

from our viewpoint...

# Bin Laden pops up to challenge West

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*



## I enjoyed my first trip to a state fair

Last month Steve and I took a train to the Colorado State Fair.

It was the first time I've ever been to a state fair, not counting a 30-minute visit to a media tent once.

I've seen pictures of the rows and rows of vegetables at fairs in Iowa and Minnesota and I've heard about the monster pumpkin that took first place this year in Kansas.

I've seen some of our 4-H'ers top entries that went on to win more prizes in Hutchinson but, I'd never been to a state fair. Never gone through the animal barns, checked out the commercial building or visited the big carnivals.

I still haven't done some of those things.

We skipped the carnival. Who needs it? We have the best carnival in the world right here in northwest Kansas, where our friends and neighbors run the games and rides. Why give some strangers a chance to fleece you when you can spend less to have more fun at home?

We didn't get to the large animals — no cattle, pigs or goats — but we did see the



**cynthia haynes**

• open season

chickens, rabbits, ducks and turkeys.

The number of different breeds of chickens was amazing and there were quite a few bunnies for sale. I was really tempted. We had a rabbit for several years and it was a great pet — never barked at the mailman, never messed in the neighbor's yard and never shed on the couch.

Steve was able to dissuade me, however, pointing out that:

- A. We are never home.
- B. We got rid of our rabbit equipment long ago.
- C. We came to the fair on the train.

He's just soooo picky. We also visited the commercial building and

watched people doing displays of waterless cookware, indoor grilling, instant clean floor care systems and air purifiers.

We passed on the magic shammies and the floor care systems, since I'm allergic to almost all forms of housework. However, we did tumble to the indoor grilling system.

A friend confessed that she had bought one a couple of years ago and had never used it. Well, ours is still in the box but it hasn't gotten cold enough to grill inside. (That's my story and I'm sticking to it — maybe for several years.)

There were several events going on while we were at the fair that I missed. The racing pigs would have been something to tell the folks back home, I'm sure.

I also missed the tiger show. I may not be from Missouri, but I like a good tiger show. At least, I'm sure I would if I ever get to see one.

Still, our visit to the state fair was fun and educational. I enjoyed the rabbits and I learned that a good salesman can sell some worthless gadget to some sucker almost every day.

## It's a constitutional republic, can we keep it

Throughout the month of September, the National Archives will be commemorating the 220th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution with a series of panel discussions, appearances by actors dressed up as the Founders and a birthday cake.

Federal law also mandates that on Constitution Day, Sept. 17, all high schools, colleges and universities across the country that receive federal funds host educational events about the Constitution.

However, the Constitution is so much more than an aging relic. Formally adopted on Sept. 17, 1787, it has long served as the bulwark of American freedom and as an example for struggling nations worldwide. Yet since the attack on Sept. 11, 2001, the rights enshrined in the Constitution, particularly those in the Bill of Rights, have come under constant attack.

Indeed, the protections and limitations on government power that were once so greatly prized by America's Founders seem to be rapidly disappearing.

Governmental tentacles now invade every facet of our lives, with agents of the government listening in on our telephone calls and reading our emails. The president continues to expand his powers by centralizing power in his own office, claiming the right to torture terrorist suspects and deciding who will have the right to a lawyer and receive a hearing before a judge. And technology, which has developed at a rapid pace, offers those in power more invasive and awesome tools than ever before.

As government invariably, perhaps inevitably, oversteps its authority, Americans are faced with the pressing need to maintain the Constitution's checks against governmental power and abuse. After all, it was not idle rhetoric that prompted the framers of the Constitution to begin with the words "We the people."

Throughout the extraordinary document that



**john whitehead**

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is the Constitution and Bill of Rights, there is an implicit assumption that we, the people, will preserve our democratic rights by acting responsibly in our enjoyment of them.

The framers of the Constitution knew very well that whenever and wherever democratic governments had failed, it was because the people had abdicated their responsibility as guardians of freedom. Moreover, they knew that whenever in history the people denied this responsibility, an authoritarian regime would arise to deny the people the right to govern themselves.

Such was the case in Nazi Germany. Despite Adolf Hitler's assertion that it is lucky "for rulers that men cannot think." He came to power not because the German people failed to think but because they failed to think clearly and act responsibly.

The people were aware of Hitler's goals when they voted to approve him as Der Fuehrer. Nazi literature, including statements of the Nazi plans for the future, had papered the country for a decade before Hitler assumed power. And Hitler's blueprint for totalitarianism, Mein Kampf, had sold more than 200,000 copies between 1925 and 1932.

However, the German people were poisoned by the enveloping climate of ideas that they came to accept as important. At a certain point, the trivial became important, and obedience to the state in pursuit of security over freedom became predominant.

Fast forward 70 years, and you will witness an eerily similar scene unfolding in America. While many Americans sit with their eyes

glued to the television set or a computer screen, the trivial has come to predominate over the knowledge of our basic rights and freedoms. Indeed, most Americans are clueless about what is in the Constitution, trusting instead in the government to keep them safe at any cost. Hence, if this great experiment in democracy fails, we will have only ourselves to blame — not the politicians, the media or threats to our security.

CBS newscaster Edward R. Murrow recognized the critical role Americans play in the success or failure of our nation. Amidst the Red Scare of the 1950s, when people were afraid to speak out against the paranoia being propagated through the media and the government, Murrow boldly spoke up. On March 9, 1954, on his CBS television show See It Now, Murrow said, "We cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home. The actions of the junior senator from Wisconsin have caused alarm and dismay amongst our allies abroad and given considerable comfort to our enemies, and whose fault is that? Not really his. He didn't create the situation of fear; he merely exploited it, and rather successfully. Cassius was right: 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves.'"

Thus, if we are to maintain our freedoms, we must do more than talk. We must act — and act responsibly, keeping in mind that the duties of citizenship extend beyond the act of voting. Indeed, as citizens, we must be willing to stand and fight to protect our freedoms. This is true patriotism in action.

Loving your country, then, does not mean being satisfied with the status quo or the way government is being administered. Indeed, sometimes love of country will entail carrying a picket sign or going to jail, if necessary, to preserve liberty. And it will mean speaking up for those with whom you might disagree.

As history teaches, it is the vigilance of "we the people" that is necessary to maintain our freedoms. Thus, it is up to us to ensure that we remain free. Indeed, as the delegates to the Constitutional Convention trudged out of Independence Hall on September 17, 1787, an anxious woman in the crowd waiting at the entrance inquired of Benjamin Franklin, "Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?"

"A republic," Franklin replied, "if you can keep it." Attorney John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. He can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.

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