

# OPINION

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## When will we learn? ■ Advocate Publisher Sam D. Kennedy

Now let me get this straight. As I understand it, we are sending several thousand troops to West Africa. I suppose they are, as usual, going to “defend America.” They are part of our defense forces so they must be defending us.

Now I sure want us defended, but I get a tad confused of late.

From what?  
At least in Africa they have Ebola. We don't want it. But surprisingly the TV and cable news folks, not to mention our chosen in Washington, have not called on generals, active and retired, to warn us of the eminent danger to our country from this invasion. Surely, as in the Middle East, we have national interests there which will require, “Boots on the ground” to defend our country.

We have sent boots, thousands of them, to the west coast of Africa.

Now I am all in favor of our sending aid to those stricken countries, but sending a labor force to a country which has almost total unemployment, and can use all the jobs it can find, seems a little over the top. Why not send

a few good construction and housing engineers and hire a lot of locals to build housing? It would not cost nearly so much and would not endanger our troops and possibly generate ill will toward our country in that region.

“Calling out the Marines,” as we have been prone to do through three presidents, both Republican and Democrat, seems a waste to me.

And why is it that we can send troops to defend West Africa against Ebola, and the President can't use his executive power, to send a brigade down to the Mexican border during the warm river swimming season, to guard our border? This should be easy compared to chasing ISIS around the arid parts of Syria and Iraq.

Besides, having maneuvers in the desert areas of our southwest, would prepare our army for our next venture into the Middle East to make the world safe for democracy, and make Democrats and Republicans out of Islamics. It also will fatten the pockets of the defense industry, which finances the campaigns and travels of our chosen.

Years ago in my youth, we were more honest. The Defense Department was called the War Department. Today it is used to wage war, but we don't call it that. Its purpose

is not to defend our shores from attack. How would the Islamic states invade us? In rowboats?

Yes, our enemies can send terrorists into our country. They will have successes. But you can't stop them with air strikes and medium tanks, or by sending our troops into another war in the Middle East. We need intelligence agents and police to fend off today's attacks.

Invaders and occupiers are always hated, no matter how worthy their objectives. As long as we are in that role, there will be those who hate us and those willing to die to show their hatred.

When will we learn?

In addition to *shepherding his publications which over the years have included the Columbia Daily Herald, the Mount Pleasant Record, the Parsons News Leader, the Buffalo River Review, the Waverly News Democrat and the Lawrence County Advocate, Sam D. Kennedy is an ex-General Sessions Judge, an ex-District Attorney, past President of the Tennessee Press Association, an ex-member of the Tennessee State School Board and ex-County Executive of Maury County. Kennedy lives on his farm in Columbia with his wife of 60 years, Betty.*

## Halloween in the time of Ebola

■ TYRADES!

Danny Tyree

“Ewww!” said my wife, when I told her that BrandsOnSale.com is marketing leftover “Breaking Bad” meth lab hazmat suits as Ebola Containment Suits this

Halloween, at \$79.99 a pop.

These suits are just part of a trend

(call it tacky, insensitive, creepy, gross) that includes Zombie Robin Williams masks, partygoers dressed as disgraced former

Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice (dragging around an inflatable wife), groups of friends dressing up as doomed Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 passengers and the guy in Boise, Idaho with the decapitated Pres. Obama in his front yard.

Yes, folks are obsessed with costumes “ripped from today's headlines,” no matter how fresh the wound they exploit. At least in the good old days when someone ripped a costume from the headlines, they dressed as a City Councilman Scheduling Hearings For The Proposed Sewer Bonds Issue. Correct me if I'm wrong, but kids in 1945 weren't chanting, “Trick or treat, smell my feet, this simulated Bataan Death March is really neat.”

The reality of today is getting closer and closer to the satire of yesterday.

Remember 1977 when Dan Aykroyd on “Saturday Night Live” portrayed thuckster Irwin Mainway?

Mainway's Halloween wares (Invisible Pedestrian, Johnny Human Torch, Johnny Combat Action Costume with real M-1 rifle and Johnny Space Commander mask, i.e.

a plastic bag with a rubber band) don't seem so outlandish in today's climate.

A spokesperson for BrandsOnSale.com insisted that spoilsports who get squeamish about the Ebola suits just don't “get” the holiday; Halloween

excesses are our way of mocking our fear of death. (Yeah, we really stick it to Death, because our ever-growing Halloween

expenses leave us unable to pay for our funeral!)

The spokesperson defended the suits as a continuation of the grand old tradition of Halloween

being a time to “laugh all the way to the b-- um, er I mean whistle past the graveyard.” No, back in the day, we WHISTLED past the graveyard. Now there's

always some jerk who



## Letters to the Editor

### School day at the Middle Tennessee District Fair

To the Editor:

In response to a recent question about School Day at the Middle Tennessee District Fair, we are happy to provide the following information. School Day is traditionally held on the Friday of Fair week and all students through Grade 12 are admitted free until 3:30 PM. The gates open at 10:00 am and students can remain at the fair until closing time if they so desire. Ride armbands are available, and these are also good for the entire day.

