

## The legal system's use of modern technology

A federal appeals court says it's OK for the police to slip into your yard or home and slip a global positioning device onto your car.

The court ruled that federal drug agents had not violated a suspected drug dealer's rights when they snuck into his driveway at night and attached a GPS recording device to his Jeep.

In court, the agents testified that the Jeep visited sites where marijuana was grown, linking the defendant to the crimes. The judges of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled twice, a three-judge panel, and later the full court, that the GPS logs could be used as evidence.

Though some, including the chief judge, dissented, the court ruled that there's no reason agents would need a warrant to attach the device to the Jeep. The dissenters said they believed, however, that the man's rights had been violated. One judge called the technique "creepy," the agents crawling under the man's car in the night.

The tactic itself is nothing new. Cops have been attaching bugs, beepers and tracking devices to suspects' cars for years. It's just that the technology has gotten a lot more sophisticated. GPS devices using today's software can project trips onto a map, showing exactly where a vehicle went.

Truth of the matter is, most of us are recording the same information all the time. Agents would need a warrant to get most of that, however, so there is a difference. We think.

Cell phones can track the bearer by block and mile. Your phone, when on, talks to the nearest tower continually. How did you think the computer finds you when someone calls? It has to know where you are. It remembers.

Newer phones have GPS technology; they talk with the satellite system and record positions - if you turn that feature on. This gives them the ability to broadcast your location to the 911 operator in an emergency, but your phone is quite capable of remembering where you've been.

And remember, your phone tracks every call you make, to whom and where.

And the sweet-talking GPS in your car? Of course, it remembers where you've been all week as well. Notice those little blue lines going down the streets around your house.

If the government subpoenas your Garmin, you'd better hope you stopped only at the grocery, not the drug dealer's house - or your girlfriend's.

So with everyone recording their every move, do we have any expectation of privacy? With surveillance cameras at every store and on every corner?

Still, we can't agree that federal agents should be able to sneak into your driveway and bug your car without a warrant. That is creepy.

And so much a sign of our times.

Steve Haynes

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Thumbs up to Diane Stiles for everything she's done for Norton while she was here!

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THE NORTON TELEGRAM

ISSN 1063-701X

215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, KS 67654

Published each Tuesday and Friday by Haynes Publishing Co., 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Periodicals mail postage paid at Norton, Kan. 67654.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Norton Telegram, 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton, Kan. 67654. Official newspaper of Norton and Norton County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, and the Nebraska Press Association

