

# commentary

from other pens...

## New 'license' plates opens can of worms

**The Olathe Daily News on "Choose life" license plates:**

It looks like the state could soon be an official fund-raiser for the pro-life movement.

... The Kansas Senate Transportation Committee endorsed a bill creating an official, state-sanctioned "Choose life" license plate. If the bill passes, Kansans who choose the specialized plates will pay \$40 to the state and an additional fee of between \$25 and \$100 to Kansans for Life. The additional money will be placed in a fund to promote adoption. Kansans for life is thrilled that its lobbying effort has moved the bill this far. ...

The license plates are a state-sponsored effort to advance a political and religious message. That in itself should have taxpayers incensed over this committee's endorsement.

But there's more. Passage of this bill is going to cost Kansans big bucks.

Why? Because the Senate panel has, willingly opened an enormous political can of worms. If this bill passes, lawsuits are virtually guaranteed and have even been promised by a representative of the pro-choice group Planned Parenthood, which has sued in other states foolish enough to go down this road. ...

This bill needs to go away, and we mean now. Passage of the bill would be a bad precedent — opening the door for any number of groups to approach the state for special license plates.

Fair is fair. How do you endorse license plates for Kansans for Life, but turn down the same request from a Nazi hate group?

Kansas should not allow its license plates to become billboards for complicated and controversial issues.

**The Hutchinson News on research centers:**

The House Appropriations committee ... wisely endorsed a bill authorizing \$110 million in bonds for new research centers at three state universities.

The research center proposal makes sense for Kansas — and for Kansans.

Federal grants and private donations would supplement the bond revenue for the centers for biomedical research at the University of Kansas, food safety at Kansas State University and aviation research at Wichita State University.

The centers would stimulate economic development in Kansas and attract federal and private grants to help fund additional research projects.

Under the bill, the state would pay off the first \$50 million of the bonds, with a limit of \$10 million a year in payments, starting in fiscal year 2004. The universities would assume responsibility for the remaining \$60 million. The Kansas Development Finance Authority estimated that it would issue 20-year bonds at less than 5 percent interest.

The bill contains one flaw — it exempts the projects from competitive bidding requirements for construction and professional service contracts. The Board of Regents contends that the exemptions would speed up the projects, but taking a few extra months to put the projects out for bid should not cause unacceptable delays.

Aside from fixing that problem, the Legislature should approve the proposal to invest in the three research centers at KU, K-State and WSU.

### Letter Policy

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## The Goodland Daily News

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## Cancelling telephone service

Dear Attorney General Stovall:

Several months ago, my mother moved out of her home. When I paid her phone bill for that last month, I enclosed a note asking the company to disconnect the number. However, she continued to get billed and I continued enclosing notes asking the company to disconnect the line. After a couple more months of this, I called someone at the phone company who informed me that all bills are read by computers and that my notes were never read. I don't want to pay for several months of usage when I thought I had cancelled the service. Attorney General Stovall, what can I do?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

My Consumer Protection Division contacted your telephone phone service company and it informed us that when customers send payment for



**carla j.  
stovall**

• consumer corner

their bills, the items are sent directly to payment processing centers and are read by computers. This would explain why your phone company had no record of your request to cancel.

The phone company stated that if consumers wish to correspond with the company, they should contact the company's customer service department. Contact information is provided on your phone bill. Customer Service is where requests for

new service, cancellation, and questions about billing are handled.

In the interest of good customer relations, your phone company agreed to waive the charges for the months you believed you had cancelled.

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.

## The American Auschwitz?



**diana  
west**

• commentary

Ten thousand Muslims can't be wrong: 19 Arab men did not hijack four American airliners and attack the United States on Sept. 11, killing 3,000 people. Silly us for thinking otherwise. Must be our "ruthless ... aggressive ... conceited ... arrogant ... easily provoked and biased" ways again, getting in between us and reality. At least that's how the Gallup Organization's Frank Newport said 9,924 Muslims polled across nine Islamic countries described Americans. Good thing Gallup asked the right people the important question. Now, finally, we know the facts.

Or at least we know the "facts" as the Islamic world "knows" them. This state of pan-Muslim denial — 61 percent denied an Arab role on Sept. 11 (including a staggering 89 percent in Kuwait), while only 18 percent believed Arabs were at the controls — is well worth pondering.

For one thing, Gallup's other findings are only barely comprehensible in terms of this one seminal incomprehensibility. That is, if 19 Arab hijackers from the Al Qaeda network did not kill 3,000 Americans on Sept. 11, then it makes a certain kind of sense that only 9 percent of those polled would consider military action against Afghanistan morally justified. Who do we think we are anyway, pounding on the Al Qaeda chapter of the Afghanistan Beautification League — and then incarcerating these Wordsworthian souls at Guantanamo Bay?

You — ruthless and biased American that you are — probably think of Guantanamo as a place where hardened terrorists get five prayers, three squares and a daily grilling. Think again. Think injustice. Think Big Injustice.

"This detention camp," Dr. Rif' at Sayyid Ahmad writes in the Lebanese daily Al-Liwa, according to a translation provided by the Middle East Media Research Institute (<http://www.memri.org>), "reminds me of 'J'accuse,' by Emile Zola."

Whoa: There's thinking out of the Camp X-Ray cage. What could the historic essay that exposed the military conspiracy against Alfred Dreyfus, the Jewish officer in the French Army whose phony treason conviction was undergirded by an institutional anti-Semitism, have to do with the murderous combatants of Mazar-I-Sharif and elsewhere now at Guantanamo?

"History repeats itself, painfully," Dr. Ahmad writes. "This time, we are not talking of a single Dreyfus, but of nearly 2,500 Muslim Dreyfuses ..."

We are? In case Yankee aggression and conceit are gumming up the old mental processes again, it appears that Dr. Ahmad is likening 300 Al Qaeda detainees to "2,500 Muslim Dreyfuses" being held in what he calls "The American Auschwitz." Bear with him: If the Guantanamo prisoners are just Dreyfuses in turbans at Auschwitz, then maybe — maybe — it does follow that no Arab men hijacked any airplanes on Sept. 11. What Muslim from Indonesia, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan or Turkey could think otherwise?

Gallup's results failed to shock those who monitor the government-controlled media of such countries, where blame for Sept. 11 is routinely heaped upon the CIA or, more frequently, the Mossad or Jews generally. Indeed, The New York Times' Thomas "Saudi Peace Plan" Friedman expressed surprise that the denial numbers weren't higher. No doubt they would have been had the regimes of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco actually allowed the Gallup Organization to ask the Arab-complicity question.



### berry's world

