

from our viewpoint...

# DNA samples put criminals on file

There's a growing controversy over the practice of police taking DNA samples from people arrested for major crimes. Kansas, under a law passed this year, will begin taking samples Jan. 1 from anyone accused of a violent crime. After 2008, anyone accused of a felony will have to give a sample. Civil liberties lawyers, some of them anyway, are incensed. One claimed building a database of DNA that way would mean "the end of innocent until proven guilty."

That's a silly argument. It means no such thing. We face many threats to our liberty today, but taking DNA samples from anyone accused of a crime isn't among them. Still, the American Civil Liberties Union and other groups are wary of the change.

"This is absolutely a line that should not be crossed," said one hysterical lawyer. "It's a very serious infringement of Fourth Amendment rights.(protecting against unreasonable search and seizure)."

Bull.

Look at it this way.

For decades, anyone accused of a serious crime had been photographed and fingerprinted as they are booked into jail. Fingerprints are very nearly as unique an identifier as DNA, and in some instances more specific to an individual rather than a family.

If next year, Kansas wants to take photos, front and profile, fingerprints and DNA, that does not compromise the accused's rights.

Simply being in the DNA database does not make one guilty of some future crime, any more than having been booked and fingerprinted does. Either way, you have a rap sheet and a criminal record. That says something about you, but it does not make you guilty of a future crime.

Taking DNA samples may, in fact, serve to protect the innocent. DNA tests can eliminate the innocent and wrongly accused in many violent crimes. If you didn't do it, it's not likely to be your DNA in the sample police took at the scene.

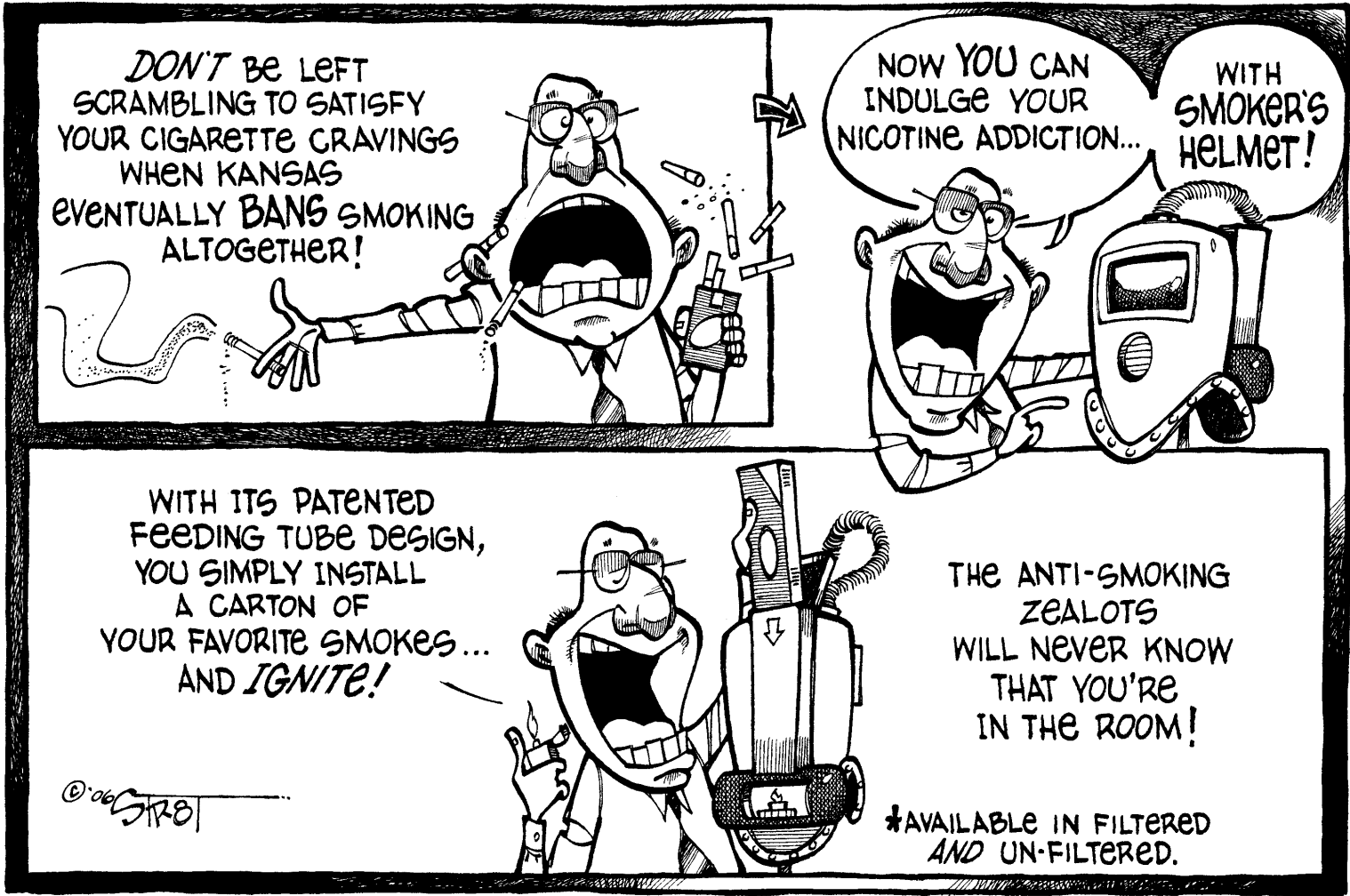
DNA can be far more certain — and sometimes easier to find — than fingerprints. A well-run DNA data bank should help protect the innocent and finger the guilty.

