

from our viewpoint...

Hullabaloo over, time to turn off tube

The Olympics are over. The athletes have gone home and the cheers, groans and moans are over.

The finger pointing will be going on for a long time, as will the problems Greece will have dealing with a bunch of white elephant stadiums it no longer needs.

The Democratic and Republican conventions are over, amidst pageantry and protests.

Was anyone surprised at who was nominated or what he said? Was there anything done or said at either convention that was startling, wonderful, exciting, glamorous or unexpected?

Were any outcomes ever in doubt?

Are we really tired of all the national and international hullabaloo?

Now is the time to turn off the tube and look out the back window.

Now is the time to go out into our own backyards and take stock of what we have here in our hometown.

The world has celebrated some of the greatest athletes performing today, but there are others out there working just as hard, striving in the heat and cold to be perfect and noticed.

Now is the time to go to a high school football game, a volleyball or tennis match or cross country meet.

Your children, grandchildren, neighbors and friends' children are out there practicing, striving, working to become the best that they can be on the field, court or course. They're going to class all day and then practicing every night.

The least we can do is get out there and cheer.

The weather is nice and the kids are working their hearts out.

If you're tired of superstars, look at the young sparkers right here at home.

Not only that, but you know these young athletes.

They're bagging your groceries at the store, delivering your newspaper, mowing the neighbor's lawn, volunteering at the nursing home, running errands for their parents, babysitting the brats down the street, hanging out on the corner and practicing at the skateboard park.

If you don't care for sports, the schools offer a lot of other programs that the public can enjoy.

Catch a band or vocal concert, student play (they're usually wonderful), scholar bowl match, debate tournament or art show.

Look in your own backyard, and you'll be surprised at the talent and enthusiasm we have right here. — *Cynthia Haynes*

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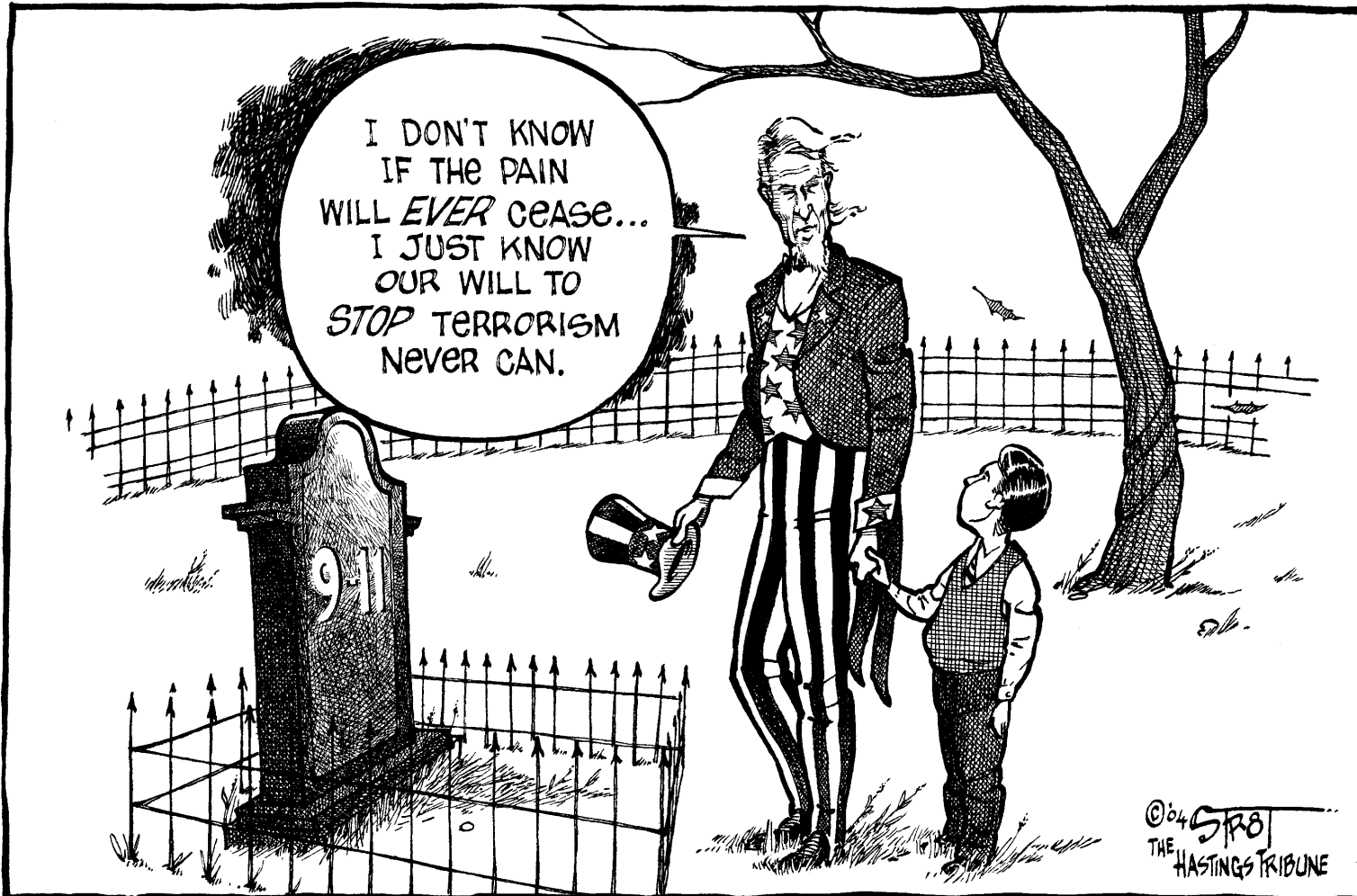
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War on terrorism hits three year anniversary

There were solemn ceremonies and moments of silence across the country Saturday to remember the 3,100-plus people who died in the hijacked planes, the Pentagon and the Twin Towers three years ago.

