

# commentary

from other pens...

## Enigmatic Afghan doesn't follow crowd

By George Geda

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — In normal times, he conducts business while sitting on a bed, his companions seated on the floor before him. Simple notepads are used to issue instructions.

He remains an enigma even to his own people. Because of a ban on photography and television, hardly anybody knows what he looks like. Only rarely does he issue policy statements.

Not one to follow the crowd, Mullah Mohammed Omar has been using these somewhat bizarre practices since his Taliban movement seized power in Afghanistan five years ago.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terror attacks against the United States, there is no more important target for American military planners than Omar — with the exception of his radical Islamic co-religionist, Osama bin Laden, whom Omar has sheltered in Afghanistan since 1996.

It may seem an asymmetrical battle — America's high tech military machine arrayed against one of the world's poorest nations — but Omar and his movement have survived more than three weeks of air attacks, and predictions of his early defeat are increasingly scarce.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf said recently bin Laden would be easy prey for the United States once Omar is out of the way.

"It could be over in one day if you take out Mullah Omar and his leadership," Musharraf told American reporters. "Once you've done that, the campaign is over."

When the U.S.-British air war began Oct. 7, Omar's office building in the southern Afghanistan city of Kandahar was among the targets. Later, Army Rangers and other special forces hit a residence of Omar in Kandahar. He is believed to have survived the attacks unharmed.

Within hours of the Sept. 11 suicide hijackings, President Bush said Omar was no less of a target than bin Laden.

"We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them," he said.

Ahmad Rashid, a Pakistani journalist who has written a newly published book called "Taliban," says some of Omar's followers contend he was chosen as their leader because of his piety and unwavering belief in Islam rather than his military or political gifts.

Omar began as a mullah, or preacher, in his village of Singhesar where he held prayer services in exchange for money to feed his family. He fought Soviet occupiers of Afghanistan during the 1980s and, in the process, lost an eye when he was wounded. Appalled by the perceived excesses of post-Soviet era warlords in Afghanistan, he and his allies formed the Taliban in 1994 and seized power in 1996.

He has not led his countrymen to the promised land. Countless thousands of Afghans have fled to neighboring Pakistan and Iran. Hunger is widespread. He is encircled by enemies and is repudiated in varying degrees by governments around the world.

Before the bombs started dropping, Omar outlined his grievances with the United States in a radio interview.

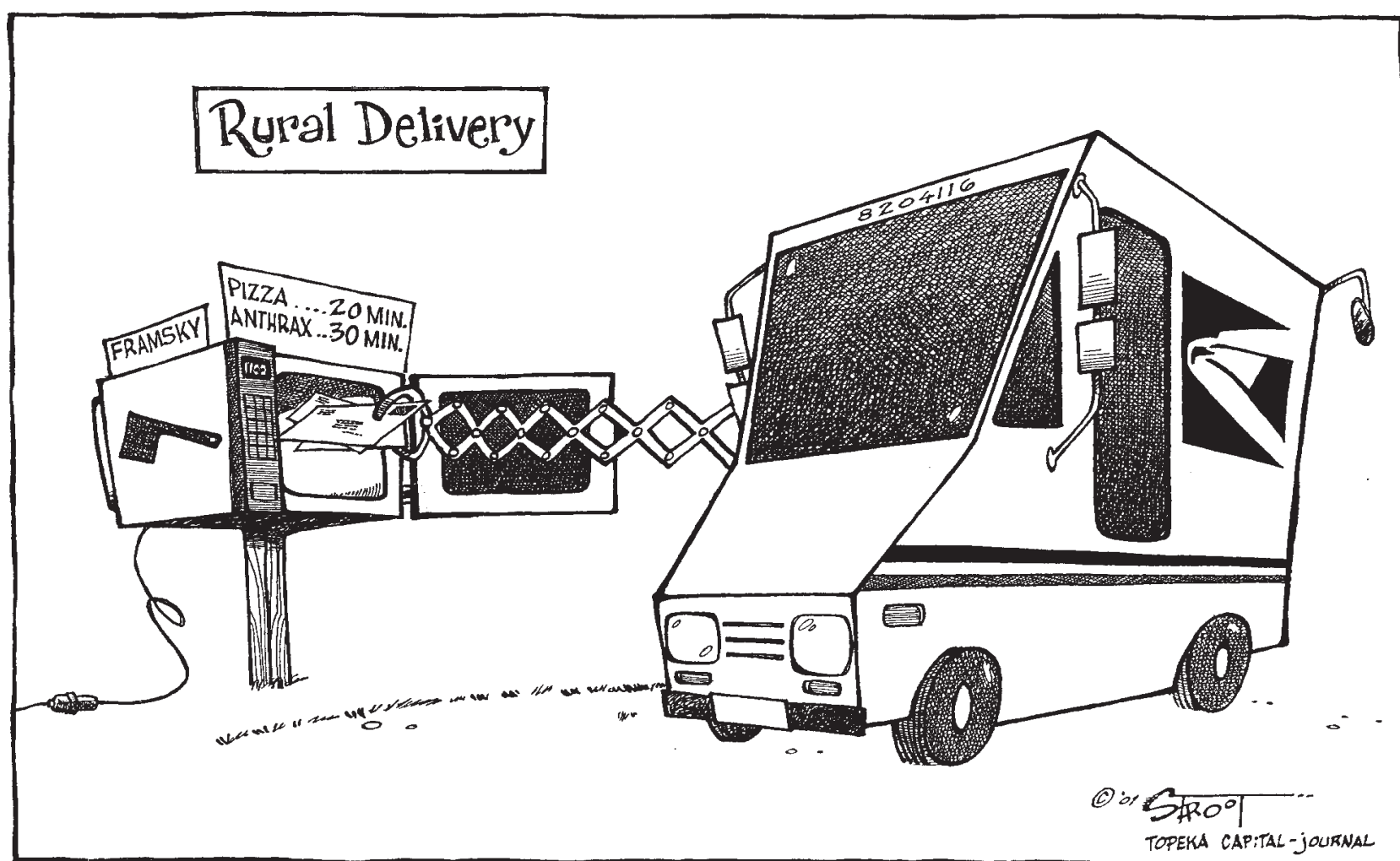
"America controls the governments of the Islamic countries," he said, according to a translation. "America keeps after them until they do its bidding. But these governments are very distant from their own people."

