

# commentary

from our viewpoint...

## Court erodes rights to expand drug fight

The Supreme Court, the drug bureaucracy, the nation's police and a lot of other good people continue to erode the protections of the Fourth Amendment prohibiting unreasonable search and seizure.

The result is that we all have less freedom, but we seldom notice, at least not at first. And vandalism to the Bill of Rights is always done in the name of a higher good.

In recent years, the high court has weakened the constitutional requirement that police have "probable cause" to stop people or search their cars when looking for evidence of a crime.

Sometimes, this takes the form of "check lanes" approved by the court to look for drugs or drunk drivers. In these operations, typically more than half of the criminal violations found are not related to the stated purpose, to find illegal drugs, say, or screen for drunk driving.

Once officers notice another crime, though, they are allowed to arrest the person involved.

Other practices which eat away at the Fourth Amendment include use of screening profiles, which amount to little more than educated guessing, to stop people, usually for drug offenses, and drug-sniffing dogs used to check cars after they are stopped.

What it amounts to is that in the name of catching drug runners, police want to be able to stop anyone they suspect may have drugs, or alternately, to stop everyone and see if anyone has drugs.

Check lanes allow officers to stop everyone to check cars for drugs or drunk driving. In Kansas, courts have ruled that the lanes must be announced in time to have notice published in a newspaper, apparently on the theory that anyone stupid enough (or drunk enough) to drive into a publicly announced operation deserves whatever they get. And plenty of drivers are that stupid.

Arresting drunk drivers and seizing illegal drugs sound like laudable enterprises, after all, and the need for the Fourth Amendment is distant. But it was written because, without it, everyone suffered from abuse of police power.

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated," the amendment says.

"The people," not just criminals.

But the Bill of Rights is a funny thing. Everyone stands behind his or her own favorite rights — gun owners behind the Second Amendment, printers, publishers and preachers behind the First, defense lawyers behind the Fifth. Most of us, it seems, neither care about nor understand the others.

But if any of us are to have rights, we all must have them, and the entire Bill of Rights must be defended. These basic rights are too precious to let slip away, even if that means a few criminals will go free.

The Fourth Amendment is just as important as the Second or the First, and all who love Liberty need to remember that, and defend them.

Or we will live to regret it. — *Steve Haynes*

## Letter Policy

The Goodland Daily News encourages and welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be typewritten if possible, and should include a telephone number and, most importantly, a signature. Unsigned letters will not be published. Form letters will be rejected, as will letters deemed to be of no public interest or considered offensive. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and good taste. We encourage letters, with phone numbers, by e-mail to: <daily@nwkansas.com>.

## The Goodland Daily News

(USPS No. 222-460. ISSN 0893-0562)

Member: Kansas Press Association  
The Associated Press

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association  
e-mail: [daily@nwkansas.com](mailto:daily@nwkansas.com)

Steve Haynes, President

Tom Betz, Editor/Editorial Page

Rachel Miscall, Managing Editor

Janet Craft, Society Editor/Reporter

Lester Bolen, Sports Reporter

Doug Jackson, Eric Yonkey, Judy Harper, Advertising Sales

Karen Jones, Adv. Production Debra Turner, Page Prod.

Sheila Smith, Office Manager Pat Schiefen Bookkeeping

### Nor'west Press

Jim Bowker, General Manager

Ron VanLoenen

Judy McKnight

Richard Westfahl

Lana Westfahl

Betty Morris

Helen Dilts



[nwkansas.com](http://nwkansas.com)

N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services ([nbetz@nwkansas.com](mailto:nbetz@nwkansas.com))  
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin. ([support@nwkansas.com](mailto:support@nwkansas.com))

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday and the day observed for New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

Periodicals postage paid at Goodland, Kan. 67735; entered at the Goodland, Kan., Post Office under the Act of Congress of March 8, 1878.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Goodland Daily News, 1205 Main St., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

TELEPHONE: (785) 899-2338. Editorial e-mail: [daily@nwkansas.com](mailto:daily@nwkansas.com). Advertising questions can be sent to: [gdnadv@nwkansas.com](mailto:gdnadv@nwkansas.com)

The Goodland Daily News assumes no liability for mistakes or omissions in advertising or failure to publish beyond the actual cost of the ad.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$22; six months, \$38; 12 months, \$72. By mail in Kansas, Colorado: three months, \$ 28; six months, \$50; 12 months, \$95. (All tax included.) Out of area, weekly mailing of five issues: three months, \$25; six months, \$40; 12 months, \$75.

