

## Bin Laden remains a threat to world peace

Like a cobra rising to strike out of the grass, but just out of reach, Osama bin Laden pops up again, issuing a video challenge to the West on the anniversary of his attack on the World Trade Center.

The viper of misguided Islam, hiding in the mountains of Pakistan and just out of reach of U.S. troops, praised the heartless killers he sent to rain terror on New York and Washington as martyrs to his cause.

As usual, he urges young men to take up the banner of jihad and sacrifice their lives, but make no suggestion he'd go himself. Such a pity.

Bin Laden may go down in history as one of the most misguided and monstrous figures of our time. His quest for world domination and his vision of a world by the sword forced to accept Islam goes against all that is Holy — in any version of The Book.

The West cannot claim purity here. Over the centuries, far too much blood has been shed in God's name. Christians have slain natives, heretics, nonbelievers, Muslims and each other in the name of their God.

But the world needs to move beyond that, and most of us in the West have. Today, Protestants and Catholics work together in Ireland. The church has renounced persecution and declared that Jews do not have to convert to see God.

Bin Laden represents a tiny minority in the Islamic world. His vision of victory includes world domination. His website urges the United States to submit to its fate and accept Islam.

He and his allies would institute a harsh rule that no more typifies the average Muslim's belief than the Irish Republican Army or the Ku Klux Klan typify Christianity.

Millions of Muslims around the world want only to live in peace and enjoy the prosperity modern times and Western thinking have brought. Most believe we are all children of Abraham and followers of the great western religions are all People of the Book, whatever version they read.

There is no reason we should not all live in peace and worship as we please, other than the demented thoughts of a few radicals. History will judge them harshly.

As for Bin Laden today, he is a prop, a shadow of his former self. They stick him up before the camera, beard dyed, makeup applied, and he talks to his followers, taunting America.

We should blow him to Kingdom Come, and probably would except for the trouble it would cause our allies in Pakistan.

In the end, it probably makes little difference whether we kill Bin Laden or he simply fades away. Among the radical fringe, he'll assume the status of a saint either way, a figure leading a revolution of true believers.

While we cannot afford to ignore his threat, because this wasp does sting, there's little chance he and his kind will prevail. The world cannot allow it, and history suggests such movements eventually fade, always to be replaced by another threat to life and liberty.

The history of man shows a long upward climb to a higher civilization, but the road often has its dips and turns. Bin Laden's movement is but one of those.

Whether it passes in a decade or two or, like the Dark Ages, takes a couple of centuries, may depend on the response of the civilized world. We're supposedly part of that.

— Steve Haynes



## Group says rides at fair safe

To the Editor:

Decatur County has a longtime tradition of providing the best home-owned carnival in the area — which could not have happened without volunteers. As with any organization, there will be criticism and misunderstandings. This year was no exception.

While preferring to not drag problems into the public arena, Steve Haynes' editorial, while written with the intention of causing controversy, must be addressed for the public's peace of mind.

First and foremost, the rides at the carnival are safe. They are inspected and maintained every year. Everyone who works at the fair is concerned about safety. The safety issue stems from a fair board member and a county commissioner.

Throughout the years, there have been close calls with vehicles driving over the train track while the train is running. Last year, a disastrous collision was narrowly avoided between the train and a pickup.

The Amusement Authority requested that the crossings be locked while the train was running. The fair board voted to lock the gates, not allow any parking inside the tracks and tow anyone parks there after 6 p.m. Vehicles could come and go during the day as needed. There was to be one key, so that safety could be controlled.

There was a discrepancy over the unlocking of the gate during the fund-raising barbecue. The agreement was that Amusement Authority would unlock the gate to allow transportation of the food from the 4-H Building to the Livestock Building. That upset a fair board member and in the end a commissioner ended up with the key to the lock during the rest of the fair.

Things get blown out of proportion or misconstrued. When it comes down to getting verbally and physically attacked by 4-H parents over nonexistent issues, then it is time to take a step back and re-evaluate the situation and its worth. Train operators and passengers who witnessed previous close calls expressed their gratitude that the gate had been locked.

Another miscommunication between the Amusement Authority and the commissioners was shutting down the train during the Livestock Building dedication. The authority has shut down the train for certain occasions and had planned on doing so again. Amusement should have informed the commissioners of its decision and the commissioners should have requested or inquired about it instead of demanding it.

A commissioner also said that Amusement Authority members have been trouble for 20 years and everyone needed to go. Yes, new blood is needed. Everyone Amusement Authority member has tried to get new members as others retired over the years with very little success. No one wants to commit the

## Letters to the Editor

time and effort that it requires. It is a big job and one that demands personal sacrifice and money. Every member who has contributed to the fair has spent time away from family, jobs and used their own money towards improvements on the midway.

The Amusement Authority also was questioned on the matter of its books. Contrary to what a commissioner says, the books have always been available. They are on file at Warren Bainter's office, with all money accounted for. A report has been given to the Chamber of Commerce office for the Chamber's annual meeting every year with a list of receipts and improvements made during the year. An Amusement Authority member has been to the Oberlin Rotary Club to give an update. No secrets. A great way to find out what is going on at the fair-ground is to help on weekend and evenings starting in the spring.

There seems to be too many other than Amusement Authority members who want to be chiefs. The nice part about the Amusement Authority was that no one wanted to be chief; everyone did their job and worked together. There just weren't enough members to do more.

