

America drifts toward becoming a police state

Bit by bit, America drifts and slides toward becoming a high-tech police state.

Bit by bit, freedoms slip away.

And it always sounds like a good idea.

There is no enemy on the left – or on the right.

The threat comes from the bureaucracy, the security apparatus, from authoritarian thinkers on either side of the aisle.

Think this is silly?

Then why are all the supposedly conservative Republicans in Topeka patting themselves on the back for passing a law forcing all Kansans to show a photo ID card before they can vote? Election fraud's never been a problem here.

What's next?

Roving checkpoints where police ask for our citizenship papers, as in some third-rate communist dictatorship from the Cold War era?

Oh, we call those drunk-driver check points. Hunting license checkpoints. Drug interdiction lanes.

If you think our liberties are not fading, try to get on an airplane without your ID.

If you're stopped for some traffic infraction, notice that the officer is likely to chat you up. He may ask you where you've been or where you're going. If your answer is a little hesitant, he might ask if you'd mind him searching the car.

It's loads of fun, having your car unpacked and dismantled while you sit beside the road.

The other day, Homeland Security agents swept in and took over the train depot in Savannah, Ga. They stopped and searched anyone who entered, whether they intended to board a train or not.

Who knows if the Transportation Security Administration even has that kind of authority. But rail security sounds like a good idea.

Government computers track your movements, your bank accounts, much of your life. And the government can access private com-

puters – at the phone company or the bank or the credit-card company, the airlines, a hundred other firms – and track the rest of your ways.

All of this is done, of course, for the best of reasons. For our own good.

Airport security is vital in the age of terrorism. Transportation Security agents, someone points out, have never caught a terrorist. They have "caught" thousands of people for minor criminal offenses, however.

Isn't election security "vital to democracy?" How did we ever get by without it for two centuries. Still, it sound like "a good idea." Same for "enhanced" border security, with computers tracking not only the comings and goings of foreigners, but of Americans as well.

Your bank is under orders to track your finances, especially any cash you might come across, and report you if you exceed certain limits. You might be a criminal, a drug dealer or a tax evader, after all.

And we all want them caught, right?

But when does "enhanced" security begin to impinge on our rights, especially the right to privacy? When is enough security way too much?

Will we wake up one morning and find out that, instead of the government serving us, with all those computers, cameras, records and files, that we must serve the government?

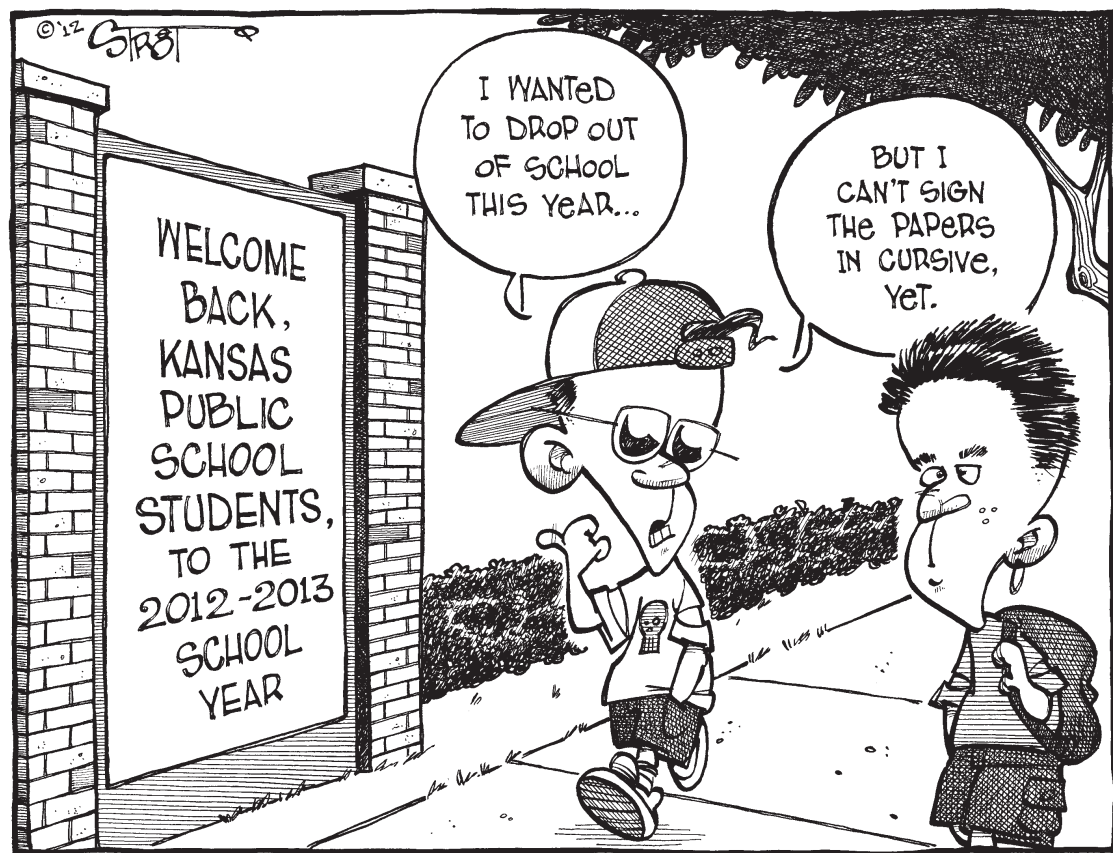
If that day comes, when it comes, it will be far too late to complain. Records will be made; action taken.