Incorporating:

**The Sherman  
County Herald**

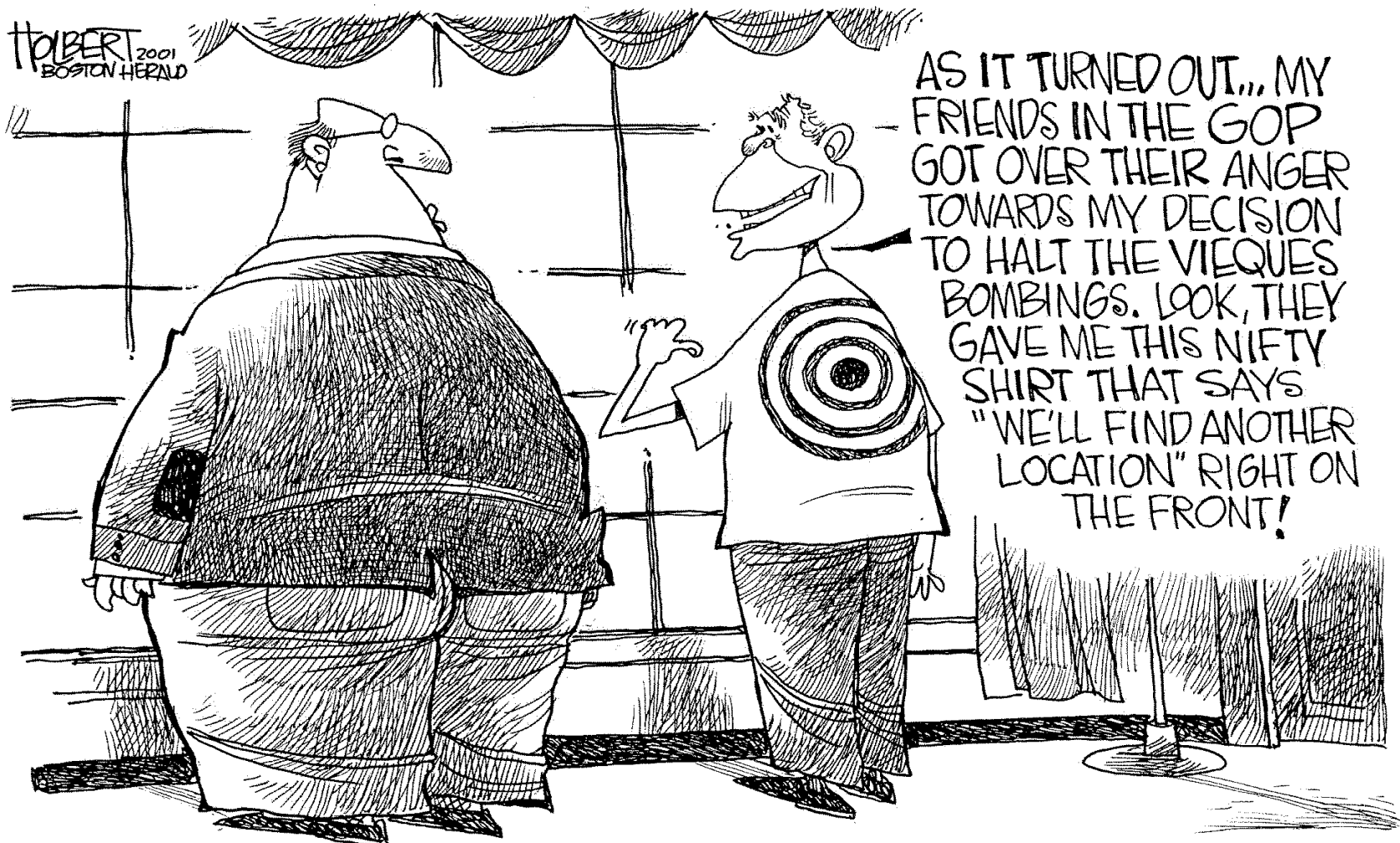
Founded by Thomas McCants  
1935-1989

**THE SHERMAN COUNTY  
STAR**

Founded by Eric and  
Roxie Yonkey  
1994-2001

**Nor'West Newspapers**

Haynes Publishing Company



## Winds take silent pet out of our life

Spike left us last week and after all we had done for him.

He came to us an orphan. Alone in the world.

We took him in and gave him a nice home on the back porch.

We talked to him every day and petted him very carefully, knowing that he had a prickly nature and an uncertain future.

Then the winds came and Spike took off for the neighbors' or hid in bushes or sailed over the houses and back out to the country, where he was born and raised.

If you see him, tell him we still love him and have a place for him on the porch.

Spike is about 9 inches tall, slender and dark gray-brown with six-inch thorns. He is a locust branch.

Why are we keeping a wild locust branch as a pet, you ask. Isn't that a little dangerous?

Well, he was pretty tame if you didn't get him all riled up. And like scissors, you should never run



**cynthia  
haynes**

• open season

with a locust branch.

His thorns were a little like the cat's claws — used mostly to hang on. He didn't ever plan to cause any damage and he never drew blood.

Steve brought the little thorn-carrier home a couple of months ago after walking the dog in the country.

He said that he had a new pet for me. Just what I needed, I thought, something else to feed and clean up after. But I was wrong, Spike needed nothing but a spot on the back porch.

I named him myself. I called him that because he was so obviously armored. Females may be as

lethal as males, but they usually camouflage it better.

And, yes, we talked to Spike. Lots of people talk to plants.

