State of Kansas to practice law. Also, it is prohibited for anyone to falsely present themselves as an attorney.

Attorney General Carla J. Stovall offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints. For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310. Leave your name, number and subject of your inquiry with the receptionist and your call will be returned promptly.

### berry's world



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