No, the time to defend liberty, as always, is today. Each policy, from the grossly misnamed "Patriot Act," to the latest "voter security" laws, needs to be questioned.

The best level of government involvement in our lives is the least possible. We need to avoid the point where ever-tighter security of all kinds becomes a straightjacket for America.

Ask questions today, not tomorrow.

— Steve Haynes



Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick
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By Casey McCormick
Good & bad, happy & sad, bitter & sweet. These are examples of the emotional spectrum our home is going through. For last Thursday was the day for our daughter Lexi to fly from the nest.

We are so very proud of what she has done to become a freshman at Washburn University in Topeka. The young woman she is becoming could be the envy of any parents, yet I know I'm a bit biased on this account.

The world is her oyster and

she's ready to swallow it whole!

Those are the bright emotions. Although optimism fills a part of us the other portion is filled with the dread and forboding of letting go.

It should be easier with her three older brothers paving the way to independence. But it isn't.

Knowing that she'll have at least two of those brothers within an hour's drive ought to make us check our reservations. But it doesn't.

Realizing that as parents our job

is to prepare our children to enter society and assume their roles as productive members would make one think that there is nothing to worry about. But that doesn't help much either.

Lexi has been, and will continue to be, such an amazing gift and blessing to us. Though time will soften the blow she will remain our little girl forever.

Hangin' With Marge

By Margaret Bucholtz
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How God Made the Earth

It seemed kind of different for Kurt and me to have to take both vehicles to town, but with two grandkids in car seats and three more that needed seat belts it just didn't allow Kurt and I room.

The first trip to town Kurt took three and I took Tucker, age 7, and Kodey age 16. We hadn't gone very far when Tucker asked, "I can see how God made the earth, but how did he make the mountains?" Kodey looked at me and said, "Do you want me to take that one, Grandma?" I told him to go ahead as I was anxious to see how he would answer it.

He put his hands out flat and put his fingers pointing in and touching. Then he said, "God made the earth out of platelets and as the earth spins some of the platelets start moving and as they get together it pushes one up and that

forms a mountain."

Now I might not have the sentence exactly how he said because I was listening thinking I don't want him to leave out God.

As soon as he finished I started in telling Tucker what a good job Kodey had done explaining to him about the earth. Of course being a woman I couldn't stop there and I went into how God makes everything like water, weeds and the animals. Then I went on about how he makes each one of us but unlike all the other things he gave man a brain and a conscious. That

is so we can make decisions about our choices in life and we have to be really careful so we always try to choose the right one.

