

from our viewpoint...

## Devious Patriot Act way to cut freedom

Most Americans say they support the so-called Patriot Act, but the truth is, most people don't have a clue what the act involves. The name sounds nice, and that's good enough for 64 percent of us, a University of Connecticut poll shows.

Only 42 percent could identify the main purpose of the law as enhancing surveillance powers for federal law enforcement agencies.

The poll shows that, the more people understand this law, the less they like it. Most of us, 81 percent, are OK with the provision that allows federal agencies to use information gathered from foreign intelligence activities in domestic criminal investigations. To most people, that only makes sense, though it's long been illegal.

It means, if the CIA overhears terrorists plotting a bombing in the U.S., the FBI can move in and use the information to make a case against the bombers.

A two-thirds majority agrees with a provision allowing the government to collect names and addresses from Internet communications in criminal investigations.

A section which allows federal agents to tap any phone a subject uses, rather than having to name each number in a court order, draws wide support, 62 percent. It just makes sense to get one warrant for one bad guy.

When it comes to allowing agents to get people's library records without telling them, though, only 53 percent say it's OK. We suppose there is some legitimate reason to check out the "Radical's Guide to Bomb Making," but we can't say right now what it is. Still, will we get on an FBI watch list if we read the Koran?

Just 43 percent support requiring banks to turn over records without a court order.

Why not get a court order? It's not that hard.

Searching American homes without telling the occupants doesn't draw much support, just 23 percent. Common sense has not left the American people.

Still, there is some scary stuff here.

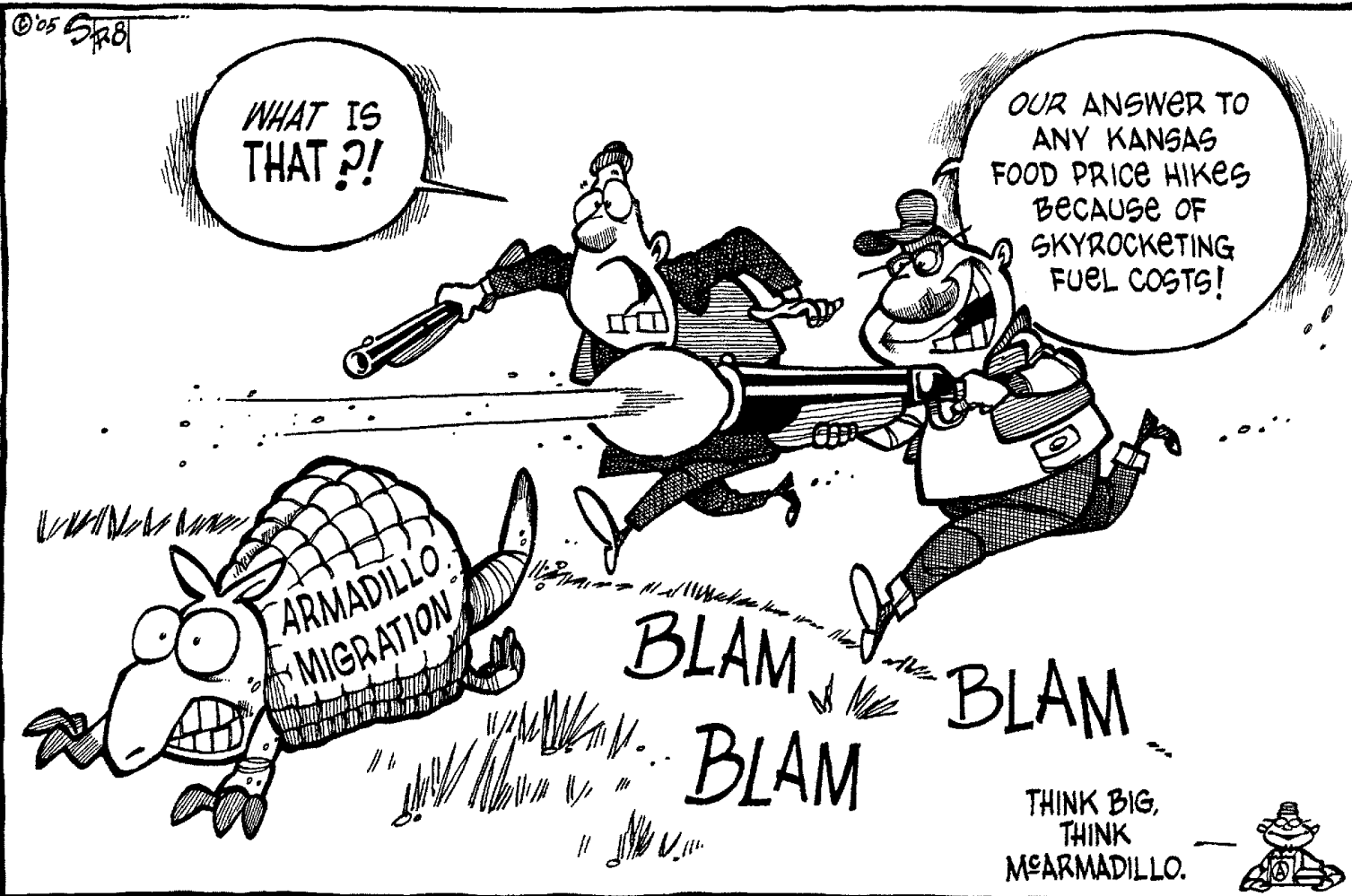
A vast majority of Americans say they support this law with the patriotic name, though few of us know what it really means.

Few understand that it means your librarian or banker may be spying on you, turning your information over to some federal agency. When people know about this law, though, many parts don't sound so nice.