Contrast that with today's system: Only convicts are in the DNA database, and just being there might serve to prejudice the system against former felons.

There are many things the civil liberties lawyers should be worried about in this country: The government snooping in our bank accounts, compiling our phone records, or tracing our movements by tracking our cell phones.

This DNA collection is just an extension of decades-old police practices that help solve crimes and sort the innocent from the guilty. More accurate, perhaps, and using newer technology, but no different from current booking practices.

The ACLU has better things to worry about. — *Steve Haynes*



# Seems there is another missing cat

To paraphrase Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, "Animals come and go so quickly around here."

First there was son's cat Frank.

Frank was evicted from his Lawrence apartment and ended up living in our garage. At least he's supposed to be living in the garage. As a house cat, Frank is firmly convinced his place is in the house — or wherever the humans are. He's very much a people cat.

Then there were Toadly I and Toadly II.

Each year we seem to have at least one large toad living in the garden. I name this monster Toadly each year as he hops out of the weeds onto the patio and under the garage lights in search of his supper.

This year, we've got not one large toad but two, which is all the better for garden protection. It also affords Frank unlimited pleasure watching and eventually chasing the toads back into the shrubs.



cynthia  
haynes

- open season

In the evenings, our back deck is decorated in spider webs and cats as our felines and their assorted neighbors and friends take over chairs, tables, railing and trash can lid. It's all quite decorative, and if you want to sit down, they'll let you. Then, of course, there are cats on the chairs, tables, railing, trash can lid and your lap.

But, we seem to have gone from five cats to four.

Rupert is missing.

Rupert is youngest daughter's soft gray female.

She's a friendly cat but tends to take off for a day or two at a time. When she had been gone

most of a week, though, we started to worry.

We waited a full week before calling daughter in Augusta, Ga., to tell her that her parents seem to have misplaced another cat.

Rupert is the sixth cat that has disappeared on us and the second belonging to youngest daughter. We lost her Baby, a beautiful Siamese, about 10 years ago.

Earlier this year, our son's other cat, Jules, disappeared out of our garage, and about five years ago we lost his Pomeroy. (I don't think we would have gotten Frank if he could have figured anyone else dumb enough to take him.)

