

Terrorism

# Big trouble in little Pottawattamie Co.

By Brandon.Blue@iowastatedaily.com

## Faux terrorist drill shows overreaction of Iowans

“Never ascribe to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity.” — Heinein’s Law.  
Believe me, Pottawattamie County saw a lot of the latter over the weekend.

According to the Des Moines Register, last week, the western Iowa county was to conduct a faux terrorist attack drill Saturday with white supremacists as the lead suspects in a school shooting. Evidently, a back-story was required to get the Department of Homeland Security to cover the cost of the exercise, which would have involved more than 300 volunteers, roughly 35 of which were “victims” to be transported to area hospitals.

But Friday, the Register broke that the exercise was canceled due to threats sent to the Treynor public schools that were involved in the event. The Register’s William Petroski quoted Treynor superintendent Kevin Elwood as saying, “They basically indicated that if we went through with this type of a drill that potentially that type of an incident could become a reality in our school district.”

Let me state that my view of race is that it’s an unavoidable, if unfortunate, byproduct of being born. So, as I continue, understand that I’m not defending any white supremacists.

But this entire situation truly bothers me. On the one side, you have bureaucratic insensitivity and shortsightedness. Don’t like illegal immigrants, but enjoy guns? So do these mass-murderers!

On the other side, you have idiotic pranksters trolling the situation. I label them so because firstly, the Register reported that the call came from outside of Iowa, and secondly, because the leaders of the Iowa Minutemen and the Minutemen Patriots have condemned the threats. People with legitimate opinions don’t vomit them forth in a spew of threat-flecked verbal diarrhea.

However, because the point of the exercise is to prepare for terrorist attacks, I fail to see why those terrorists should be Americans. Who could we possibly offend if we just said “the country of Atlantis has risen from the bottom of Storm Lake and her undead mer-children are cutting a swath toward Kansas City?” There are your malicious foreign invaders.

But why do we need to have a back story at all, especially one that maligns a certain group’s point of view? It seems to me that the respon-



Protestors gather at a counter-rally Nov. 20 at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines. They were protesting a scheduled “White Pride Day” rally organized by the American National Socialist Party based in Chillicothe, Ohio. File photo: Iowa State Daily

sible parties simply left their forethought on the dresser that morning when they lifted the plot of the Columbine Massacre and tweaked a few details. My money’s on the DHS, given its out-of-nowhere 2009 report claiming “The DHS/Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) has no specific information that domestic right-wing terrorists are currently planning acts of violence, but right-wing extremists may be gaining new recruits by playing on their fears about several emergent issues.” They also may be training dragons to pick the lights off the KCCI weather tower, but for some odd reason, that doesn’t appear in the report.

The truth is that nobody wants to be associ-

ated with a terrorist, especially in a “what-if” scenario enacted by the sheriff’s department and funded by the federal government.

What bothers me the most is that the idiot or idiots who called in threats to the Treynor School District are not nearly as malicious as they are crippingly moronic. Even though I disagree with the back story, I recognize that the drill’s purpose is to better prepare the community for a terrorist attack, not to make people angry. Evidently, truths that lie further than the bridge of their noses escape these trolls.

For what it’s worth, I can tell you from first-hand experience that white supremacists rising up and shooting people in any kind of coordi-

nated fashion is unlikely in Iowa.

Last fall, I covered an Aryan Nations rally at the Capitol in Des Moines, only it turned out to be nothing more than a counter-rally to a demonstration that never happened. The Aryan Nations never showed up, except for two members, and the myriad of protesters were left holding bags of dildos with no one to wave them at. I don’t believe bigotry will get to the point of planned-out terrorist attacks in America. Too many good people, too many true Americans, act against racism when they find it and condemn it when they see it.

As long as the waving dildos outnumber the racists, freedom will prevail.

Technology

# Don’t forget to spring clean your computer

By Rick.Hanton@iowastatedaily.com

## Tidy up your system, keep it running smoothly

Even though Mother Nature keeps trying to dump snow on us in Ames, spring has begun to arrive. Many of us will soon start to think about our plans for the summer and begin to clean our houses and apartments in preparation for the end of the school semester. I want to remind you that your personal computer or laptop shouldn’t be an exception from your spring cleaning, and I’d like to give you a few tips on things you should do regularly to keep your system running smoothly.