As I paused for a breath Tucker said, "Grandma, you can stop talking now because I haven't been listening to you. I have just been looking out the window and waiting for you to stop talking."

Both Kodey and I had a good laugh about it and you could tell Kodey was so happy that he had listened to him.

Reader seeks prayers for country

Letter to the Editor:

For the last several days, I have been sorting through some of my things for what will be the last time – some things for my children along with a couple of friends. In the process, an editorial page from *The Saint Francis Herald* just keeps getting in the way.

So, as I sat at the table eating my lunch today, I finally picked it up. Low and behold, your article on the opinion page was looking back at me. You said, "As Memorial Day fades away, so do the veterans of past wars."

Being sent home from the Southwest Pacific to die because I had unknowing drank some untreated water which was alive with some little bugs, one of the two that brought with it a death sentence. In a few days, much of my time was spent sitting on outhouse seats. Consequently, I went from over 160 pounds down to about 110 after a big meal.

After spending months in a

Letters to the Editor

couple of VA hospitals, a doctor would not sign my discharge papers until I signed up for a disability pension. I said, I don't want or need it! His reply was, you won't live a year so your widow and her two children will.

Upon returning home, I went to a private hospital in a nearby state. They gave me something to drink that tasted like kerosene and as it circulated through my entire body, it seemed to get into every nook and cranny. My body became so cold that I shook like a leaf in the wind.

Needless to say, I sat on the round seat, shaking, freezing and shaking some more. I do not remember just how much of this delicious drink I drank, I know, I was there for hours - drinking and shaking, shaking and drinking. The end result was they killed the bug, but the damage to my innards was a whole different story.

I then went to school on the GI Bill because I didn't want to spend the rest of my life feeling sorry for myself. Because my wife, Mary, was interested in the study of cosmetology, I enrolled and by the grace of the Lord, had one of the finest practitioners in the nation as one of the instructors.

It was a proven fact because he charged \$2.25 for either a shampoo and set or a hair cut. Meanwhile his competitors received

15- to 25-cents for the same kind of service.

Having learned how to focus first in the boxing arena, and then behind a machine gun, kept me from many a self-pity party.

A few years later, when Mary was 35, she looked up at me from her hospital bed with a big smile on her face and said, "Hold me, honey." The trip of a few blocks home to tell our 13 children, Mother will not be coming home, took much more courage than it did to do the things I had to do on a couple of occasions to keep our plane from blowing up from within was nothing compared to telling our children, "Mother is not coming home." Our youngest son was a day or so over four-weeks-old.

So, just why am I writing this? Good question.

I have been to a number of dentists because I have a couple of infected teeth, but none of them here, Goodland and the Denver area have the courage to pull them. I've seen cowards on the killing fields of yesteryear but men without the courage to pull a couple of decaying teeth makes me feel like all of the lives I was a part of taking on the killing fields was wrong - even though the future of our nation was at stake.

Carl M. Swenson,
Minister, missionary, counselor
St. Francis

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The Saint Francis Herald
(USPS 475-960)
A Century of Service to Cheyenne County

P.O. Box 1050, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050

Published each Thursday by Haynes Publishing Co., 310 W. Washington, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050. Entered as periodicals matter at the post office at St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050, and at additional offices.

Official newspaper of Cheyenne County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year \$38 (tax included) in Cheyenne and adjacent counties; \$42 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$48 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$28 extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Box 1050, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050

Nor'West Newspapers
8:30 a.m. - noon - 1:00-5:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday
(785) 332-3162 Fax - (785) 332-3001
E-mail - sf.herald@nwkansan.com

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GOD SAYS
The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable; but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.
Psalms 10:32

Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 9 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.

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

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
423-650-5663 • 3rd & Adams
Pastor James McCurdy
Sabbath School 9:30
Morning Worship 10:45

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Roger Meitl
Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8:00 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Communion 3rd Sunday

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 9:15 a.m.
Church Service 10:15 a.m.

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.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Randy Nelson
Church 332-2928
Parsonage 332-2312
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Communion 1st Sunday

St. Francis Equity

St. Francis Herald