Over the last dozen years, we've also lost Dixie and Khan, a couple of Siamese mixes we got to replace Baby.

Where do they go? Were they washed down the sewer after heavy rains, eaten by coyotes, stolen by strangers, arrested as vagrants?

Sometimes, they come and go so quickly around here. Who knows?

# Explaining the problems at Smoky Garden

To the Editor:

It's that time of year when fathers and their children find some of the nicer weekends a good time to get out those rods and reels and find the closest fishing hole for a chance at a bite or two.

This is why I'm writing, to explain some of the details of what has happened at Smoky Gardens.

In the last couple of months, we've heard several comments, both good and bad, about draining the lake, and why we did it, so I will try and explain the situation we were faced with.

First, we have access to an irrigation well where water recuperation in mid-winter is tested every year about the second week of January for recovery stage of the water table in that area. Over the past nine years, since 1997, that recovery level has measured at an average loss of 9.5 inches per year. That leaves us with about 85 inches less recovery of the water table since then.

Some have thought over the years that springs were present in Smoky Gardens, and, as we've found, they do not exist. The basin of the Smoky is actually very porous and has allowed ground water to control the level.

The reason for draining the lake in 2004 was to remove some very measurable sediment build-up from previous floods, and to remove some material that was never removed when work was done in 1976.

So, as it has turned out, as the valve was closed, the water level returned to basically, exactly where it was before we drained it, and after some U.S. Geological Service measurements, it has been confirmed that the water level was a direct relation to the surrounding ground water level at the upper end of the lake.

In essence, when the ground water went down, the lake would have gone dry anyway.

One of the factors that pointed us in the direction of releasing water again last summer was the fact that black bullhead and carp of the



from our  
readers

- to the editor

previous year's hatch had survived in the very small pools left. As the water was slowly rising, these fish exploded in numbers that were uncontrollable by any means other than to drain it again, and possibly poison the remaining fish and start over.

What most people have not understood is that the bullhead and carp stir the water so much that clarity becomes a problem and the turbidity actually kills out all other species of fish like bass, that cannot feed due to poor visibility.

Another problem besides the drought conditions is the fact that, flying the drainage basin by aircraft, we counted 27 dams that had been constructed in runoff areas from Stratton, Colo., back to the Sherman County area. In 1919, there were two dams in the drainage area. Terraces and other conservation practices have eliminated 90 to 95 percent of the runoff we had in past years.

The main reason for this report is to inform the public of what the problem is, and the fact we may never see the water levels of even 10 years ago.

Smoky Gardens Board members worked an extensive amount of time building structures, piers, etc., and we as people, just like everyone else, desire a great fishery and place to camp and spend time with children, relax, kick back and enjoy the great benefits of the outdoors.

We need Mother Nature to help us. The draining had nothing to do with water level, as previously mentioned, as it recovered to within two inches of where it was before draining, and as soon as moderate irrigation started, the lake lost the two foot of water it had in it in about

six days. I wish everyone would thank those involved in "attempting" to rehabilitate this facility to be what it once was, or make it even better.

We as board members hope everyone understands we have had the best biologist from the state Department of Wildlife and Parks helping with the projects we've done, and the only thing we cannot do now is make it rain. Yes, it's that simple.

I will add that if and when the lake does fill, we are prepared to start stocking immediately with forage base minnows. Game fish species will follow in the order the biologist recommends. With the growth of many cottonwoods and salt cedar in the basin, the population of these fish will explode with very fast growth rates. I think we really have something to look forward to.

I hope this has cleared-up some issues, and has answered questions as to why the lake is the way it is.

Thank you, and let it rain.

Kenny Sanderson  
Smoky Gardens board member  
Goodland

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e-mail: [star-news@nwkansas.com](mailto:star-news@nwkansas.com)

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**nwkansas.com**  
N.T. Betz, Director of Internet Services  
(ntbetz@nwkansas.com)  
Evan Barnum, Systems Admin.(support@nwkansas.com)



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