The 2007 fair was another record setter. While the gross receipts may seem like a lot of money, the fair is expensive to run. Even with most communities surrounding Oberlin having their own home-owned carnivals, Oberlin is still considered the best in the area. Yes, new rides are needed, but it takes money, lots of it. Used rides are in high demand since many smaller towns have decided to start their own carnivals.

To see where the money has gone, take a look at the numerous improvements on the midway. The goal was to make the midway as low maintenance as possible.

The carnival at the 2007 fair grossed \$72,954 and had \$45,798 in expenses: carnival supplies, \$709; supplies, \$510; fuel, \$239; annual fee, \$40; toys, \$11,600; labor, \$3,313 (cleaning, moving, toy runners, trash, general and concession workers, such as local youth groups and the DCHS Singers); advertisement, \$1,306; spraying rounds, \$330; ice, \$335; rent to the fair board, \$5,471; utilities, \$664; and sales tax, \$4,596. This is as of Sept. 15. We also had \$28,376 in ticket sales.

The reporting on the insurance issue was incorrect. The day before the county commissioners talked about that was the only attempt made to contact an Amusement Authority member, who happened to be out of town that week. The insurance that the carnival has is expensive and hard to find. The Amusement Authority has tried to find full coverage without suc-

cess, however we do have liability insurance.

The Amusement Authority paid \$6,080 for insurance this year, the vast majority of the total insurance paid for the fair. We are lucky to be grandfathered in with the insurance company that we have. Newer home-owned carnivals have had a difficult time finding insurance, if at all. If there are any questions, we have purchased the insurance here from Fredrickson Insurance.

The "rumbling of discontent" has been circulating for years by uninformed people. We were under the impression that there was better communication with the fair board in the previous years. If there was a problem, surely the commissioners or fair board would have addressed the issue. A perfect time would have been the fair board meetings when Amusement Authority members attended. In previous years, the fair board and Amusement Authority have had the same goals in mind, which is to provide a safe and fun fair for everyone.

Amusement authority members have never worked at the fairgrounds for glory, money, authority or prestige. There is none of that at the fairgrounds. The countless hours spent there were for our children, family and friends, and because it was the right thing to do by giving to the community. No one expected a pat on the back or even a thank you. When tough decisions are made for the safety of the fair, people should have the respect to ask why they were made before flying off the handle or spreading rumors.

Every volunteer and business that has donated and supported the fair is important, from the two-hour shift to the many weekends and evenings throughout the year others put in.

Each year it has gotten harder to find volunteers. Many are dedicated in supporting the fair, but more in the community need to step up and do their part.

Don't wait to be asked. Don't assume you aren't needed. You are needed!!

No one on the Amusement Authority thought they were indispensable. We have no doubt that the fair will go on. We want our fair to continue.

Sometimes it takes a shakeup to make things happen. We encourage everyone to step forward and do their part. It's a challenge. Are you ready? We may be a small community, but we can work together and make it a successful one.

There is a reason we are called "The World's Best Home-owned Carnival." We'd keep it that way.

Former Amusement Authority members: Jason Fortin, Kelsey Gallentine, Kristi Gallentine, Lynn Groneweg, Peggy Ream, Ward Votapka, Ray Ward

## 'Gentle' chimes just bug her

It's frustrating when something supposed to be soothing is unbearably irritating. I feel that way about the wind chimes hanging over the balcony outside our bedroom door.

The chimes have a sweet tone. Usually, when you're working outside in the yard or sitting on the back patio, their gentle "tinkle" has a soothing sound.

But when you're trying to think (as in writing this column) or go to sleep, the sound can be more than a little irritating.

Today, the breeze is brisk and the "tinkling" sounds more like "clanging."

-ob-

What was he thinking? Can O.J. really be that dumb?

The details are trickling in and I'm sure we're going to be subjected to at least a week of nonstop drivel about what he claims was a "sting" operation. Whether it was or not, is it really worth the networks' time to go on and on about it?

O.J. Simpson is not famous because of his great accomplishments. He is infamous because of his connection to a horrific event.

-ob-

My brother Bill sends me the funniest and most interesting e-mails.

I've neglected to always give him proper credit, so the following



### Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts  
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comes with a disclaimer: these are not original to me — I stole them.

- In the 1400s, there was a law in England that allowed a man to beat his wife with a stick as long as it was no thicker than his thumb. Hence the saying, "rule of thumb."

- Many years ago in Scotland a new game was invented. Someone decreed, "Gentlemen only — Ladies forbidden," ... and GOLF was born.

- Did you know that 28 percent of Africa is wilderness? And 38 percent of America is still wilderness?

- The average number of people airborne over the U.S. at any given hour is 61,000.

- Half of all Americans live within 50 miles of their birthplace. (I do.)

- In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When the ropes were pulled, the bed was tightened. That's where the phrase, "Goodnight, sleep

tight" came from.

-ob-

Tomato season is winding down. We're canning just a few at a time, 'cause that seems to be how they are ripening. A few at a time.

Jim and I have an agreement. I scald a batch of tomatoes, slip the skins and put them in a kettle before I go to work. When he gets home, he will boil and can them, usually about three to four pints at a time.

The tea kettle is whistling, so it's time to do my share of today's project.

### From the Bible

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

John 14:1

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