This act of terror did more to galvanize Americans against terrorists — especially Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida — than other scattered actions that began in August 7, 1998, with the bombings of the United States embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. These attacks killed over 200 people, and in October 2000 bin Laden's terrorists attacked the USS Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden.

These attacks encouraged bin Laden, but did not awaken Americans to the coming threat. The attacks made the news, but they were not understood as the opening round in bin Laden's self-proclaimed war against the United States.

Bin Laden got his start in 1979 fighting in Afghanistan against the Soviets as part of an underground war supported by the United States.

It was fine for the Americans to support his fighters against the Soviets, and when the Russian army pulled out in 1989, he returned to Saudi Arabia as a hero.

But two years later when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and threatened bin Laden's native country, that was different in his mind. Bin Laden went to the Saudi royal family and said



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his fighters could take on the Iraqis rather than let the infidels of America bring troops to his country. The royal family told bin Laden they felt they needed the support of the Americans and British, and told bin Laden to stay out of it.

Bin Laden left Saudi Arabia before he was arrested for speaking out against the Saudi royal family and the Americans, and flew out of the country to begin recruiting more fighters in his new refuge, Sudan in Africa. His hatred of Americans grew deeper, and he planned to take revenge on the country he felt had defiled his homeland.

He trained and tested his al-Qaida fighters and tested America's will in Somalia. He believed American's were weak, and did not have the stomach to really fight or defend themselves. His terrorists made an attempt to bring down the World Trade Center in 1993, but the bomb was not strong enough.

Bin Laden survived several attempts to kill him, including attacks by the United States on his stronghold in Afghanistan. His hatred continued to deepen against Americans.

College savings: Plan for kids tomorrow

Looking at your 8 year old, it's hard to imagine she will one day be packing all of her belongings into boxes and moving off into the world.

It's hard to imagine that this little person will one day attend college and start a career of her own. It's hard to imagine it will happen — much less what a post-secondary education will cost in 10 years.

Educational costs are rising rapidly and will likely continue to increase every year. Tuition rose 14 percent at four-year colleges and 6 percent at private institutions in the past year And, the average annual cost for tuition, room and board is currently \$13,833 at public in-state colleges and \$29,541 at private schools. Those numbers can be overwhelming, but investing in your children's education doesn't have to be.

September is National College Savings Month for the State of Kansas and Learning QuestÆ is celebrating with contests and prizes! Learning Quest is a 529-education investment plan established by the State of Kansas, and administered by the State Treasurer's office, for our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and even friends.

We are asking Kansas' seventh and eighth grade students to write an essay about someone they admire who went to college and how it has helped the person succeed. One winner from each grade level will receive a \$1,000 Learning Quest college investment and one runner-up winner from each grade will receive a \$500 Learning Quest account. All winners will receive a celebration party for their classmates. Home school students are eligible to participate. If a home school winner or runner-



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up is selected, they will receive a celebration party for their immediate family. Kansas students enrolled in seventh or eighth grade can enter through entry forms distributed to principals and teachers in August. Forms are available for download at learningquest.com/essay. Contest entries must be received by Thursday, Sept. 30.

We are pleased to celebrate College Savings Month by offering a chance to win \$10,000 in college savings accounts. Adults are encouraged to enter the Learning Quest Sweepstakes to win one of the two \$5,000 accounts. For details about the sweepstakes, call 1-877-345-8837 ext. 2129 or visit (before December 31, 2004) learningquest.com to enter.

At the State Treasurer's office, we want to help parents face the growing challenges of saving for college by educating citizens about Learning Quest. Learning Quest is designed to help you plan for tomorrow by taking action today that can make paying for your children's college education easier. Kansas residents can open a Learning Quest account with as little as \$25 a month or just a \$500 initial investment, but Kansas residency is not required to participate in the plan. Residents of other states can open an account with just \$50 a month or a \$2,500 initial investment.

Learning Quest accounts have benefits that

Three years ago, he took his revenge with the help of 15 fellow Saudi's who were specially trained and hidden in the United States, awaiting the order to strike.

Terrorism has been with the world for many centuries, longer than bin Laden, but he personifies the terrorist leader of today. Efforts to find him continue, with American troops in Afghanistan searching along the Pakistani border in the underground tunnels he built years ago.

Much of the attention of the American public has been diverted to the fighting and violence in Iraq, but bin Laden lurks in the background and continues to plan and plot ways to attack Americans wherever he can.

Remembering the terror attack of three years ago, we need to remember Iraq was not the culprit in that, and while Saddam needed to be removed from power, it is not him or his country who have targeted our country for attack — it is bin Laden and al-Qaida.

Whether we capture or kill bin Laden, that will not end the war on terrorism. For those who died three years ago, we must be prepared to go the distance no matter how long and how many administrations come and go.

We must go on. Great civilizations in history have not fallen to invasions, but rather from losing their national identity and their determination.

Letter Policy

The Goodland Star-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 address and phone numbers, by e-mail to: <star-news@nw-kansas.com>.

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