Nor'West Newspapers  
Dick and Mary Beth Boyd  
Publishers, 1970-2002

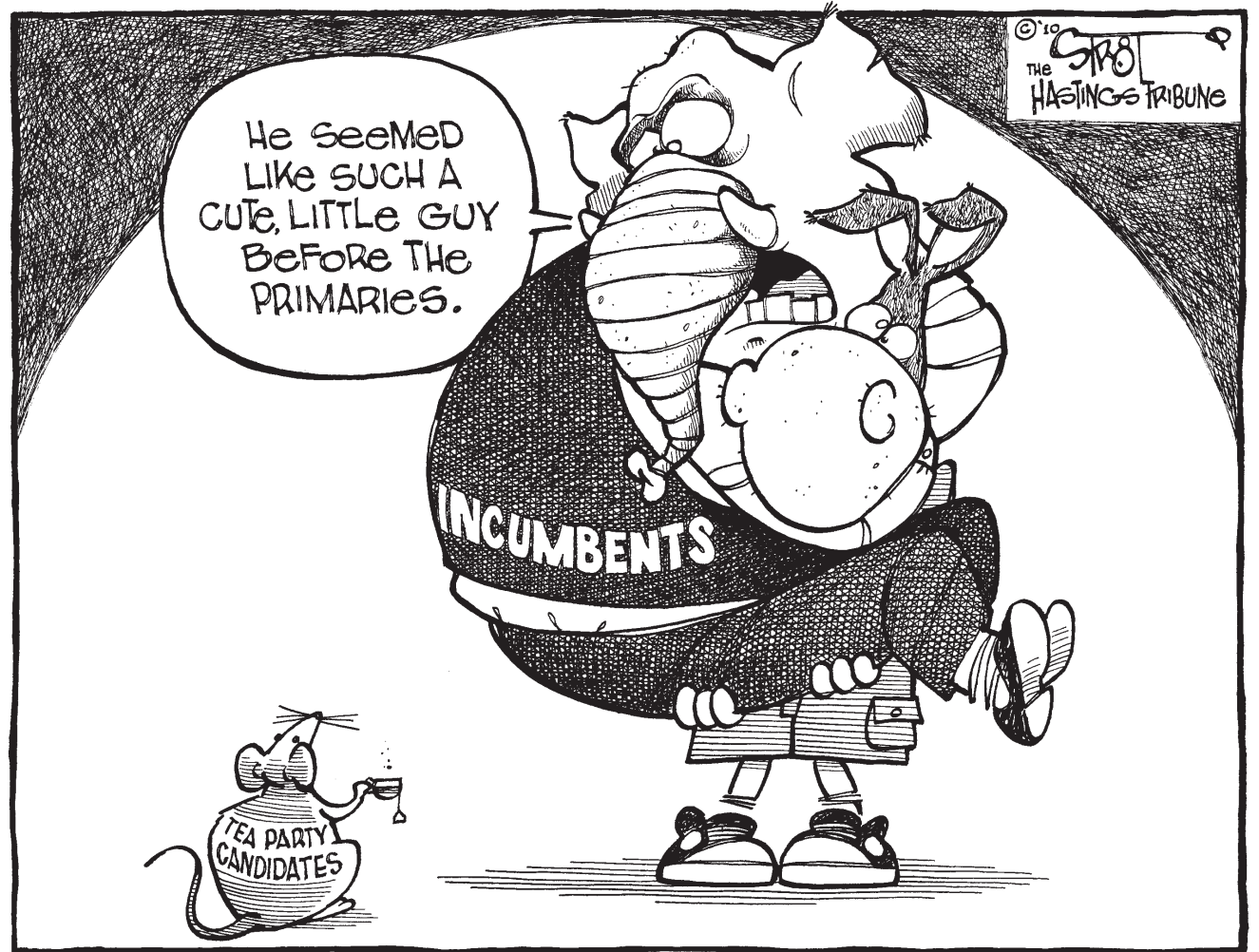
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## I'm looking for a little inspiration

For inspiration I moved my WebTV unit to the kitchen, in front of the picture window.

Okay. That's just a little fib. I was actually going to move it into what will (someday) be the home office. The kitchen breakfast bar is as far as I got. Not only is the office, which was once my closet, not empty but, I was too far into the project when I remembered there is no phone jack in that room. And, I certainly did not have enough phone line to run from the closet/office, through the library and across to the north wall of the kitchen to the nearest jack. That's the real reason I'm writing this with the keyboard balanced on my lap while I perch on one of the kitchen stools.

An inspiration I'm getting from looking out the window is the evidence that summer is waning. The grass is starting to get that wilted look and some leaves have begun to turn color. Some have even drifted to the ground. The other inspiration I get is looking at the south side of our little rental house next door and remember I've promised the two sisters who live there that I will paint the house this summer. Jim set up the scaffolding last week so now, it's up to me.

I showed the ladies some paint choices

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



and we agreed to keep it in the "blue" family. They have been wonderful tenants and we want them to stay.

Another inspirational view I get out the window is a clear shot of my tomato patch. We've eaten them as fast as we can but, they've managed to get ahead of us. Nothing left but to can some of them. Besides, they will be great in goulash this winter.

Ahh, winter. Right now, that almost sounds good. This has been such a brutal summer that snow would be a welcome relief. Maybe, "welcome" is taking it a little too far.

Something else I just noticed in my kitchen: one of the cats has found herself a cozy corner above the cabinets behind a sunflower arrangement. She peeks out every now and then to check on me. I'm afraid to scold her for fear she might

overreact and knock down some of my "pretties". Short of electrifying the top of the refrigerator, which is her access route, I don't know how to keep her down.

