

Opinion

Government is biggest threat to our privacy

In an age when one government official flatly tells us we have no right to expect privacy any more, the government spends a lot of time — and money — telling us how it protects our privacy.

That's a joke, of course. The government is the biggest threat to our privacy. And it exempts itself from any law designed to protect us.

Take the health-care privacy rules under the law known as HIPPA. The government says it's protecting citizens — that's us — from having our privacy invaded by insurance companies and other big corporations. Of course, the government can get our medical records any time it wants them. It's exempt from these rules.

New health privacy rules cost the insurance and medical industries billions of dollars spent to change computer programs, building layouts and information sharing rules. Customers foot the bill.

We've yet to hear from a taxpayer who feels more secure as a result.

But many complain about new policies under the regulations which put an end to publication of hospital admissions (always voluntary on the part of the patients) in community newspapers, to pastors getting notice when a church member is in the hospital, to even having the names of patients on their door in some places.

It's illegal to listen in on people's telephone conversations, of course, unless you happen to be the government. Then, it's patriotic.

In the old days, the government had to go to court and get a warrant to tap the phones of a Mafia chief. Today, it simply orders AT&T to turn over all the calls going through its switching centers that begin or end in a foreign land. No warrant required.

The government says it's looking for bad

guys, international terrorists and such. But many small fry could get caught in this net. When the government starts listening to long-distance calls looking for terrorists, it's not going to ignore tax cheats, drug runners and white-collar criminals. Constitutional rights just sort of disappear.

As many who forgot they had contraband in the airline luggage have learned, you don't have to be a terrorist to get caught in the security net. You just have to be at the airport.

Airport security, of course, is designed to prevent attacks on the air traffic system. But security screeners are told not to ignore evidence of other crimes as they search your bags, no matter how trivial.

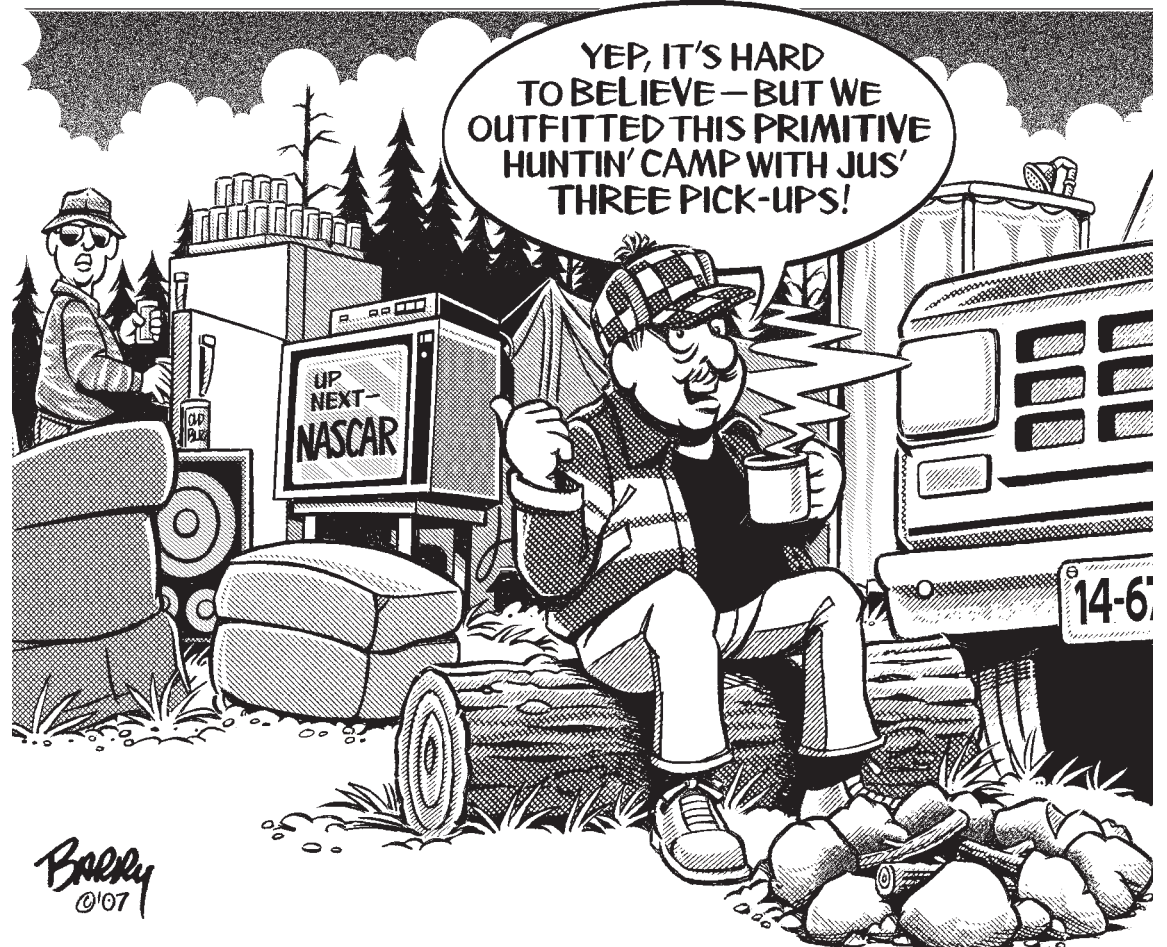
Your bank account? Your bank is watching that for the government. You'd best not deposit too much cash at any one time. The bank is required to report you.