The Patriot Act — high sounding, but not so high in purpose. Many provisions have to be reauthorized by Congress, and some of them ought not to be.

When the law was passed, the Sept. 11 attacks were fresh in everyone's minds. Few asked questions.

Now, though, people have a better grip on the law, and many Americans know which parts ought to be scrapped. Congress needs to listen to them. — Steve Haynes



## Plants are growth opportunity for county

To the Editor:

Many people in this community already know us, but for those who do not we are Gerald (Gerry) and Linda Franklin. We have lived in other states and other places in Kansas, but 24 years ago we had the opportunity to move back to the community where we both graduated from high school. We have been involved in volunteer activities such as 4-H, Extension, Board of Education, the United Methodist Church and farm organizations, to name a few.

During the past 24 years, we have watched the community slowly fade away, just like most small communities in western Kansas. As empty stores show up on Main Street, school enrollment drops and there is little opportunity for employment outside of city, county, or federal jobs. In the Goodland area, this is true, and may be accelerated by the loss of irrigation. You might say we are on a long, slow losing streak, with no end in sight. As a result, the community now stands at a crossroad. Do we close



### from our readers

to the editor

schools and continue to lose businesses? Do we become a motel-and-fast-food stop along 1-70. Or do we want more?

We chose to invest in the proposed energy center because we want the people and children of this community to have more options. The city has a wastewater problem that could be turned to an asset by producing steam power and in the process reduce electrical rates. With our location along 1-70, proximity to the Front Range of Colorado, reduced electrical rates and availability of steam power, Goodland has a chance to end the losing streak.

If the steam can be used to generate electricity and then to produce ethanol and biodiesel

fuel, these plants will have an economic advantage over their competitors that use natural gas. This can be done while providing a new market for grain produced in this area, while expanding the declining tax base and solving two pressing issues for the city. The only requirement is that the community must work together.

Our opportunity is unique and other communities have expressed a desire to follow Goodland's approach to changing its destiny.

What affect will this have on the railroad, sunflower plant, housing market school enrollment, tax base, trucking, livestock industry, town businesses and the farm economy? We can not say for certain, but we know where we are now and where we have been. Help Goodland make a mark on the future. We must focus beyond ourselves and make our community significant.

We welcome your input.  
Gerald and Linda Franklin  
Goodland

## Getting settled in People's Republic of China

Darin and Kati (Amos) Curts of Greeley, Colo., are serving as WorldTeach volunteers in the People's Republic of China. WorldTeach, affiliated with Harvard University, has an agreement with the Human Provincial Department of Education and Foreign Affairs to place volunteer English teachers throughout the province. Darin and Kati will be teaching in Yueyang, Hunan, PRC, at Yueyang Ba Zhong (Yueyang #8 Middle School) for one year. Kati Curts, formerly of Goodland, still has relatives here.

By Darin Curts and Kati (Amos) Curts  
Aug. 31, 2005

Nimen Hao (Hello Everyone!) After only a month in the People's Republic of China, we've come to regard China as a country of contrasts and contradictions. Everyday life is marked not only by the lack of conveniences one would expect from a developing nation, but also the rapid pace of progress and change that modern China seems determined to pursue.

Prior to our August departure, we read much about China's rapid development, its increasing role in global affairs, and its influence in the world economy. Concurrently, we heard concerns about poverty, the escalating population, and the dangerous levels of pollution in China. Living within the local community, we have witnessed many of these issues that a tourist passing through may not encounter.

With a few days remaining until our classes start, we decided to explore the city and took a bus to the "Walking Street," a street dedicated to the shopping pedestrian. It is full of contemporary architecture, fashion boutiques, large bronze sculptures, high-end electronic stores, and fast-food restaurants (including both McDonald's and KFC). Its neon lights and wealthy patrons seem to epitomize modern China. As we strolled down the middle of the street, we passed hordes of young Chinese men and women dressed in trendy jeans and T-shirts who often turned to gawk at us and occasionally call out "weiguoren," which means foreigner and is heard all too often.

This two-block swathe of buildings, green planters, and new stone paving came to an abrupt end when we reached the west end. As



Darin and Kati Curts

we crossed the street to wait at the bus stop, we approached an old man with no shirt and no legs lying on a blanket with his hands outstretched, holding a bowl with a few coins in it. Not 10 feet away, another man in a large straw hat was hauling a massive load of cardboard boxes in a rickshaw, a large wheelbarrow attached to a rusty bicycle. After paying the 1 yuan fare (roughly equivalent to 1/8 of a dollar), we boarded the bus and road it around the back side of the Walking Street. There, we saw a series of dilapidated apartment buildings, patched with concrete and decorated with drying laundry.

The bus took us through the narrow streets of Yueyang, past wet markets selling fruits, vegetables, and meats of all kinds, by street vendors and small restaurants serving steamed buns and dumplings, and dropped us off at a large outdoor "mall." This Escheresque labyrinth of shop-lined alleys was not only overwhelming but also confusing, having no apparent order. If China is the world's factory, this

mall was Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and JC Penney wrapped in plaster walls. Down one particular "aisle," we came across chandeliers, homemade ladders, trash cans, televisions, straw brooms, squat toilets, and black-market dvds. We had no shopping list and exited with nothing more than tired feet, tired minds, and a great experience.

We decided to call it a day and hailed a taxi to take us home. After reciting the memorized Chinese name of our school to the driver, the car weaved in and out of the traffic for several kilometers before stopping in front of the school gates. We paid the metered 8.5 yuan and stepped out of the car saying, "xie xie" (thanks).

It was an interesting day full of new observations and experiences. It seems each time we step out of our door we encounter China's unique and sometimes startling contrasts, but it's always an adventure. The coming year is sure to be unforgettable.

Zaijian!

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