After several days at our house, Don DelMonte, the cowboy who got sidelined here, has resumed his journey. He traded horses with a rancher he met before he arrived here and will ride that horse to the state line. The rancher will meet him there and they will trade horses once again. If he can keep to his schedule, he hopes to be through The Rockies before snow flies. He was a big personality guy and fit right in. He pitched in and helped with chores, always picked up his plate from the table and said, "Please and thank you." Can't ask for a better house guest than that.

This is going to be a busy week. I have a trip to Florida planned with my oldest brother, Bob, to see our sister, Kathryn, who moved to Orlando a few months ago. Not only do I have to pack and get things ready for Jim while I'm away but I have several feature stories to finish, tomatoes to can, blood to donate, the Haven House to get ready, Bible study to prepare for and another column to write.

Sounds like a lot but, you know what I always say, "You know how to eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

## Farmers, it's them against the world

By John Schlageck,  
Kansas Farm Bureau

Life experiences teach plenty to those willing to learn. From the time I was a small boy, I remember my dad, uncles and grandfather talking and debating the issues of the day whenever we visited one another.

As I grew older, I began to hear some of what they said. I began to understand what they were talking about. But it has taken me nearly 30 years to realize what my grandfather used to say about comprehending issues.

About the time I was half way through high school, something he said finally sunk in. Grandpa Bert always said when you know a little about an issue, it's easy to form an opinion. When you learn a little more, it becomes a little more difficult to make a decision. And when you learn even more about an issue, your decision becomes, "just plain hard."

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about the issue of farmers and ranchers who often toil long days away by themselves. Sometimes they feel isolated with their backs against the wall. More than one farmer has expressed a feeling of, "It's me against the world."

Never before in agriculture has it been more important for farmers to express their basic wants, hopes and needs. Things like protection of personal property, a sound education for their children and a responsible, nonintrusive federal government, to mention a few.

Never before has there been such an opportunity to express agriculture's needs. Today there are countless satellites in orbit around our globe. Our cable system is loaded with hundreds of networks.

### Insight

John Schlageck

The information highway continues to speed forward and we can communicate with people around the world instantly. Many farmers and ranchers use Facebook, blog and Tweet with the best of them

Today's technology allows individuals to access videos, music, news, weather, markets, and consumer information - literally anything happening in our world today and more importantly - instantaneously.

It's been nearly three decades since newspapers entered the era of national and international publications. In this country, Christian Science Monitor and the Wall Street Journal pioneered the way.

Magazines and newspapers from all over the world are on line today, available for anyone with the time and desire to read them. Of course they are still being shipped by mail. You can also read news, weather, markets and sports on the screen of your computer or in the palm of your hand. If you've got the money honey, communication's tools are there to purchase.

With all of these different information avenues at your fingertips, it may also be easy for some to tune out and turn off. Farmers, ranchers, businessmen, bankers and professionals cannot afford to do that. We must utilize these communication tools to tell our story.

One way to help do this is by becoming active in the farm organizations and

commodity groups of your choice. They can provide the vehicle to help you tell agriculture's story while developing sound farming policy that must be communicated.

Agriculture finally arrived as a headliner during the farm crisis of the mid-'80s. Every day, newspapers, radios, television and computers are chock full of stories about agriculture. Subjects range from food additives in processing to agricultural chemicals. Stories include animal care, cholesterol in the diet, passing on the family farm, increasing agricultural trade and the next farm bill.

Remember, farmers and ranchers must continue to voice their message in the public information arena. Agriculture must utilize this medium to promote and persuade others to bring about change. Change that will benefit agriculture and a society that relies on U.S. farmers and ranchers for the safest and most abundant food source in the world.

A Kansas citizen said it best nearly 90 years ago, "This nation will survive, this state will prosper, the orderly business of life will go forward only if men can speak in whatever way given them to utter what their hearts hold - by voice, by postal card, by letter or by press."

William Allen White wrote this in his Emporia Gazette during the post World War I recession in 1922. These words ring true today.

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Send your letters to the editor to dpaxton@nwkansas