Today, you have to give "proper identification" to open a bank account, just in case you might be a terrorist. Or a tax cheat. Federal rules make your bank a real partner with the security goon when it comes to watching us.

Now, it's the fire department. In New York, Homeland Security is training firemen to look for terrorists as they go about their duties inspecting buildings and the like. Firemen get into places without a warrant that now law enforcement officers can't reach. Now, they'll be reporting on citizens, too.

There may be other ways the government infringes on our privacy. We just don't know about them yet. Maybe we'll never know. You can bet they're out there. The anti-snoops try, but the government is always ahead of them.

Doesn't that make you feel safe and comfortable? — Steve Haynes



News From the Past

10 years ago - 1997

The Kid's Korner was new this year at the St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce Craft Show. Children could make ornaments and gifts while the mothers shopped the booths. The Korner was headed by Mary Beikman and some of her art students. Gloria Bracelin, Chamber secretary, declared the Korner definitely a hit.

The Advanced Music and Drama Class are preparing to present Madrigal Madness, a madrigal dinner with entertainment, on Dec. 1.

At the St. Francis Board of Education meeting, members appointed Daryl Loyd as a wrestling coaching aide in the high school and Robyn Raile, a high school girls basketball coaching aide. John Knodel was appointed to finish the term on the board of

education left vacant by Dean O'Brien.

The sixth grade music class, under the direction of Jean Ann Confer, traveled to Colby on Nov. 13, to take part in the KBSL-TV 10 "Sounds of the Season" musical series.

The chamber's sign on US 36 which was destroyed in the hail storm is in the process of being repaired.

25 years ago - 1982

The Northwest Kansas Junior Miss program received the Best Local Program of the Year award at the contest in Belleville. Last year the program received the Most Improved Award. Twila Kramer is this year's program chairman.

An Eagle Scout Court of Honor was held for Danny Penton on Nov. 7, at the Peace Lutheran Church in St. Francis.

Bonnie Burr of Cheyenne County was elected chairman of the Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas at the recent board meeting.

Verenica Rath led the season scoring for the St. Francis Lady Indian volleyball team. Leigh Winston was named the most valuable player and Vernelle King was the most inspirational player.

The St. Francis Community High School FFA team received an award for their "Building Our American Communities" project at the annual Congress held in Kansas City. They are one of the six Kansas Chapters to be entered into the national convention. St. Francis officers at the meeting to receive the award were Mitchell Hilt, Roger Orth, Gilbert Sherlock, Greg Cooper, Mike Bandel and Darrell Vandike.

Hangin' With Marge

Christmas Candy

By Margaret Bucholtz



margeb@cityofstfrancis.net One of the traditions I always enjoyed was making Christmas candy. It started when I was a child at home and helped my mother.

We would only make the usual kinds like fudge, divinity, red cinnamon and peanut brittle. The fudge was my very favorite at that time. Since we milked a few cattle we always had plenty of cream.

I remember that recipe still to this day. We took two cups of sugar, 4 tablespoons of cocoa, one cup of cream and 2 tablespoons of white syrup. Put it in a heavy pan and cooked it until it would make a soft ball.