The county's Physical Education teachers hold field day events in the morning for Lawrence County students in grades Pre-K through 8. Youngsters compete for ribbons and nominal cash prizes and the event attracts several hundred participants each year. The Rotary Club makes cash donations to the PE programs at each of the county's elementary and middle schools. There are special kid friendly educational demonstrations, and we have an afternoon give away where one lucky student wins a

laptop computer courtesy of the Lawrenceburg Rotary Club.

In addition to special School Day events, the fair has many educational benefits that run for the entire week. We have demonstrations like Farmer for a Day where youngsters do hands on activities including milking a make believe cow, stripping corn, and participating in rubber duck races. Our exhibit buildings have many interesting displays, and one of our most popular exhibits is presentation of school art that students from across the county have entered. 4H exhibits are also very popular with the kids. Other kid friendly attractions like Sparky, Smokey Bear, Nick's Kids Show plus other attractions are not only entertaining but also educational. Most importantly, we provide a safe, family friendly environment where children (and their parents) can spend an enjoyable day with their friends and neighbors. Thanks for asking!

**Bill Phillips**  
Communication Director  
Middle Tennessee District Fair

### Government, more or less

Guest editorial by Emily Weathers Kennedy

In Wednesday's *Advocate*, publisher Sam Kennedy endorsed Bill Haslam to be re-elected as governor of Tennessee. He said, “He is usually level headed, reasoned and fair. Add to that, I don't feel like I need a bath after I watch his commercials.”

Mr. Kennedy prefaced this rather profound pat-on-the-back with a lamentation echoing my own frustrations with the political milieu in our state and the nation. To quote him, “So I will not look forward to the next election as I once did. There is no discussion of a better future, only how bad we are. No one has the courage to suggest that new taxes might be necessary to make our schools better, our roads more passable, and extend Medicare to all Tennesseans. They are all against something or somebody...”

I, too, lament the general unwillingness to embrace compromise. One-sided positions do nothing to further our country. In fact, they damage it. Where statesmen used to argue their points then compromise over drinks after sessions, our current legislators' belligerent noise has bled over into our national conversation, poisoning it.

Most damaging is the anti-government rhetoric that has crept into dialogue at an alarming rate. I have to believe party operatives are at the root of this phenomenon followed by the candidates themselves, news propaganda shows masquerading as hard news programs, and talk radio. I have heard “I hate the government” so often of late that I wonder why more people don't move to private compounds and raise their own food and energy off the grid. They don't do this, and to me this is telling. In fact, many government haters actually take government assistance all the while despising the fact that the government assistance exists!

What does it mean to criticize our government while taking Pell Grants or TennCare for households as people buy new vehicles/go on vacations/remodel homes? How do folks rant about people on welfare “stealing” their money while they take it another way when they truly don't have the need to do so?

And for seniors, what if the Democrats had not fought tooth and nail for Medicare? Can anyone over 64 even

comprehend shopping for insurance on the open market with arthritis/diabetes/cancer/glaucoma/heart disease at that age? Even with the ACA, their coverage would be unaffordable. Still, many loathe the government when a Democrat is in office and vote accordingly.

Want the federal government out of our lives? Maybe prefer Rand Paul who would, according to the *Washington Post* eliminate four Cabinet departments including Energy, Education, Commerce, and Housing and Urban

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Published each Wednesday and Sunday at  
121 North Military Ave., P. O. Box 308, Lawrenceburg, TN 38464  
Phone # (931) 762-1726, FAX # (931) 762-7874

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## Capitol Hill Week in Review

■ State Senator

Joey Hensley MD

CHILDREN

*Students / Erin's Law / Prevention of Child Sex Abuse -- “Erin's Law,”* which focuses on preventing child sexual abuse, met final legislative approval

this year. As passed, the legislation encourages schools across

the state to provide age-appropriate instruction to students on personal body safety and how to report sexual abuse, including occurrences that could potentially happen in the home.

The bill is named after Erin Merryn, an Illinois native who was sexually abused as a child. Merryn now fully dedicates her time to getting the law passed in all fifty states.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation reported that in 2012 there were 3,508 child sexual abuse cases reported across the state. The U.S. Department of Justice, however, indicates child sexual abuse is under-reported in about 60% of cases, meaning the actual number of abuse cases in Tennessee is most likely higher than reported. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice, 93% of juvenile sexual assault victims know their perpetrator, with 34% of the offenders being family members. The Bureau reports that 59% of offenders were acquainted with the victim and only 7% were strangers.

**Child Fatalities** – In other legislation regarding children, the General Assembly approved a law that sets minimum disclosure requirements for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) after a fatality or near fatality.

The legislation places into law disclosure requirements which have been voluntarily implemented by DCS Commissioner Jim Henry regarding investigations of abuse and neglect in these cases. It ensures that the policy will not change under a new department head or gubernatorial administration.

The newly-passed law requires DCS to release the child's age, gender, and a history of the department's involvement with the child within five business days of the child's fatality as a result of abuse or neglect.

At the closure of DCS's investigation, the department must release the final disposition of the case, whether the case meets criteria for a child death review, and the full case file. Following DCS's final classification of a child abuse or neglect

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