Of course, I also talk to the table, call for my missing car keys to come out of hiding and discuss supper with the refrigerator. Since I've yet to have any of these things talk back, I consider them all excellent conversationalists.

Spike was an excellent conversationalist. We could carry on discussions all day and he never disagreed with me — obviously an excellent companion, and he made a good guard with all those spines.

But, the wind came and Spike left.

Maybe I can get Steve to walk the dog and find a poor orphaned cactus that needs a home on the back porch.

It might not be quite as original as a locust branch but it would keep me from missing the kids.

It'll remind me of having them around when they were teens.

## Daily efforts as enjoyable as lifetime dream

WASHINGTON — During a contentious Q-and-A session at the New School in New York City, where I was speaking recently, a woman lobbed a verbal grenade onto the stage. "Would you go back to Pennsylvania and run for office? And if so, would you run as a Democrat or a Republican?"

For a moment I was uncharacteristically speechless. I paused before giving what I thought was a pretty smart response to the two-part query. "I don't know, and I don't know."

The media buzz triggered by my double-bartreled answer indicates the need for a fuller airing of my ambitions at age 55.

When I was a kid I dreamed of leading a cavalry charge across the plains of Russia. My saber raised high, my horse galloping, I was single-handedly defeating the Communist enemy.

As a fantasy, it's still hard to beat.

When I grew older, my heart stirred to other notions of glory.

As a Philadelphia high-schooler I wanted to be a U.S. senator. I read "Advise and Consent" with fascination. On a band trip to Washington I thrilled at the sight of Hubert Humphrey standing before a Capitol elevator. When the Democrats had their convention in Atlantic City, I waited in the crowd to see and shake the hands of the future anti-Vietnam War hero Eugene McCarthy.



**chris  
matthews**

• commentary

I had caught the Senate bug while still in grade school, watching Republican Hugh Scott win his upset in 1958, beginning his long career as the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania. In my first national election, I voted for his Democratic colleague, the great liberal reformer Joseph Clark. But in college, I watched the power of Philadelphia Inquirer columnist Joe McGinniss. Three mornings a week, he jolted the city's breakfast tables and car pools with his 800 words of a.m. audacity. Radio talk-show hosts would open by asking listeners, "So, what do you think of McGinniss?"

In grad school, I made a habit of catching CBS' Eric Sevareid deliver his big-picture reflections on the Vietnam debate. One of Edward R. Murrow's boys from World War II, he spoke with the crisp authority of someone who'd been there. I could not think of anything grander, more vital to the Republic, than to be a TV news commentator.

## Buyers need to watch for previously wrecked vehicles

Dear Attorney General Stovall:

Last month I purchased a used car from a local dealer. I was able to drive it for one week before it literally started falling apart on me. The dealer did not want to work with me regarding the repairs, so in frustration, I took it to another dealer. That dealer found so many problems with the car that the cost of the repairs almost exceeds what I paid for the car! Attorney General Stovall, I just want to give the car back to the dealer and walk away. Can you help?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

My Consumer Protection division investigated the history of your vehicle and discovered that it had been previously wrecked and rebuilt. It became especially apparent that major body work had been performed when we discovered that the driver's side door came off a different year car. Nowhere in your paperwork was it disclosed to you that this vehicle had been wrecked. Furthermore, the car was also experiencing major mechanical problems, such as coolant leaks from the head gaskets, a faulty fuel pump, and broken motor mounts.

At first the car dealer was adamant about either fixing the car or putting you into another car of equal or greater value. If you traded up, you would have to pay for the difference. Not surprisingly, you had lost confidence in this particular dealership and wanted to give the car back and have the loan canceled. The Kansas Consumer Protection Act (KCPA) states that failing to disclose a material fact is a deceptive act or practice. We contacted the dealership and informed it that by failing to disclose that this car had been previously wrecked

and rebuilt was a violation of the KCPA. Furthermore, the mechanical condition of the car, coupled with the dealer's previous unwillingness to repair the car, also violated the KCPA. The KCPA requires that every supplier honor the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose for any product sold in Kansas. It was obvious that this car did not meet these implied warranties, as you were only able to drive the car for a week.

After we informed the dealership of these violations, and to avoid a lawsuit, it agreed to buy the car back, which included paying off the loan and reimbursing you for the two payments you had made on the loan.

Although dealerships are required by law to disclose material facts, such as previous damage to a vehicle, the best way to protect yourself from expensive surprises is to have any car you are considering purchasing checked over by a qualified mechanic whom you trust. Also, consider having a title history run on the car to check for any "branded" titles, such as salvage or previously non-highway. This would indicate that the car at one point had sustained severe damage.

If you have had any problems with the purchase of a vehicle, please contact my Consumer Protection division at 1-800-432-2310.

Attorney General Carla J. Stovall offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints. For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Carla J. Stovall, Consumer Protec-

tion Division, 120 SW 10th, 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kansas 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310. Leave your name, number and subject of your inquiry with the receptionist and an agent will return your call promptly.

### berry's world