"The people ask to follow Islam, but the governments do not listen. The people are powerless against their governments, because they are in the grip of the United States."

Omar would rather face international censure than turn over bin Laden to a third country for trial. The Afghans say tradition forbids expulsion of guests. U.S. officials respond bin Laden has been a generous boarder, training Arab-Afghan guerrillas to do battle with anti-Taliban guerrillas in northern Afghanistan and providing Omar with millions of dollars.

According to Rashid, Omar keeps fresh dollars handy in a tin trunk. The stash is, Rashid says, "The treasury of the Taliban movement."

EDITOR'S NOTE — George Geda has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.



## Lack of seat belt cuts promising life short

I'm mad and sad and heartsick. They buried a 19-year-old on Monday because he wasn't wearing his seat belt.

Russell was a bright, active, enthusiastic young man. He was going to college and working part time for his uncle.

When his dad noticed a tendency to fast cars, he started to share his love of racing. All summer Russell raced in northcentral Kansas. All summer he got into his dad's racer, put on his helmet and seat belt and roared around the track.

So why didn't he put that little scrap of material on last Thursday morning?

Why did he take off early that day without doing what he had done during every race all summer long? Why? Why? Why?

If I had you here, Russell, I'd grab you and try to shake some sense into you. You can't imagine the anguish you've caused your mother and father. I know you would never have deliberately done



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

anything to hurt them like this.

I'm not related to Russell. In fact, I only met him a couple of times.

But I know his dad. His father and my sister have been dating for several years now. And as everyone who's dated a person with children knows, it's a package deal.

Rick is one of the kindest people I know. He treats my sister like a queen and my mother like the queen mother.

Ever since my father died, Rick has been the one to move the refrigerator, fix the car, put up the ceiling fan, take the trash to the dump and watch out

for both Mom and Marie.

But, his children have always been first with him. The sun rises and sets with his daughter and four sons.

His hobby is racing cars and he passed on his love of the sport to his sons.

When the season was done this year, the guys in Concordia gave Russell a model of his Dad's car, telling him that now he had a car his own, so his dad could have his again and be back on the track next year.

Thursday morning, Russell lost control of his vehicle on a gravel road. The car went into a ditch. Russell was thrown out and the car rolled over on top of him, breaking nearly every bone in his body.

They said the vehicle was hardly dented.

If Russell had been wearing a seat belt, most likely, he would be driving a race car next summer instead of being buried with the model he was given at the end of this season.

Why Russell? Why?

## Telemarketers wrote book on rudeness

Telemarketers are becoming like a school of hungry sharks, feeding morning, noon and night.

No combination of federal and state laws, telephone technology and itchy hang-up finger seems to fend them off.

They just keep circling and circling, waiting for the kill.

Rudeness is lost on them — and besides, they wrote the book.

Tell them you don't want whatever it is they are selling, and they'll argue that you should just listen to their pitch. They are experts at getting a word in edgewise. And he who hesitates here is lost indeed.

It's not possible to sleep in on Saturday anymore, because it's more or less a certainty that a telemarketer will call just past the magic hour of 9 a.m. That's when presumably, Americans are supposed to be up and at 'em even on their days off.

We got a new phone with caller ID this summer. In three months, the daughter who calls home the most has logged 37 calls. The telemarketers hit 99 by the end of August, and they just keep on calling. I cannot tell you how many times, because the



**steve haynes**

• along the sappa

phone only registers 99.

All telemarketers have the same number and name: "unknown, unknown." So the phone logs them all in the same slot.

I don't know any real people who have their phones listed "unknown, unknown," which is just as well. I'd hate to be hanging up on my friends.

If you were sort of anti-social, that would be OK. You wouldn't get any calls at your unlisted number, and no one would take your outbound calls. Your phone would be reserved for emergencies and late-night 900 forays.