Back then we didn't own a candy thermometer so we would put a little cold water in a cup. When mom thought it might be cooked enough we would spoon a little in the water and see if it made a soft ball.

Most people would have thrown that away, but not me. It was always my job to eat that little ball.

When it was just right we would set the pan in a dish of cold water and

wait until it cooled. Then we would add a teaspoon of vanilla and start beating the fudge with a wooden spoon. Man, did your arms ever get tired but after enough beating the color would lose its shine and you would know it was time to pour out on a plate and let it cool. If you had walnuts you would add them, but sometimes we couldn't afford the nuts, but, either way, the fudge was wonderful.

I think the hardest job of all was for my mother to watch over the fudge and keep me out of it so there would be some left for Christmas.

As I got older I still kept the tradition going. However by this time I had gotten some other recipes from friends and more kinds were added.

When my children were small, my sister-in-law, Bonnie Cooper helped me and we would work all day at making the goodies. Most of the candy was handed out for Christmas gifts, but that too came

to an end.

Years later my daughter Lezlie started helping me and by this time we had added butterfingers, cherry mash, caramels, pecan turtles and cherry chocolates. How fun the process was.

One year I found a new recipe and we added that. However it didn't set up so Lezlie and I decided to taste it and see what we might have done wrong. It really didn't even taste good, but there we sit with two spoons and we just kept tasting. Before long the pan was empty, we were both a little sick, but we never did figure out what it was we didn't like. (nor did we ever make it again) We have spent lots of time laughing about what we did and to this day if we taste something we don't like we talk about how we ate all of that candy like we thought it would get better.

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



scmcormick@nwkansas.com Thanksgiving is over and, with a full stomach, I can review the many things that I have to be grateful for.

I'm blessed with a wonderful family both here in Kansas, across the border in Colorado and in states beyond. All of our five kids are happy, healthy and doing what they should — either going to school or working.

I have a fantastic job doing what I like. I meet different people often and see very likable people daily. On top of that, I get to write a little bit.

Occasional disturbances sometime do happen to the daily balance. But overall life is pretty darn

ideal!

Each night I lay my head down in a warm and comfortable bed next to my love. I know my kids are safe and our home is secure.

There is a reason for this safety. I'm reading James Bradley's book, *The Flags of Our Fathers*.

His father, John Bradley, was one of the six soldiers who raised the American flag on Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima in World War II. The senior Bradley wouldn't share the horrors of war with his wife and children. The son had to go on his own quest to find out what his father had been through.

He interviewed family members and veterans to get the story of the

six boys, ages 19 to 26, who came into the nation's collective consciousness because of the picture that captured that moment in time.

There are many places around our planet where uncertainty is the daily routine. Third World countries where people go to bed hungry, not knowing what could sneak up at night, much like the Marines for a month and a half on Iwo Jima.

It gives me great peace of mind in knowing that we have brave men and women who are standing on guard. Every moment of every day they have our backs. How's that for something to be thankful for?

Honor Roll

New and renewed Herald subscriptions: Darrel Boll, St. Charles, Mo.; Lyle Boll, Highlands Ranch, Colo.; Lisa Mann, Joplin, Mo.; Dana Rogers, Olathe; Carl Frodine, Wheatridge, Colo.; Bill Ehrman, St. Francis; Bernice Zwegygart, St. Francis; Rev. H.J. Smith, Portland, Ore.

GOD SAYS

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. **Luke 2:4-5**

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Praise the Lord

Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 11 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Roger Meitl
Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

First Baptist Church
2nd & Scott • 332-3921
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,
Wed. AWANA Club 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
St. Francis Community Church
332-3150
204 N. Quincy Street
www.sfccfamily.com
Pastor: David Butler
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Potluck & Communion -
Every 2nd Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

United Methodist Church
Church Office 332-2292,
Church 332-2254,
512 S. Scott
Pastor Morita Truman
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Sunday School: 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Ken Hart
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday eve Bible Study 7 p.m.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
332-2888 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor Mike Larson
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

Solid Rock Baptist Church
412 S. Denison
Welcomes You!
Pastor Allen Coon
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

First Christian Church
Pastor Jeff Landers
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster
Bible Fellowship 9:20 a.m.
Church Service 10:30 a.m.

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