While most people don’t realize it, computers can get very messy, both physically and virtually, over months and months of use. Pop open the hood of most PCs or laptops and you’ll likely sneeze as balls of dust and debris come flying out.

The first thing you should do every time you pause to clean your computer system is figure out how to open it up — if it’s a desktop — and carefully use a \$5 compressed air can to blow the dust out, or clean the air filter if you have a newer system with a filter.

Only use compressed air, or a vacuum if you desire, as any other cleaning substance can damage the parts inside. Also, don’t take apart your laptop to clean dust out, because you might not be able to put it back together without breaking it.

Once the interior is cleaned, you might want to shine up the case a bit with a damp rag. You can also clean off your monitor with a microfiber or cotton cloth dampened with distilled water or rubbing alcohol, which you should carefully wipe the screen with. Do not press forcefully or “scrub” the screen! If your keyboard seems dirty, compressed air can do

wonders there, too.

Now that the outside of your machine is looking nice, you should make sure you’re taking care of the bits and bytes inside of the computer.

Something that drives me crazy is when people don’t do the best easy thing to keep a computer clean and safe from viruses and attacks — install updates! If you have an XP-era Windows machine, go to [update.microsoft.com](http://update.microsoft.com) using Internet Explorer and install any important updates.

If you have Vista or Windows 7, go to “Programs” and “Windows Update” to run a check for system updates. On a Mac, you’ll click the Apple symbol and “Software Update” if your computer isn’t set to automatically install updates.

Once your operating system is up to date, the second set of programs to check is your virus scanner and firewall software. If you don’t have a virus scanner or a firewall running besides the basic Windows firewall, I’d recommend going to [www.it.iastate.edu/downloads/](http://www.it.iastate.edu/downloads/) and downloading the free McAfee VirusScan for your computer or finding another free alternative.

I use avast! antivirus and COMODO firewall. If you do have these programs running, open them up and run their “Check for updates” function to make sure you are running the latest version.

Most new security software updates automatically, but once in a while they get stuck or need you to help make a major update. While you’re looking at your antivirus, think about setting up a scheduled antivirus scan of your entire computer once a week to help keep malware at bay.

We’re almost finished, but there are a few steps left that you should take to clean up

trackers and junk files from your computer. I recommend grabbing a copy of CCleaner from the Internet for this next part. CCleaner is a nifty program that you can run occasionally to clean up unnecessary files from your computer. When you open the program, you can select what type of files the cleaner should search for. The default settings are fine, but you might want to skip certain data like the Web cache, history or cookies on your favorite browser. Then you simply hit “Analyze,” and after analysis, click “Run Cleaner” to clean your system. I’d recommend using CCleaner’s registry cleaner too; though be careful whenever you edit the Windows registry. For the Mac crowd, you can do similar things with a program like MacCleanse or CleanMyMac.

Finish your interior cleaning by downloading and using Spybot Search and Destroy to clean any bots from your system. It will help you remove tracking cookies and other malware put on your computer by websites without your knowledge.

Search for a tutorial on Spybot online to learn the process — it’s a multi-step scanning process — or check out IT Services’ article on Spybot S&D online. For Macintosh users, try

MacScan, which does the same thing as Spybot for Mac users.

A last measure to simply help your computer run better is to defragment your hard drive(s). I have to add a disclaimer that defragmenting is unnecessary if you have a brand new solid state hard drive, or SSD — you can actually shorten the lifetime of those drives by trying to defragment them — or if you have Mac OS X, which fights fragmentation for you. But, if you do have a regular old hard drive and Windows, you might want to defragment once in a while. On Windows, you need to go to “My Computer,” right-click the drive you want to defragment and select “Properties — Tools — Defragmentation.” I also recommend using the “Error-checking” and “Backup” utilities. You can click “Analyze Disk” to see if defragmentation is needed and “Defragment Disk” to defragment it. Then, think about using the scheduled defragmentation tool on Windows 7 to automatically do this on a weekly or monthly schedule.

Congratulations, you have survived Rick’s computer spring cleaning course. Your computer should now run faster and safer to give you more time to spend outdoors this spring. Enjoy!