I never thought I'd see the day, but I'm thinking of calling Bell and having my number reject anonymous calls. I think they charge for that, but it might be worth it.

My finger gets tired of hanging up on these

people.

I used to answer and tell the nice telemarketer ever so politely that I wasn't interested. Then they started demanding that I find out what they were selling. And that takes time.

I know what it is. It is a credit card, a loan or a refinance. (Banks are big on telemarketing.) Aluminum siding or a magazine subscription. Maybe a newspaper. I don't need any of 'em. I've got plenty of credit, more than I need, and the house has plastic siding. I already get two daily newspapers.

There is nothing else that is sold by telemarketers, nothing I need, at least. Ed McMahon will come to my door, should I ever win the sweepstakes. I have seen this on TV.

With the increase in volume, I no longer have time to talk to the telemarketers. I've decided that they volunteered for this racket, and like lawyers, used car salesmen and others who have sold their soul, deserve no quarter from the rest of society.

This is war. Let the caller beware. But my finger is getting tired, and I get grouchy when I don't get to sleep in on Saturday.

Is that the phone?

## The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association  
The Associated Press

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association  
National Newspaper Association  
e-mail: [daily@nwkans.com](mailto:daily@nwkans.com)



Steve Haynes, President  
Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page  
Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor  
Society Editor/Reporter  
Sharon Corcoran, Sports Editor  
Eric Yonkey, Bill Wagoner, Advertising Sales  
James Schiefen, Adv. Production  
Sheila Smith, Office Manager Pat Schiefen Bookkeeping

### Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager  
Ron VanLoenen Judy McKnight Richard Westfahl  
Lana Westfahl Betty Morris Helen Dilts

[nwkans.com](http://nwkans.com)

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services ([nbetz@nwkans.com](mailto:nbetz@nwkans.com))  
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. ([support@nwkans.com](mailto:support@nwkans.com))

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: [daily@nwkans.com](mailto:daily@nwkans.com). Advertising questions can be sent to: [gdnadv@nwkans.com](mailto:gdnadv@nwkans.com)

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$22; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$28; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$95. (All tax included.) Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$25; six months, \$40; 12 months, \$75.

Incorporating:

The Sherman  
County Herald  
Founded by Thomas McCants  
1935-1989

THE SHERMAN COUNTY  
STAR  
Founded by Eric and  
Roxie Yonkey  
1994-2001

Nor'West Newspapers

Haynes Publishing Company

## Golden West was not a 'warehouse of abuse'

To the Editor:

I am writing in regard to the front page article "What happened to Christina," (Oct. 19).

First I want to respond to Brad Pistotnik's statement, "Golden West employees warehoused the residents and treated them worse than dogs."

Nothing could be further from the truth. I was an employee of Golden West from March 1, 1985 to June 20, 2001. I did not see abuse or neglect, to the contrary, I saw a great deal of compassion, attentiveness and empathy.

Golden West has a zero tolerance for abuse. All staff were required to attend weekly inservices, stressing the importance of voice tone, negotiating, understanding verbal and non-verbal language, body language and sign language.

These residents are a unique and delightful group. I have learned as much from them as they have from me. I always looked forward to going to work because every day was different.

Some days were diamonds and some days were lead, but more were diamonds.

I have worked with, and for, some of the finest people I'll ever meet. They respected the residents and cared for them as individuals.

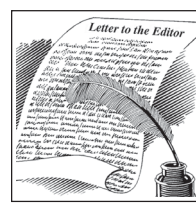
I can assure you, everything that was done for Christina, was done with the intention to help her and improve her life. I don't know why Christina died.

I lost my 17 year-old son Joe in a bizarre freak accident. I don't know why he died, either.

Maybe God doesn't want us to always know why.

I want to challenge all former and present employees of Golden West to write in and express their thoughts about what inspires them to come to work every day over and beyond their paychecks.

Or they can be silent, and by their silence mak-



from our readers

• to the editor

ing an affirmation in the public eye, we were negligent and abusive.

I want the citizens of Goodland to know Golden West is an asset, not a blight to this community.

Margaret Hass  
Wallace

To the Editor:

On behalf of Hospice Services Inc., I would like to commend our area ministers for working with our organization.

During the end-of-life journey, it is natural for patients, families and caregivers to search for meaning. For some, this search is spiritual. Many times we find a minister joining them in this journey. Their central role is companionship, not only with the patient and family, but with the community and the hospice team. They provide love, support, encouragement, acceptance and prayers on behalf of the patient.

For the family and loved ones left behind, the end-of-life journey continues. This part requires courage. The ministers and faith community play key roles of encouragement and comfort. Again, this support does not stop with just the family, but reaches out to the community, too.

Their role in hospice care continues, as they help educate our volunteers, staff, and community. Ministers provide their expertise at volunteer trainings and grief support groups. They also work in partnership with us to raise public awareness on end-

of-life issues.

Hospice care is just one of the various ways our ministers improve our community. Thank you for caring!

Hospice Services Volunteer  
Linda Knott, Goodland

### berry's world



"I THINK I'M OVER-HAPPY HOURED"