

from our viewpoint...

## Court says police can sneak into yards

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 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 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 there’s no reason agents would need a warrant to attach the device to the Jeep. The dissenters said they believed, however, 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 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 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*

## The Goodland Star-News

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

Member: Kansas Press Association

Inland Press Association Colorado Press Association

National Newspaper Association

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Published every Tuesday and Friday except the days observed for New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, at 1205 Main Ave., 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 Star-News, 1205 Main Ave., Goodland, Kan. 67735.

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

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: In Sherman County and adjacent counties: three months, \$29; six months, \$46; 12 months, \$81. Out of area, weekly mailing of two issues: three months, \$39; six months, \$54; 12 months, \$89 (All tax included). Mailed individually each day: (call for a price).

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## Remembering a young woman

Faith.

I remembered a smiling kindergartner, wispy blonde hair, ever present smile.

By the time I saw her dad last week, they’d had her funeral.

Shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade found her in an Army intelligence compound in Iskandariya, Iraq, not that long before her deployment would have been over. Ironically, she followed the last of the U.S. “combat” brigades home.

Her family had not thought Faith Hinkley would be a soldier. She headed off to the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs after high school graduation, looking for a career. When she came home and said she might be in the Army, I don’t think her parents were thrilled.

Yet, by all accounts, Sgt. Hinkley was a good soldier. She worked in “human” intelligence, interviewing Iraqi women. The general who spoke at her funeral said she helped track down materials used to make “improvised explosive devices” to kill American troops and Iraqi civilians.

She was good at her job. Her commander wrote her score topped the promotion list for sergeant, a rank she was advanced to postmortem. The Army gave her a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. They’ll be treasured forever by her family, I’m sure.



## steve haynes

• along the sappa

A week later, her dad, David, admitted he was still in a daze. We have know each other for years, worked together at Rotary Club functions. He was my eye doctor back in Colorado.

David and Faith’s mom had flown to Dover, Del., to meet her casket. The response when they got back to the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado, he said, was amazing.

Hundreds of people lined the highways from the Alamosa airport to her home in Monte Vista. State troopers, police and sheriff’s officers, Patriot Guards, veterans, kids and elders, just plain people saluted her casket. Firemen used two aerial rigs to hoist a giant flag over the road to the state veterans home.

“We couldn’t believe the response,” her dad said later. Neither could the general, a hardened veteran who admitted it was his first funeral detail.

“People called and wrote from all over the state,” David said. “All over the country.”

Friends posted nearly 200 photos on her Facebook page. Comments on her “wall” run

## Health professionals should get flu shots

Every doctor, nurse and other health care professional knows the first rule of medical care is “to do no harm.”

The ethical obligation to safeguard patients from unintended illness or injury is imbedded in the Hippocratic Oath, the moral compass that has guided the practice of healing arts for more than 2,000 years.

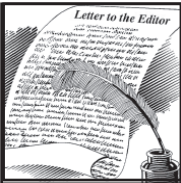
That’s why it is so puzzling that about half of all health care professionals today don’t bother to protect themselves and their patients against influenza by getting the annual flu vaccine.

Even during last year’s flu pandemic – the global outbreak that caused more than 12,000 deaths in the United States – only 37 percent of US health care professionals said they got the additional H1N1 flu vaccine, according to a new report.

What’s going on here?

Virtually none of these highly trained professionals would think of approaching a patient with unwashed hands that could transmit infectious agents. None would blithely permit their patients to be exposed involuntarily to tobacco smoke or other toxins that could lead to cancer or heart disease.

Yet after 30 years of irrefutable evidence that flu vaccines are safe and effective in protecting patients, tens of thousands of health care professionals decline to receive them each year. Despite intensive education campaigns every year to get health care staff immunized in most hospitals and large clinics, such voluntary efforts rarely achieve more than 70 percent



## from other pens

• commentary

coverage.

Studies have shown health care professionals turn down flu vaccines for the same reasons other people do. They have doubts about their risk of getting infected, or their need for the vaccine. Some question how well it really works, or express concerns about side effects.

Some just don’t like getting injections.

Frankly, this is appalling. Health care providers should know better than this by now. And they should set a better example for their patients and their communities in the coming flu season by getting themselves in line for the new flu vaccine as it comes on the market in Kansas in the next few weeks.

It has been well established flu vaccination of health care professionals lowers patient risk and saves lives. When health care staff members are immunized against influenza, they are much less likely to transmit the flu virus to their elderly and other high-risk patients, some of whom may otherwise die from the disease.

There is strong evidence an immunized health care workforce has less absenteeism during the annual winter peak in community flu cases. This allows hospitals and clinics to

for pages. A Google search produces 10 pages of news.

From the airport to the First Presbyterian Church in Monte Vista, where she grew up, they saluted. They jammed the high school gymnasium where she’d played, trained, been a cheerleader, danced at the prom. The governor was there, a senator, legislators and leaders, nearly everyone in town, strangers and friends.

The general said kind words, praised Faith as a hero. A letter from her commanding officer said as much.

The newspaper said her dad thanked the crowd, and said how, when she told the family she wanted to join the Army, he’d suggested maybe she think of something else.

“What if everyone had that attitude?” he recalled her saying. “Who would serve our country?”

The honor guard loaded her casket on a fire engine for the last few miles to the veterans home cemetery. More salutes. More words.

In the quiet days that followed, her family had to come to terms with the reality of it all. Faith might be a hero, a soldier and a professional, but she was gone, a life ended all too soon at 23.

“Someday, maybe I’ll understand,” David said. “Someday, I know I will.”

keep more qualified staff on duty when the demand for care is highest, and to keep down the cost of care.

So we all benefit when doctors, nurses and other members of the clinical team do the right thing and get themselves immunized against the flu.

That’s why it may be time for patients and other concerned Kansans to give the health care professionals in our lives a good-natured reminder about the importance of getting the flu vaccine this year. A gentle word coming from you may be just what some hesitant doctors and nurses need to roll up their sleeves and get the vaccine.

This year’s vaccine – which will cover both the H1N1 strain and the common seasonal strains – promises to be available in abundant supplies. And, according to new national guidelines, virtually everyone over six months of age is recommended to get the vaccine.

There is simply no good excuse for a doctor, nurse or other health care professional not to be immunized against the flu this year. This is a critical patient safety issue, a matter that goes to the heart of every health care professional’s obligation “to do no harm.”

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